

ABSTRACT

**Diamonds and Denim:
A Case Study of Large-Scale Western Art Exhibitions and Sales
as Museum Fundraising and Development Opportunities.**

Lauren A. Perez

Chairperson, Kenneth C. Hafertepe, Ph.D.

This project will discuss the varying styles and similarities of large-scale exhibitions and sales within museums specializing in the art of the American West, primarily focused on the Western Artists of America Show and Sale at the Pearce Museum in Corsicana, Texas. Many museums fundraise for a distinct purpose and Western Art museums are distinct in many ways. Surveys were conducted among Western Art museums that were known to have held and supported events and sales as focused in this study. They were then evaluated and discussed in the study. The Western Artists of America Show and Sale at the Pearce Museum was then discussed from a first-hand point of view and then discussed in the larger framework of these particular shows in an effort to understand how they are conducted and how such events can be replicated in other Western Art museums who may have not taken the leap to establish one. Western Art by nature is attractive to many, and is thus a perfect opportunity for themed fundraising and community involvement.

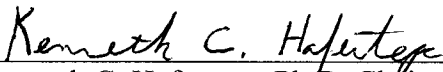
Diamonds and Denim: A Case Study of Large-Scale Western Art Exhibitions and Sales as Museum Fundraising Opportunities

by

Lauren Perez, M.A

A Project

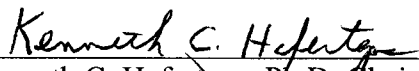
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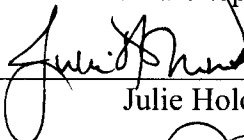
Kenneth C. Hafertepe, Ph.D, Chairperson

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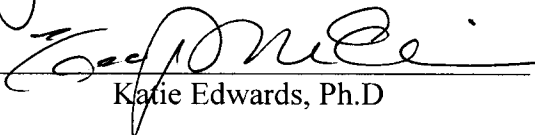
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DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this project to my family,
my Mom, Dad and Sister
without their love and support
I wouldn't have made it through the
long sleepless nights of writing and research.

I love you all and thank you for being my support base

INTRODUCTION

Development efforts are a core part of museum work. Fundraising helps keep the museum running and thus supports its mission. American Western Art museums approach development efforts in their own special way. They collect and display a specific genre of art, conduct fundraising efforts that involve a great deal of community involvement and access, and mount exhibitions that can not be replicated with the same results in other art museums of a different genre. In this project I will discuss large scale exhibitions and sales that are common in American Western Art museums as development opportunities, both in conjunction with outside organizations and those solely conducted by museums.

It is important to start this discussion with an overview of the growth of Western Art museums and the people who were critical to the development of the western style of art. The first two iconic figures in Western Art were Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell. Both of these men had a specific view on what it meant to be a western artist and what the genre itself represented to them. Frederic Remington was born October 4, 1861. He attended art school at Yale College (now Yale University) for three semesters, leaving to tend to his father who was ill and died a year later¹. While at Yale Remington found that his passion in art was more in line with action and movement rather than still life.

¹ Frederick Remington Art Museum, "Frederic Remington",

This would become important in his later life and art. He used his inheritance money to devote his time to camping and traveling. He made his first main trip west to Montana at the age of 19 and he was exposed to the changes in the final expansion of the West and the end of the U.S. Cavalry struggles with the Native Americans. Remington was to become the most successful illustrator at the end of the 19th and 20th century.² His art focused on three main areas: illustrations, bronzes, and paintings. He was known for honing in primarily on the person and the animal, with the landscape being the second most important thing. According to Peggy and Harold Samuels, authors of *Frederic Remington: A Biography*, he was the first American artist to accurately portray the gait of the horse in motion and this would become his signature.³

Charles M. Russell himself fell under the category or the area that is sometimes referred to as “School of Remington.” Born in 1864 in St. Louis Missouri, he would move to Montana in 1880 and eventually take on the job of a night wrangler which he felt was much closer to the lifestyle of the West that he had imagined. He would work this job for 11 years, before settling to become a full-time artist. He focused on much the same subject matter as Remington; however, there is a difference in their use of color. Russell tended to paint in rather vibrant and deep colors, while Remington tended to favor rather harsh light that is seen in the mid-day.⁴ Both he and Remington entered the scene at the time that the “West” was being promoted in Wild West traveling shows and

² C.M. Russell Museum, “About Charles M. Russell”, <http://cmrussell.org/about/about-charles-m-russell>

³ Peggy and Harold Samuels, *Frederic Remington: A Biography*, Doubleday & Co., Garden City NY

⁴ Ibid

dime novels. According to the C.M. Russell Museum, “he painted in a time when there was considerable interest in the West. Charlie's works were popular because of their narrative subject matter, unique style, and dynamic action. In addition, he had the ability to accurately depict specific times or events in western history.”⁵ In later years Russell would become friends with people such as Will Rogers and Douglas Fairbanks, men who would be the precursors to the large-scale Western film stars such as Gene Autry and Roy Rogers. These artists would cement the idealized version of the West that would continue to this present day.

Wealthy collectors took great interest in the genre, particularly those collectors from the West and the South, such as Thomas Gilcrease, Amon Carter, Sid Richardson, and Gene Autry. Thomas Gilcrease, a major and important collector of the Western Art genre, was the founder of the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The museum opened in 1949 as a private museum and following some financial difficulties, the collection was deeded to the city of Tulsa after a bond resolution issue was voted on, passed and used to save the museum.⁶ At this point the museum became the property of the city of Tulsa, and a part of the lives of the people in the city. However the museum’s collection and range of artists spans from early colonial to contemporary artists. Its collection of Western artists, for which the museum is best known, ranges from Thomas Moran to Frederic Remington. It also holds some objects not directly related to Western Art, such as one of the rare copies of the Declaration of Independence. The collection

⁵ C.M. Russell Museum, “About Charles M. Russell”, <http://cmrussell.org/about/about-charles-m-russell>

⁶ Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture, “Gilcrease Museum”, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/G/GI004.html>

was born out of a love of European art galleries, but Gilcrease also had a passionate love for Western Art, and for the mythic and romantic aura, which this genre promotes.⁷

Texas native Amon Carter made his money in newspapers and oil, and even coined the phrase that Fort Worth was the place “where the West begins.” As a person Carter heavily identified with the American West, and he built an extensive collection of the works of Remington and Russell. Upon his death in 1955, his will established both a foundation and the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas to hold his collection of Western Art. Sid Richardson, another wealthy Texas oil man, was another collector (and chief collecting rival of Carter’s) of both Russell’s and Remington’s work. Another avid lover of the West and the lifestyle that it portrayed, Mr. Sid (as he was known by his friends and associates) set up the Sid Richardson Foundation and the Sid Richardson Museum in Fort Worth, Texas to share the same love of Western art that he carried his entire life.⁸

Another collector of Western Art who ended up founding a museum was Gene Autry, a former Hollywood cowboy star, singer, and, later, owner of the Anaheim Angels. The Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum in Los Angeles, California eventually merged with the Southwest Museum of the American Indian and the Women of the West Museum. That merger created a new entity, the Autry National Center, which takes a much broader look at the culture of the American West. The goal of the Autry Center is to “bring together the stories of all peoples of the American West, connecting

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Sid Richardson Museum, “Sid Richardson:,” http://www.sidrichardsonmuseum.org/nu_site/sid_richardson_museum.php/museum/swr_bio

the past with the present to inspire our shared future.”⁹ There are also four main focuses of the museum that are central to the programming and interpretation of the museum’s mission, those being: Voices of Native America, Western Resources, Justice and Conflict, and The Imagined West. The Autry Center is thus able to interpret the West from many different perspectives, and to combine each of those elements, creating a coherent narrative.¹⁰

These individuals, and others like them, were both private collectors and founders of public institutions, and thus made sure that all people can enjoy Western Art. They gave the public access to the art, and also gave recognition to a genre that has often been treated as “kitschy,” and that sometimes has not been well received in larger and better-known institutions.

⁹ The Autry National Center, “What is the Autry?”, <http://theautry.org/about-us/what-is-the-autry>

¹⁰ Ibid

CHAPTER 1

“What is Western Art, the Pearce Museum and the Western Artists of America?”

Western Art holds a special place in the hearts of Americans. Interest from collectors, both nationally and internationally, range far and wide due to its grand interpretation of the American heartland, the tough grit of the settlers, or the majesty of the newly discovered American landscape. However it is a genre that sometimes doesn't generate the respect that it deserves because of what others deem its “kitschy” subject matter. This genre of art does have its supporters, from collectors and from the wider community as well. In fact supporters form an extremely tight-knit group. Most collectors and artists are aware that the genre can sometimes be overlooked or looked down upon by the art communities on both coasts, but this only serves to strengthen their resolve. That is why there are several artist and collector associations that support, strengthen and exemplify the great diversity that can be found in Western art. This diversity can be seen in different ways, from how they feel and interpret what is most important in the field, to how they develop and support burgeoning artists grow into masters of the highest class. It is important to first inquire as to how these artists and collectors define this genre by asking these questions: what is Western Art, and how do these representative organizations interpret this particular genre?

The Cowboy Artists of America defines Western Art as: “The culture of the Old West as typified by the late Frederic Remington, Charles Russell and others... authentic

representations of life in the west, as it was and is.”¹ An article by Carl Hoover, the Entertainment writer for the *Waco Tribune Herald*, has recently observed that “There is so much that is up for interpretation, some people catalogue it by ‘place (landscape), those who claimed/staked or fought for the land, the Native Americans who lived there, the cowboys who tamed it, and the effect of 20th century urbanization and industrialization.’ It should be noted that today’s Western Art is arguably driven by tastes for representational art and iconic subjects.”² Then there is the Western Artists of America that define it as: “genre of cowboy, Indian, pioneer, cattle and horse subjects with backgrounds appropriate to the subject matter.”³

There is some overlap between each of the definitions, but there is much to be said for Carl Hoover’s definition. There is something about the landscapes, figures, and depictions of struggle that excites viewers and invites them to consider the struggles and embrace the values that Americans can hold in common. This art speaks to what it means to be from this country and the pride that came with developing and growing, especially for those people who grew up in the West and Southwest. It is a similar concept and sense of exploration that drove people to push the concept of Manifest Destiny in the 1800s. Though that concept has some more specific issues that define it, we are taking that idea from the romanticized feeling that can sometimes be connected to that idea of Manifest Destiny.

¹ Cowboy Artists of America, “Objectives”, <http://cowboyartistsofamerica.com/>

² Carl Hoover, “Spirit of a day gone by”, *Waco Tribune Herald*, November 13, 2011, sec. Brazos Living.

³ Western Artists of America, “Western Artists of America”, <http://www.westernartistsofamerica.com/>

The purpose of this project is to discuss the fundraising and development efforts of Western Art museums, and from there, to focus particularly on the largest exhibits and sales that they hold annually. To do that, we need to understand what communities hold important and what they deem necessary to the efforts to raise money and continue sharing this genre of art. That is why, in reiterating what the purpose of this project is, it is important to restate as we are defining and discussing a distinctly different style of fundraising. The main focus of this project is the Western Artists of America 8th Annual Exhibition and Sale that is held with The Pearce Museum at Navarro College in Corsicana, Texas. This event is held annually by the Western Artists of America, but has only been held at the Pearce for two years, 2012 being its second. The Pearce Museum was founded in 1996, when Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pearce gifted their extensive collection of Civil War documents and Western Art to Navarro College, and founded an institution where they could be seen and enjoyed. The Pearces had started to collect Western Art when they were living in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which is home to many artists, galleries, and museums. Mr. Pearce was familiar with the area, as he had attended prep school at Los Alamos Ranch School near Santa Fe. According to the history of the museum, “their philosophy for the collection is based upon gathering a representative collection from recognized artists while identifying up-and-coming artists.”⁴

The mission of The Pearce Museum is to “To preserve, collect, and interpret the history of the American Civil War and the art of the American West.”⁵ The museum elaborates on that mission by stating, “We wish to preserve and interpret as fully as

⁴ The Pearce Museum at Navarro College, “History”,
<http://www.pearcecollections.us/page.php?cat=Home&id=14>

⁵ Ibid

possible the history of the American Civil War and the people involved – North and South, men and women, children and adults, leaders and common citizens; and through the Museum’s Western Art collection preserve and interpret art which depicts either the historic or modern American West. Staff and volunteers are dedicated to the visitor experience and committed to excellence in every aspect of its educational programs and collections management. To this end, we aim to serve a diverse public through a dynamic, innovative, and welcoming facility.”⁶ The museum has two distinct exhibit spaces, The Civil War Gallery and the Western Art Gallery. Together they present the two categories that were so special to the Pearce family.

The Civil War Gallery displays less 5% of the entire collection of 15,000 manuscripts and documents on a daily basis. It seeks to be an interactive experience, giving an in-depth look at the Civil War from the perspectives of the people who lived it themselves by using videos, displays and interactive screens. It covers a range of subjects from battles to everyday personal struggles that were documented by soldiers. The Western Art Gallery features both two- and three- dimensional works of art ranging from the classic Western style to the more contemporary Western vision. There are over 255 works in the collection; less than half are on exhibit at any given time. Items are rotated and displayed on a routine basis, with the exception of those that are too delicate or too fragile to display for long periods.

The Western Artists of America, (who partner with the Pearce Museum) according to the mission statement on their website, “...is an organization formed for the purpose of promoting the talents of professional fine artists specializing in the genre of

⁶ Ibid

cowboy, Indian, pioneer, cattle and horse subjects with backgrounds appropriate to the subject matter. The primary purpose of WAA is to always first and foremost promote its artists.”⁷ The founding members of the organization are Ed L. Holmes and Ed Copley, two well-respected artists in the Western Art community. Ed Holmes and Ed Copley spearheaded the creation of the organization in 2000 after they met in Scottsdale, Arizona. The WAA was formed to cover a wide range of subject and most importantly, to include all western artists. Unlike the Cowboy Artists of America, which was established in the mid 1960s, the WAA allows women in their organization and makes an effort to seek them out as well. There are no ethnicity or nationality requirements for the organization, something that both founders felt strongly about, because they thought such requirements might hinder their efforts to find and include artists of the highest caliber. Mentoring was another factor that was extremely important to them, in that they felt strongly about finding good artists and turning them into great artists. As they pointed out, many members of the organization are older, ranging in their 40s through 70s, and are at a point in their careers when they are better able to impart that information to another generation of artists. Mentorship allows other generations to refine their skills and techniques, which will propel them to a level that will help them create a lasting career in the art community.

Following the formation of the WAA, the next goal was to find a home for the group; a museum was the ideal choice. The ideal museum would be willing to work with the artists, would be able to foster the organization’s artists in the ways that the artists themselves couldn’t, and would fill that void to teach about showing and forming

⁷ Western Artists of America, “Western Artists of America”, <http://www.westernartistsofamerica.com/>

relationships with other institutions. There was also the question of subject matter, in that these artists wanted to make sure that they covered all the areas that encompass the genre. The artists are involved with many Western subjects, from Native cultures to abstract Western themes, some taken from personal experience, some from personal travels, and some from dreams, stories and places long ago. There also had to be a balance between what mediums the artists use and how they used them. However, the most important aspect of membership in the organization is a passion for what they are doing and where they want to go with their life. The organization wants to leave a legacy, one of artists who care about what they do and how they do it. They aspire to have and put out the highest caliber art with the highest level of passion.

Each artist applies to become a member of the organization and once the application is complete, both the two founders and other members of the organization review them. Artists are invited to join based on referrals. They maintain a specific balance in the organization making sure that the medium category, criteria, gender, and other factors are not leaning heavily in one direction. Currently there are more male members than female, but that has to do primarily with the genre having been traditionally dominated by males. There are bylaws that dictate the rules on how members are voted in. WAA stresses that they are very selective as to which artists are chosen for membership and the rules that are in place for those people to stay in the organization. At one point the bylaws of the organization stated that an incoming member had to be approved by 75% of the artists (though that has changed), as well as maintain a two-year probationary period where they pay dues. After the first two years are completed, they artists are then made permanent

members with dues no longer being required. Artists that participate in the show must be members of the Western Artists of America.

CHAPTER 2

“Who are some other Western Artists’ organizations?”

There are some large Western Art Auctions in the United States. Among the largest and best known are the Prix de West Invitational Art Exhibition and Sale held at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, The Cowboy Artists of America Sale in Phoenix, Arizona (which returned to the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in 2012), and the Western Artists of America Annual Exhibition and Sale at the Pearce Museum in Corsicana, Texas. Each is unique and has certain requirements for participation. There are more shows that will be covered in this project for reference purposes. Many of the events that will be covered are: The Russell at the C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls, Montana; Cowgirl Up! at the Desert Caballeros Western Museum in Wickenburg, Arizona; Masters of the American West Exhibition and Sale at the Autry National Center in Los Angeles, California; and the Phippen Museum and Western Art Show in Prescott, Arizona.

The Prix de West Invitational might be the largest and best known of the Western Art shows and sales, though it is not the oldest. The largest and the oldest Western art show is the Cowboy Artists of America Show. Though stock shows and rodeos have existed for a very long time in the United States, and have been known to have included auctions of Western Art, art shows and in particular Western Art shows and sales were not introduced until the second half of the 20th century. Some sales and exhibits are still connected to large stock shows and rodeos such as the San Antonio Stock Show and

Rodeo's Western Art Contest and Auction. However that show does not work in conjunction with a museum and the focus of this project is on the shows and sales that are stand-alone exhibits and sales, and museum associated exhibits and sales.

The first annual Cowboy Artists of America (CAA) exhibition opened at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum (NCWHM) on September 9, 1966. Sales were modest, but they were in for a surprise. Word soon spread of this particular exhibition, artists were added to the line-up and pieces were being sold to places all over the country and being shown in galleries in such well-known and large cities like New York. After a few years and a tumultuous relationship with the NCWHM, the CAA and the NCWHM parted ways. This resulted in the NCWHM creating and developing the Prix de West. The CAA show moved back to Arizona, where the organization had been founded. This proved to be fruitful for the CAA as the customer and audience base grew larger and sales, in total, would eventually would top over \$2.8 million.⁸ The CAA show is one that stands alone. It does not partner with a museum or other entity. There seem to be two main reasons why this is done: first, they generate a large enough profit that partnering with an outside organization would be too cumbersome and problematic, and second, an attempt by the NCWHM to take over the show may have contributed to lingering doubts about partnering with another group. However, much to the surprise of people in the Western art community, the CAA announced they would be leaving the Phoenix Art Museum because of differences over managing the exhibition and would be moving back to the NCWHM. As a result, both the Prix de West and the CAA show will

⁸ Cowboy Artists of America, "History", <http://cowboyartistsofamerica.com/>

be held in the same location. It is unclear how the two events sharing the same venue will impact the museum or the shows, but it should prove to be an interesting case to study.

A whole host of other organizations soon followed the lead of CAA and took an active part in Western Art shows. The Women Artists of the West is another organization that supports and mentors artists in the genre. A small group wanting to network as professionals and to participate in the world of Western Art founded this organization in 1971 in California. Together they combined their efforts and began promoting their careers with shows and advertising. WAOW soon became known for its high caliber of artists and distinctive western style. Their debut exhibit was held in Palm Springs, California and has shown in other well-known locations. WAOW has experienced many changes and growth over its existence; from their headquarters' location to the amount of members, to the subject matter that the artists depict. The membership of WAOW consists of artists from all over the country, and from more than 30 states. The common connection between the WAOW and artists of similar organizations is the passion for their work and the desire to express the genre of Western Art.⁹ They are very similar to the CAA and the WAA, however they are a much smaller organization.

The Western Art Association is another organization created “to promote interest in Western Art, artifacts and to preserve our unique western heritage... The Western Art Association continues to perform its mission in many ways from offering an encouraging word or advice to a beginning artist to being a resource for established artists.”¹⁰ In addition to promoting burgeoning artists and established artists, they have started

⁹ Women Artists of the West, “About”, <http://www.waow.org/Aboutwaow.shtml>

¹⁰ Western Art Association, “About”, <http://westernartassociation.org/about/>

scholarships for students who are hoping to further their talent as artists in the genre. They also seek to provide venues and opportunities for those artists to show, grow and establish client bases.

In addition to artist organizations, there are ones dedicated to the collectors and lovers of the genre such as the Western Art Patrons, founded by the Tucson Museum of Art. Its creation was intended to support “the acquisition, conservation, and exhibition programs of the Western Art curatorial department. The group celebrates and explores the themes, experiences, and environments unique to the art produced in, or about, the western United States – encompassing historical and contemporary western expressions, as well as the important aesthetic contributions of our Native American cultures.”¹¹ Though the organization is to support the museum’s efforts, it serves a secondary purpose, bringing together a group of people that have an affinity for the genre.

Many events, such as Cowgirl Up!, Masters of the West, the Phippen Western Art Show, and The Russell have become large sources of revenue for their respective institutions. These events feature artists from organizations such as the CAA, WAOW, Western Art Association and the Western Artists of America. The community is a small but passionate one, so there are going to be overlap in the artists, organizations, buyers and audience that attend these sales and exhibitions.

¹¹ Tucson Museum of Art, “Western Art Patrons”,
<http://www.tucsonmuseumofart.org/support/wap.php>

CHAPTER 3

“Western Art Exhibitions and Sales ”

When a museum decides to mount a large-scale exhibition and sale, there are many factors that must be addressed for the event to come off in a flawless manner. As a first step toward identifying “best practices” in organizing such an event, I developed a set of questions, which were sent out to eleven museums in the Western Art community, to elicit information about the particulars and the struggles that each institution has faced when working on such a large event. I made sure that these were institutions with large-scale exhibitions and sales similar to those at the Pearce Collection. I spoke to staff members at several of these museums, and asked questions about the event and the relation it has to the museum and its fundraising efforts. In total five returned information, and even some additional material, back to me from the questions that were sent to each institution. The museums that returned them and will be discussed in this section are the Phippen Museum in Prescott, Arizona, the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma, the Desert Caballeros Western museum in Wickenburg, Arizona, the Autry National Center in Los Angeles, California, and the C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls, Montana. All have unique events that contribute tremendously to their mission and their fundraising efforts and it is important to discuss how to take these events into account when discussing the general operation of the museum.

The Phippen Museum in Prescott, Arizona organizes the Phippen Museum Western Art Show and Sale, which is the largest event on their calendar year in terms of fundraising events and attention. 2012 will mark the 38th year for the Phippen Museum Western Art Show and Sale. This is a self-created event for the museum, so unlike some other institutions, this is not in conjunction with another organization. In addition to the financial incentives, this event also increases awareness of the museum to the general public. It also focuses attention on Western Art, its artists, and the mission of museum itself. Though the planning stage for the event takes up a great deal of staff time, it is the largest fundraiser that they have, generating about 70% of their annual income. There are six other events that the museum conducts on an annual basis, and those, combined with other efforts such as memberships and the like would comprise the other 30%. The museum would not exist without the funds that are generated by this event. The planning stage for this event, from start to finish, is September through May, 9 months.

The goal of the event beyond the fundraising aspect is to “Encourage and inspire up and coming Western artists and expose the community and our visitors to a one of a kind cultural event that provides direct interaction between the participants and attendees.” The artists that are chosen to participate in the show are reviewed by a juried panel, which review the submitted artwork, and determine who will participate. The overall planning and preparation for the event takes away about a third of the museum staff’s time away from their normal procedures. The show averages between five to seven thousand visitors coming to see around 120 artists over the three days. There are several events that take place over the course of the seven-day event. Over the years there was a decline in the number of artists participating in the events; however that aspect seems to

have reversed itself and is back on the rise. In addition, the museum has attempted to attract a higher caliber of artists wanting to participate in the event. There was a steady growth in the revenue generated by the event until 2007-2008; however, the downturn was related to the beginnings of the national recession. The problems that were being faced at the Phippen were also being confronted all across the nation in other institutions and was not anything that could be linked to the museum's handling of the event. Overall, the visitor traffic has more or less remained steady since the start of the event. The event is held in two main locations, the courthouse plaza in downtown Prescott, Arizona and the museum grounds and building. The advertising zone for the Phippen is national, through magazines, invitations, and television, because so many artists come from all over the country and bring in many of their own clients.

The physical preparation of the museum, setting up the locations and hanging the art works, takes around one day, and is conducted by the staff at the museum. Donors, volunteers, and other help also make the event possible; everything from the advertising to the set up, is conducted by museum staff or volunteers. There are no outside companies hired to help with the event. Overall the museum does benefit significantly from the event; in fact the museum could not operate without the funds that are generated from this event. Volunteers are essential to the running and the preparation for this event and this is something they are willing to repeat on an annual basis as long as they can. It is the most vital fundraising event for the institution.

The granddaddy of all such events is the Prix de West Show and Sale held at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. The goal of the Prix de West, which is currently in its 39th year, is to "feature Western paintings and sculpture by the finest

contemporary Western artists in the nation with art seminars, receptions, sale and awards banquet.” The event is purely the creation of the NCWHM and not in conjunction with any other outside organizations. The show is recognized internationally, and people are able to view the show on-line if they choose to; this also provides an opportunity to view parts of the permanent collection of the museum. The most important result of this whole event is the building of relationships between the museum and the artists, donors, collectors, and museum members. In addition to the event awards and exhibition, one piece is chosen each year and purchased to become part of the permanent collection; this is the Prix de West Purchase Award. This tradition has allowed the museum to amass one of the strongest contemporary collections of Western art in the country.

The museum hosts a total of 8-10 fundraising events in addition to Prix de West, however Prix de West accounts for 54% of annual fundraising. The event attracts around 1,000 visitors and brings in sales at over 3.2 million. Artists who want to be among the 112 that are featured annually must submit by mid-April to be considered for the following year’s show. A small committee comprised of previous Prix de West Purchase Award winners, Prix de West committee members, and museum staff members, make the final decision on who ultimately ends up in the show. The show features four full days of events, including private events for artists, sponsors and donors as well as public events open to any museum visitor. There are also pay-to-attend events that are somewhat exclusive. The show has grown quite a bit over the course of the years. The first event started with 35 artists and 92 works of art. Seminars and a show catalogue were created. As the reputation of the event grew, more and more artists were brought in. The artists attract buyers both nationally and internationally. In addition to people chancing upon the

event, many visitors plan annual vacations to coincide with the event. The planning stage for this event isn't clearly marked out like that of The Phippen. Due to the large scale of the event and the formal submission policies, the event is constantly in a planning stage, though focus does shift to focus on it as the opening date grows near. Board members and staff are all included on the planning stages for the event throughout the year. The sale is held in the museum's temporary exhibition galleries and the seminars, lunches and awards banquets are held in the Special Events Center, thus keeping the whole event on the museum grounds and not split between other locations.

The advertising scope for the event is national, but with the far reaching aspects of social media outlets like Facebook, Twitter and the museum's website, thus the event can have an international presence without much effort. There are two main workshops that are held the week before and after the opening. A Prix de West artist teaches both of these lectures. The preparation time for the event is extensive: the process can take several weeks, but does not inhibit the normal operations of the museums because the art is placed in the temporary exhibition hall and can be closed off when not in use. The shows that are featured in that exhibit space before the Prix de West usually close an average of 8 weeks before the opening of Prix de West, thus allowing ample time to take down the previous show and set up the exhibition space with the pieces from the featured artists. A preparator and curator in keeping with professional standards hang the art while an events planner, with the addition of the crew that is kept on staff, coordinates the set-up of all the other "events."

When it comes to the personnel that is used to help with the event, the docents provide a wide variety of help. They serve as sellers the night of the sale and they

maintain the hospitality booth, assist with registration, help with the set-up of the awards banquet, and help transport the artists from the airport to the host hotel and back. Volunteers help assemble the bid books, and various donors contribute both financially and in other ways. The marketing aspect of the event is done completely internally, though a commercial artist is sometimes employed to help with advertising efforts. Overall this event benefits more than just the museum, though it does comprise over half of their fundraising efforts. It is important to the Western Art community as a whole because visitors, collectors and major donors are exposed to the genre and to the artists. These people are most likely to be return visitors to this museum and others.

The next event that was examined was the Desert Caballeros Western Museum's annual Cowgirl Up! show and sale. The museum is located in Wickenburg, Arizona. The exhibition's goal, when it started, was to balance out the lack of an outlet that the museum saw for venues existing solely for female Western artists to show and sell their work. The Desert Caballeros Western Museum stepped in to fill that void. More than just a show and sale, the director of the museum states that Cowgirl Up! is a "mindset" and a vehicle for building relationships between the artists, collectors, buyers and the museum. The artists who participate in the event become longtime friends of the museum, and each year new relationships are forged and strengthened. Those friendships develop throughout the year as the artists and staff members interact with and support one another. Cowgirl Up! provides an opportunity to publicly recognize the significant contributions of women Western artists to the Western American art world. In a realm dominated by men, these talented women artists, through this event and this museum, have a chance to thrive in a genre that is typically dominated by males. In some small

way, Cowgirl Up! is helping to right a wrong and to give women Western artists a place alongside their male counterparts.

The event is in its 7th year, is held the last weekend in March, and has three days of events and runs for 5 weeks. This is a museum-generated event in that it is not in conjunction with any other outside organizations. The event usually attracts 12,000 visitors over the five-week period and features a maximum of 58 artists. This last year the event raised the most money in its history, around \$547,000. Events are added and subtracted to keep the event up-to-date and fresh. Two events are held before and after the main three days, those being the Cowgirls and Camaraderie (new for the 2012 year) and the Cowgirls Night Out. The Cowgirls and Camaraderie event is in conjunction with the Scottsdale Artists School, and artists are invited to do a demonstration and up close interviews are given to the visitors that they may not get otherwise. The Cowgirls Night Out is a fundraiser conducted by the museum's support group, Las Senoras de Socorro. The planning stage for the event is a constant process. Submissions for the 2013 event were coming in during May 2011, and the general cutoff for the following year's show is the last day of the current year's exhibition. A selection of artists for the next year's show is conducted in June and invitations to said artists go out by the end of the month. A selection committee, that is kept anonymous and rotated annually, selects the artists and usually contains about 3 to 5 members. Staff, trustees, and collectors have all participated. Generally all the artists commit to the exhibition by July and the museum corresponds with them over the next couple of months. Catalog photographs of the works are due in October. Biographies, mailing lists, checklists, and other necessary documents and requirements are due on various dates between November and February.

The works are due two weeks prior to the exhibition to prepare for set up and display. The museum tries to make the event more of an “invitational” by gathering names throughout the year to invite to the following year and trying to bring as many new artists as possible to keep the show fresh. Artists that have previously participated are reviewed and evaluated; however they do receive upwards of 300 unsolicited portfolios that are reviewed.

The event takes an enormous amount of staff time, and this resulted in a full time staff member being assigned and paid to work solely on this event. Due to the poor economy of recent years the museum did have to downsize both their full time and their part time staff significantly, so putting on the event is a huge effort on the part of remaining staff, but it is the largest annual fundraiser, positively represents the museum, brings national attention, and has even helped shaped the identity of the museum. The Purchase Award, a piece that is chosen by the distinguished art acquisition committee to add to the permanent collection, also serves to keep the event momentum going and generate a positive response in the Western Art community. This also serves to widen the scope of the collection and amass some of the finest works of contemporary western art. The majority of the events are held on the museum’s property, though some of the events, such as the main lecture and the artist and patrons’ party, are held at a local resort. This is done for the sake of variety, though they could be held on the museum’s property. The event is advertised on a national level, and though they haven’t advertised on an international scale, they have had buyers and visitors that come every year. The physical preparation of the museum for the event takes about two to three weeks and takes over 150 volunteers to help in addition to the paid staff. Some volunteers work months in

advance and donors provide \$120,000 worth of sponsorships to help cover the cost of the event. Outside professionals are hired for specific tasks: a professional art handler to help with the unpacking, packing, and shipping, a catering company, and a graphics designer to work throughout the year on all the advertisements and other print pieces. In addition, tents and other things are rented each year.

From a financial perspective the event has grown exponentially. Over the course of seven years the net profit has risen and has stayed within the range of \$109,000 to \$201,000. Last year the net profit was approximately \$175,000 despite the fact that they sold over \$547,000 worth of art, the most they had ever sold. The deductions come from the percentage of art sales minus the extra costs that weren't offset by donations and sponsorships. Cowgirl Up! generates between 12 to 15% of the Museum's annual operating expenses. In terms of the money raised strictly from "fundraisers", the Cowgirl Up! income represents probably 90% of that fundraising income.

Overall the event is a significant event that museum can't imagine not doing. It is something they both benefit from and believe is an important asset to the community of Western Art. The community also rallies around the event as well, seeing it as great exposure for the Wickenburg community and the museum. Even those in the community that may not love art do have a sense of appreciation for what Cowgirl Up! does for the community, especially during the tough economic times that has been facing all small towns and museums.

The Autry National Center, located in Los Angeles, California is another great example of an organization that is deeply entrenched in the Western Art community. The Masters of the American West Fine Art Exhibition and Sale is a creation of its founder,

Gene Autry, from start to finish. The event features 76 contemporary artists who are chosen by a committee after submitting in an application. In its initial creation, the show was a weekend long that gradually grew to a week and then into a six-week exhibition. It is currently in its 15th year and the museum has no plans of discontinuing the event. There are two full time staff members that are dedicated to the event; additional staff members help as needed during the nine month planning stage. The goal of the event, beyond the fundraising side of the event, is “to increase museum attendance, membership, and overall awareness in the art community.”

The event and exhibition is held at the Autry, the first two days being the most action packed ones with a dinner for 300 people that Friday night, 500 guests for the luncheon and presentation on Saturday, and 650 guests for the sale Saturday evening. There are also an additional two presentations during the event. The physical preparation for the event takes about one month from start to finish, and is done completely by the Autry staff. Some volunteers are used; this is primarily during the actual art sale itself, and they are instrumental to the execution of the sale. The sales range locally, nationally and internationally, though the advertizing zones are national and local. The total net profits settle around the \$1 million mark, making it a large event and encompassing around 20% of their annual fundraising efforts, second to the annual fundraising gala which is put on by the two main development and fundraising staff members that also manage The Masters.

Overall Masters of the West is an important event for the museum, and it brings in a great deal of foot traffic to the museum, while also allowing the general public to see some of the best contemporary Western art being made today.

The final museum, to be discussed is another large Western art museum that carries a famous name, The C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls, Minnesota. The focus of the museum is slightly different from the rest of the museums in that the complete focus of the museum is on the life and artwork of Charles M. Russell, though they do support the art of his contemporaries and his successors in the Western art community. The show and sale is the only fundraising event that the museum puts on, as the majority of their fundraising comes from memberships and an annual appeal. The Russell takes place over the course of a month with the main events occurring in a three-day span. This coming year it will also include eight events: an essay contest for local students that results in an award and proclamation ceremony (a month before), a preview evening for local businesses (three weeks before), a silent auction and art preview evening, a luncheon for high profile members, a quick finish event, two educationally focused seminars, and a live auction. The event is held in Great Falls, with the majority of events being held on the museum grounds, however the live auction will be moving back to a hotel to accommodate a much larger audience and buying group.

This event is in its 43rd year; however, the first 40 were partnered with the Ad Club. Up until 2010, the auction was put on by the Great Falls Ad Club to benefit the museum, however the board of directors met and decided that it would be more financially beneficial for the museum to handle the all aspects of the auction themselves, rather than partnering with another organization. They concede that they haven't had as many attendees in the past two years, but that was due to the fact that most of the events were held at the museum and the capacity there isn't as large as it was at the hotel that was previously used. This next year will feature some events at that hotel as an additional

location. The planning stage is a continuous one, that is, the work on the following years' show is started as soon as the last one is finished. There are some post-show meetings of staff members to discuss what worked, what didn't, what should change, how things should change, et cetera. Then everything is recorded and implemented for the following year. Everything from the past years events can be looked up as everything is documented for the sake of changes and other ideas.

The main goal for the event, beyond raising funds, is the education and promotion of the museum and its mission to the local community and the nation. Artists are chosen based on three pieces that they submit. A selection committee meets, views all the images, and makes their recommendations on who should be included in the auction. A select group of artists are asked to send in work, and they are exempt from the selection process. An event coordinator, who is hired, takes on a major part of the planning and manages the event. One administrative assistant works in other areas of the museum when not working on the auction. Beyond this, the focus of the marketing person, curatorial staff, store, security, education, and administration is largely on this event from November through March. It is an extremely labor intensive project so this is a definite drawback, but the exposure and the financial gain more than makes up for the massive amount of work that this event takes. The overall auction does provide funds that are used for operation purposes, so it is extremely important to them. The exposure is worldwide, although the advertising scope is only national. There are many buyers that come from the US, Canada and other countries.

The preparation and the execution for this massive event might be one of the largest and the longest prep and staffing from among the other museums surveyed in that

it takes them almost two months to prepare the spaces and return it to normal after the event concludes. In addition to that, they receive around \$160,000 in donations to help them net a pure profit on the event, and cover the expenses that the museum would face to put on the show. There are also around 230 volunteers that are used to help execute the activities and the event as a whole. Professional lighting and sound operators are brought in, as well as caterers, a printing company, and a moving company. There is an oversight committee that consists of three board members; a museum staff planner who works solely on this event, and the chief executive officer makes sure everything is done according to schedule and plan. The rest of the staff steps in as needed and as the event comes closer to opening.

The need to put on a financially successful show has grown in terms of importance, mainly due to the end of the partnership. As is common with some of the other museums surveyed, things slowed down the last couple of years due to the economy, and the art works didn't sell for as much as the organizers would have liked. However these past two years are the ones where they have received all the profits from the sale, as they no longer partner with the Ad Club. This whole event does encompass about 20% of their annual fundraising efforts, this being the only event that is held by the museum. The rest is comprised of memberships and the annual appeal.

CHAPTER 4

“The Western Artists of America 2012 Show and Sale at the Pearce Museum”

Because shows of Western art are a world unto themselves, it is important to explore the particulars of the development processes in showing and selling Western Art, the benefit to the museums that host these events, and the attention they bring to the museum fundraising efforts. This type of fundraising event, in which a professional organization and a museum (with similar interests) team up to host an event that is mutually beneficial to both parties. This chapter discusses the effort that it takes to put on such an event, from the perspective of the staff at the Pearce Collections at Navarro College.

The most important part and binding part of such an event is the initial contract and hosting agreement. In most of these documents, the hosting museum sets up an agreement with the organization to host the event. In the instance of the Western Artists of America and The Pearce, the main agreement is that in exchange for the hosting responsibilities, the “WAA agrees to provide newly created artworks, never before exhibited by their membership, and providing a retail market value of \$1 million plus for display in the galleries for the duration of the sale and exhibit. The exhibit in its entirety to last a minimum of two weeks.” There are several things encompassed in the agreement, and it is important to be aware of the conditions, so that the event and the arrangement pan out correctly.

Several things that are in the agreement to host between the two are as listed.

From the side of the WAA:

Western Artists of America shall request member artists' mailing lists, with complete mailing addresses, at a minimum of 25 patrons per artist at the member artists' discretion, be provided to The Pearce Collections Museum;

Western Artists of America shall provide ad design in the *Western Art Collector* and *Art of the West* magazines to publicize the sale and exhibit;

Western Artists of America shall design the sales and exhibit catalog and poster;

Western Artists of America agrees to provide complete location information regarding the sales event and exhibit at their Web site;

On the side of the Pearce:

The Pearce Collections Museum shall take responsibility for receipt, hanging, and installation of the fine artworks in the manner prescribed by the best practices of the American Association of Museums;

The Pearce Collections Museum shall provide "wall to wall"¹² insurance coverage for the artworks provided by the Western Artists of America;

The Pearce Collections Museum shall provide catering and drinks for the scheduled events on March 30th and 31st , 2012;

¹² Wall-to-Wall coverage is insurance that covers an item, from the place where it originally resided, to the location it is going and back. It is complete all risk coverage and not just when it is physically in the hands of the person taking possession. It means that it is insured during its transportation to the temporary home, in this case the gallery, to when it reaches its final destination or owner. It is important to note that it is also an all encompassing and broad coverage for fine art and museum property.

The Pearce Collections Museum shall pay designing and printing costs of the invitations with artwork produced by Western Artists of America for both its membership and Western Artists of America's member artists' mailing lists;

The Pearce Collections Museum shall pay first-class postage for mailing the above referenced invitations;

The Pearce Collections Museum agrees to advertise the sales event and exhibit on its web site;

The Pearce Collections Museum agrees to mail artists' check within ten (10) days of the opening weekend sale directly to the individual artists at the addresses provided to the Museum by the Western Artists of America. Also, checks for sales that occur for the balance of the exhibition shall also be sent to the artist within (10) days of the sale. The five percent (5%) proceeds from artwork and names and addresses of buyers shall be sent to the attention of Ed Holmes at 16745 E. Saguaro Boulevard, #114, Fountain Hills, Arizona 85268 within ten (10) days of the opening weekend events. The Pearce Collections Museum shall continue to provide sales information to the said Mr. Holmes throughout the exhibition, and checks and buyer information shall be provided within ten (10) days of sales as they occur.

Mutual agreements between the two state that:

All ticket sales proceeds for the sales event and awards dinner, plus admission fees for the duration of the exhibit, shall be paid at 100% to The Pearce Collections Museum;

Artworks sold at the sales event and for the duration of the exhibit shall be split seventy percent (70%) to the Western Artists of America member artist, twenty-five percent

(25%) shall be paid to The Pearce Collections Museum, and five percent (5%) shall be paid to the Western Artists of America organization;

These are the basic terms of the agreement on hosting the event that are mutually agreed upon. This is one of the most important steps to the start of the relationship between the two. Outlining the requirements between the two of them, it sets off a mutually beneficial start to the process of planning the event and the requirements following it. It also gives the two groups the opportunity to take in what would be required and take on the responsibilities should they agree with them. There are additional agreements between the two organizations and those are outlined in the document that lists the quantities of each item that needs to be produced, from the napkins to the invitations. The Pre-Show Details also outline the costs for items such as tickets and pricing for other events.

The next issue that must be resolved is determining where and how this event is going to be housed, either at the institution or at an alternate location. In the case of the Pearce, like most others, the event is held at the museum and the location around it. The Pearce displays the art in its Western Art Gallery; however, it would not be able to host the larger dinners and lunches in the museum because it is too small. Luckily, the museum is housed in the Cook Education Center on the Navarro College campus, and can thus use that space for the large more formal events and for the educational programming.

Preparation for the show begins with a great deal of administrative and small task work (for non-senior staff, such as the volunteer coordinator, receptionist, and interns). Among the things that must be attended to requires contact between the museum and the

artists, collecting materials such as photos, information, documentation, insurance information, client lists (artists are required to give at least 25 names for invitations to be sent), dimensions, tracking information, hotel information, and more. The real heavy lifting and moving of the items for the show does not take place until about three weeks before the show. The museum requires pieces to be sent by early March, and until then the staff works on invitations, date notices, data input about the pieces, ticket packets, catering discussions, decorations, name-tags (for the artists, their guests, and volunteers), artist packets, and numerous small tasks that make a difference in the show. Both Ed Holmes and Ed Copley were in contact with the staff on a daily basis, so as to remain up-to-date as to what is going on.

Many things had to be printed, ordered, or ready to go by January; these included the posters, catalogues, invitations, advertisements and large outdoor banners. That art that was provided by the artists resulted in the pieces that were selected to be on all of these items. The outdoor banner and catalogue used the same piece by Ed Holmes, the poster used a piece by Don Weller, and the invitations used a piece by Karen Cooper. Each had to be picture perfect and ready to be sent to the printers to make sure that there was enough time for them to be made and sent to the museum for the show. There also had to be enough time to make sure that there were no problems with these items. The catalogue was produced in a joint effort by the museum, Holmes and Copley, and the artists. Each artist was expected to send in images and a brief biography, so that an image could be chosen and used in a single page biography within the catalogue. These items would sell for 25 dollars each during and after the show. On the day of the show the artists were each given one copy of the catalogue, and any additional copies were sold at

a discounted rate. The posters were printed and sold as well, though both the catalogue and the posters were given free to patrons and people that had purchased a weekend package for the show and sale. The invitations were also of the utmost importance, as they contained a schedule of the event, registration cards, and ticket information for the recipient to send in and pay with.

Major work began in late January/ early February, starting with the invitations, there were a few more tasks that were completed that day, but we are going to start with the invitations as that was the largest and most important at the time. My first full day at the museum included hours of sealing and organizing over 3,000 invitations that were to be sent out to both the artists' regular customers and affiliates, and the museum's members and mailing list. Sealing with envelope glue and making sure that they had been organized in the zip code zones as required by the post office when sending bulk mail at the discounted rate for non-profit organizations. When mailing items at the non-profit rate, there is a certain amount that you must have in order to get the rate. Most non-profits can't get that rate unless they are mailing in bulk. The bulk non-profit discount takes down the basic rate about 10-15 cents, so museums are saving a considerable amount of money, in this case, around 300-450 dollars. Though that may not seem like much, every penny counts, especially when you are sending out over 3,000 invitations. It took almost an entire day to have them sealed and ready to be mailed. This was also with the help of three other volunteers that were brought in to help finish the work as quickly as possible to have taken the next day to the post office to bulk mail those out.

Another on-going project was started next: the uploading of photos of the artists' works in the show to the Pearce Museum's Facebook page. This upload serves a dual

purpose, the first one being the contact with the museum's patrons and fans, the second being that it allows for the public to see the items that will be for sale before the show. Many of the artists are on Facebook as well, so it allows them to get more excited about the show and for them to spread the word among their own fans and connections. The Facebook phenomenon allows the museum to take the advertising much further than the budget might allow. Each photo contained the information for the piece such as: Title, Dimensions, Medium, and Price. It is a chance for people to decide and make a list of pieces that they may want to purchase, which is the whole purpose of the show and sale.

There were several other tasks that were completed, including more photo uploads to the Facebook page. Photos were uploaded as they were received from the artists, so this was an ongoing process that was done on a weekly basis. The artists were required to send in photos both for promotional and show purposes, as well as the Facebook page. Some artists didn't send any (outside the main one that made it for the catalogue), and those were never uploaded or used for the show purposes. Most of the artists did and those were used for promotional images, the Facebook page, a rolling Power Point in the atrium of the Cook Education Center and other promotional uses. Another important task was the artist information data entry. This was done in a Microsoft Access document mainly to make the printing of labels and documents much easier. Another large project was the production of nametags. This was made infinitely easier with the help of Microsoft Publisher. There were three different styles of nametag that had to be made and assembled, ones for the artists participating, ones for the guests of the artists and ones for the volunteers. A few additional tags were made for the master of ceremonies or for Navarro College staff who didn't have ones from the college. Artist's nametags were

made to be ones that were hung around the neck and featured the Western Artists of America logo. The nametags of the spouses and the guests were assembled and designed to be pinned onto their shirts and had a special decorative watermark for the background. This took several days, as they needed to be cut exactly to the size of the holders. It also took a bit of time to come to a design that was perfect for each of the different styles.

During the time I was working at the museum there was art being delivered in crates and boxes on a daily basis. They were being stored as best as they could in the reading room of the museum and specific spaces of the gallery. The start of March meant that the gallery was being emptied and art from the permanent collection was being taken down and stored. The removal of the art was done primarily by the curator, Allison Chew, as she was the one with the authority to decide where the art would be stored and to make sure that the set up for the gallery would be correct. Occasionally she needed help, but for the most part this was a solo activity. Once the gallery was emptied and the permanent collection was stored properly, this was done in a matter of a week; the unpacking of the art began. All the pieces that had been delivered were moved into the gallery and those that were still being delivered were delivered there. The unpacking of all the art took almost two weeks; this is also while art was still being delivered. Unpacking had to be done carefully, so as not to damage the art and the containers that they were shipped in. The shipping packages were to be used coming and going, whether the artwork was going to the purchaser or back to the artist, at the end of the show. Destroying those containers and the padding on the inside would not serve any purpose, and only create more problems for the museum after the show was over. Some artists would be coming back to pick up their pieces, but the majority would be having them

shipped back. At this time, a Power Point was compiled and made of the permanent collection; this was because many of the artists and visitors would be anticipated as asking about images of the permanent collection. This would be on rotation in the atrium as well during part of the first day for the Artists breakfast and the opening events of the show. This took almost two days to complete, as there were so many pieces that needed to be placed, sized and labeled.

The rotation of unpacking the art and placing it in the area in which it would be hung, the Power Points of the permanent collection and the show works, and data entry would go on for at least a total of about two weeks. At the end of the second week the actual hanging of the pieces began, at the same time pieces were being moved around different parts of the gallery based on size, artist seniority, best locations and the style of the artist. It would do no good to place works by artists painting in the same medium and focused on the same subject matter right next to each other. It would cause the visitor to critique the works unnecessarily. Works are then leveled and adjusted based on visual appearance and preference. This would go on all the way up until the week of the event. Lighting took the longest as the lights in the museum were extremely hot, could only be moved with special gloves by the curator, and most could not be directly aimed at a work because the heat could cause damage. A delicate balance was struck in how lights were aimed across the entire gallery to light the pieces. The museum is hoping to move from the halogen bulbs to a LED network of lights, but until then it is a balance that has to be managed. In addition to the lights, labels to identify each artwork, the artist who created it and the price were made and mounted on the walls.

The week of the event brought in the last of the art. Ed Holmes and Ed Copley both were there for the entire week. They brought with them their own art as well as that of a few other artists who didn't want to ship their art. This made the placement of the art prior to their arrival a challenge; although we knew the dimensions of the actual art, that didn't take into account the framed size, something that can really change the dimensions as most Western Art is framed rather elaborately. There was also a delay in receiving all of the sculptures. Most of these are in bronze, and most of the artists use the same foundries; as a result there was a backlog of pieces to be cast. Though that was not as problematic as not having the last of the wall pieces, as the sculptures' stands were already in the positions that were going to be for the show. By the day before the show, the last of the pieces had made it to the museum and everything was in place. Lighting was the most difficult thing to the end, as there were not enough lights to go around and some works were moved around at the artists' request and thus the lighting had to be adjusted. Volunteers took care of tables and decorations. They were organized and lead by the volunteer coordinator and the events coordinator for the Cook Center, who had them assemble them all and make sure that there were enough for each table. The atrium of the Cook Education Center was also divided with a barrier that is used to separate the area into two spaces. One part was kept off limits until Saturday. This area contained the tablescapes for the final awards dinner, allowing for a quick transition, assembling and moving the tables into the rest of the atrium. The rest of the area was used for the rest of the show and was transitioned for the events as needed.

The weekend of the event was two full days of nonstop activity. The first day, March 30th, started with the artist's breakfast at 8:30. Though the event started at 8:30,

the doors were open at 8, and the artists were so excited that they got there as early as possible. This was the opening event for just the artists, and this would also allow them and their guests to get a look at both the Western Art Gallery and the Civil War Gallery before the rest of the public was allowed in. During the breakfast there were some quick adjustments that were made to the lighting and the hanging of pieces in the gallery, both from our own point of view and from artist's requests.

Registration for pre-paid attendees and guests opened at 10 and ended at 4. During these hours the general public could purchase tickets, packets, posters, catalogues and books. This allowed for the pre-sale of some artwork, in addition to the artists and their guests being able to see what pieces were there and what the prices were. Packets listing the art were provided for free, though the labels in the gallery did provide the same information. From 11 am- 2 pm, the gallery was open for a preview to the artists. At 2 pm, the first artist lecture began with Sheila Cottrell, a well-known oil painter, speaking on the subject of oil painting and the process that must be done in order to achieve the style and visual effect needed. She also discussed the processes that artists use to mix their paints and other custom tools that are used in their painting. Following that at 3 pm was another artist lecture by Jack Muir, discussing bronze sculpture and the process that is taken from the molding and the crafting stage to the finished cast.

At 4:00 p.m. the Cook Education Center was closed and things were set up for the evening reception and fine art sale that was to take place between 6 and 8 p.m. There was no dinner, but rather a cocktail hour with finger foods and drinks provided at two bars, and would allow artists and people to wander around and discuss their art and entice people to purchase pieces. Though the event was supposed to wrap up at 8, the final

people didn't actually leave until 9, and from there the staff proceeded to put away much of the furniture and set up for the next morning as best as they could. This took roughly an hour to complete and the center was locked up for the night.

The second day opened at 8:30 a.m. for a continental breakfast for the artists and a "Meet & Greet" with the artists for the general public. Again though the continental breakfast started at 8:30, the doors were open at 8 and the artists came in at that time. Following that at 10 a.m. was an autograph party with all the artists sitting in a semi-circular manner allowing for easy movement around the artists. This also allowed for people to also get their catalogues, posters, signed by all the artists at the same time. This lasted until 12 noon, to create a break for lunch and give the artists some free time around the city. At 2 p.m. there was an artist's demonstration by Roger Kull in sculpted leather. This was a fantastic breakdown of the complexity that it takes to make the pieces that he sculpts, and what methods he uses to prepare, dye, and seal his works. Again the Cook Education Center was shut down between the demonstration and the awards dinner that would take place in the evening.

From 4 to 7 p.m. the Cook Education Center was partially shut down. There were still some people, volunteers and their friends, allowed into the gallery to see the art, but for the most part, there weren't any people coming in at the time. This gave the staff the time to change into eveningwear for the awards dinner, as it was much more formal than the previous events. Prior to the actual start of the awards dinner, the Cook Education Center opened back up at 6 pm to allow people back in, the gallery was open for people to both look at the art and purchase if they chose to. The dinner was a wonderful buffet-style sit-down dinner. Artists had tables assigned to them, but the rest of the open seats

allowed guests and visitors (who had purchased tickets for the event) to sit with their favorite artists if there was the space. This allowed for connections to be made for the artists to possibly sell future pieces or for some of the people to just be able to talk to the artists.

During the dinner awards were given based on medium, artist's choice, a special award from *Western Art Collector* magazine, and the announcement of the piece that was to be purchased by the Pearce museum. The piece that is chosen for the gallery is one that takes a considerable thought by the staff. Several pieces are identified as possible acquisitions; from there the choice is narrowed down based on the attributes of the piece that they believe expands and supports the scope of the collection and the museum's mission to the Western Art tradition. Following this was another viewing of the gallery and drinks session. Again more pieces were sold, and in the final tally of the weekend, 22 pieces were sold out of the 256 works that were in the gallery. By mid-April around 30 pieces had been sold, bringing the total sales to \$107,850. The show and sale is the only large event that the Pearce Collection puts on an annual basis and it encompasses around 50-75% of their annual fundraising efforts. The rest is made from annual appeals and membership fees. The show will continue to run and sell the art through May 12, 2012.

There are some changes that were made between the last show and this show, the main one being that there was a difference in the prices of the pieces for the show. Though the artists set the prices for the artworks, there was a greater effort to have the artists submit and show more pieces that had a much larger range in prices. There was also a difference in that many of the pieces were smaller. The previous year contained many larger pieces, which did not sell very well, because some people don't have the

space to place extremely large pieces in their homes or work. Also, the founders of the WAA wished to expand the show and look into having a live auction in the coming years and creating a large buzz around that event. There is also an idea to create a Masters Salon that would select the best artists and exhibit them in a separate place. One piece would be selected from that group for the auction. The auction would be a great addition, though the Masters Salon might be something that should be studied more closely. It might create undue divisions between artists in the group, something that could cause problems within the WAA.

CHAPTER 5

“Discussion and Conclusion”

The purpose of this study was to discuss the importance of these shows to the development of the museum. They are a large part of the overall fundraising opportunities in these museums, and each is a variation of the same concept. Although they are similar, each is tailored to the capabilities and the needs of the respective institutions. There isn't one that is “better” than the other because there is such a particular focus for each institution. Each has specific needs and resources that can shape their shows and what results are needed from these shows.

From working on the Western Artists of America 8th Annual show I learned that these events are not pulled together quickly or easily. That is one reason I would advocate that museums looking to replicate these types of events and sales must look into starting small and growing from there. There is one large and well-known institution that already holds a large-scale event and is going to be taking on another that will be around the same scale. The most interesting thing in that case will be to see if they attempt to combine the two events. Taking on two events that are on such a large scale is going to be an interesting case to study, in how that museum manages it and how they feel it will move forward, and if it is feasible to maintain both at the same size they are now. They do have the resources to pull it off, but it is still a large endeavor. Starting small is the most important part, and that is something that the Pearce did very well. They started small, looked into what their event would and could be and built from there. Another

main issue is that museums need to be mindful of what their museum can hold and what it can do. It will serve no purpose to plan something that can't be held at your museum or at alternative locations. It would just create a large struggle and problem from the staff and the people that would come to see the show.

In addition to making sure that a museum can handle and physically take on the event, planners must understand the limitation that this could place on staff. Although most museum staff is capable of taking on any type of event, planners need to keep in mind the institution's limitations when it comes to staffing. Volunteers and museum staff are the most important asset when it comes to a show, without them you can't take on anything on a large scale. You also need to consider, how much of your time is going to be spent on this project, and how is that going to affect your daily operations in the museum. You don't want to take on something that is going to ultimately hinder your daily operations and mission in the museum. It is important to make sure that you find the balance between the two.

Advertising is a core part of the event process and a great way to spread information about your respective organization and the show. Advertising is essential because of the need to sell the pieces to raise money, as that is the reason the show is happening in the first place. One potential tool that is underutilized is social media, which can connect with people and is free to use. It also serves as a way to build connections for the future so that the local community feels much more involved and connected. It also serves to bring in another demographic to museum viewership. Social media attracts a much younger group of people, and something that museums should look into expanding into. Another thing that sometimes can be overlooked is what connections their own staff

can provide. In the case of the Pearce, the advertising scope was national. The invitations were sent out went across the nation and advertisements were placed in both *Western Art Collector* and *Art of the West* magazines. There were a few television advertisements that were placed, but they were locally rather than nationally based, due to the fact that the cost of national advertisement would have been astronomical. Advertising can take a huge chunk of the overall budget, so it is important to figure out what you can do for free and what you can't. It is also great to forge relationships with large companies to help support and team with to help spread the word, at the lowest possible cost.

The most important factor when putting on a show of this caliber is understanding that you are forging connections in the process, connections between the artists, with caterers, event staff, volunteers and your own staff. Relationships change and evolve, and you want to make sure that you maintain the same relationship going in as you do when you are going out. Dynamics shift and change, you want to make sure that it stays in your favor. Staff relationships need to stay the same to make sure that everything goes smoothly, efficiently, and maintains the trust between each other.

These large shows are a unique aspect of these distinctive organizations and provide a way for these organizations to raise money to continue their missions to perpetuate and educate the public on the western tradition and all that it encompasses. They work to bring in excited families and the community in which they reside. They seek to create a bond between the museum and their community making them feel connected to each other and responsible for each other. This makes the community feel that their museum is a source of pride for the community and that visitors will be

impressed with the museum as well. They also provide a unique reflection on the genre of western art, and evoke a stronger connection to field and the people that represent it.

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