



ALLEN TRUE'S *West*

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Images available upon request.

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ALLEN TRUE'S WEST COLLABORATIVE EXHIBITION OPENS OCTOBER 2, 2009 Denver Art Museum, Colorado History Museum and Denver Public Library join forces to tell the story of one of Colorado's favorite artists

(Denver, Colo.)— A three-part collaborative exhibition featuring the work of Colorado artist Allen Tupper True, presented by the Denver Art Museum's Petrie Institute of Western American Art (DAM), the Denver Public Library's Western History and Genealogy Department (DPL) and the Colorado History Museum (CHM), will open at all three venues on October 2. Each venue will highlight a unique aspect of the renowned artist's work, including illustrations, easel paintings and public murals that depict life in the American West during the early 20th century. The joint endeavor also includes a documentary film on the artist and his life, produced by KBDI PBS, Colorado Public Television. *Allen True's West* is organized by the DAM and will run October 2, 2009 through March 28, 2010, in Denver, and will travel to additional museums in the western region.

"Allen Tupper True is regarded as one of Colorado's premier native-born artists, and his art is as complex as it is enduring. He strived to 'see and feel the beauties of Colorado,' translating that into his creations," said Peter Hassrick, Director Emeritus of the Petrie Institute of Western American Art at the Denver Art Museum. "His decades as an artist spanned illustrating and painting, and his reflections on the American West punctuate our everyday lives in the city of Denver and beyond."

True's style of illustration was built on the famed Brandywine tradition, his easel paintings embodied the exuberance and chromatic vigor of British muralist Frank Brangwyn, and his murals were decorative and elegant, with a focus on Western subjects.

Born in 1881 in Colorado Springs and raised mostly in Denver, True graduated from Manual Training High School in northeast Denver. He studied briefly at the University of Denver. True's interest in the arts in his twenties led him to the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C. His rapid advances in illustration and drawing earned him admittance into renowned artist Howard Pyle's exclusive school of illustration in Wilmington, Del. It was with Pyle that True learned to "live in his art." During this training, his lifetime friendship with fellow art student N.C. Wyeth developed. For a time, the two worked together under Pyle's direction, eventually sharing a studio and creative ideas. True worked in illustration until 1915, while also focusing on easel paintings until about 1917. But the majority of his career was devoted to murals.

Denver Public Library

While studying under Pyle, True began to develop original painted illustrations for books and magazines, including *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's Weekly* and *Outing Magazine*. One of the most compelling illustrations from this time was included in a series of paintings from Colorado accompanying his story, "The Mountain Pony," in the spring 1908 edition of *Outing Magazine*. In the work, "The Mountain Pony Has the Climbing Ability of a Goat," True aimed to "connect man, horse and wilderness together into one universal and symbiotic system," according to Hassrick in his essay entitled *Allen True: The Early Years*. This illustration and other True works including studio props, vintage magazines and books created between 1905 and 1915 will be on view on the 5th floor of the Denver Public Library.



The Mountain Pony Has the Climbing Ability of a Goat, 1907, oil on canvas. Delaware Art Museum, Gift of Frank Eaton True.



A Wanderlust Memory, 1912, oil on canvas. Denver Art Museum; funds from Helen Dill bequest.

Denver Art Museum

True began to envision his art beyond the ephemeral medium of magazines and newspapers, focusing on easel painting and fine art as early as 1912. His creations included landscapes and themes from western frontier life, and subjects from Taos and the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico. His work was exhibited and praised from Los Angeles to Cincinnati. Exemplary pieces from his easel paintings include *A Wanderlust Memory*, painted in 1912. This and 12 additional True easel paintings will be on view in the Denver Art Museum's Gates Western Gallery on the second level of the Hamilton Building.

Colorado History Museum

True's longest creative period was as a muralist. In 1909, after studying in London under noted British muralist Frank Brangwyn, True returned to Colorado where in 1911 he received his first private mural commission and, in 1912, received his first public commission. By 1915, he had established himself as a muralist. Over the next 40 years, True worked on many public and private mural commissions including murals done for the Colorado, Wyoming and Missouri state capitols. In Denver, he received commissions for murals in the Colorado National Bank building, Denver Telephone Company building and Denver's Civic Center. His work, according to a critic of the day, expressed a "freedom and happy abandon rarely seen in American art." Large-scale murals, mural studies, photographs and other details related to his mural work will be highlighted at the Colorado History Museum.

Allen True's West is presented by the Denver Art Museum in association with the Colorado History Museum and the Denver Public Library. This exhibition is sponsored by the True Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the JFM Foundation, Edith Marbut, Tom and Jane Petrie, Raymond and Sally Duncan, Crimson Resource Management, Leptas Foundation, Rob and Julie Lewis, Redd Foundation, Bruce and Dorothy Dines, Jim and Lucy Wallace, Alan and Carol Ann Olson, Joan True McKibben, Mr. and Mrs. Will F. Nicholson Jr., David Cook Fine Arts Galleries and Mr. and Mrs. Barton M. Johnson. We also recognize the generosity of the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District and the donors to the DAM Annual Fund Leadership Campaign.

Allen True's West is a three-part exhibition. Tickets are included in general admission to the Denver Art Museum and admission to the Denver Public Library and Colorado History Museum is free.



Mountain Telephone Construction, Study for Denver Telephone Building Mural, 1927, oil on linen. Courtesy of Joan True McKibben.

Denver Art Museum

The Denver Art Museum is located on 13th Avenue between Broadway and Bannock streets in downtown Denver. Open Tuesday-Thursday and Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Sunday noon-5 p.m.; closed Mondays, July 4, Thanksgiving and Christmas. (General admission is free on the first Saturday of each month.) Free First Saturdays are sponsored by Target and made possible by the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District. The Cultural Complex Garage is open; enter from 12th Avenue between Broadway and Bannock or check the DAM websites for up-to-date parking information. For information in Spanish, call 720-913-0169. **For more information, visit www.denverartmuseum.org or call 720-865-5000.**

Denver Public Library

Open daily; closed on major holidays. Denver's award-winning Library features a whimsical Children's Library, Summer of Reading programs, storytimes, public computers and cultural programming for children and adults. DPL holds world-class Western History materials including art, maps, rare books and manuscripts. **For more information, visit www.denverlibrary.org or call 720-865-1111.**

Colorado History Museum

The Colorado History Museum, located at 1300 Broadway in Denver, is a History Colorado site. Open Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday noon-5 p.m. History Colorado is the public programs, services, statewide museums and historic sites of the Colorado Historical Society. The Colorado Historical Society was established in 1879 and is headquartered at the Colorado History Museum. In addition to History Colorado, the Colorado Historical Society contains the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, the Stephen H. Hart Research Library, and administers the State Historical Fund—a preservation-based grants program funded by limited stakes gaming tax revenues. **For more information, visit www.coloradohistory.org or call 303-866-3682.**