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- Cody, Wyoming -

Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale announces major awards

The judges have spoken.

From a roster that's a veritable Who's Who in contemporary western American art, one talented artist in the Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale has already added to his bankroll, even before the bidding begins September 25. For the first time in the show's 28-year history, an artist was awarded a \$20,000 cash prize for Best in Show.

"Offering this award puts the Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale in the company of the best western art shows in the country," Matt Hall, show chairman, explains. "Our artists have consistently delivered the most extraordinary interpretations of the American West, and now for the first time, we're quantifying just how much we appreciate the effort."

From Peter Fillerup's twisting bronc and Linda St. Clair's wobbly calf to Reid Christie's glistening South Fork of the Shoshone River, and Ted Feeley's mountain goat precariously perched on a precipice, this year's show makes any comparison tough duty indeed. These artists are just that good.

After all, can E. Denny Neville's *In Freedom's Light* be adequately evaluated against Robert Pummill's Indian chief on horseback, *An Era Passes*? And what about those artists who took us by surprise and moved away from their signature subjects and our collective comfort zones? Did Ty Barhaug really paint horses instead of a landscape? Is a trail ride replacing Deanna Matteson's usual portrait?

"Clearly, there are no 'apples to apples' when it comes to this year's art – any painting or sculpture could easily have garnered an award," Hall continues. "So, in order to choose the 'best of' in art, we had to assemble the 'best of' in western art authorities."

On September 3, three judges – definitely Who's Who in their own right – accepted the daunting task of choosing the Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale's Best of Show (\$20,000), Best of Sculpture (\$2,500), and Best of Two-Dimensional Work (\$2,500).

B. Byron Price, former executive director of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center (1996 – 2001), is currently the Director of the Charles M. Russell Center for the Study of Art of the American West at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, along with being tapped in 2007 to serve as Director of the University of Oklahoma Press. A prolific author, he's penned work about cowboys, cowboy cooking, and cowboy photography – as well as dozens of articles about

western American history and art – and is now editing the Charles M. Russell catalog raisonne.

“The Buffalo Bill Art Show and Sale has evolved into a premier venue for the contemporary art of the American West,” Price says. “It is attracting an increasing number of distinguished artists working in a variety of styles and genres.”

Mary Williams owns and operates Mary Williams Fine Art Gallery in Boulder, Colorado, where she specializes in antique prints and maps by artists such as Karl Bodmer, George Catlin, Albert Bierstadt, and Thomas Moran, among others. She has a more-than 25-year career in the art business and has represented living artists at her gallery for the past 14 years. As such, she represents some of the West’s best artists, including Steven Lee Adams, Michael Ome Untiedt, Julie Oriet, Robert Harper, and Sallie K. Smith.

“Coming to Cody for the Buffalo Bill Art Show and Sale these last thirteen years has allowed me to see the evolution of a show as well as the artists who shape it,” Williams says. “Bravo to all involved and congratulations on accomplishing something different – getting better every year. It was an honor to be part of this process.”

Avid art collector and member of the advisory board of the Whitney Gallery of Western Art at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Carlene Lebous of Nashville, Tennessee, and Cody, Wyoming, brings a collector’s discerning eye and point of view to the judge’s trio. A retired healthcare executive, Lebous has long been known for her commitment to programs for the blind and other philanthropic causes.

“This was a wonderfully challenging experience,” Lebous says. “The quality of artwork improves each year, and the Buffalo Bill Art Show continues to capture the true spirit of the West.”

After extensive deliberation, consideration, and contemplation, the judges combined their expertise to choose the following award winners.

Best of Show, co-sponsored by the Buffalo Bill Historical Center and the Cody Country Chamber of Commerce: **Kyle Sims**, Belgrade, Montana; *Spring Loaded*, oil, 34 x 34 inches. The judges say: “It is steeped in the wildlife tradition and is a powerful image in the wildlife motif that beautifully captures a moment in time. It pulls you in right away and holds you, conveys the tension of the moment and is thus well-titled. It is exceptionally executed: proportion and composition are perfect. This was a unanimous choice.”

Best Sculpture, sponsored by Nielson & Associates, Inc.: **Robert Deurloo**, Salmon River, Idaho; *The Fighter*, bronze, 20 x 17 x 9 inches. The judges say: “It is sleek and powerful with great lines and makes a simple, graceful statement. It is well-executed with a beautiful, understated patina. It is truly a western piece.”

Best Two-Dimensional, sponsored by Basin Mechanical: **Karen Vance**, Winter Park, Colorado; *Emerging Spring*, oil, 24 x 22 inches. The judges say: “It conveys the spirit of western landscape with superior atmospheric – bravo! There are complex techniques and the execution is spot on. It is glorious and grand but intimate at the same time.”

The Buffalo Bill Art Show is on display in the Historical Center’s John Bunker Sands Photography Gallery through the live auction on September 25, 2009. To see the work to be auctioned during this year’s show, visit www.buffalobillartshow.com or call 307.587.5002 for information.