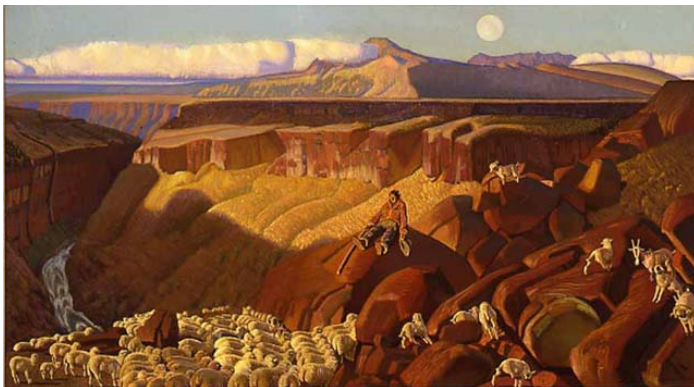


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**The Denver Art Museum Celebrates Holiday Season with Art of the American West**  
*In Contemporary Rhythm: The Art of Ernest L. Blumenschein* to open at DAM November 8

**(Denver, Colo.) July 31, 2008** – Celebrating the life and art of New Mexico’s most accomplished painter, *In Contemporary Rhythm: The Art of Ernest L. Blumenschein* provides a comprehensive view of the artist’s colorful and inventive works. One of the founders of the famed Taos Society of Artists, Blumenschein rocketed into the spotlight with his modernist approach to capturing the American West. Featuring 66 pieces created in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the show includes major paintings, sketches and illustrations. The exhibition opens November 8 at the Denver Art Museum (DAM) and continues through February 8, 2009.



*Afternoon of a Shepherd*, 1939. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City; 1976.32

“This exhibition is the largest and most comprehensive effort ever made to assemble, analyze and celebrate Blumenschein’s remarkable work,” said Peter Hassrick, Director of the Petrie Institute of Western American Art and co-curator of the exhibition. “It features masterworks by the artist, revealing his daring aesthetic, his proto-modernist style, his social sensitivities and his influence on regional as well as national trends in art.”

Credited as one of the champions of Western American art, Blumenschein was drawn to the West initially by boyhood fantasies of exploration

and adventure. The artist found the landscape transformative and exotic, writing soon after his arrival in Taos, “I saw whole paintings right before my eyes... Everywhere I looked, I saw paintings perfectly organized and ready to paint.” With his inclination toward modernism, Blumenschein expressed what he saw in bold color and form using a daring color palette and sophisticated style. Whether painting a piercing blue sky or a Pueblo Indian garbed in rainbow hues, he ignited his canvas with light and emotion.

Born in Pittsburgh, Pa., Blumenschein was raised by his father, a professional musician and director of the Dayton Philharmonic Society. After initial studies at the Art Academy of Cincinnati and Art Students League of New York, the artist attended the Académie Julian in Paris. Following his initial formal training, he worked as a professional illustrator.



*Star Road and White Sun*, 1920. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of The Albuquerque Museum, Museum purchase, 1985 General Obligation Bonds, Albuquerque High School Collection, Gift of classes 1943, 1944, and 1945; 1986.50.3

Blumenschein stumbled across Taos as a fortunate accident. He was traveling with fellow artist Bert G. Phillips on a sketching trip from Denver to northern Mexico when a wheel of their carriage broke, leaving them stranded in Taos Valley. The delay gave the artists time to take in the spectacular countryside and interesting cultures of the area. They decided to stay and work in the area, founding the Taos Society of Artists to promote the splendor of Taos and the art of the American West to larger audiences. The society formed a blossoming art colony in the Taos area that continues in spirit today.

The exhibition follows Blumenschein's life, tracking the artistic, social and political dimensions of his art. It begins with his lively illustrations and continues with early paintings of the West and his favorite subject, Pueblo Indians. As Blumenschein developed as an artist, he also developed a stance on social issues that included pictorial testimonials on the cultural integrity of the native people of Taos and respect for their lands.

A diverse offering of programs surrounds the exhibition. An adult studio class will explore painting the Southwest region, allowing participants to draw inspiration from the work of Blumenschein. Family activities include tours and an in-gallery game. A symposium about Blumenschein and Western art is planned for January as part of *WinterWest*, Denver's premier Western Art celebration.

*In Contemporary Rhythm: The Art of Ernest L. Blumenschein* is organized by the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, the Denver Art Museum, and the Phoenix Art Museum. This exhibition is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Albuquerque Museum Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation, and the Western Art Associates of the Phoenix Art Museum.

Wells Fargo is the local presenting sponsor. Additional support is provided by The Adolph Coors Foundation Exhibition Fund, the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District and the generous donors to the Annual Leadership Campaign. Promotional support is provided by *The Denver Post* and *5280 Magazine*.

The exhibition will be on view in the Gallagher Family Gallery at the Denver Art Museum from November 8, 2008 through February 8, 2009, and is included with general admission.

### **Denver Art Museum**

The Denver Art Museum is located on 13th Avenue between Broadway and Bannock Streets in downtown Denver. Open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Sunday noon-5 p.m.; closed Mondays, the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Admission for Colorado residents: \$10 adults, \$8 seniors and students. Admission for non-Colorado residents: \$13 for adults, \$10 for seniors and students, \$5 for visitors aged six to eighteen, free for children under 6. General Museum admission is free for Colorado residents the first Saturday of each month, thanks to citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). The Cultural Complex Garage is open; enter from 12th Avenue between Broadway and Bannock or check the DAM website for up-to-date parking information. For information in Spanish, call 720-913-0169. For more information, visit [www.denverartmuseum.org](http://www.denverartmuseum.org) or call 720-865-5000.

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