



Elevating Western American Art: Developing an Institute in the Cultural Capital of the Rockies (Western Passages)

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Unprecedented in size and scope, this special issue of *Western Passages* celebrates the full range of the western American art holdings at the Denver Art Museum. Published to mark the tenth anniversary of the museum's Petrie Institute of Western American Art, *Elevating Western American Art: Developing an Institute in the Cultural Capital of the Rockies* includes thirty essays by art historians from across the United States and Canada as well as a comprehensive history of the growth of Denver's impressive collection of art of the American West.

More than twenty of the museum's undisputed masterworks are discussed in detail, from George Catlin's *Cutting Ceremony* and Charles Deas's *Long Jakes* to Frederic Remington's *The Cheyenne* and Charles Russell's *In the Enemy's Country*. Unique among its peers in being a dedicated western American art department within an encyclopedic museum, the Petrie Institute is able to draw on the resources of other museum departments to provide a broad context for its holdings. Essays by Denver Art Museum curators on objects that relate to western American art but are displayed and cared for in other museum departments—a portion of a New Mexican altarpiece, a magnificent Native American coat, a Japanese woodblock print depicting Yosemite—demonstrate both the inclusive nature of the Petrie Institute's approach and the fact that western American art stubbornly and gloriously refuses to be fenced in by traditional art historical boundaries. Special attention is paid, as well, to contemporary artists of western American art, whose work is generously represented in the book's more than 250 color illustrations.

This highly collectible book—an essential addition to any art library—is a testament to the artists whose work it so handsomely portrays and to the many benefactors, staff, and supporters, over a period of more than a hundred years, who have made it possible for western American art to find a home at the Denver Art Museum.

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