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South Dakota Art Museum Newsletters and Publications

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Summer 1974

### **South Dakota Memorial Art Center News, Summer 1974**

South Dakota State University

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## 'Buffalo nickel' creator made American coinage unique

*The following is the seventh in a series of profiles of South Dakota artists based upon the Memorial Art Center's Survey of the Visual Arts in South Dakota. This profile is written by Joseph Stuart, survey director. The survey has been funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts through the South Dakota Arts Council.*

Although almost every American is familiar with the work of James Earle Fraser, he remains one of the most anonymous of our leading 20th century sculptors. Fraser's

"buffalo nickel" of 1913 certainly ranks as one of our most famous and uniquely American coins. His sculpture of 1915, *End of Trail*, grossed an estimated \$150,000 through reproductions.

Fraser was born in Winona, Minnesota, in 1876. His father, an engineer and railroad contractor, moved with the railroad to Mitchell, Dakota Territory (South Dakota) when James was very young. It was in Dakota that Fraser developed his deep feelings for the American Indian, the pioneers, and the animals of the

prairie. In a letter to a young admirer he wrote:

*A long time ago, when I was a small boy, younger than you are, I lived in the Indian country of Dakota, in the land that belonged to the Indians, and I saw them in their villages, crossing the prairies on their hunting expeditions. Often they stopped beside our ranch house, and camped and traded rabbits and other game for chickens. They seemed very happy until the order came to place them on reservations. One group after another was surrounded by soldiers and herded beyond the Missouri River. I realized that they were always being sent farther West, and I often heard my father say that Indians would some day be pushed into the Pacific Ocean, and I think that accounted for my sympathetic feeling for them.*

FRASER page 3



## South Dakota artist reference published

The *Index of South Dakota Artists*, which contains biographical and professional resumes of 428 South Dakota artists, has recently been published by the Center. Two years in preparation, the *Index* is edited by Center Director Joseph Stuart and funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts through the South Dakota Arts Council. Copies of the *Index* are being presented to all South Dakota libraries, museums, colleges, and universities, and to the National Endowment for the Arts, South Dakota Arts Council, South Dakota Department of Cultural Preservation, Library of Congress, and Smithsonian Institution. Copies are available through the Center at \$25 per copy.

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# Five Art Center exhibits scheduled for tour throughout state in 1974-75

Several exhibitions have been organized by the Center staff for tour throughout the state during the coming 1974-75 season. Foremost among these is the **Art of South Dakota** exhibition, now scheduled for showing in Aberdeen, Canton, Deadwood, De Smet, Freeman, Hot Springs, Huron, Mitchell, Mobridge, Pierre, Rapid City, St. Francis, Sioux Falls, Vermillion, and Yankton from November 1974 through December 1976. This program is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, South Dakota Arts Council, South Dakota Bicentennial Commission, and the South Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs.

The May-June exhibition of South Dakota College Arts Students held at the Center will tour during 1974-75 academic year to Augustana College, Dakota State College, Dakota Wesleyan University, Huron College, Mount Marty College, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, and the University of South Dakota.

The April exhibition of South Dakota Art Students held at the Center will

tour during 1974-75 academic year to Tea Grade School, Meade Independent School District in Sturgis, Lincoln Senior High in Sioux Falls, Clark School District, Vermillion High School and the Egan Independent School District.

The Center's "mini" touring exhibition, Japanese Printmaking, will be shown under the auspices of the Woman's Club of Lead at the Sweatman Art Memorial in Lead in June.

A special exhibition, on loan from Miss Roberta Glenn of Huron, is being offered for circulation during 1974-75. It is a rare proof set of wood block prints by the French artist Paul Jacoulet, who resided in Japan for many years. The exhibit features 80 proofs of the various stages in the development of one color print, showing the addition of each color, tone, and texture. Accompanying the exhibition are a variety of color wood block prints of other subjects by Jacoulet, including his famous "Rainbow" suite.



Melody Schaefer is one of 35 South Dakota students who had their work on display at the South Dakota Memorial Art Center. Melody's piece is done with pastels. This is the first year that the Art Center has assembled such a student show from across the state.

## Gift and grant provide for Indian art purchases

A gift and a grant totaling \$10,000 is making it possible for the South Dakota Memorial Art Center to purchase paintings by living South Dakota Indians for the center's collection.

Joseph Stuart, Center director, said a \$5,000 grant was approved by the National Endowment for the Arts but was contingent on a matching gift. That gift was provided by a former South Dakota State University student from the West River area who is now a successful businessman in Chicago but who prefers to remain anonymous.

Stuart said the \$10,000 is being used to purchase significant works from Indian artists to add to the center's growing permanent collection of South Dakota art. Some of the artists from whom a work has already been purchased are: Arthur Amiotte, Manderson; Robert Penn, Rosebud; Donald Montileaux and John Gritts, Rapid City; and Calvyn Tyndall, Macy, Neb.

Negotiations are proceeding on additional works.

## Biennial II will open June 30

During the period June 30th-August 25th the Center will present its Northwestern Biennial II exhibition, this summer based on the theme of realism in painting, printmaking, and photography. Artists from Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota who are working in academic realism, photo-realism, magic-realism, etc. have been invited to participate. The Biennial is the Center's major effort in showing outstanding regional artists.

## Center gains memberships

**RENEWED**  
Ruth Amidon; Mrs. Thomas J. K. Evans; Dr. and Mrs. Saul Friefeld; and Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Hogen.

**NEW**  
Mr. and Mrs. John Lowrie; Mr. and Mrs. Oliver H. Evans; Miss Loletta Grieve; and Miss Nellie K. Patson.

## FRASER continued

It was in Dakota as a youth that Fraser displayed an interest and ability in sculpture, using native chackstone to carve small human and animal figures. His family moved to Minneapolis, and then to Chicago. He attended the Art Institute and worked in the studio of sculptor Richard Bach. After only six months, at the age of nineteen, he left for Paris. There he studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and Academie Julian for three years. His work was accepted into the 1898 Salon, and received the American Art Association Prize.

In Paris he became the assistant of the renowned American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. He returned with Saint-Gaudens to the United States in 1900, staying with him for two more years at his studio in Cornish, New Hampshire. During this period Fraser executed the first of his many outstanding medals—one honoring the work of Saint-Gaudens in the Pan-American Exposition of 1901 in Buffalo, New York.

In 1902 Fraser established his own studio in New York City, and from that point until his retirement remained constantly at work on commissions.

In recalling his design for the buffalo nickel Fraser wrote in 1949:

*It had always occurred to me that American coinage, outside of portraiture and lettering, might as well have belonged to any other country in the world. I felt that this was not as it should be, and that is the reason for the American character of my design. In other words, I wanted a coin which could be mistaken for no other coin in the world outside of the United States. This has been appreciated by coinage*

*experts. As a matter of fact, I was told that the Irish Free State based its coinage more or less on the idea of the buffalo nickel, using Irish animals.*

His sculpture, *The End of the Trail*, was created for the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. The idea for the work was inspired by a passage from Marion Manville Pope:

*The trail is lost, the path is hid and winds that blow from out the ages sweep me on to that chill borderland where Time's spent sands engulf lost peoples and lost trails.*

Fraser envisioned the work cast in bronze and placed on a cliff somewhere near San Francisco, looking down on the Pacific; the American Indian driven to the edge of the continent, to the end of the trail. No commission for such a bronze came, however. The image was pirated by art-print publishers, and grossed more than enough to have paid for the casting. Several small copies were cast in bronze; a full-scale plaster version is at the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.

Aside from scores of monuments, medals, and portraits, Fraser's work in public collections include the American Museum of Natural History in New York; Brookgreen Gardens in South Carolina; Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City; Edison Institute in Dearborn, Michigan; Franklin Institute in Philadelphia; Hall of Fame of Great Americans at New York University; Syracuse University; the United States Military Academy at West Point; and many others. His only work in South Dakota is a small plaster of Lewis and Clark at the Friends of the Middle Border Museum in Mitchell.



Fraser died in 1953 at Westport, Connecticut. Having followed the academic tradition in art (he was elected National Academician in 1917), and being thoroughly romantic in his outlook, he has been all but forgotten in texts on American art history. It is certain, however, that with the new national interest in Western Americana his work and philosophy will be rediscovered.

Biographical information in this profile is from Wayne Craven's *Sculpture in America*, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968; Elizabeth Semple's "James Earle Fraser, Sculptor," *The Century Magazine*, LXXIX (April 1910); and "James Earle Fraser," *South Dakota Historical Society Bulletin*, XXIII (1 August 1969).

### Types of Annual Membership

STUDENT MEMBER	\$	1
ACTIVE MEMBER		10
PARTICIPATING MEMBER		25
CONTRIBUTING MEMBER		50
PATRON MEMBER		100
SUPPORTING MEMBER		250
SUSTAINING MEMBER		500
SPONSORING MEMBER		750
LIFE MEMBER		1,000

Gifts and memorials are welcome.

### Charter Membership Application

for the  
*South Dakota Memorial Art Center*

Name Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### General Membership Privileges

- Quarterly calendar of events and Members Newsletter
- Reduced fees for art classes and workshops
- Reduced subscription rates to leading art magazines
- Rental and purchase of original works of art through the Soles and Rental Gallery
- Discounts on most items sold in the Art Center Shop
- Participation in the Art Center's Tour Program
- Discounts on Art Center publications
- Invitations to Member's previews of major exhibitions



## Mrs. Lusk to serve fourth term; Board endorses Artist of Month program

Mrs. Robert Lusk of Huron has been elected to her fourth term as president of the South Dakota Memorial Art Center board of trustees.

She has served as chief executive of the board since the center opened

### Reynard painting acquired as memorial

The Memorial Art Center has acquired the Grant Reynard painting, "The Beach at St. Ives," as a memorial to Margaret Williams Cheever (Mrs. Herbert Cheever, Sr.) former Brookings resident who died last fall. Since 1964 the Cheevers have made their home at Port Hueneme, Calif.

The painting was given by family and friends.

Art Center Director Joseph Stuart said the center now has four Reynard works in its permanent collection.

The Cheevers had become acquainted with Reynard when he served as artist-in-residence at South Dakota State University for several summers. Through what Stuart called "a fortunate coincidence," the Reynard painting, which had been part of the Reynard exhibit shown at the Art Center last year, was for sale at the time the Cheever family indicated its wish to purchase a memorial painting for the center.

four years ago. The trustees serve in an advisory capacity to the director of the center and make recommendations on practices and policies.

Re-elected vice-president was Mrs. Hubert Mogen of Waubay. C. F. Cecil of Brookings, was elected secretary-treasurer.

Named to repeat as board members for three-year terms were Robert Carey and John Lowrie, both of Watertown; Mrs. C. L. Ferguson, Philip; and Mrs. Robert Osborn, Huron.

Other members of the board are Mrs. John Bibby and Elmer Sexauer, Brookings; Vern Laustsen, Aberdeen; Mrs. Kathryn Holst, Pierre; and Dona Brown, Huron.

H. M. Briggs, president of South Dakota State University, also serves as a voting member of the board. Although the center is located at SDSU, it exists to serve art needs of the entire state.

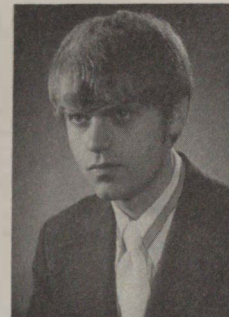
In other action at the board's annual meeting, the trustees recommended hiring an assistant to the director, with salary paid from non-state funds.

The board endorsed a proposal by the center's director, Joseph Stuart, to initiate a South Dakota Artist of the Month program in which one work by one South Dakota artist would be selected for special showing in the center each month.

The group also authorized for purchase a rare glass-cast head of a



Mrs. Lusk



Gulbranson

### Gulbranson named center assistant

South Dakota, and a 1973 art graduate of South Dakota State University, has been appointed Assistant to the Director at the Center as of 1 May, 1974. Gulbranson was Gallery Assistant at the Center during 1972-73 while a student. He will be primarily involved in Center outreach and educational programs.

### Museum group to meet at center

During October 11th and 12th the Memorial Art Center, University Museum-Heritage Center, and Brookings County Historical Society and Museum in Volga will host the annual meeting of the Association of South Dakota Museums. The delegates will have the opportunity to visit the Center's **Art of South Dakota** exhibition at this time.

study of George Washington created by Gutzon Borglum for his work on Mt. Rushmore. The cast was made in limited quantity by the sculptor.