



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HERBERGER THEATER CENTER
DEBUTS EXHIBITION OF ARIZONA CENTENNIAL ARTISTS**

PHOENIX – The Herberger Theater Center will debut the exhibition of an official Arizona Centennial Legacy Project on Thursday, September 1, 2011, 5:30-7pm. The exhibit will be on display in the Herberger Theater’s Art Gallery through October 2, 2011.

The exhibition, “Arizona Centennial Artists – Arizona’s Early Women Artists,” is sponsored by the Arizona Committee for the National Museum of Women in the Arts (www.aznmwa.org) and will highlight artwork by five women, all of whom were academically trained, taught art and earned their living in the arts in early Arizona.

These pioneer artists left the cities of New York, Boston, Los Angeles and Chicago to portray the landscapes and people of Arizona, long before any art schools or galleries existed in the state. Their contributions to the legacy of Arizona include paintings, engravings, dinnerware, book production and illustration. These contributions included a lot of “firsts”:

- ◆ **Kate Cory** arrived in 1905 to live and work at the Hopi Reservation. She was the first woman, and last person to live and photograph the Hopi at their pueblo in Northern Arizona.
- ◆ As the owner of the land which is now the Phoenician and Biltmore Resorts, **Jessie Benton Evans** was the first “Doyenne” of the Phoenix Art Scene. Her contributions include responsibility for the high quality of art during the early years of the Arizona State Fair, which was the major venue for the arts during the formative years of the state.
- ◆ **Marjorie Thomas** opened the first artist’s studio in Scottsdale, thus beginning an arts industry there.
- ◆ **Lillian Wilhelm Smith** was the first and only female illustrator for Zane Grey, and co-owned a Trading Post at Tuba City, a Dude Ranch in Sedona and was artist-in-residence at the Biltmore Hotel.
- ◆ Finally, **Claire Dooner-Phillips** was a Founding Member of the Laguna Beach Arts Association and of the first Mountain Artists’ Guild in Prescott, AZ.

The opening event is for the benefit of the public. Other venues for this travelling exhibition in 2012 include The Phippen Museum in Prescott and the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff.

The Herberger Theater Center is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support and foster the growth of the performing arts in Phoenix as the premier performance venue, incubator and advocate.

For more information, visit www.HerbergerTheater.org or call 602-254-7399 x105.

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