

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 21, 2006

Contact:

Kathy Lyles, Director of Marketing
770-387-2833

KathyL@georgiamuseums.org

**Booth Western Art Museum Presents
“Serenading the Light: Painters of the Desert Southwest”**

CARTERSVILLE, GA – The Booth Western Art Museum will open “Serenading the Light: Painters of the Desert Southwest” on Saturday, August 26, 2006, in the Booth Museum Special Exhibition Gallery. The exhibition, on view through November 12, features more than 70 painting by early twentieth century painters from the famed Taos and Santa Fe art colonies in New Mexico, plus works by lesser known artists who also produced outstanding depictions of the desert Southwest. This is the first time many of these works have been exhibited east of the Mississippi.

In addition to being an important collector, Billy Schenck is also an artist. He is known internationally as one of the originators of the contemporary “pop” Western movement, producing paintings and photographs laden with social commentary. In conjunction with the exhibition of Schenck’s collection, the Museum is also offering “Shadows and Selves: Paintings and Photographs by Billy Schenck” in the Museum Theatre Lobby Gallery, running concurrently with Serenading the Light.

In deciding what type of art to collect, Schenck said he found himself “attracted to the more romantic imagery that was begin produced in New Mexico, including landscapes with cottonwood trees, landscapes with adobes or adobe churches, and portraits of Pueblo Indians, Hopi and Navajo.” He says finding a new painting for his collection is as exciting as creating a new painting in his studio.

The art colony at Taos, New Mexico was the vision of artists Ernest Blumenschein and Bert Phillips. The pair first traveled to the beautiful northern New Mexico town on the recommendation of artist Joseph Henry Sharp. Following a successful painting trip in 1893, Blumenschein and Phillips encouraged other artists to join them in Taos. By 1915, six artists had made Taos the focus of their art and decided to form the Taos Society of Artists. The new organization worked to advance the standards of American art and to promote the work of its members. Through traveling exhibits, these artists exposed the country to not only their artwork but to new cultures and new landscapes.

At the same time, Santa Fe’s art community was growing. Artists were coming to Santa Fe to do commissioned advertisements for the railroad, at the urging of other artists, or to recover from respiratory ailments in the state’s dry climate. Inspired by the land and the people, many artists chose to stay permanently in Santa Fe, and an art colony was born. While artists working in Taos and Santa Fe have received the majority of the

attention from art collectors and museums, they are not the only ones who were inspired by the states unique land and people. Visitors to Serenading the Light will also find artists with whom they are not familiar, but whose work is equally stunning.

Billy Schenk credits the numerous western movies he watched as a child with not only inspiring his collecting of Western art, but also providing the basis for his own art work. He began painting Western subject matter while living in New York City in 1970s. Using a truly American painting style and singular Western subject matter, Schenk's works have been somewhat of a mystery. He incorporates techniques from Photo-Realism with a Pop Art sensibility to both exalt and poke fun at images of the West.

About the Booth Western Art Museum:

The Booth Western Museum is an 80,000 square foot museum located in Cartersville, Georgia, where guests are invited to explore the American West through contemporary Western artwork. The Museum also features a Presidential Gallery; a Civil War art gallery; and Sagebrush Ranch, featuring hands-on art activities and area for role-playing, storytelling and reading, all with a Western flair. Visitors to Booth Museum also enjoy the intimate downtown setting with unique specialty and antique shops, boutiques, and nationally featured restaurants, all within walking distance of the Museum. Open since August 2003, the Booth Museum is the only museum of its kind in the Southeast and is the second largest art museum in the state of Georgia. For more information about the Booth Western Art Museum call 770-387-1300 or visit www.boothmuseum.org.

###