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The Booth Western Art Museum takes a Wild Ride with Artist Eric Strauss

Cartersville, GA – Join the Booth Western Art Museum April 4 – June 4, 2006 to experience *Wild Ride: Artistic Lessons of Nature by Eric Strauss*. This will be the largest exhibition ever assembled featuring the work of Ellijay, Georgia sculptor Eric Strauss.

- A total of 18 works ranging from tabletop sunbursts and contemporary furniture to modern interpretations of the Our Lady of Guadalupe and monumental horses will be on display in the Booth Museum's first indoor/outdoor exhibition. Six of the horses will be grouped in a "herd" on the South lawn of the Museum.
- Strauss, well known for capturing the evolving world in images of horses and other animals, celestial bodies, and spiritual assemblages, creates his work from stainless steel, scrap metals and found objects.
- Over his 20-year career Strauss exhibited his work in numerous one-man gallery shows, participated in over 70 group shows, and has been featured in several museum exhibitions. His collectors include a who's who of Atlanta area art lovers, including Sir Elton John. However, the imaginative spirit Strauss invests in each of his works attracted the attention of the Booth Western Art Museum.
- Anyone spending just a few moments talking art with Strauss comes away with respect for the level of passion and commitment he has for his work. Each sculpture displays delightful simplicity on the surface, yet reveals much deeper commentary on today's complex world as one has time to reflect and interact with the work of art.
- Strauss pushes the boundaries of contemporary sculpture, combining industrial techniques and materials to create beautiful works of art that exhibit strong lines and help to reconnect us to the Earth. His inspirations come from nature, a seeming contradiction for someone using materials salvaged from the scrap heap, grinding tools, and welding torches to fashion his commentary.
- For the past several years Strauss' inspirations have also been rooted in the memories he brought back from the desert Southwest, resulting in artwork perfectly suited for exhibition at the Booth Western Art Museum.
- Following trips to Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico, Eric felt inspired to create works influenced by the people, places and animals of the West. He said, "I am drawn to both the traditional and contemporary art of the Southwest. I have just scratched the surface of knowledge of Southwestern life and art, but as a

Southeastern artist, I feel a strong connection to it.” At the Booth Western Art Museum we feel the same way. Despite the great distance, both physically and mentally, between the Southeast and the Southwest, we experience the same strong connection.

- Strauss managed a horse farm for 10 years while also struggling to establish his art career. Therefore, he brings firsthand knowledge to the subject when he creates his stylized horses from stainless steel and other scrap metals.
- He considers the horse a noble subject for artists, “The horse conquered the world. Up to World War I, the horse was primarily used for farming or as a weapon – a way of exercising power over people who didn’t have them.” Strauss’ horses have a skeletal quality, looking light and airy, yet solidly connected to the ground.
- Although they share the same contemporary style, each horse among the dozens he has created is truly unique. “I always work to make the personality of each horse dominate and overrule the identity of its various parts,” said Strauss.
- Each horse created by Strauss is free-flowing, the glistening steel giving the illusion of a liquid rather than a solid form. Yet there is no question each is a horse. Strauss observes, “I usually give the viewers enough realism to know where my starting point was and enough distortion to keep them interested in my piece.”
- Later this year, portions of this exhibition will travel to at least four other locations around the state of Georgia, including Athens, Madison, Albany, and Moultrie.
- Opportunities to meet the artist:
 - Art for Lunch, April 5, 2006, 12:15 pm in the Booth Theatre – Join Strauss for a discussion of his career over the past 20 years. Event is free to members, included in admission for non-members.
 - April 22, 2006 – Strauss will be in the Museum all day. Admission is free to members, \$8 for non-members, \$5 for students and free for children 12 and under.
 - April 22, 2006 – Members only Meet the Artist Reception, 7:00 pm on the South lawn of the Museum. Memberships are available at the door.

About the Booth Western Art Museum:

The Booth Western Art 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 areas 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.

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