



MUSEUM of
NORTHERN
ARIZONA

Celebrating the Colorado Plateau

PRESS RELEASE

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**Museum of Northern Arizona's *Grand Muse* features art inspired by Grand Canyon
Exhibition opens November 19**

(Flagstaff, Ariz.) November 8, 2016 – More than 40 works depicting the beauty and grandeur of Grand Canyon will be on display in *Grand Muse*, opening November 19 at the Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA). In celebration of the centennial of the United States National Park Service, the exhibition brings together works of art from the earliest days of artistic exploration of the Canyon to the present. *Grand Muse* is on view through February 20, 2017 in MNA's Donald Ware Waddell Gallery.

From the definitive Romantic images of Thomas Moran and William Henry Holmes, to modern masterworks by Ed Mell and Merrill Mahaffey, *Grand Muse* conveys the power of Grand Canyon as a source of inspiration for artists. The exhibition features historical and recent paintings, as well as photography, prints and mixed-media from the Museum's collection, artists-in-residence at Grand Canyon National Park and contemporary masters.

"Among the many intangible aspects of Grand Canyon is its eternal and perpetually changing nature," said Alan Petersen, Curator of Fine Arts. "The Muse speaks to each artist in a different language, though a common element in each work is a profound love for the subject."

Since the late 19th century, Grand Canyon has been a source of wonder and inspiration—calling to artists with its unique challenges. The Canyon was made known to the general public through the eyes of artists. Thomas Moran was the first Anglo-American artist to tackle Grand Canyon when he was hired by John Wesley Powell to illustrate a series of articles that Powell published in 1875. Moran's dramatic and idealized western landscapes have indelibly linked the artist with Grand Canyon and our Romantic vision of it.

The scope and interests of artists have changed dramatically since Moran's time. Today's artists benefit from more than a hundred years of modernist art theory and creativity that has many times over re-written what it means to address one's subject and the reality of what a painting, print or photograph can be.

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For thirty years, artist Bruce Aiken lived and worked at Roaring Springs, five miles down the North Kaibab Trail, deep in Bright Angel Canyon. Roaring Springs gave the artist a remarkable home base for painting the immense inner spaces of Grand Canyon. His painting, *Shadows on Deva*, depicts Deva Temple from a location near this inner-canyon home.

“Over the three-and-a-half decades I lived in the Canyon I became aware of another side of this dynamic muse,” said Aiken. “It can be gentle, serene and intimate down deep inside its vastness.”

Fifteen of the artists represented in *Grand Muse* served as artists-in-residence at Grand Canyon National Park, including at the North Rim, South Rim and serving at the Inner Gorge. They were able to spend weeks at a time living on the rim and within the Canyon, immersed in the space and light of their subject—their muse.

“Grand Canyon changes you,” says photographer Izabella Bultrowicz, a 2008 artist-in-residence. “It floods you with powerful emotions; you feel insignificant but at the same time important and proud of being able to capture a glimpse of ever-changing beauty that is bigger than us.”

A series of gallery talks will be programmed in conjunction with the exhibition and include: *Grand Muse*, November 19, at 2:00 p.m., and *Gunnar Widforss: Painter of the National Parks*, December 11, at 3:00 p.m. Bruce Aiken will speak about living and painting in Grand Canyon on January 28 at 2:00 p.m. Gallery Talks are included with Museum admission.

The Museum of Northern Arizona is located at 3101 N. Fort Valley Road in Flagstaff, Arizona. Admission is \$12 for adults and \$8 for seniors (67+), students (with ID), American Indians (10+ with tribal affiliation) and youths 10-17. Children under 10 are free.

For more information, call the Museum of Northern Arizona at 928.774.5213 or visit musnaz.org.

The **Museum of Northern Arizona** inspires a sense of love and responsibility for the beauty and diversity of the Colorado Plateau. Founded in 1928, the 200-acre campus includes an historic exhibit building with nine galleries showcasing the geology, anthropology and art of the region; research and collections facilities; a museum shop and bookstore; and more than 450 public programs annually.

Images:

Ed Mell, *Canyon Expanse*, 1996, oil on linen, 29 x 41 inches

Thomas Moran, *Grand Canyon*, 1911, oil on canvas, 11 ½ x 15 ¾ inches

Bruce Aiken, *Shadows on Deva (Psalm 121)*, 1984, oil on canvas, 22 x 24 inches

Izabella Bultrowicz, *Untitled*, 2008, black and white photograph, 31 x 25 inches

Location: Museum of Northern Arizona, 3101 N. Fort Valley Rd, Flagstaff, AZ 86001

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