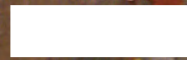




**'CAULDRON
OF
CREATIVITY'**



"THE TOM TOM PLAYER" E.I. COUSE, OIL ON CANVAS, CA. 1913

Couse Foundation breaks ground for Lunder Research Center

by TAMRA TESTERMAN

The Couse Foundation announced its May 18 groundbreaking for construction of The Lunder Research Center at the Couse-Sharp Historic Site. Temporarily closed to visitors due to the COVID-19 outbreak, it is scheduled to reopen July 1, 2020.

Dedicated to the early Taos art colony, the painters who became known as the Taos Society of Artists didn't embark casually on a painting jaunt to Taos to dabble in Southwest culture. They moved lock, stock and barrel from their 1920s cosmopolitan cities in the East to a dusty village with bumpy dirt roads far from the sound of a lonesome train whistle.

The TSA artists built adobe homes, raised families and began an artistic dialogue with the people of Taos, the dramatic landscapes and the temperamental light of Northern New Mexico. The art they produced changed the world's perceptions of the peoples and cultures of the Taos Valley forever.

The Couse-Sharp Historic Site, which consists of the home, studio and gardens of TSA co-founders E.I. Couse and J.H. Sharp, is located in the heart of the Taos historic district.

Davison Packard Koenig, executive director and curator of the Couse-Sharp site, said the Couse Foundation mission is "to preserve and interpret the Couse-Sharp Historic Site, its buildings, grounds and collections, and the archives of the Taos Society of Artists, through education, collaboration and scholarly engagement. The Couse Foundation vision is to be the center for scholarship of E. I. Couse, J. H. Sharp, and the Taos Society of Artists.

"The TSA story resonates around the world," Koenig continued, "and we have built partnerships with museums, galleries, auction houses, collectors and artists who are invested in the story of Taos art."

As part of the educational and scholarly outreach mission of the Couse-Sharp Historic Site, the Lunder Research Center is a major research center and museum with ample exhibition space, an extensive research library, archival and collections storage, curatorial work space and administrative offices, scheduled to open in 2021.

The Lunder Research Center is named after Peter and Paula Lunder – passionate art collectors, philanthropists and friends of the foundation.

The new facility will be state-of-the-art for environmental controls (temperature/relative humidity), security and fire suppression. Koenig said there are plans for future green initiatives, including a photovoltaic solar array and rainwater-collection system. It will be the first solar-array museum in Taos.

The lead architect for the project is Henry Architects, located in Arroyo Seco, in Taos County. Koenig said the work will be done with local contractors where possible.

"The project is a ground-up reconstruction with all new plumbing, electrical, HVAC, windows and roof, to create a secure museum envelope," Koenig said. "We will keep the original appearance of the exterior, Pueblo/Mission revival, while the interior will strikingly combine modern features while referencing the historic nature of the building and site."

Koenig noted that because the focus is on a broad international audience supported by a powerful community, including work with indigenous communities, it is expected that the Lunder Research Center will increase "visibility and attendance by bringing scholars, students, artists and art enthusiasts to immerse themselves in the story of early Taos art. Just as important to impart to these audiences is the story of the relationships these early 20th-century



Courtesy photo

Taos Society of Artists founding member Oscar E. Berninghaus in his Taos studio.

painters built with the community that helped them produce such profound works of art."

"In this unlikely cauldron of creativity, which began at the turn of the last century," Koenig concluded, "artists and intellectuals from around the world could meet new friends with whom to talk theory, critique each other's work and challenge themselves and their peers. Finding inspiration in a remote desert landscape, they were witness to, and participants in, a rich cultural community with a rhythm of life dictated by changing seasons and longstanding tradition." ❖

For more information, call (575) 751-0369, email admin@couse-sharp.org or see couse-sharp.org.



COVID-19 UPDATE

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