

# THE LEGACY

COUSE-SHARP  
HISTORIC SITE

## RESEARCH CENTER COMES ALIVE

Nathan Burtron/Taos News



Marissa Hendriks, director of The Lunder Research Center, and Virginia Couse Leavitt, right, review archival documents in the center's rapidly filling library. Leavitt, an art historian, is the preeminent expert on the work of her grandfather, E. I. Couse. She and her late husband Ernie were the founders of Couse-Sharp Historic Site, where she lives today.

It's a day we've anticipated for many years: As of Oct. 1, researchers are now welcomed to The Lunder Research Center (LRC) at Couse-Sharp Historic Site, another key milestone in the drive to open a research center and museum facility dedicated to the early Taos art colony and the Taos Society of Artists (TSA).

The doors to the LRC opened to the public last fall for art exhibitions, but a full-scale opening waited until a critical mass of materials could be processed, catalogued, and otherwise rendered accessible.

"We're ready for researchers thanks to the hard work funded by successful grant applications to the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute for Library and Museum Services, and the New Mexico Historical Records and Archives Board, plus private support," said Marissa M. Hendriks, director of The Lunder Research Center and Virginia Couse Leavitt Archivist Chair. "We've now digitized key parts of collections, cataloged a good portion of our growing library, created finding aids for archival materials, and launched a website where students, scholars, and other interested folks can see what we have that can facilitate their research." Visit [LunderResearchCenter.omeka.net](http://LunderResearchCenter.omeka.net) to check it out.

The state-of-the-art facility resides in a 5,000-square-foot building that incorporates the remnants of the home of J. H. Sharp. It includes an archive for documents and art created, and artifacts collected, by the 12 members of the TSA. Materials include original documents and correspondence, photographic prints and negatives, sketchbooks, works of art, a library, scholarly papers relating to the group, and Native American art and ethnographic items. In addition to exhibition and curatorial space, the center affords office and meeting space for the organization's growing staff.

The Couse Foundation's capital campaign to fund the \$3.5 million project received momentum in 2018 from a \$600,000 grant from The Lunder Foundation—Peter and Paula Lunder Family. "As we work to fulfill our expanded vision and secure a sustainable future, we reach out to our local community and the larger national community of people and organizations that recognize the importance of the early Taos art colony to the development of American art and culture," said Rich Rinehart, chairman of the board and president.

Nathan Burtron/Taos News



### A New Era

Hello Friends,

This year our summer began early with our biennial La Luz de Taos gala in May, and now sunflowers line the byways of Taos, promising autumn's return. The Lunder Research Center officially opens to researchers October 1, and we've been busy making that happen.

Over the summer, 10 staff, interns, and contractors worked daily in the new facility—plus volunteers. Staff and our museum fellow continue to research archives, digitize (17,000+ facsimiles so far), and build online content, as well as create a database

of all Taos Society of Artists (TSA) paintings in public collections plus another on the Indigenous people who modeled for the TSA.

Our first LRC academic program hosted Lunder Institute for American Art research fellows, scholars, and curators from across the country, Colby College Art Museum staff, and Indigenous artists and scholars from Taos Pueblo. We've fielded research inquiries from colleagues across the country including Denver Art Museum, New Mexico Museum of Art, and University of New Mexico. The most frequent request is for information on Indigenous models; the runner-up topic is the early female artists of Taos.

We're excited to see the LRC taking on a life of its own. A dream we have been working toward for years, beginning with Ginnie and

Ernie's vision more than two decades ago, has come to fruition and is already yielding compelling humanities contributions to art history—and American history.

The historic campus flourishes with improvements to the Couse home and gardens and the addition of the Sharp gardens. In addition, we have greatly expanded the Kibbey Couse story at the Site to include his office, laboratory, machine shop, and "Rosie," the last known Couse Mobile Machine Shop in North America. None of this would be possible without your support of our mission and vision, for which we are truly grateful.

**Davison Packard Koenig,**  
Executive Director and Curator

# NEW RELATIONSHIPS: OUR BOARD AND STAFF GROWS IN 2022

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



BERQUIST



DOERK

At the February meeting of The Couse Foundation Board of Directors, two new members were elected. **Robert Berquist** lives in Boulder, CO, and is a retired electronic engineer, business owner, and Rocky Mountain Region manufacturer's representative. **Thomas Doerk** resides in LaVeta, CO, and is a retired lawyer, commercial banker, and nonprofit executive. He was designated treasurer-elect at the July annual meeting. Also at that meeting, we

welcomed two more members, bringing the board to 13. **Elizabeth Crittenden Palacios** of Taos is a nonprofit and philanthropic executive. **Ilona Spruce** is Director of Tourism for Taos Pueblo. **Rich Rinehart** was elected chairman and reelected president, and treasurer **Jeanne Timber** was designated president-elect.

"We are thrilled to have four new board members, longtime supporters of CSHS with valuable skills and enthusiasm," Rinehart said. "Succession planning to sustain our excellent governance is a high priority. We're looking forward to a board and staff retreat in October in which both continuity and new perspectives will inform our strategic planning for the future."

## FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES



DALEY



LEMM

This spring we added two much-needed permanent, full-time staff members to our team. **Rachel Daley** is our new collections manager. She is a former senior auction coordinator, cataloger, and works on paper specialist at several auction houses who holds

a BA in Art History from the College of William & Mary and an MA in Art Business from the Sotheby's Institute of Art. **Larry Lemm**, administrative assistant and the smiling face at the front desk, is a former almond farmer, technical editor for *Videomaker* magazine, tour manager, and founder of The Bobolink Music Festival in California.

## ON CONTRACT



BALESTRIERI



MCDANIEL

Our Estate and Collections Consultant is **James D. Balestrieri** of Balestrieri Fine Arts. Jim served as director of J.N. Bartfield Galleries in New York for 20 years and did all the catalogue research and writing for the Scottsdale Art Auction's first 15 years. He serves as Western

Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West communications manager, and is finishing a new monograph on American painter Clark Hulings for the Clark Hulings Foundation. He works with collectors and writes regular columns and features for national arts publications. Contract Archivist **Lucas McDaniel**, who holds an MFA from Otis College of Art and Design, has been with us on a grant-funded basis on

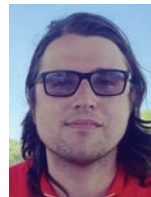
multiple archival processing and digitization projects. He's a current Museum Studies graduate student at the University of New Mexico, formerly Collections intern with the National Council for Preservation Education at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. We thank Rosa Fernandez and Stephen Monroe for providing housing for Lucas.

## INTERNS AND FELLOWS



VON GRIES

**Olivia von Gries** is a doctoral student in the University of Oklahoma's Art of the American West PhD program, where she focuses on contemporary artists examining and engaging in cultural cannibalism and the "myth of the West." For her second summer internship at the Site, Olivia compiled a list of over 100 recommended academic texts for the Research Center and its website, organized the David and Carol Farmer Archive, and researched and wrote essays about selected objects from the collection for an online LRC exhibition that she built, and created a list of early- to mid-century female artists active in Taos. Our gratitude to Holly and Tom Azzari for hosting Olivia this summer.



SCHUSTER

**Andrew Schuster** is a doctoral student at the University of Texas at El Paso interested in Borderlands history and cross-cultural interaction. As a summer intern, he worked on collating an online database of Taos Society of Artists works in institutions across the country in addition to processing an archive of Couse family papers including Virginia Couse Leavitt's papers from her essential works on Couse and the Couse Catalog Raisonné. Andrew also was also game for physical labor and skunk trapping. Many thanks to Jeanne Timber and Davison Koenig for providing Andrew housing during his Taos tenure.



KINNEY

The first recipient of the **Colby College Museum Fellowship**, funded by The Lunder Foundation—Peter and Paula Lunder Family, is **Alexis Kinney**. She recently graduated from Colby College in Waterville, Maine, with a BA in Art History and Environmental Studies. Alexis has created and been adding to a models database for all of the TSA. This database consists of images of models and paintings they are featured in. During her year-long tenure, she is excited to continue to expand the database and get in touch with descendants of the models. Special thanks to Rebecca Calvert for hosting Alexis for her year-long fellowship.

## THE MISSION

of The Couse Foundation is to preserve and interpret the Couse-Sharp Historic Site, its buildings, grounds, collections, and the archives of the Taos Society of Artists, through education, collaboration and scholarly engagement.

## THE VISION

of The Couse Foundation is to be the center for scholarship of E. I. Couse and J.H. Sharp and the Taos Society of Artists.

# ACQUISITIONS ABOUND!



Since our fall 2021 newsletter, we've had so many donations of art, objects, and archival materials that we can't list everything! We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for these wonderful additions to our collections. Here is a sample of recent items:

- Stephanie Bennett-Smith: E. I. Couse painting *Tom Tom Player*, 1910 (pictured above); J.H. Sharp painting *Winter Afternoon - Taos*
- The Berninghaus Family: O. E. Berninghaus painting *Visitors in Camp*, ca. 1950; more than 20 Native American objects from the Berninghaus collection
- Kevin Rowe and Irene Vlitos Rowe: two

- E. Martin Hennings paintings (a self-portrait, ca. 1914, and *Portrait of Helen Hennings*, ca. 1940)
- Phyllis Guest Bachhuber and Frederick W. Bachhuber: four Beacon Blanket store display cutouts created from Couse paintings, ca. 1915–30
- David Clemmer: untitled Couse watercolor of Mystic, Connecticut
- John and Peggy Hamilton: six posthumous Sharp etchings
- Lyn Coupland: Couse drawing of his studio at Walker Ranch

We are grateful to board member Dustin Leavitt for donating four studies by Walter Ufer that allowed us to mount an exquisite Luna Chapel exhibition called *Academies: Life Drawing by Early Taos Masters*.

The research center welcomes archival material relating to the 12 members of the Taos Society and their close associates such as models and family members. Examples include photographs, letters, sketches, or notes by scholars who studied these artists in the past. If you have in your personal collection any such material, we'd love to discuss a possible donation with you! Also, if you run across a "lead" on relevant material that crops up at auction or in an estate, please contact us. And of course we are always seeking donations of original artwork by the TSA.

## NEW EXHIBITS IN THE 1915 SHARP STUDIO

A Plains headdress and a beaded suit, Indigenous artworks once owned by Henry Sharp, are exciting additions to the permanent exhibition in his studio. Both were donated by Lainey Reynolds (far right) from her family's collection. Their conservation was paid for by Erland and Lois Paff Bergen and Holly and Thomas Azzari. The Bergens also underwrote the 7-foot-tall display case for the headdress to keep it safe and on view. Thank you to all parties for your generosity so that visitors can enjoy these beautiful historic works.



## LEADERSHIP

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Donations that include an in-kind or artwork component are marked with an asterisk. Donors whose total includes a gift in honor of Virginia Couse Leavitt have a footnote mark. For space reasons, we cannot acknowledge the many donations less than \$100 in this issue, as much as we appreciate them. Every penny counts!

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<sup>1</sup>includes a gift in honor of Virginia Couse Leavitt

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Donors whose total includes a gift in honor of Virginia Couse Leavitt are in the main list with a footnote mark

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# CROSSING THE FINISH LINE



**La Luz de Taos:** What a weekend it was! Seeing many of you and hearing your congratulations on the slate of activities, the research center, and the historic site made us proud. It took years of hard work and dedication by our staff and board to bring the organization to where we are. All of you—our friends, donors, artists, and collectors—made it possible.

A question I heard from many was, “What’s next?” In my mind, the top priority is to finish funding The Lunder Research Center. We’ve raised more than \$3 million since September 2018. Retiring our \$475,000 loan obligation will complete the “Bringing the Legacy to Life” capital campaign so we can focus on exciting programs and ideas based in the LRC and on our historic treasures.

We aim to reach that goal by the end of March 2023. Every day we meet people who experience the site for the first time and respond with enthusiasm—including donations. Many of you have already given to the campaign, and we’re grateful.

We’re so close! Here are ways to consider to help us cross that finish line: Making a cash gift equal to your first gift to the campaign. Donating art or securities. Introducing friends to the site through a personal site tour with our Executive Director or one of our highly trained docents. Hosting an evening in your home with friends to hear about our Historic Site, the Taos Society of Artists, and the research center. We have the story, you provide the venue and audience.

We will be reaching out to ask for your help once more in the coming months to put this wonderful project to bed. As always, thank you for your friendship, your support, and your continuing interest.

Sincerely,  
**Rich Rinehart**, Chairman and President



## Every Penny Counts

### HELP PRESERVE OUR NATIONAL TREASURE

Financial support of Couse-Sharp Historic Site is not only a gift to the present but also an investment in the future. Every donation to The Couse Foundation is greatly appreciated.

### WE ARE A GOLD SEAL ORGANIZATION!

The Couse Foundation has achieved the designation of Gold Seal from GuideStar, the world’s largest source of information on non-profits. See our profile at [Guidestar.org](https://www.guidestar.org)

Gold  
Transparency  
2022  
**Candid.**

### ESTATE ART PROGRAM

If you collect art and have been contemplating your estate planning, consider our program to coordinate the donation (full or partial) and sale of your artwork, thus enabling you to “do well and do good.” Contact us at 575.751.0369 to inquire.

### DONATE TODAY!

The Couse Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization; contributions are tax deductible. Donate by credit card via PayPal at [couse-sharp.org/donate](https://couse-sharp.org/donate). You can also donate by check or credit card with the enclosed remittance envelope to PO Box 1436, Taos NM 87571. For more information about about securities, special-purpose, and planned giving, see [couse-sharp.org/ways-to-give](https://couse-sharp.org/ways-to-give)

[couse-sharp.org](https://couse-sharp.org)

## Rosie's Home



On Jan. 31, we welcomed to campus a vehicle nicknamed Rosie—the last Couse Mobile Machine Shop Aviation Model in existence, to the best of our knowledge. The truck-based machine shop was designed by inventor Kibbey Couse, E. I. and Virginia’s son. His New Jersey factory produced well over 1,000 of these and other models, used extensively by the Allies in World War II.

The acquisition represents a huge step forward as we interpret the “Kibbey story” and highlight its historical importance. The

laboratory, workroom, machine shops, and archives at the Site represent every aspect of his engineering career.

Rosie was in continuous use since at least 1945 and was bought from her second private owner after the military. A coalition of more than a dozen generous donors led by Tony Skvarla contributed the purchase price. We continue to raise funds for restoration and to build a steel ramada for her protection.



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HISTORIC ARTISTS' HOMES & STUDIOS

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



The exhibition in the Dean Porter Gallery. Below the window is *The Cottonwood*, oil on canvas, 90" x 100" on 12 panels, 2018–2020

# The Infinite Taos Landscape

## AS EXPERIENCED THROUGH JIVAN LEE'S MIND AND PAINTS

Seven works, each made up of multiple canvases. These installations are a gorgeous glimpse into a landscape that stretches far beyond the exhibition space, far beyond the Taos Valley, through the perceptions of Taos artist Jivan Lee.

Every piece was made predominately outdoors and grew out of happenstance. "They act as records of immersion in the landscape, akin to maps of the experience of being in a place on a given day," said Lee.

The exhibition opened to the public in June, and the artist presented a gallery talk to a packed house on July 2 and a popular plein air painting demonstration Aug. 6. The historic site regularly hosts shows with working artists, all of whom have formed a relationship with the history of Taos art celebrated at CSHS.

"Jivan Lee as a contemporary Taos painter represents a continuum with the Taos Society of Artists going back over 100 years, artists whose work has forever changed how we view Taos Valley," said Davison Koenig, CSHS executive director and curator.

**The Infinite Landscape | Open 1–5 p.m. Tuesday–Saturday through Jan. 13 except holiday periods | For details: [couse-sharp.org](http://couse-sharp.org)**



OCTOBER 2022 | FALL

# THE LEGACY



# BIGGER AND BETTER GALA EXPERIENCE

More than 300 gathered in Taos May 20–22 to appreciate and buy art, celebrate Ginnie Leavitt’s 90th birthday, and formally open the nation’s premier research center focusing on early Taos art.

“We exceeded our goals for our seventh biennial Gala weekend,” said Richard Rinehart, chairman and president of our board of directors. “Most important, we were able to be together after the long period of the pandemic, strengthen our relationships, and celebrate our accomplishments.”

*La Luz de Taos* kicked off with a 10-week exhibition of 39 artworks in diverse media (see the show online at [laluzdetaos.org](http://laluzdetaos.org)). Gala attendees and absentee ballot purchasers participated in a draw sale for the works. The exhibition was dedicated to artist Kang Cho, who passed away in December 2021.

The big weekend started May 20 with the VIP grand opening of the eagerly awaited Lunder Research Center. After a blessing and remarks by Taos Pueblo Tribal Secretary Dwayne T. Lefthand Sr., Taos Mayor Pascual Maestas read a proclamation from Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham declaring May 22 “Virginia Couse Leavitt Day” to honor the art historian and guiding light of Couse-Sharp Historic Site. The duo cut the red ribbon to officially open the building. Many patrons and dignitaries were on hand, including Marjorie Lunder and Kevin Gillis of The Lunder Foundation, the largest contributor to the project so far.

The next morning, scholar Michael Grauer, McCasland Chair of Cowboy Culture/Curator of Cowboy Collections and Western Art at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, gave a well-received lecture titled *PARDS: The Taos Society of Artists*.

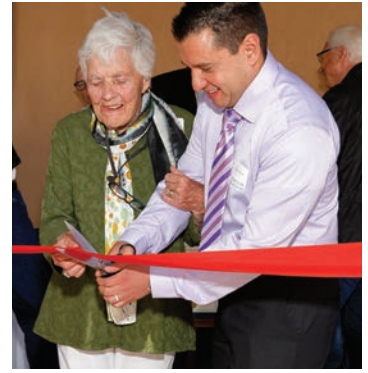
That evening brought the gala at El Monte Sagrado Resort. Activities included the draw sale, bidding on curated silent auction art, Ginnie Leavitt’s birthday cake, music from Robert Parsons and friends, and unveiling a bust of Ginnie created by Ed Smida. Led by an anonymous donor with a six-figure challenge grant, dozens came forward with pledges to defray Research Center construction costs, raising more than \$300,000. The celebration was capped with a performance by award-winning recording artist Charley Crockett.

On Sunday, ticketholders were treated to a VIP open house of the historic site featuring a demonstration by renowned painter Sherrie McGraw, ably assisted by fellow artist David Leffel and model/artist Lyle Wright.

“The weekend was a great success; people thanked me continually for the good work we are doing and the professionalism of our staff, volunteers and leadership,” said Davison Koenig, executive director and curator. “I suspect folks will be talking about *La Luz de Taos* for a long time to come, and the ripples from Taos will continue to travel.”



Surprise musical guest Charley Crockett wows the crowd.



Ginnie Leavitt and Mayor Pascual Maestas open The Lunder Research Center.



A volunteer unveils a bust of Virginia Couse Leavitt, presented in honor of her 90th birthday. The bronze by Ed Smida is installed in the library of The Lunder Research Center for posterity.



Taos Pueblo Tribal Secretary Dwayne T. Lefthand Sr. gave a blessing in the Tiwa language as part of Friday’s ceremony. At far left is Davison Koenig, Couse Foundation executive director and curator.



Kevin Gillis (center foreground), executive director of The Lunder Foundation, and Marjorie Lunder (right foreground), participate in the Friday VIP opening of The Lunder Research Center. Looking on are, from left, Tim Newton, former chairman of The Couse Foundation (TCF); David Henry, project architect; Richard Rinehart, TCF president; Virginia Couse Leavitt, TCF secretary; Paul Espinoza, project general contractor; and Carl Jones, chairman, TCF National Advisory Council.



More than 300 guests enjoyed gourmet small plates at the Saturday gala.

Photography by Tony Donaldson, Jim Coe, Jeremy Lundani, and Bill Curry

See our artists, sponsors, and special donors on the reverse!

# LA LUZ DE TAOS PARTICIPANTS

We thank our generous sponsors, artists, donors, and all those who purchased tickets, art, and absentee ballots!

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## Exhibition & Draw Sale Artists

Tony Abeyta  
Bill Acheff  
Clyde Aspevig  
Thomas Blackshear II  
Carla Bogdanoff  
Eric Bowman  
Chloé Marie Burk  
G. Russell Case  
S. M. Chavez  
John Coleman  
Nicholas Coleman  
Glenn Dean  
Josh Elliott  
Phil Epp  
Susan Folwell  
Tammy Garcia  
Victor Goler  
Walt Gonske  
Logan Maxwell Hagege  
Brett Allen Johnson

Jerry Jordan  
Jivan Lee  
Petecia Lefawnhawk  
David A. Leffel  
Ira Lujan  
Mark Maggiori  
Sherrie McGraw  
Patricia Michaels  
Ed Mell  
Paul Moore

Chris Morel  
Pat Pruitt  
Cara Romero  
Maria Samora  
Russell Sanchez  
Roseta Santiago  
Ed Sandoval  
Ed Smida  
Jim Vogel

## Silent Auction Artists

Nina Anthony  
Bill Baron  
Michele Byrne  
Angie Coleman  
Nicholas Coleman  
Susan Folwell  
Lenny Foster  
Aaron Garlick

Carol Guzman  
Ellen Harper  
Ann Huston  
Peggy Immel  
Inger Jirby  
Elizabeth Jose  
Randall La Gro  
Jeremy Landau

Melinda Littlejohn  
Jocelyn Martinez  
Peggy McGivern  
Rich Nichols  
Paige Pierson  
Dean Porter  
Ron Rencher  
Melwell Romancito

Geraint Smith  
Ryan Suazo  
Sonny Spruce  
Gak Stonn  
Steve Talley  
Mike Vargas  
Lyle Wright

Photography by Tony Donaldson, Jim Cox, Jeremy Landau, and Bill Curry



Logan Maxwell Hagege's *Where the Rain Falls and the Sun Shines* (30 x 30) was the evening's top sale at \$42,500.



*A Sacred Sun* by Mark Maggiori (22.5 x 24) sold for \$30,000.



Chris Morel, left, who contributed his *October Snow on the High Road* at 100% donation, greets Robert Parsons of Parsons Fine Art, a sponsor of the event. The two also happen to be professional musicians who volunteered their talents to entertain gala attendees.



Sherrie McGraw gives a demonstration during the open house, assisted by model Lyle Wright (Taos Pueblo), who also was one of the silent auction artists.



Ed Sandoval, who contributed a painting, and Patricia Michaels (Taos Pueblo), who contributed a hand-painted and beaded fashion ensemble, share a laugh after the draw sale.