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WESTERN ART MOVES BEYOND THE FRAME AS BRISCOE COMPLETES TRANSFORMATIONAL MUSEUM RENOVATION

Beyond the Frontier: Four Pillars of Western Art Brings 85 Works to Life through Animation, Cinematic Imagery and a 20-Foot Digital Canvas

New Valerie Urschel Guenther Four Pillars Gallery Completes Transformational Museum Renovation and Creates a New Gateway to the American West

San Antonio, TX – (September 2026) – A Western landscape stretches nearly 20 feet across the room. Paintings expand beyond their frames, revealing details easily missed at their original scale. Historic images give way to sweeping views of the West, while subtle animation, movement, music and sound bring the people, wildlife, cultures and traditions captured in Western art to life.

Welcome to *Beyond the Frontier: Four Pillars of Western Art*, a new 14-minute cinematic experience at the heart of the Briscoe Western Art Museum's newly opened Valerie Urschel Guenther Four Pillars Gallery. Created from 85 works of art and layered with cinematic footage, archival imagery, animation, motion graphics, narration, music and sound design, *Beyond the Frontier* transforms a nearly 20-foot LED wall in the Linda Whitacre Orientation Theater into a sweeping digital canvas — inviting visitors not simply to look at Western Art, but to look more closely, make connections and better understand the stories it tells.

The experience creates a new starting point for every visit to the Briscoe and marks the completion of a transformational renovation of the museum's historic River Walk campus. Through the Briscoe's Four Pillars — Wildlife & The Land; Native People of the Americas; Tejanos, Vaqueros & Spanish Heritage; and Cowboys & The American Frontier — *Beyond the Frontier* reveals how landscape, culture, tradition and people intersect across centuries to create the West we know today.

"Western Art has an extraordinary ability to transport us to another place and time, but there is so much within these works that can be missed at first glance," said Liz Jackson, President and CEO of the Briscoe Western Art Museum. "*Beyond the Frontier* gives us an entirely new way to invite visitors into the art. A landscape can suddenly surround you. A detail that may be only inches wide can become several feet tall. Works created decades or even centuries apart can appear together and reveal connections we might not otherwise see. And then visitors can carry that experience into the galleries, encounter the original works and see them with new eyes."

Four Pillars, One Story of the West

For generations, Western Art has largely been understood through three familiar lenses: the land and wildlife of the West, its Native peoples and cultures, and the cowboys and frontier figures who became enduring symbols of the region. The Briscoe recognizes a fourth pillar: Tejanos, Vaqueros & Spanish Heritage.

That distinction is fundamental to the museum's interpretation of the West. Long before the cowboy became an American icon, Spanish and Mexican traditions had shaped ranching, horsemanship and cattle culture across the region. Vaqueros developed and refined the skills of riding, roping, herding and working cattle that became fundamental to Western ranching and the American cowboy. Without the vaquero, the cowboy would not exist as we know him.

The new gallery provides visitors with a framework for understanding the people, cultures, traditions and landscapes they will encounter throughout the Briscoe:

- "Wildlife & The Land" explores the landscapes, wildlife and natural forces that have shaped life in the West.
- "Native People of the Americas" recognizes the Indigenous peoples, cultures, traditions and artistic expressions integral to the history of the West.
- "Tejanos, Vaqueros & Spanish Heritage" explores the Spanish and Mexican roots of ranching and horsemanship and the profound influence of Tejanos and vaqueros on Texas and the American West.
- "Cowboys & The American Frontier" examines the people, traditions and imagery that came to define the American frontier, including cowboy traditions with deep roots in the vaquero culture that preceded them.

But *Beyond the Frontier* also demonstrates that these are not four separate stories. Rather, the Four Pillars provide a framework for understanding how the people, cultures, traditions and landscapes of the West intersect and influence one another. The land shaped those who lived and worked upon it. Native peoples cared for it for generations. Spanish and Mexican traditions helped establish the ranching culture of the West. Vaqueros passed on traditions of horsemanship, roping and working cattle that became fundamental to the American cowboy.

Together, the Four Pillars give visitors a richer lens through which to experience the museum — and a greater understanding of how the art of the American West reflects centuries of interconnected histories and influences.

"The Four Pillars give us a way to tell a richer and more complete story of the American West," Jackson said. "Three of those pillars will be familiar to anyone who knows Western Art. But at the Briscoe, we recognize something essential to understanding the West: there is no cowboy as we know him without the vaquero. Tejano, Spanish and Mexican traditions helped shape ranching, horsemanship and the culture of the West long before the cowboy became an American icon. Tejanos, Vaqueros & Spanish Heritage isn't just an addition to our story – it is essential to the story."

<u>See Western Art with New Eyes</u>

Conceived by the Briscoe and produced by Digiscura, *Beyond the Frontier* combines works from the Briscoe's collection and other significant collections with cinematic footage, archival imagery, motion graphics, narration, music and sound design.

The scale of the experience makes possible something a conventional gallery presentation cannot. A face, distant figure, saddle, animal or passage of landscape can be enlarged until details that might otherwise escape notice command attention. A single landscape can sweep across the gallery, conveying a sense of the vastness that has defined both the physical West and the art it inspired.

Works that could never physically hang together can also enter into visual conversation. Historic and contemporary interpretations appear side by side. A vaquero is connected visually to the cowboy tradition that followed. Landscapes are juxtaposed across generations. Indigenous, Spanish, Mexican, Tejano and frontier perspectives can unfold as parts of a larger, interconnected story.

Among the 85 works represented are works from the Briscoe's collection and loans spanning all Four Pillars, including John Nieto's *Poised Coyote* (2000), John Coleman's *The Healer* (2017), Ernesto Icaza Sánchez's *Lassoing Cattle* (1920), Gladys Roldán-de-Moras' *Sunday Riding at Mission San Jose* (2014) and Mark Maggiori's *Once Upon a Time* (2020). The experience also draws from significant outside collections, allowing works separated by geography, generations and collections to appear together in new visual conversations.

Select paintings and images are brought subtly into motion, where appropriate, using an AI-assisted animation workflow integrated into the editing process. Working under curatorial direction, the production team used movement selectively, alongside traditional techniques such as pans, zooms, changes in scale and choreographed transitions. The intent was not to reinvent the art, but to preserve the composition and character of each work while creating new opportunities to engage with its details, atmosphere and story.

In one of the experience's signature moments, the brilliant colors of John Nieto's *Poised Coyote* fill the wall as the animal subtly comes to life, transforming a familiar work into an invitation to notice its color, movement and detail anew. But original artwork remains at the center of the experience: *Beyond the Frontier* is designed to encourage visitors to seek out works they encounter on the wall and experience the originals elsewhere in the museum — creating moments of recognition and inviting an even closer look.

Featuring Spanish subtitles, *Beyond the Frontier* runs continuously throughout the museum day.

Built for Art: A 20-Foot Digital Canvas and One Billion Colors

Bringing *Beyond the Frontier* to architectural scale required technology capable of reproducing fine art with exceptional detail while allowing visitors to stand close to the imagery. The installation is presented on a Nanolumens Engage NXT COB 1.25 LED wall just shy of 8 feet tall and 20 feet wide. Composed of 70 NXT Series cabinets in an ultra-wide seamless array, the wall has a resolution of 4,800 by 1,890 pixels.

The Briscoe installation is only the second installation of this Nanolumens system in the United States. Unlike tiled LCD displays, the direct-view LED wall has no visible bezel grid interrupting the image. A landscape can therefore stretch uninterrupted across the entire canvas, while an expansive viewing angle allows visitors to experience the imagery from different positions as they move through the gallery. With an approximately 1.2 mm pixel pitch, the display allows visitors to experience extraordinary detail from as close as approximately six feet—an important consideration for a gallery designed around close engagement with art.

Capable of displaying more than one billion colors, the system provides the tonal gradation needed to reproduce subtle skies, shadows, textures and color transitions within works of art. But the technology is not the destination. It is the gateway, giving visitors a new way to engage with Western Art while deepening their appreciation for the original works.

A New Gateway to the Briscoe

The Valerie Urschel Guenther Four Pillars Gallery is the centerpiece of a larger renovation designed to strengthen the visitor experience, expand exhibition capacity and create stronger connections among the stories told throughout the museum. The gallery features *Beyond the Frontier* in the Linda Whitacre Orientation Theater.

The project encompasses 700 square feet of renovated and reimagined space and adds new exhibition space through the expansion of the museum's first floor in the historic building that once housed San Antonio's Public Library. Among the changes is the Theresa Guenther New Works Gallery, along with the new West Gallery, both flanking the Four Pillars Gallery.

The renovation also expands the Briscoe's capacity to display its collection and present changing exhibitions, creating additional gallery space and stronger connections among the museum's first-floor experiences. Together, the new and refreshed spaces allow visitors to move from the immersive Four Pillars introduction into galleries where the ideas introduced digitally can be encountered through original art and objects.

Revolutionary Women Reopen the Women of the West Gallery

The museum's Women of the West Gallery has also been refreshed and will open October 15 when it hosts *Kathy Sosa Revolutionary Women of Texas and Mexico*, bringing the stories of women who helped shape

Texas, Mexico and the American West to the forefront through more than 30 paintings, mixed-media works and sculptures by acclaimed San Antonio artist Kathy Sosa. Drawing from Sosa's exploration of *mestizaje* and the cultural identity of the Texas-Mexico borderlands, the exhibition focuses on women who were not simply witnesses to history, but participants, survivors, cultural transmitters, laborers, activists, mothers, revolutionaries and community leaders. Inspired in part by Sosa's book, *Revolutionary Women of Texas and Mexico: Portraits of Soldaderas, Saints and Subversives*, the exhibition uses contemporary art to illuminate the lives, experiences and influence of women whose contributions helped shape the region.

On view through June 14, 2027, *Revolutionary Women of Texas and Mexico* serves as a contemporary companion to *Tejano Legacy: Another American Origin Story*. While *Tejano Legacy* explores nearly 400 years of Tejano history, culture and identity through historical art, artifacts and scholarship, Sosa brings those themes to a deeply human scale, examining how culture and identity endure through migration, conflict and change and are carried forward through family, language, faith, food, music, storytelling, dress and memory. Sosa is also among the contemporary artists featured in *Tejano Legacy*, creating a direct connection between the history explored in the landmark exhibition and the living culture and artistic expression it continues to inspire today.

Investing in the Future of Western Art, Heritage and Culture

The transformation was made possible through significant support from Bexar County and philanthropic investment from longtime supporters of the Briscoe. Bexar County has been an essential partner in the museum's growth and in strengthening the Briscoe as a cultural and tourism destination in downtown San Antonio.

The Valerie Urschel Guenther Four Pillars Gallery is named in honor of Valerie Urschel Guenther through a meaningful gift from her husband, Jack Guenther, and the Jack and Valerie Guenther Foundation. Jack and Valerie Guenther have played an important role in the founding, growth and continued success of the Briscoe and its mission to preserve and share the art, history and cultures of the American West.

The Four Pillars Extend Across the Briscoe

The Briscoe's recognition of Tejanos, Vaqueros & Spanish Heritage as a fourth pillar of Western Art extends well beyond the new gallery. It is also reflected in *Tejano Legacy: Another American Origin Story*, the largest and most ambitious exhibition in the museum's history. On view through Jan. 18, 2027, the landmark bilingual exhibition explores nearly 400 years of Tejano history, culture and influence through art and historic objects from private collections and major institutions in the United States and Mexico, including works being shown in the United States for the first time.

Together, the permanent Four Pillars framework, *Tejano Legacy* and *Revolutionary Women of Texas and Mexico* demonstrate how the Briscoe is bringing the interconnected histories and living cultures of the American West into conversation across the museum. Also on view is *Selena Forever / Siempre Selena*, another companion exhibition to *Tejano Legacy*, featuring monumental photographs of Selena Quintanilla-Pérez by acclaimed San Antonio photographer John Dyer, through Jan. 4, 2027.

The West Starts Here

Located on the River Walk near La Villita in downtown San Antonio, the Briscoe preserves and presents the art, history and culture of the American West through exhibitions and programming exploring Wildlife and the Land; Native People of the Americas; Tejanos, Vaqueros and Spanish heritage; and Cowboys and the American Frontier. The museum's campus includes the McNutt Sculpture Garden and features 37 sculptures portraying various aspects of Western life in the garden and around the museum's beautifully restored historic building that once housed the San Antonio Public Library. The museum is open Thursday, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., Friday through Monday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and closed to the public on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The Briscoe is located on the south end of the River Walk, near the Arneson River Theatre and La Villita, with

convenient parking at the Riverbend Garage directly adjacent to the museum or one of many downtown surface lots. Museum hours, parking and admission details are available online.

About The Briscoe Western Art Museum: *Preserving and presenting the art, history and culture of the American West through engaging exhibitions, educational programs and public events reflective of the region's rich traditions and shared heritage, the Briscoe Western Art Museum is located on the San Antonio River Walk at 210 W. Market Street in the beautifully restored 1930s former San Antonio Public Library building. Named in honor of the late Texas Gov. Dolph Briscoe Jr. and his wife, Janey Slaughter Briscoe, the museum includes the three-story Jack Guenther Pavilion, used for event rentals and programs, and the outdoor McNutt Sculpture Garden. Follow the Briscoe on social media, @BriscoeMuseum.*