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## Review of Pike's Peak Vision: The Broadmoor Art Academy , 1919-1945

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Pike's Peak Vision: The Broadmoor Art Academy, 1919-1945.* By Stanley L. Cuba and Elizabeth Cunningham. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 1989. Bibliography, artists' biographies, exhibition checklist. 196 pp. \$27.50 paper.

*Pike's Peak Vision: The Broadmoor Art Academy, 1919-1945* is a catalog for a 1989/90 exhibition organized by the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. Co-curators and authors Stanley L. Cuba and Elizabeth Cunningham state that the exhibition was the first survey of the collections of the Broadmoor Art Academy and its successor, the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center.

The Broadmoor Art Academy was incorporated after World War I. Located at the foot of Pike's Peak in the Rocky Mountains, it was the perfect place for an art colony. Like the Taos Art Colony, and because of the inception of European modernism at the beginning of the century, Broadmoor Art Academy instructors sought to establish a purely American art. The publication's illustrations—historic photographs, paintings and prints—and text take the reader through a nostalgic

journey during the heyday of the American Scene/Regionalist period paralleling the Depression, the Works Progress Administration program (WPA), and World War II.

Nationally known artists Grant Wood, John Steuart Curry, and Thomas Hart Benton were the Academy's mentors. Among the Broadmoor Art Academy's most famous instructors were Randall Davey, Ernest Lawson, Birger Sandzen, Willard Nash, Ward Lockwood, Laura Gilpin and Boardman Robinson. Known primarily as a mural painter, Robinson is identified in the publication as the "moving spirit" of the institution from its transition to the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center until his resignation in 1947.

The Broadmoor Art Academy dedicated its new building, with its new name, in 1936. Heralding its mission to present a distinct diversity of all the arts, the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center's opening included impressive performances in modern dance and music, highlighting Martha Graham, and an exhibition of modern French painters. The Center, however, still emphasized landscapes and regionalism and for twelve years organized the conservative annual exhibit *Artists West*

of the Mississippi. These years witnessed the climax of the Center in terms of national and international attention. The authors cite competition from other art schools and the international critical acclaim of abstract art for the decline of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center in the late 1940s.

*Pike's Peak Vision* is an admirable publication. It is a handsome volume with 59 black and white and 65 color reproductions, and it includes biographies of the artists featured and a timeline. While the aesthetics of the Academy–Center, represented by the reproductions, is not all that exciting as a whole, the history of the organization—especially as it parallels national art history—is quite interesting. The catalog attains the stated goal of the exhibition, to capture the “aura of the resort community.” Packed with names, places and dates, it is certainly a comprehensive survey of the Broadmoor Art Academy. Yet, this barrage of facts, occasional redundancy, and obvious self-promotion for the organization is tedious at times. Ultimately, however, with current theory suggesting “isms” are a thing of the past and with art trends moving toward more regionalist art exhibitions, *Pike's Peak Vision* is a timely publication.

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