

For Immediate Release

Sid Richardson Museum • 309 Main Street • Fort Worth, Texas 76102

SID RICHARDSON MUSEUM TO EXHIBIT FOR FIRST TIME RARELY SEEN LETTER BY CHARLES M. RUSSELL AND THREE RELATED ARTWORKS; EXHIBITION OPENS FRIDAY, OCT. 24, 2008, AND RUNS THROUGH SUNDAY, SEPT. 6, 2009

FORT WORTH, Texas -- Fans of the Western American artist and sculptor, Charles M. Russell (1864 – 1926), can look forward to the exhibition of *Charles M. Russell and the Art of Counting Coup*, which opens at 9 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 24, 2008, at the Sid Richardson Museum and runs through Sunday, Sept. 6, 2009.

For the first time together, two of Russell's oil paintings, *Counting Coup* and *When Blackfeet and Sioux Meet*, and one of his sculptures, *Counting Coup*, will be exhibited along with a rarely seen letter written and illustrated by Russell that recounts the story that inspired the three related works.

"The letter is considered to be one of the finest that Russell ever wrote about one of his works of art," said Brian W. Dippie, Ph.D., a specialist in the history of Western American art and an authority on Russell.

According to Dr. Dippie, "counting coup" (pronounced "coo") was a high honor and a key to social status for men in Plains Indian societies, which prized individual bravery. The coup was "counted" when an Indian succeeded in getting so close to the enemy that he could touch his adversary with a club or whip —without necessarily causing him any harm.

The Museum has published an insightful publication by Dr. Dippie, *Charles M. Russell and the Art of Counting Coup*, which includes images of the three works along with the letter and rare photographs of Russell and his wife, Nancy. Dr. Dippie will attend the Friday opening of the historic exhibition.

Sid Richardson Museum director Jan Scott, who organized the exhibition, said, "The exhibition will feature nine of Russell's bronze sculptures from a private collection, including his first, *Smoking Up*." In addition to *Smoking Up* (date unknown) and *Counting Coup* (1905), the bronzes in the exhibition include:

- *A Bronc Twister* (date unknown)
- *Oh! Mother, What Is It?* (cast c. 1941-42)
- *Smoking with the Spirit of the Buffalo* (cast c. 1929-32)
- *The Snake Priest* (cast c. 1941-42)
- *To Noses That Read, A Smell That Spells Man* (cast c. 1929-32)
- *The Range Father* (cast c. 1941-42)
- *Will Rogers* (cast c. 1929-32).

The Sid Richardson Museum at 309 Main Street downtown in Sundance Square features Western American art by Russell, Frederic Remington (1861-1909), and other

artists collected by the legendary Texas oilman and philanthropist, Sid W. Richardson (1891-1959). It is considered to have one of the most significant private collections of Remingtons and Russells in the United States. Admission is free and the Museum is open daily except for major holidays. For information, call 817-332-6554 (toll-free at 888-332-6554) or visit the Museum's Web site at www.sidrichardsonmuseum.org.

Dr. Dippie's introduction to the publication, *Charles M. Russell and the Art of Counting Coup*, properly sets the stage for the exhibit:

"Sometimes the stars line up just right, and the effect is electrifying. In the course of forming his great collection of Western art, Sid Richardson acquired both *Counting Coup* and *When Blackfeet and Sioux Meet*, two thematically related oil paintings that show Charles M. Russell at the top of his form in 1902 and 1908 respectively. In between, Russell created a brilliant action group, also titled *Counting Coup*, which was cast in bronze in 1905. Because Russell modeled so effortlessly, he liked to fashion wax figures to serve as guides for his paintings. They allowed him to perfect lighting, shadow, proportion, and perspective. In this instance, he had created a major bronze group based on the incident portrayed in his 1902 oil, and then he went on to make a painting identical in composition to the bronze.

"It was always a goal to exhibit the bronze and the two pictures together to establish the interplay between modeling and painting in Russell's art. But a fourth component was missing. Russell wrote a letter in 1902 to his St. Louis patron, George W. Kerr, vividly recounting the story that inspired *Counting Coup* — a story he had heard directly from the lips of the Blood Indian featured in his painting...When that letter became available for exhibition through the generosity of its owner, all the pieces fell into place and the stars were aligned. Prepare to be electrified."

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