



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Behind the Vault Doors

June 11 - August 31, 2010// Carnegie Galleries

Filmmaker Reception and Gallery Talk: Allen Powers, June 17, 5-8 PM

Missoula, MT / April 6, 2010 / Missoula Art Museum (MAM) / MAM's *Behind the Vault Doors* exhibit is part of a statewide collaborative venture between six Montana museums spurred on by the film project of Allen Powers. This project highlights the rich artistic heritage found in the collections of our Montana museums, home to many of our most precious cultural treasures. Powers is concerned that these collections too often remain hidden from the public "behind vault doors". Not only are the objects out of sight and out of mind, but so too are the compelling stories of many of Montana's wonderful and inventive artists. Powers aims to inform Montanans about the treasures residing in collections across the state, instilling an appreciation for - and a pride in - the cultural foundation museums provide, and increasing our appreciation of the artists that live and work today in communities throughout the state.

Powers spent the last three years assembling and editing stories from Montana artists, curators, museum professional, and historians. In addition, he conducted myriad interviews with representatives from the cultural institutions who protect and preserve the artists' stories. Powers sees this as an ongoing project and hopes eventually to share this enthusiasm in a broadcast series entitled *Behind the Vault Door*. This pilot film emphasizes the uniqueness of Montana and celebrates the tightly knit community of artists that impacts the contemporary cultural life in the state.

Six institutions in Montana, each with a unique set of stories, artists, and artworks, agreed to participate by featuring work from their collections. This series of exhibitions provides an opportunity for each institution to open their collections, share their cultural treasures, and educate the public about their missions. MAM is the first institution to host *the Behind the Vault Doors* concept, and while MAM's collection is modest in size, the assortment of artworks is a well focused representation of our community and tightly connected to our mission to "serve the public by engaging audiences and artists in the exploration of contemporary art relevant to the community, state and region." The MAM exhibition features works created by the first wave of skilled and innovative artists who brought modernism to Montana in the 1940s and 1950s. These artists, in the spirit of Picasso, Matisse, and Pollock, were more concerned with the expressive and formal qualities of color, shape, and line rather than representation and narrative. Gennie DeWeese, who is featured in this exhibition, transitioned from non-objective purism to primarily landscapes when she moved to the Cottonwood Canyon near Bozeman, in 1965. Gennie enjoyed the visual feast of the mountains and plains while still struggling with the same formal issues.

Viewers will see this progression among the 30 displayed artworks recently gifted to the MAM by Gennie's family.

In addition to this monumental showing of DeWeese works, MAM will feature the work of Lela and Rudy Autio, Bob DeWeese, Frances Senska, Peter Voukos, Walter Hook, Jim Dew, George Gogas, Freeman Butts, Ted Waddell, Maxine Blackmer, and Aden Arnold.

MAM's Carnegie Gallery will be packed full of art strongly representing the time when Modernism reigned supreme in Montana. While drawing attention to these works from the collection, we also hope to reveal how these artworks intricately define the mission of the institution. It is a natural time to celebrate the artists who also broke ground for Modernism in this rural environment with an energy like that of the landscape, Montana's incredible "house of sky".

Contact: For more information please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406-728-0447, visit the MAM website at www.missoulaartmuseum.org or contact Stephen Glueckert, Exhibitions Curator, stevegl@missoulaartmuseum.org, 406.728.0447 x226.

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About MAM: FREE EXPRESSION / FREE ADMISSION. The Missoula Art Museum strives to engage artists and audience in the creative exploration of contemporary art relevant to our community, state and region. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Gallery Hours: Wed-Fri, 10AM-5PM, Sat-Sun, 10AM-3PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.

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