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Left: Anne Van Briggie Ritter, *Drying Creek near Colorado Springs* (detail), c. 1925, oil on artist's board. See also page 168. (Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, photo by Dean Lovett)

Cover: Vance Kirkland, *Red Mountain* (detail), 1947, watercolor, casein, and gouache. See also page 43. (Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art, Denver).

## INTRODUCTION and ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The need to preserve the story of the Denver Artists Guild and document its place in Colorado's cultural history became increasingly important for me when my father, Clarence Durham, died in 1994 at age 90 after an eleven-year battle with Alzheimer's. At that time, I began gathering information on him and his long-standing membership in the guild with the intention of writing a book about him to help preserve his legacy.

Around the same time, my father's friend Mary Cornish, the daughter of another guild founding member—C. Waldo Love—began culling information from her father's records and scrapbooks. She was the corresponding secretary of the Colorado Artists Guild, the name by which the Denver Artists Guild has been known since 1990, facilitating participation by artists from throughout the state in the organization's activities.

While researching my late father's career, which included five terms as president of the Denver Artists Guild, I was approached for material about some of the organization's other founding members by several individuals whom I soon discovered knew practically nothing about the group, its history, or its connection with Denver and Colorado. This led me to expand my research about my father to include the careers and accomplishments of the guild's other fifty-one original members.

Having met most of them through my father while growing up in Denver, I thought it would be fairly simple to contact their families, write their bios, and obtain photographs of them and their work. When I started assembling the material, little did I foresee the amount of time, effort, and financial outlay the project would require. As it turned out, a number of the guild's founding members had moved away and started second families. Even their children had died or relocated elsewhere without a trace. Some artists proved almost impossible to track down because they died quite young, in their thirties and forties. I learned also that some had no offspring or close relatives, not to mention those who had gone off to France and Italy.

With relatively few direct descendants of the guild's founding members still living, I became convinced that if someone did not soon record the extant information about them it would be lost forever. Persistence led to wonderful contacts with their families, and I met many of them for the first time. Like me, they also struggled to find ways to remember their parents or grandparents who had involved themselves with the guild early on.

Given the greatly expanded scope of my project, I sought the assistance of two coworkers: Leah Naess, a technical writer with whom I previously worked as Art Director for NL Petroleum Services in Houston, Tex., and Dean Lovett, a fellow graphic artist at McDonnell Douglas in Aurora, Colo. With their input we located the guild's founding members' families through the organization's old scrapbooks and the Internet. This contact facilitated our compilation of material for the artists' biographical entries and for a map locating the artists' work that the public can still see throughout Colorado. Leah wrote the initial draft and scheduled preliminary photo sessions, at which Dean willingly spent countless hours photographing the founding members' work at private homes, schools, churches, libraries, museums, banks, hotels, post offices, and other government buildings at locations from Estes Park to Colorado Springs. Dean's colleague Terry Woodward provided inestimable assistance through her family history research in uncovering missing artists' information and finding relatives.

Annette Stott, professor of American Art and Women's Studies at the School of Art and Art History at the University of Denver, offered us the assistance of a graduate student, Alisha Geiwitz, who spent a summer researching the guild's founding members. Then Stan Cuba, Associate Curator of the Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art, prepared the members' biographical entries, helped with the final selection of color reproductions and captioned them, and wrote an extensive historical overview introducing readers to the general subject of the guild and documenting the heretofore little-known story of its fifty-two founding members.

The following immediate family members and relatives provided us with photographs, biographies, and information on the location of artwork: Karen Aschbacher, Jennifer Ballentine, Nancy Bernhart, Jim Betterton, Susan Cable, Sherry Carrell, David Davidson, Grace Lang Davidson, Johanna C. Fallis, Nora Fisher, Mimi Griffenberg, Evan A. Haynes, John Hazelhurst, Jo Ann Jonson, Victoria Kirby, Sharon Kramer, Enrico Licari, Mary Luft, Mary Mobley, Richard RePass, Heather Shepard, Phillip Skolle, Ken Stiefel, Vallie Fletcher Taylor, Nancy Walker, and Mary G. Wheeler.

Relatives, plus several private collectors, allowed us access to their homes to photograph paintings and sculptures reproduced in this illustrated history: Shawn Beckman, Mary Cornish, Chuck Des Moineaux, Martha and Clark Ewald, Melody Hagerman, Robert Jeffrey, Cynthia Durham Jennings, Suzanne Losee, Nelson Love, Ruth Strauss Oppenheim,

Regina Quackenbush, Charla Rudolph, Nancy and Scott Stockton, Deb Wadsworth, and Connie Wanke.

Additionally, individuals and institutions shared material about the guild's founding members and their art: Bob Adams (Pine Emporium, Pine Junction, Colo.), Henry J. Duffy (Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, N.H.), Bukki Erwin, Derek Fortini (Estes Park Museum, Estes Park, Colo.), Jonathan Frembling (Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Tex.), Hugh Grant and Chris Herron (Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art, Denver), Judy James (St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Denver), Stephanie Khoury, Claudia Merthan, Jeff Richmond-Moll (Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia), Nancy Moure, Chuck Pittenger (Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Ky.), Janet Paladino (General Services Administration, Lakewood, Colo.), Nicole Parks and Thomas Smith (Denver Art Museum), Theresa and Bob Roe, Nicki Sheuwater (St. Thomas Seminary, Denver), Barbara Sternberg, Jay Trask (University of Northern Colorado, Greeley), Rick Unruh (Clars Auction Gallery, Oakland, Calif.), Deb Wadsworth, Evelyn Waldron, Leah Davis Witherow (Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum), Brent Wolfe, Nancy Woodward (St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Denver), Metropolitan Museum of Art, Oregon State University at Corvallis, and Willis Henry Auctions, Inc. (Marshfield, Mass.).

After almost a decade of spearheading this amazing and worthwhile research project, I remain convinced that all our efforts, including the inevitable trials and tribulations, have been well rewarded. This beautifully published commemorative volume presents for the first time the legacy of the fifty-two original members of the Denver Artists Guild and their contribution to the cultural history of Denver and Colorado.

—Cynthia Durham Jennings