

Review of *The Denver Artists Guild* for the Center for Colorado and the West  
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Reviewer: Dennis Gallagher, Regis University

Stan Cuba, an expert by day on prevailing local wages in the Denver City Auditor's Office, has written by night a history of the Denver Artists Guild (DAG). Cuba is associate curator of Denver's Kirkland Museum of Fine and Decorative Art in Denver, an institution which has done much to collect, preserve, and exhibit Colorado artists. Cuba is a widely published specialist on Colorado artists with many books and articles to his name.

Cuba's latest book, a full-color, glossy paperback, consists of a twenty-eight-page history of the DAG, brief biographies of the fifty founding members, and self-guided walking and driving tours of these artists' surviving work. Large, colorful images comprise perhaps three quarters of this spectacularly colorful book. Some names may be familiar: Anne Evans, photographer Laura Gilpin, Vance Kirkland, and Allen True. The eye-catching work of other artists included here will make readers want to learn more about them.

Unlike many artist catalogs, this one includes a fair number of women artists. History Colorado published this 260-page book and it was printed in Colorado by Vision Graphics. The authors offer readers wonderful examples of many of the works of the founding members of the guild. Readers will enjoy Philip Hagerman's portrait, painted by his mother, Helen Hagerman, in 1931. Cuba explains that Philip is frowning in the portrait because he wanted to go ice skating with friends instead of posing for his mother that day. His mother caught his disappointment in her haunting picture.

We can be drawn into Marion Hendrie's 1939 watercolor, housed in the Denver Art Museum. It's entitled *Near Golden, Colorado*, and the painting captures the desolation of post-mining shacks and outbuildings probably on the way to Central City where she was born in the year Colorado joined the union. Cuba's book zeroes in on photos of Hendrie's carved wooden pieces housed in St. Martin's Chapel at St. John's Episcopal Cathedral. The book offers us several styles of Vance Kirkland, the founding director of the University of Denver's School of Art. In his 1928 oil on canvas entitled *Cliff Dwellers*, a Gilpin County ghost town becomes an echo of the cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde.

Enrico Licari's four angels guarding the four corners of the tower at St. Thomas Seminary prompted architect Jacques Benedict, the chapel's architect, to hope that they might inspire viewers from afar to lofty and spiritual thoughts.

Architect Harry Manning's 1920s Shrine of St. Anne in Arvada shows the stairs in front requested by the pastor to keep the Ku Klux Klan from riding their horses into the church. Kluxers did not like so many Catholics moving into their territory.

I remember old St. Mary's Church in the 1933 lithograph by Arnold Rönnebeck called Central City. The artist must have composed his piece from beside or behind the Opera House where I worked as a stagehand when in college at Regis.

In Male Portrait, Albert Byron Olson captures in oils the look of a young man possibly asking what his future holds. It's undated, but possibly his forlorn expression springs from the depression years.

Cuba did not leave out Allen Tupper True and includes several of his murals from the State Capitol and his masterpiece set of murals, Indian Memories, including Happy Hunting Ground (1925), now showcased in the rebirth of the Colorado National Bank Building as the swanky Renaissance Hotel.

Although it includes sources, this book sadly lacks an index, an indispensable tool for researchers and even casual readers. It is available at the History Colorado Center, 1200 Broadway, and the Byers Evans House Museum, 1310 Bannock Street. This first-rate book nudges me to want to take up painting since I retired from public service on July 20, 2015.

Reviewer Info: Dennis Gallagher is a former Denver city auditor, Denver city councilman, Colorado state senator, Colorado state representative, and Regis professor of speech and classic literature. Classic. Artistically, he is known for his fine calligraphy and icon creation.