



The Art of the Cowgirl gathering, to be held this month in Phoenix, Arizona, spotlights the craftsmanship, art, horses and spirit of the West.

## CULTURE

# All Things Western

Art of the Cowgirl celebrates Western culture through the spirit of the strong women and horses at its heart.

By **CHRISTINE HAMILTON**

**F**ROM ITS OPENING COLT-STARTING DEMONSTRATION THROUGH TO THE FINE ART AUCTION AND RANCH HORSE SALE, the inaugural Art of the Cowgirl gathering aims to immerse all comers into the authentic West in every aspect.

The event—February 8–10 at the Corona Ranch & Rodeo Grounds south of Phoenix, Arizona—draws respected Western women from every geographic corner of the West and from all walks as ranchers, horsewomen and artisans. The idea is to celebrate the Western lifestyle through horses and women.

“What makes this unique is the way we are showcasing the artistry of our Western culture alongside our horsemanship, which to me are one in the same,” says Tammy Pate, respected Montana horsewoman and Art of the Cowgirl founder. “Yes, this is a gathering of Western [female] artisans and horsewomen, but it really is about celebrating our lifestyle, and that’s family, couples, husbands and wives, and friends. Everyone is welcome.”

The event kicks off with a colt-starting demonstration featuring male-female clinician pairs, such as husband and wife Luke and Kelli Neubert, and father and daughter Curt and Mesa Pate (Tammy’s husband and daughter).

“I hope it sets the tone of what this is all about, a good foundation” Pate says. “When people work together we each bring strengths. Typically, men ask for something [from a horse] and they have that skill to ride it through. Women put

out a different energy in our ability to empathize and connect and gain trust. When you combine the two you have the best of both worlds.”

Additional highlights include:

• **Artist demonstrations:** Master artists and craftsmen in saddle- and bootmaking, silver engraving and rawhide braiding, as well as photography and fine art, will demonstrate the skills behind their work.

• **Horsemanship demonstrations:** Clinicians lined up to help are a Western horsemanship Who’s Who list—Reata Brannaman, Sandy Collier, Sharon Edsall, Justine Munns, Kelli Neubert, Mesa Pate, Brandi Phillips, Lee Smith and Amberley Snyder—covering topics including barrel racing, colt starting, liberty work, ranch roping, reined cow horse, and working with stock dogs.

• **Art Auction and “100 Years of Western Wear Style Show”:** Each participating master artist has donated work to be sold in an auction Saturday evening. Canadian Western clothing designer and horsewoman Paige Callaway is coordinating the fashion show.

• **Ranch horse sale:** The Sunday ranch horse sale features solid horses from programs across the West. After the auction, buyers will have the opportunity to ride their new horses with the event clinicians.

• **Ranch rodeo:** At press time, more than 25 all-female ranch rodeo teams have entered. The long go will be held at South Buckeye Arena on Friday, with the top four teams in the short go competing at the main Art of the Cowgirl venue on Saturday.

• **The Courtyard:** Explore a dynamic marketplace of vendors, and listen to live cowboy music and cowboy poetry performances from artists such as Adrian Buckaroo girl, Trinity Seely and The Genuine Cowgirls trio.

“We really want the entire event to be a coming together of artists and horsewomen, giving people the chance to meet people that will inspire them to live their dream in this Western life,” Pate says.

NICOLE POVO



## UNITING ARTISTS AND MENTORS

The heart of the event is to raise funds through the art auction, saddle raffle and horse sale to support a non-profit fellowship program designed to grant fellowships to men and women 18 years and older seeking to pursue work in traditional Western trades.

"My dream for this was to provide an event and a fellowship program that would honor and keep the Western trades and lifestyle alive," Pate explains. "Each fellowship is different. [For example,] Nancy Martiny's is a 10-day saddlemaking workshop: all expenses are paid, all materials, and the recipient will build a saddle from start to finish."

At press time the horsemanship fellowship with Lee Smith and the saddlemaking fellowship with Martiny have been funded and will be awarded during Art of the Cowgirl. The application process for others will open as they are funded, with the hopes they will be completed in 2019.


Each participating artist is donating pieces for the art auction, including an Art of the Cowgirl custom saddle built by Martiny.

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Tammy Pate grew up in Montana working with horses and in the Western lifestyle. Her appreciation for horses and experience as a clinician led her to create Art of the Cowgirl. • Idaho rancher and trainer Justine Munns is just one of several respected horsewomen and clinicians offering demonstrations. • Many Western artists are participating in demonstrations and an art auction.

In addition, the first Western Horseman Women of the West award will be presented at Art of the Cowgirl to lifelong Montana horsewoman Judy Wagner, vice president of marketing and communications for Montana Silversmiths.

"A lot of times our Western women are unsung heroes in their work. We need to recognize these women," Pate says. "[Women] truly bring a different energy to our horsemanship, our art, and we need to celebrate that."

"This isn't a 'woman's movement,' it's truly just taking a chance to showcase women who think outside the box and take risks, and hopefully empower a younger generation."

For more information on purchasing tickets, sponsorships, or fellowship donations and applications, visit [artofthecowgirl.com](http://artofthecowgirl.com). Also, follow the event on Facebook and Instagram at [@artofthecowgirl](https://www.instagram.com/artofthecowgirl). 

## PARTICIPATING MASTER ARTISTS INCLUDE:

- **Teresa Black**, rawhide braider and horsehair hitcher, Bill Black Custom Braiding, Plush, Oregon
- **Constance Jaeggi**, photographer, Constance Jaeggi Photography, Weatherford, Texas
- **Jan Mapes**, artist, Jan Mapes Fine Art, Kim, Colorado
- **Kelly Martin**, bootmaker, Martin & Co., Battle Mountain, Nevada
- **Nancy Martiny**, saddlemaker, Martiny Saddle Co., May, Idaho
- **Amy Raymond**, engraver and silversmith, Raymond Silver Co., Helix, Oregon
- **Lee Smith**, horsewoman and clinician, Lee Smith Horsemanship, Wickenburg, Arizona

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: NICOLE POYO; NICOLE POYO; JENNIFER DENISON