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PRESS RELEASE

THE BRISCOE PRESENTS GEORGE CAITLIN'S NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN PORTFOLIO *Exhibition showcases rare, vibrant images of 19th century Native Americans*

San Antonio, Texas (May 31, 2017) – The Briscoe Western Art Museum is pleased to present its summer exhibition showcasing a very rare deluxe set of George Catlin's *North American Indian Portfolio*. This edition of 31 hand-painted color plates is one of only three known sets still in existence. *Catlin's Portfolio* is among the most famous color plate books relating to North America's Native populations produced in the 19th century.

George Catlin was one of the first artists to venture along the western reach of the Missouri River to study and document the Native peoples of the region. From 1832 to 1837, Catlin spent the summer months sketching the tribes of the Great Plains and then finished his pictures in oils during the winter. *Catlin's North American Indian Portfolio* contains the lithographic prints resulting from his years of painting, living with, and traveling amongst tribes such as the Mandan, Sioux (Lakota), Blackfeet, Crow and several others. Overall, Catlin painted around 600 highly realistic and powerfully projected portraits of Indians, carefully recording their dress, culture, and way of life.

In addition to publishing the *Portfolio*, Catlin also spent from 1837 to 1852 touring the United States, England, France, and Holland, exhibiting his collection of paintings with examples of Native American arts and crafts. He was accompanied by representative members of the Indian tribes he painted during this time. Financial problems in 1852 caused Catlin to lose his collection. He spent his later years making trips to South and Central American, sketching the Native peoples there.

The Briscoe's *Catlin's North American Indian Portfolio* exhibition is FREE for members and with paid Museum admission and will be on display from June 23 – September 4, 2017. The exhibition also includes excerpts from the documentary film, *Frontier Visionary: George Catlin and the Plains Indians*, produced by the Smithsonian American Art Museum¹ and a reference reading area. The Briscoe Museum offers extended hours and free admission every Tuesday from 4:00-9:00pm.

¹ *Frontier Visionary: George Catlin and the Plains Indians* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2002)

About The Briscoe Western Art Museum:

The Briscoe Western Art Museum, named in honor of the late Texas Gov. Dolph Briscoe Jr. and his wife, Janey Slaughter Briscoe, preserves and presents the art, history and culture of the American West through engaging exhibitions, educational programs and public events reflective of the region's rich traditions and shared heritage. Located along the San Antonio River Walk, the museum's campus includes the restored 1930s former San Antonio Public Library building, which now serves as the museum space with nine galleries on three levels; the three-story Jack Guenther Pavilion, used for event rentals and programs; and the outdoor McNutt Sculpture Garden. For more information about The Briscoe Western Art Museum, visit BriscoeMuseum.org, follow us on Twitter @BriscoeMuseum or "Like" us on Facebook @TheBriscoe.