

Copyright Applications May Help Museums Curators

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Applications for copyright registration may seem cut-and-dried to those of us who see plenty of them. Yet who knows if other eyes might read a different story line besides name, date, title, and so forth? When the eyes are those of a museum curator, the copyright application form may yield very interesting information.

The Whitney Gallery of Western Art, part of the Buffalo Bill Cody Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, reports using copyright applications to gain knowledge about its holdings. In fact, a curator there told *Copyright Notices* that research frequently involves looking at copyright applications for information about a specific work of art.

An example of the information obtained is on the museum's label beside a sculpture on display. The work is "The Wounded Bunkie" modeled in 1896 by American sculptor Frederic Remington (1861–1909) and cast in bronze in 1900 by the Henry-Bonnard Bronze Company, an art foundry in New York City. The label quotes the author's description of his work. "Two horses in full gallop, side by side. Each horse carries a cavalryman, one of whom has been wounded and is supported in his

saddle and kept from falling by the arm of the other trooper," wrote Remington in the copyright application for this sculpture."

Another instance of an application's potential to provide details to the curator came to light when Grant Hamming, 2007 Junior Fellow, discovered an old photographic deposit that is likely the first reproduction in any medium of the well-known official 1903 White House portrait of President Theodore Roosevelt (see *Copyright Notices*, September 2007). The application attached to the photograph yielded new details about the painting. Although American artist John Singer Sargent painted the portrait and is named as author, the copyright claimant was *Collier's Weekly* magazine. Why? Did *Collier's* purchase rights from Sargent? Hamming found out that *Collier's* issued a limited edition print reproduction as a supplement in an April 1903 issue. Interesting... and fodder for future research and interpretative information. ©

"The Wounded Bunkie," a sculpture by Frederic Remington (1861–1909), was the second bronze sculpture created by the artist after "The Bronco Buster." It depicts a wounded cavalry officer supported by another while the two horses gallop. The piece was cast in the lost wax process.



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