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Charles M. Russell: A Catalogue Raisonné. Edited by B. Byron Price. Foreword by Anne Morand. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. xviii + 348 pp. Color plates, illustrations, bibliography, index. $125.00.

No one painted the majestic mountains of Montana more splendidly than Charles M. Russell, but most of the action in his art, played out among the cowboys of the open range and the Native peoples of the Northern Plains, unfolds on the flat. Thanks to the comprehensive electronic catalogue of Russell's paintings, drawings, watercolors, models in mixed mediums, and illustrated letters available with this print publication, the reader can verify these assertions without tipping a single book off the library shelf.

Catalogues raisonnés have always stimulated the discovery of lost works and the reattribution and redating of others, and such new findings, along with the workings of the art market, have rendered these massive publications out of date almost as soon as printed. This near-instant obsolescence has finally been defeated by on-line technology, which also facilitates a host of additional benefits, many of which can be enjoyed in this publication. One can search this catalogue by title, date, collection, medium, and provenance; trace the compositional evolution of a specific subject; review every work from a single year; and examine from afar all the Russells (bronzes excepted) in a particular collection. Unlike the weighty multi-volume catalogue raisonné of yore, this one is as easily portable as a laptop computer.

Maximizing the utility of a resource of such open-ended flexibility is labor-intensive, and it is encouraging that the catalogue's base of operation is the University of Oklahoma, whose Charles M. Russell Center for the Study of Western American Art can supply graduate students as well as permanent staff continually to correct, update, and augment it.

Purchase of access to the catalogue's Web site also includes this hardcover book of essays by every major Russell scholar alive today, and an impressive group they are. Brian Dippie's contribution is a fascinating inquiry into the effect on Russell's art of market forces, which his wife and business manager Nancy Cooper Russell impressed upon him, as well as her growing exertion of control over the subject matter, size, medium, and even utility of his works in response to her assessment of buyer preferences. Rick Stewart discusses Russell's models and miniatures in plaster, wax, and a variety of other, often "found," materials in

wonderful detail and constructs a convincing case for their germinal role in the artist's creative process.

Peter Hassrick makes a trenchant survey of Russell's paintings, analyzing their formal elements, divining their symbolic and metaphorical meanings, and setting out clear chronological guideposts to the various phases of the artist's career. Ginger Renner recounts her late husband Frederic G. Renner's activities as a government scientist and pioneer Russell researcher, collector, dealer, bibliographer, and connoisseur and summarizes his publications and impressive body of research. Raphael Cristy, who has exhaustively studied Russell's storytelling in person and in print, focuses here on the artist's wry accounts of the collision between old-time westerners and the newfangled inventions and social changes of the early twentieth century. The volume concludes with Byron Price's historiography of Russell scholarship, criticism, and collecting, followed by a detailed chronology and select bibliography.

The book is handsomely designed and generously illustrated. The sole disappointment—the uneven quality of the color plates—can eventually be fixed on the Web site, and it is far outweighed by the contribution to Russell studies of the project as a whole. At $125, this publication is a steal, and scholars, collectors, curators, and Russell's lay admirers will be forever indebted to Byron Price and the University of Oklahoma Press for committing themselves to an effort of such extraordinary ambition.

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