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Review of *Remington Schuyler's West: Artistic Visions of Cowboys and Indians* Compiled and with preface and introduction by Henry W. Hamilton and Jean Tyree Hamilton

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Remington Schuyler's West: Artistic Visions of Cowboys and Indians. Compiled and with preface and introduction by Henry W. Hamilton and Jean Tyree Hamilton. Afterword by Brian W. Dippie. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2004. ix + 113 pp. Illustrations, color plates, notes, index. \$35.00.

Henry W. Hamilton and Jean Tyree Hamilton's *Remington Schuyler's West* establishes their friend Remington Schuyler (1884-1955) in the annals of American illustration and introduces his long forgotten work to a new public. This amply illustrated book is a pleasant read for anyone who appreciates popular culture, particularly regarding Western subjects.

Organized into three parts, the book opens with the Hamiltons' brief biography of Schuyler (illustrator, writer, associate of the Boy Scout movement, and instructor of illustration). Although written for a general audience, more could have been added here since biographical details round out the picture of Schuyler in the context of his era. Schuyler's writings, interspersed with sketches, cover and story illustrations, dust jackets, and an oil painting, comprise the second section, which contains letters from his 1903 sojourn at Rosebud Indian Agency, South Dakota, and radio scripts and magazine articles from the 1920s. Brian Dippie's scholarly afterword, in which he adroitly analyzes Schuyler's art and positions the artist within the American illustrative tradition, complements the authors' enthusiasm.

Schuyler's illustrations for western pulp literature included *Adventure*, *Farm & Fireside*, *Wild West Weekly*, *The Frontier*, *Western Story*,

Short Stories, *Top-Notch*, and *Popular Magazine*. Occasionally, his work appeared on the upscale covers of the *Saturday Evening Post*, *World's Work*, *Literary Digest*, *Leslie's Weekly*, and *Women's Home Companion*. There is a marked dichotomy of image and word: while Schuyler's writing bespeaks tedium, hardship, loneliness, and suffering (the life and environment he saw and experienced firsthand as an agency store clerk and a ranch hand in the Great Plains), his images evoke excitement, courage, romance, and self-reliance—the stuff of boyhood dreams and fantasies. Lack of reality was not an anomaly, as Dippie points out. Rather, Schuyler was in the good artistic company of the likes of Charlie Russell, Frederic Remington, Joseph Henry Sharp, E. W. Deming, and many others who preferred the mythic West. Schuyler's job was to sell magazines by enticing readers to pick up the next rip-roaring adventure of the gun-toting hero Billy West. And, indeed, Schuyler was successful.

Dippie asserts that Schuyler was a sound journeyman, not a studio artist with fine art pretensions. Nonetheless, Schuyler had a solid command of formal language; his good use of counterbalance creates the dynamic element of many compositions. With intelligent attention to small details, he dealt with the abstract relationships of line and form to integrate and unify his figures into landscapes, exemplified by the cover of *Western Story Magazine* (May 15, 1926), where the viewer's eye moves through a series of rounded shapes: the crown of the hat, the vested chest, the curve of the left arm, the bend of the left and right knees, the dome of the coffee pot, and the summit of the butte.

In *Remington Schuyler's West* we recognize the importance of the unexceptional and the ordinary. We also understand how Schuyler's art perpetuated the myth of the West that so engrossed the public of that time.

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