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## Groundbreaking Exhibit Stimulates Senses While Telling the Stories of South Texas

**SAN ANTONIO**— From the dusty thornbrush, a longhorn bursts through the wild landscape, pursued by a vaquero, then roped by his compadres. Cowboys crowd into a San Antonio cantina after long days on the trail. These scenes were part of real life in South Texas, and became stories of mythic proportions. In its new, pathfinding exhibition, *A Wild and Vivid Land: Stories of South Texas*, the Witte Museum unveils the real stories of the South Texas ranches, the San Antonio Plaza and the border. It is a story of a wild and vivid land.

*A Wild and Vivid Land: Stories of South Texas* opens in the Witte Museum's Kathleen and Curtis Gunn Gallery on **June 24, 2006**, where it remains on view through March 25, 2007. Get a fascinating look into the Witte's storied collections in the largest display of South Texas artifacts since the premiere of *Texas Originals* in 2003.

*A Wild and Vivid Land* tells the story of South Texas conceptually from 1850 to 1950, with hundreds of artifacts dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The major theme areas include: 1849 San Antonio Plaza, "South Texas Stories" Theater, Changing Borders, Ranching and Transforming the Landscape.

"This exhibit is, above everything, a thoroughly engaging experience that stimulates the senses. This groundbreaking exhibition features high-tech light and sound, robotic personas, touch-screen computers, authentic aromas, a gallery theater, live demonstrations, an original 1949 pick-up truck and a chuck box, mud wagon coach and carreta," said Marise McDermott, President and CEO of the Witte Museum.

Among these exciting features is a 19<sup>th</sup> century Tejano freighter (in the form of a robotic persona), who greets visitors and tells anecdotes about his latest journey with his 16 oxen, laden with goods and supplies from throughout South Texas, as well as where in San Antonio he will spend the night and get a shave. In the 1849 Main Plaza of San Antonio, state-of-the-art remote sensing technology triggers

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“conversations” and ambient sounds; in the ranching area, light and sound enhance the experience, virtually, as night turns to morning and cattle “stampede.” Learn how to herd cattle up the trail and load a burro through hands-on interactives. Listen to tales of iconic South Texans and smell the coffee brewing while watching a performance of *Cowboy y Vaquero: A Campfire Conversation Gallery Theater*. Through technology, “encounter” vaqueros, cowboys, 19<sup>th</sup> century hotel workers, dry-goods storeowners and familiar figures, including Juan Seguín, Mary Maverick, Davy Crockett, and Richard King.

“A *Wild and Vivid Land* combines unique art and objects from the Witte Museum collections with technology and theatrical set exhibits to present the history of South Texas and its capitol, San Antonio, in a way that has never been seen before,” said Bruce M. Shackelford, Guest Curator. “Stories are as much a part of the history of the area as the collections and those stories are a primary part of the exhibit,” he added.

Setting the stage for lifelong learning in South Texas, the Witte Museum has developed three major initiatives as its focus for the future. Among these is the construction of a South Texas Heritage Center, scheduled to begin in 2007, which will display the Witte’s renowned permanent collections. A *Wild and Vivid Land* serves as an ambitious precursor to the highly anticipated South Texas Heritage Center.

The exhibition *A Wild and Vivid Land: Stories of South Texas* and the future South Texas Heritage Center are generously supported by Betty Stieren Kelso, Gov. Dolph Briscoe, Jr., Valero Energy Corporation, AT&T Foundation, Time Warner Cable-San Antonio, Lewis Energy Group, LP, Alex and Sally Halff Family Foundation, The Brown Foundation, Inc., The Wachovia Foundation, Betty Stieren Kelso Foundation, Nathalie and Gladys Dalkowitz Charitable Trust, Beldon Roofing Company, C. H. Guenther & Son, Inc., Union Pacific Foundation, Frost Bank, International Bank of Commerce, Jack and Doris Smothers and Mary Ann Bruni Memorial Foundation in honor of Olivia Pilar Weatherbie and Olivia Estelle Bruni, Richard and Mary West Traylor, Bank of America, Virginia Stokes Nicholas, and Helen Jean Travis.

There is a \$2 surcharge for *A Wild and Vivid Land: Stories of South Texas*. For more information call 210.357.1900 or visit [www.wittemuseum.org](http://www.wittemuseum.org).

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