

Clark artist captures top prize in Arizona contest

By **AMBER PEABODY**
Staff writer

Clark artist Harriet "Rox" Corbett captured a still moment in time during a branding event last year that is captivating viewers.

Corbett won first place in two-dimensional art at the "Cowgirl Up! Art Show and Sale" in late March.

"I was excited," she said. "Having won an award was exciting and it looks good on a resume."

The show was conducted at the Desert Caballeros Western Museum in Wickenburg, Ariz. As a winner she received \$1,000.

"It's making a big splash in the West and has become quite popular," Corbett said of the show. "This is the third year of the event and it's one of the only shows of its kind in the country."

Corbett was asked to participate in the invitation-only show after the executive director saw one of her pieces.

The winning piece is a 26x40 charcoal drawing of a cowboy quieting a calf during a branding event. It is titled, "Two Dot Branding: Hush."

Contest judge Peter Hassrick said the piece was a "striking composition and a technical tour de force."

Corbett also entered two other pieces in the show titled, "Two Dot Branding: Smoke," and "Quarter Circle Eleven Branding: Miss a Loop,



photo by KEN BLACKBIRD

Harriet Corbett of Clark recently won first place at an art show in Arizona.

Make a Loop."

All three were purchased. The award winner was bought by a patron of the Desert Caballeros Western Museum, who donated it back to the museum.

Corbett has been an artist since childhood. She graduated from Concordia University in Montreal with

a bachelor's degree in graphic design and illustration.

After graduating from college, she spent the next 20 years at sea as a biologist studying marine mammals, but she never left her artistic roots. She has illustrated numerous books, posters and brochures depicting marine life.

In the early 1990s, she was an artist-in-residence at the Ucross Foundation in Wyoming and began using charcoal to draw the interiors of old-fashioned diners.

She permanently moved to Wyoming in 1993 and became interested in branding.

"It's a big, cultural thing here," she said. "In my mind, brandings are the epitome of the ranching lifestyle and ethic. Neighbors come to help. Animals are central, whether it be calves destined for a bad day or horses vital to getting a job done.

"What I aim for in my drawings is to capture a still moment in what is otherwise a frenetic ballet of people, animals and dust."

It usually takes Corbett 40-50 hours to complete a piece.

"They're realistic and detailed," she said. "I'm relieved when I finish.

"Starting a project is always the hardest part," she added. "It's sort of a drudgery getting details and making it look accurate, but it's a good feeling when it's finished."



Corbett's charcoal drawing, "Two Dot Branding: Hush," won first place in two dimensional art at the "Cowgirl Up! Art Show and Sale" in March.

She has worked in other mediums including water color, oils and acrylics, but says charcoal is her favorite.

"Charcoal has a richness that I have not found in other black and white media," she said. "Working from white paper into dark shadows, I can create a wide range of tones between black and white. But because of the warmth of charcoal, it is like working in color."

Corbett has been involved in smaller gallery shows in the past, but nothing as big as "Cowgirl Up!" She hopes to participate in more shows such as the Buffalo Bill Art Show and Sale, C. M. Russell Art Auction in Great Falls, Mont., "Quest for the West" Show in Indianapolis and next year's "Cowgirl Up! Art Show and Sale."

The current show will be on display until May 4.