

Wyoming: Wild and Worldly

BY ROSEMARY CARSTENS



Teddy Roosevelt once said of Wyoming, “There can be nothing in the world more beautiful than . . . the Canyon of the Yellowstone [and] the Three Tetons, and our people should see to it that they are preserved for their children and their children’s children forever, with their majestic beauty all unmarred.” What was true more than a century ago remains so today, thanks in part to Wyoming’s diligent conservation of its awe-inspiring geysers and hot springs, wilderness, and revitalized bison herds.

The least populous state in the union (with just over 500,000 residents), Wyoming possesses a dramatic geography that varies from jagged western peaks nearly 14,000 feet high to the tapering Great Plains along its eastern border. There is no shortage of outdoor activities here, but residents and visitors also enjoy an array of fascinating historical sites, museums, and art galleries.



INTERIOR OF THE ARTIST JOSEPH HENRY SHARP’S CABIN
(ORIGINALLY LOCATED AT CROW AGENCY, MONTANA)
BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER, CODY

CHEYENNE

Known as “Crow Creek Crossing” before it was renamed for one of the Great Plains Indian nations, the state capital of Cheyenne is a city of 60,000 located near Wyoming’s southeastern border with Colorado. Thanks to an abundance of historic buildings and districts, the Old West’s romantic lure can still be conjured here, especially during the annual *Cheyenne Frontier Days* in late July. CFD’s *Western Art Show and Sale* occurs at the **Old West Museum**, a year-round attraction with intriguing exhibitions and collections. This event’s 2011 edition features paintings, wood and alabaster carvings, and Navajo weavings by more than 60 contemporary artists.

Deselms Fine Art, housed in Cheyenne’s Whipple House Mansion (1883), represents talented artists across all genres, including the wildlife specialists Reneé Piskorski and Brandon Bailey, plus still life and figurative artist Mike Beeman. Each year Deselms hosts the *plein air* exhibition *Prairies to Peaks*; the 2011 version takes place August 1-13. Cheyenne loves its public artworks, too. In addition to many fine bronzes, a series of 8-foot-tall boots have been painted in bright colors by local artists and displayed around town. Youngsters will

GERTRUDE VANDERBILT WHITNEY (1875-1942)

BUFFALO BILL — THE SCOUT

1924, BRONZE, 12 1/2 FT. HIGH

BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER, CODY; GIFT OF THE ARTIST. 3.58

PHOTO: SEAN CAMPBELL



CARRIE BALLANTYNE (B. 1956)

CONTE COWGIRL #7

2011, CHARCOAL & CONTE CRAYON ON PAPER, 10 1/8 x 8 3/4 IN.
BIG HORN GALLERIES, CODY

especially enjoy tracking down *These Boots Are Made for Talkin'* using the map distributed at the Depot in the city's visitor center. A cell phone tour allows viewers to hear each artist comment personally on his or her contribution.

LARAMIE

Home to roughly 26,000 people, Laramie is located approximately 50 miles northwest of Cheyenne. This town is the gateway to the beautiful Snowy Range ski and recreation area, and also home to the University of Wyoming. UW's Centennial Complex (1993), designed by internationally acclaimed architect Antoine Predock, is a remarkable work of art itself — shaped like a mountain newly thrust up from the plains, detailed like an airplane wing, and aerodynamically positioned with respect to Wyoming's omnipresent winds. Inside it are the **American Heritage Center** and the **UW Art Museum**. Both are worth a visit, though art lovers will particularly want to see the latter's two summer exhibitions. First, *American Regionalism: Selections from the Art Museum Collection* highlights the period after World War I when so many American artists turned their attention to scenes of rural America. Also on view is *Fifty Works for Fifty States*, which features the generous gift of minimalist and conceptual artworks made by Herbert and Dorothy Vogel to museums nationwide, including this one. Throughout the UW campus and Laramie itself, prepare to enjoy the ongoing *Sculpture: A Wyoming Invitational*, which encompasses seventeen works by major international artists.

CASPER, BIG HORN, AND SHERIDAN

In east central Wyoming, the town of Casper is home to the **Nicolaysen Art Museum & Discovery Center**. Known as "the NIC," this 25,000-square-foot institution is the only major museum in Wyoming dedicated to contemporary art made in the Rocky Mountain region. On view now, Jamie Burmeister's *Shooting Gallery* shows off Burmeister's innovative and often interactive experiments with sculpture, installation, mechanics, electronics, everyday materials, sound, and video. Another highlight is *Living History*, an exhibition of seven artists' work in photography and film. Later this summer, the NIC's annual *Rocky Mountain Invitational Exhibition* will focus on textile and fiber arts.

Continuing northward toward Montana, you'll come to Big Horn. This town is home to the **Bradford Brinton Memorial Museum**,



THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WILDLIFE ART'S BUILDING
(1994) BLENDS INTO ITS NATURAL SETTING.



MIKE PIGGOTT (b. 1963)

BLUE SKY PINES

2011, ACRYLIC AND PASTEL ON PAPER, 22 1/2 x 30 IN.

TAYLOE PIGGOTT GALLERY, JACKSON

which graces a well preserved 1892 house on the Quarter Circle A, a prime example of a 1920s gentleman's ranch. Today the main house is filled with fine art, furnishings, books, and documents from the Brintons' time, and twelve of its twenty rooms can be seen during the guided tour. The collection includes important works by such masters as John James Audubon, George Bellows, Edward Borein, A.B. Frost, E.W. "Bill" Gollings, Frank Tenney Johnson, Hans Kleiber, Frederic Remington, and Charles M. Russell. Until Labor Day, painter Allen Mardon and knife maker Ted Larsen are exhibiting their work in *A Sharper View of the West*; pastelists Gary Huber's *Of Mountains and Meadows* show is on view through August 4, followed by Marian Kline's oil paintings of horses. Autumn brings an exhibition of new works by sculptor Linda Reynolds and painter Jon Madsen.

Not far from Big Horn is the town of Sheridan, where you'll find **Bozeman Trail Gallery**. This venue offers a range of Western, *plein air*, and sporting artworks by such historical masters as Russell, Gollings, Kleiber, Ogden Pleissner, O.C. Seltzer, and Joseph Henry Sharp, as well as contemporary work by Stanley W. Galli, Walt Gonske, Bruce Graham, Joel Ostlind, Geoff Parker, Brett Smith, D. Michael Thomas, Karen Vance, and others.

CODY

Heading westward, the town of Cody (population 9,000) is located only 52 miles from the eastern gateway of Yellowstone National Park. It was established in 1896 by the legendary Col. William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, who, having already succeeded as a Pony Express rider, scout, and hunter, then toured the world with his *Wild West* shows for 30 years. Since its founding in 1917, the **Buffalo Bill Historical Center** has evolved from a 50 x 70-foot log structure into a facility that could cover six football fields and incorporates five museums, a research library, and a vibrant educational outreach program. Its oldest unit is, not surprisingly, the **Buffalo Bill Museum**, which focuses on the great man's life and pioneer culture. The **Whitney Gallery of Western Art** offers a superb collection of paintings, sculpture, and prints spanning the early 19th century through today. Among the masters represented here are Remington, Russell, Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran, and Maynard Dixon.

Also here is the **Plains Indian Museum**, which offers, according to Crow elder and historian Joe Medicine Crow, "a living, breathing place where more than just Indian objects are on display." At its heart is a multi-media presentation providing insights on Native Americans' history, traditions, and values, as well as their lives today. The **Cody Firearms Museum** houses the world's largest and most important collection of American arms, as well as European arms dating back to the 16th century. Completing this quintet is the **Draper Museum of Natural History**, which highlights the environment and human cultures of the American West, especially the Greater Yellowstone region.



BART WALTER (B. 1958)

WAPITI TRAIL

MODELED 2005 AND CAST 2007, BRONZE, LIFE-SIZE

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WILDLIFE ART, JACKSON; ANONYMOUS GIFT

Cody's prestigious *Rendezvous Royale* is always held the fourth week of September and encompasses the *Buffalo Bill Art Show*, an auction, fashion show, quick draw, home tours, and an elegant ball. On view in the 30th-anniversary *Art Show* this year are works in various materials and styles, all related to the land, people, and wildlife of the West.

Located in downtown Cody opposite the historic Irma Hotel is **Big Horn Galleries**, which shows a variety of subjects and styles from living and deceased painters and sculptors, as well as jewelry and original graphics. Particularly noteworthy are Darcie Peet's luminous landscapes and Carrie Ballantyne's intimate portraits. Right down Sheridan Avenue is **Simpson Gallagher Gallery**, with its stable of exceptional landscape painters. This fall, an important show with the memorable title *Kathy Wipfler and the Boys* showcases Wipfler's acclaimed paintings, as well as those of T. Allen Lawson, Ralph Oberg, Geoff Parker, Skip Whitcomb, and Dan Young.

JACKSON

Set 6,200 feet above sea level and bisected by the Snake River, the wide valley commonly called Jackson Hole lies between two mountain ranges — the Tetons to the west and the Gros Ventres to the east. At the valley's northern end begins the magnificent Yellowstone National Park. The town of Jackson stands at the valley's southeastern edge, abutting the 25,000-acre National Elk Refuge created in 1912 to accommodate the world's largest elk herd through the winter. Beyond its exceptional opportunities for recreation, Jackson functions as Wyoming's artistic heart thanks to its vibrant community of artists and world-class events.

Founded to inspire appreciation of fine art, wildlife, and humanity's relationship with nature, the **National Museum of Wildlife Art** holds a remarkable collection of more than 5,000 catalogued items. Though it juts dramatically from a cliff overlooking the elk refuge, the

NMWA's 51,000-square-foot building blends beautifully with its surroundings, vaguely reminiscent of the Southwestern desert's ancient architecture. Its windows provide rare glimpses of wildlife in their natural habitat, as do the artworks inside.

This summer the NMWA is highlighting its new sculpture trail, designed by renowned landscape architect Walter Hood. The important sculptures to be installed there include a casting of Simon Gudgeon's streamlined bronze bird form *Isis*, a life-size elk bronze by Tim Shinabarger, and eight larger-than-life bison in Richard Loffler's *Buffalo Trail*. Fortunately, the museum will be offering "hard hat tours" of the trail twice a day throughout the summer. Also on offer is the exhibition *Yellowstone to Yukon: The Journey of Wildlife and Art*, which underscores the crucial role of the Canada-U.S. migratory corridor in sustaining millions of animals.

The corridor's rich artistic history will be depicted through works by such master painters as Bierstadt, John Clymer, and Bob Kuhn. Throughout the summer and into the fall, engravings by one of America's finest wildlife artists, Carl Rungius (1869-1959), will also be on display.

Founded in 1965, the *Art Fair Jackson Hole* takes place on two weekends every summer in Miller Park downtown; this year's dates are July 15-17 and August 19-21. Always well attended, these family-oriented celebrations feature up to 170 international, national, and local artists, live music and dance performances, food, and art-related activities. Autumn is probably this region's most beautiful season, so it's only fitting that its premier arts event, the *Jackson Hole Fall Arts Festival*, is set for September 8-18. Thousands come annually to experience more than 50 events encompassing an array of artworks, music, cowboy poetry, and cuisine. One of the festival's signature events, NMWA's *Western Visions Miniatures and More Show & Sale*, will occur September 16, featuring the painter Daniel Smith and sculptor Bart Walter. Yet another festival highlight is the *Jackson Hole Art Auction*, co-organized by Trailside Galleries and Santa Fe's Gerald Peters Gallery and set to occur on September 17. Held at Jackson's handsome **Center for the Arts**, which offers performances, classes, and art exhibitions year-round, this auction features masterworks of Western and wildlife art by outstanding historical and contemporary artists — many selling for remarkably high prices.

In Jackson's lively downtown arts district, one highlight is **Altamira Fine Art**, which focuses on contemporary Western paintings, sculpture, photographs, and Indian art. On view July 1-14 are 20 new canvases from master painter John Nieto; later in the month, Amy Ringholz and Mary Roberson take center stage with their modern portrayals of animals. August brings to Altamira contemporary interpretations of Western themes by Donna Howell-Sickles and Duke Beardsley. And during September's *Fall Arts Festival*, Altamira will present Jared Sanders's modernistic mountainscapes and rural scenes, plus new pieces by R. Tom Gilleon in his clean, impressionistic style.

For lovers of Western art, no visit to Jackson is complete without a stop at **Legacy Gallery**, where upcoming exhibitions include a solo



ROBERT BATEMAN (b. 1930)

CHIEF

1997, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 71 x 98 IN.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WILDLIFE ART, JACKSON; GIFT OF BIRGIT AND ROBERT BATEMAN

show of 20 epic Wyoming landscapes by Kenny McKenna, and also the gallery's annual *Visions of the West* group show. Legacy adds to the allure of Jackson's *Fall Arts Festival* with its annual *Legacy of Nature* group show of wildlife and sporting art. Owner Maryvonne Leshe confirms that summer and fall are always busy at **Trailside Galleries**. July brings its first ever *Masters in Miniatures Invitational*, and the *Western Classics* showcase runs the entire month of August. This year the latter will feature Gary Ernest Smith's landscapes and Jeffrey Watts's well known portrayals of Northwest mountain men and Native American life in the late 1800s. During the *Fall Arts Festival*, Trailside will present the wildlife paintings of Kyle Smith and the sculpture of Veryl Goodnight.

A newer gallery on the Jackson scene, **Trio Fine Art** is a collaborative effort by four local artists: September Vhay, Kathryn Mapes Turner, Lee Carlman Riddell, and Jennifer L. Hoffman. Although each woman brings top-quality work to the mix, Vhay has won several national awards recently, including special recognition at the 2010 edition of the NMWA's *Miniatures and More*. Realist in form and detail, Vhay's oils and watercolors also possess an impressionistic energy sure

to captivate. Specializing in post-war and contemporary art, **Tayloe Piggott Gallery** represents emerging, mid-career, and established artists. Among them is painter Mike Piggott, who is admired for his skillful use of color and ability to find eloquence in quiet, familiar moments.

This summer **Mountain Trails Gallery** is set to present a series of solo shows by artists who celebrate the animal kingdom: Jeff Ham, Andrew Bolam, and Edward Aldrich. The gallery is particularly proud that one of its top artists, Dwayne Harty, has been selected as the *Fall Arts Festival's* featured artist. Nearby at **Astoria Fine Art**, this summer ushers in solo shows by Joshua Tobey, Jimmy Dyer, Jeff Legg, and Mark Eberhard, followed by *Fall Arts Festival* showcases of Greg Beecham, Ewoud de Groot, Dean Mitchell, Bart Walter, and Joshua Tobey. And at **Galleries West Fine Art**, July features a show of recent work by Jennifer L. Hoffman and D. Lee, followed by August's group show focusing on the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem and then a round-up of all gallery artists during September.

As you can see, any art lover with a taste for the pleasures of nature will be rewarded amply in Wyoming, where simplicity and sophistication happily co-exist.

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