



TUCSON MUSEUM of ART

WESTERN ART PATRONS

Newsletter: Fall 2024

Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block
140 N. Main Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85701

Western Art Patrons Opening Event



Our hosts Jessie and Gary Van Ness

patterns are made to be aligned when worn (so the ends of the pattern are touching in front). Although the number of Indigenous weavers decreased considerably in recent years, Terry is still making regular visits to meet with weavers of both media from numerous tribes in the Southwest. If you've ever been in a gift shop at a National Park and have seen Indigenous baskets or textiles for sale, they were most likely sourced by Terry. Tasty refreshments were provided by Feast.

The Western Art Patrons opening event on Sunday, October 20th was a great success with 57 members in attendance. Jessie and Gary Van Ness opened their beautiful home and shared their impressive collection of Indigenous baskets and blankets. Terry DeWald educated us with his immense knowledge of Navajo textiles and weaving techniques for all types of Indigenous baskets. There were many stunning examples on hand for all of us to view and enjoy. Terry explained the types of plant materials used in the weaving process, including those grasses that bring out darker colors to form the patterns.

We also learned that Apache baskets are the most dynamic in pattern, rare, and thus the most sought after. The chief blankets were also of great interest, as the



Josh King demonstrates how a Chief Blanket would be worn

Western Art Patrons Attend Luncheon with Author Dr. Diane Dittemore



Diane Dittemore presents to WAP after a wonderful lunch

On Saturday, November 16th, the Western Art Patrons gathered to enjoy a delicious lunch of Indigenous-inspired Arizona food and to hear a fascinating scholarly talk by Dr. Diane Dittemore, curator at the Arizona State Museum, on the basketry of the Indigenous people of the Southwest, enhanced by examples from the museum collection as well as photos and histories of many of the



Diane Dittemore and Robert Knight pose in front of baskets from the Arizona State Museum

creators. Dr. Dittemore has recently published a beautifully illustrated and definitively researched book *Woven from the Center: Native Basketry in the Southwest*. She encouraged us to come up and see the examples from the museum. The event was held at the Murphey Gallery at St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church, which will also be the venue for our January program when Jerry Freund will present the "Tale of the Spider Woman" describing and demonstrating his deep knowledge and wonderful collection of Navajo wearing blankets.

Western Art Patrons Visit the Dennis Zieminski 50 Year Retrospective Exhibit at Medicine Man Gallery

On December 5, the Tucson Museum of Art's Western Art Patrons (aka "WAP") were welcomed by the Medicine Man Gallery and more than 60 works on paper and paintings of renowned artist, Dennis Zieminski.

The Drs. Kathleen and Mark Sublette, along with Medicine Man Gallery staff and acclaimed WAP board member Jerry Freund, hosted our group of 36 art lovers for an exclusive private showing of Zieminski's 50 Year Retrospective, along with a celebration of the release of his new book, and a special sneak peek and confab in the adjacent Maynard Dixon and Native American Museum.

The MDNA Museum, a personal passion of Dr. Sublette, has been housed at the Medicine Man Gallery for many years. The new exhibition space is the realization of a long held dream of the Sublettes, and is replete with drawings, paintings, furniture, and ephemera from the life and art studio of Maynard Dixon. Complementing Dixon's work is a selection of paintings by the much beloved Arizona artist, Ed Mell, whose style is an extension and homage to the Dixon aesthetic. Additionally, the Museum houses some of the finest examples of Native American art and is a must-see for any art aficionado.

After retiring from the retrospective exhibition to the MDNA Museum's gallery, Mark opened the evening's talk with a compelling analogy between the life and art of two extremely successful young illustrators, Dixon and Zieminski. He explored their parallel career paths and explained that both California-based graphic designers left the Golden State for greater opportunities in New York City — and in mid-career moved their oeuvre from illustration to fine art.

Mr. Zieminski, a native San Franciscan who graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the California College of the Arts, began his talk with a slide presentation of his early life as a commercial artist. He showed examples of master illustrators he admired, such as J.C. Leyendecker, N.C. Wyeth,

Ludwig Hohlwein, Tom Purvis, and Maxfield Parrish. The artist also included examples of graphic designs he did for large events like the Olympics, Academy Awards, 2006 Kentucky Derby, Super Bowl XXIX, along with his many book covers, magazines, and posters for numerous organizations. He ended with an explanation of his evolution from a formally trained and successful illustrator to that of a fine artist



Cover of Zieminski's book



Interior of the new Maynard Dixon Museum

and emphasized his sincere love of painting. He said emphatically that is where his passion lies and stated, “This is what I always wanted to do.”

The heroic scale of Zieminski’s retrospective is a nostalgic journey into a world of New York diners, steam locomotives, historic cars, and various western themes. Compelling landscapes with horseback riders hugged by billowing clouds stand in contrast to the artist’s large neon lit urban street scenes. His distinct color palette and hard-edged figure ground compositions have an art deco feel and are a nod to his earlier work as a graphic designer. Zieminski’s paintings are eminently approachable and resonate with a sense of warmth that beckons the viewer to participate in their well-choreographed compositions.

The evening ended with enthusiastic WAPers thanking the artist and our hosts for the honor of a private presentation and such an interesting and intimate look into the life and work of two incredibly gifted artists.

A new podcast interview with Dennis Zieminski and Mark Sublette is available on the Medicine Man Gallery’s website and is well worth a listen.

Western Art Patrons Board of Directors Holiday Party



Peter and Linda Friedman give cheers during the holiday party at the Mountain Oyster Club

The WAP Board of Directors Holiday Cocktail Party was held Saturday, December 7 at the Mountain Oyster Club. Over 60 members and friends enjoyed a festive evening of socializing and excellent food with a background of western music performed by Chris Minker. Chris performs regularly at the MO



Connie Trecartin, Travel and Events Chair; Christine Brindza, TMA WAP liaison; and Nancy Landes, President are all smiles at the event

Club and had an appreciative audience on Saturday evening. The 55th Annual Mountain Oyster Club Contemporary Western Art Show and Sale was still up and although many of the pieces had been sold, party goers were able to purchase art that was available for sale. Cocktails and generous passed canapés kept members satisfied during the early part of the evening, which were followed by Angus beef sliders and finished off with holiday cookies.

Contemporary American painter Dennis Zieminski, featured in the 50 Year Retrospective Exhibit at Medicine Man gallery, attended the event with members of his family and Mark and Kathleen Sublette. Many WAP members attended his pre-opening show on December 5 and were pleased to see him gift his new book *The Art of Dennis Zieminski*, which celebrates and captures his career over the last 50 years, to TMA. Christine Brindza accepted the book on behalf of the museum.



Dennis Zieminski presented Christine a copy of his book for TMA's library.

WAP President's Message



Nancy Landes

The New Year is upon us! Welcome Western Art Patrons to 2025. We have many opportunities for you to participate in our activities in 2025. Be sure to check out the schedule for upcoming events of speakers and artists, including in January, “The Gift of Spider Woman,” a presentation by Jerry Freund about Navajo Weaving Blankets. We are excited about the twelfth annual Cowboy Cantina in February, 2025, with Cara Romero as our speaker. This will be held at TMA. In March, Christine Brindza will lead a tour of the exhibition *Divergence of Legacy*, which she has been working with community curators to develop. You will receive more information on all these events closer to the scheduled date. We hope to see you at some or all these exciting happenings.

Planning for the Reno trip scheduled for July 23–27, 2025 is underway. It includes attending the Coeur d’Alene Art Auction which specializes in the finest classical Western and American art representing past masters and outstanding contemporary artists. It will also include visiting a private collection and touring the Nevada Museum of Art. We’ll be figuring out costs and finalizing the itineraries, with information to be out in the next couple of months. It’s going to be a lot of fun, and these trips sell out quickly, so reserve a space as soon as you get the flyer. See the “Save the Date” on the next page for more teaser information.

Best Wishes to you in the New Year!

Warm Regards,

Nancy Landes, WAP President





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SAVE THE DATE JULY 23-27, 2025 RENO, NV



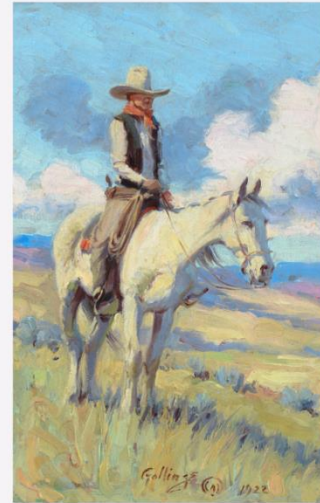
AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE

For the past 40 years the Coeur d'Alene Art Auction has specialized in the finest classical Western and American art representing past masters and outstanding contemporary artists. The auction principals have over 125 years of combined experience in selling fine art and have netted their clients over \$400 million in the past twenty years alone. The Auction is arranged annually by Mike Overby, Stuart Johnson (Settlers West, Tucson) and Peter Stremmel.

QUESTIONS? Contact Judy Betty judybetty@icloud.com or text at 612-210-6058

"RENO IS HOME TO THE NATION'S BIGGEST AND MOST SUCCESSFUL AUCTION OF WESTERN ART."

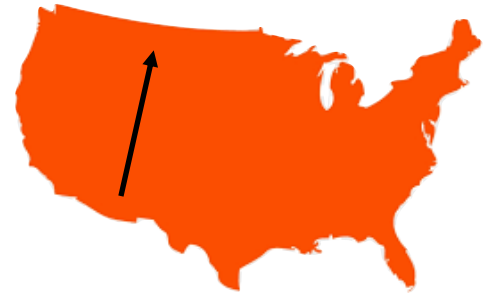
- THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



JOIN US

- Attend the world renowned and lively **Coeur d'Alene Art Auction**
- Visit a private collection
- Tour the Nevada Museum of Art
- Visit shops along the River Walk
- Lodging at Grand Sierra Resort
- More info to come in February 2025

SPECIAL EDITION: WAP Trip to Montana: An Artful Adventure



It was a beautiful September day when twenty-seven Western Art Patrons traversed the United States from south to north meeting up in Great Falls, Montana to begin our artful adventure.

Great Falls was the starting point because of being the home of the great western artist Charlie Russell as well as the gateway to Glacier National Park (and, yes, we saw a glacier).

Top: *From Tucson to Northwest Montana*
Bottom: *Group photo from the CM Russell Museum*

Our stay began at the lovely Historic Hotel Arvon. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the hotel was built by Robert Vaughn in 1890. Vaughn was an early Montana pioneer who famously wrote a book chronicling his experience on the Montana frontier. In 2010 it was completely renovated. The hotel has an impressive gallery of original artwork featuring local and regional artists. After a day of travel, a fun evening was had by our weary travelers in the hotel's Celtic Cowboy Restaurant.

The next day Charlie Russell was at the top of our agenda. We were all anxious to see the museum. The **C. M. Russell Museum** was an amazing tribute to this iconic artist. The museum complex had his house studio as well as more art than we could fit into one day! Our tour was filled with art and stories about Charlie Russell, his art and life and times in early Montana.



Charles Marion Russell, known as “the cowboy artist” was an American artist of the American Old West. He created more than 2,000 paintings and sculptures of cowboys, Native Americans, and landscapes set in the western United States and in Canada. He is also known as a storyteller and author and for everyday scenes of cowboys and Native Americans. The bison skull became his signature.



Detail of TMA’s Russell Print, I’ve Seen the Buffalo Myself, with skull signature

Chris Warden, Executive Director, gave us a warm welcome and introduced Christina Horton, the terrific staff member who led our tour. It was fascinating to observe Russell’s evolution as a self-taught painter employing his on-the-job learnings from his work as a cowboy and trapper/skinner. It was so much fun to learn Charlie Russell’s favorite holiday was Christmas! He would close his studio to visitors starting in late October to create sketches, paintings and even small, whimsical statues from the Arabian Nights, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court, and others to give as presents.



Richard Sobonya, Katherine Scoggin-Sobonya, and Peter and Linda Friedman take in Montana mermaid culture

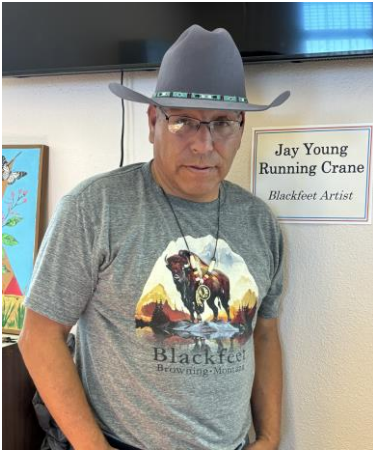
Our evening was an unexpected pleasure! The destination- the iconic Sip ‘N’ Dip Bar, voted Best Tiki Bar Lounge, was to watch the mermaids, sip Tiki Bar cocktails and enjoy the bar food. We had been told that we would go to a “tiki bar!” A “tiki bar?” Were we skeptical? Of course, a western saloon filled with old cowboy paraphernalia would be expected in Great Falls, Montana but we went to see mermaids!

“The legendary “**Sip and Dip**” Tiki Lounge was named the #1 bar on earth worth flying for in 2003 by GQ Magazine. Yes, it has a huge pool with swimming mermaids. Truly, a unique experience for us Tucsonans.



A resident mermaid in the tank behind the bar

The next day we were off to Browning, Montana for a tour of the Museum of the Plains Indian. The route we took gave us an early opportunity to get in touch with “Big Sky Country” as we drove through long stretches of countryside dominated big sky. The museum, founded in 1941, displays art and artifacts of the Northern Plains Tribal peoples. Lucky for us, Jay Young Running Crane, a Blackfeet tribal member, was our lecturer. Jay shared with us his art, history, and stories of his people.



Our speaker, Jay Young Running Crane, at the Museum of the Plains Indian

Glacier National Park was our next stop. Even if you have been there before, “Going-to-the Sun” road never ceases to amaze! And, yes, there were still glaciers. It was a long day filled with wonderful sights and we were all happy to get to our next stop, Kalispell.



Breathtaking view of a glacier

After a good night’s sleep, we were ready for art and our day was full with a trip to FoR Fine Art Gallery in Whitefish, Montana. FoR stands for “Frame of Reference.” Tula Thompson, WAP member, is a partner in the gallery and was on hand to help answer any questions. We had an excellent session on the importance framing art correctly and the difference it makes. Derek Vandenberg, a professional framer and gallery partner talked about all the variables in framing and why it is paramount to fine art.

Another thing Derek stressed was the importance of proper lighting on art. We all looked at a piece of art and realized something was amiss and realized it was not properly lit. Several of us were ready to rearrange art when we arrived home! Another colleague, Joe Abbrescia, fine art restorer, gave a second presentation that morning on the importance of his craft. We learned more about how to care for fine art. There were many oohs and aaahs as we learned new information.



Tula Thompson, Derek Vandenberg, and Joe Abbrescia speak to the group at FoR Fine Art



Ken Yaris talking about his work and creative process at his studio



Christine presents the Kelloggs with a catalogue as a thank you

we could see many examples of his handiwork at their home. It was a lovely way to end a very artful day.

Tucked away in our hotel in Kalispell we wondered if the next day could live up to the last few and of course, it did. We headed to the studio of Tom Saubert. His studio was as fascinating as his art. The studio was filled with cowboy and Native American regalia to add authenticity to his artwork. We were in ‘awe’ at some of the artwork we saw.

Departing to Lakeside, Montana was next. Lunch was overlooking the harbor at Flathead Lake. Afterward we boarded a lakeside cruise. It was a wonderful chance to relax and enjoy the beauty of our surroundings as we cruised the lake.

Then the rest of Whitefish, Montana was calling us to explore the many gift shops and restaurants. Many of us stopped to purchase a Montana treasure—huckleberry jam—while several people made sure to sample huckleberry pie at one of the local establishments.

Well, our day was not over. Later in the afternoon we visited a collector’s home. Tula and Michel Thompson invited us to their home, to see their art collection and enjoy the beautiful home on the banks of the Swan River. We had a lovely pizza dinner accompanied by appetizers and drinks. Their most gracious hospitality was much appreciated. The home was as warm and inviting as our hosts. This was a day not to be missed, filled with friendship, conversation, and fine art.

Yet, another day beckoned with more art! The next day we visited the home and studio of artist, Ken Yaris. It was a lot of fun meeting him, learning about his approach to art, and seeing his work. Hopefully, we will see him again when he shows in Tucson.

Then we were back on the road for Bigfork, Montana. FoR Fine Art Gallery has a second space in Bigfork where we were treated to more art and artists. Our speakers were Tabby Ivy, Michelle Usibelli and Ken Yaris joined as well. The gallery was filled with wonderful art, all very tempting to bring back to Tucson.

Bigfork is a lovely town located on the bay where the Swan River flows into Flathead Lake and was named "One of the 100 Best Small Art Towns in the Nation." We lunched in a local restaurant before exploring the shops and galleries.

Our next stop was the home of collectors Dennis and Kitty Kellogg. We enjoyed the art, the ambiance, and the amazing stonework done on the house by Denny. Denny is a stone mason, and



Part of the interior of the Saubert studio- full of props, artifacts, and pieces he made himself



Judy Betty, chair of the trip, gave remarks during the closing party. The atmosphere was great and food was delicious.

Our final meal together, dinner at FoR Fine Art Gallery, was a spectacular end to a marvelous trip. Our gourmet dinner was catered at the gallery with the very best wine and food you could imagine. It was an unbelievable trip.

Many thanks to those who worked so hard to make this trip a success. Our WAP Travel and Events Committee members Judy and Jim Betty, Connie Trecartin, Susie Hayes, Tula Thompson and Senior Curator for Art of the American West, Christine Crame Brindza, planned and delivered another outstanding artful adventure.

BONUS!

Did you know that some WAP members were almost eaten by a bear?



Not quite! But really, there was a close encounter of the furry kind in Glacier!

Patty Mathes, Larry Morris, and Christine Brindza unexpectedly found themselves within feet of a black bear while at a rest stop. They stayed calm and eventually it moved along, but Christine was able to sneak a quick photo. Not an event that happens every day! Whew!

Western Art Patrons Board of Directors

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Judy Betty, Vice-President and Membership	Linda Friedman
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