



The Ackland Looks Westward

“Way Out West: Celebrating the Gift of the Hugh A. McAllister Jr. Collection” presents transformative gift of art related to American West and Southwest

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Chapel Hill, N.C. — May 30, 2019) — The Ackland Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill presents the new exhibition “Way Out West: Celebrating the Gift of the Hugh A. McAllister Jr. Collection,” on view from Friday, June 14 through Sunday, Aug. 25, 2019.

“Way Out West: Celebrating the Gift of the Hugh A. McAllister Jr. Collection” showcases the transformational gift of over 20 examples of art related to the American West and Southwest to the Ackland Art Museum. Displayed together with artworks already in the Museum’s permanent collection, the exhibition features nearly 80 works spanning 150 years, by artists such as **Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran, Ansel Adams, Awa Tsireh, Dorothea Lange, Edward Weston** and **Allan Houser**, among others. The works chart how artists have responded to the

landscape and culture of the American West since the late 19th century. Exceptional paintings, prints, photographs, sculpture and decorative art are displayed thematically. A special section is devoted to the collector, his taste and his understanding of the role of art in daily life.

This will be the first exhibition curated at the Ackland by **Dana Cowen**, the inaugural Sheldon Peck Curator for European and American Art before 1950. Cowen's position became the first full-time endowed position at the Ackland thanks to a generous gift from Leena and Sheldon Peck in [January 2017](#). The Peck gift, initially valued at \$25 million, contributed to the University's historic fundraising campaign, [For All Kind: the Campaign for Carolina](#). Because of market increase in value of the art, the value of the gift totaled \$28.27 million as of May 2019.

“‘Way Out West’ presents the UNC-Chapel Hill and Triangle community with a wonderful opportunity to experience over a century’s worth of artwork related to the American West in our own backyard,” said curator Dana Cowen. “It not only celebrates Hugh A. McAllister Jr.’s transformative gift, but also allows us to showcase over 50 objects from the Ackland’s permanent collection, many of which have not been displayed in decades. Whether you have a deep association with the West or have simply admired the landscape and its culture from afar, this show offers something for everyone this summer.”

The opening section of the exhibition, “Exploration and Discovery,” focuses on late 19th-century romantic depictions of the western landscape by such artists as **Albert Bierstadt** and **Thomas Moran**, presented alongside photographs by **Carleton Watkins**, **Eadweard Muybridge**, and **Timothy O'Sullivan**, that characterize the West as a vast, open space seemingly devoid of people. Such imagery captivated eastern audiences while simultaneously disregarding the terrible and lasting effects westward expansion had on Indigenous cultures and the natural environment.

An “Encounter and Exchange” section explores how early 20th-century artists, including the Taos Society of Artists, engaged with the unique landscape and culturally diverse populations of the Southwest. This section also presents works from the Ackland’s collection by Pueblo and Navajo painters **Awa Tsireh**, **Romando Vigil** and **Gerald Nailor** to consider the ways American Indian artists navigated complex intercultural relationships in their artwork during the 1930s and '40s. Recent acquisitions of works by contemporary American Indian artists, including **Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie** and **Larry McNeil**, demonstrate how outdated conceptions of American Indians by non-Native artists from the early twentieth century can be reconsidered and reinterpreted through a critical modern lens.

“The Collector’s Eye,” a distinct section of the exhibition, recognizes Hugh A. McAllister Jr.’s achievements as a cardiac pathologist and art collector. It features paintings and sculptures that reflect his passion for nature, including works by **Albert Bierstadt**, **Ernest Blumenschein**, **Mary DeNeale Morgan**, **Walter Matia** and **Dennis Doheny**.

The “Abstraction and Transformation” section draws on the Ackland’s rich collection of 20th century American photography of the West and presents works by **Edward Weston**, **Garry**

Winogrand and **Robert Adams**, among others. The section demonstrates how artists conveyed the rapidly altered landscape through various aesthetic means, ranging from close-up views of nature to panoramic visions of housing developments. Displayed together with the environmentally focused photographs of **Richard Misrach** and **Peter Goin**, the works in this section provide a compelling contrast to the early artistic depictions of a pristine American West.

“Way Out West: Celebrating the Gift of the Hugh A. McAllister Jr. Collection” has been made possible with support from the **UNC Medical Foundation** in honor of **Hugh A. McAllister Jr., M.D.** This exhibition will be the first time his collection has been on view to the public. In 2012, McAllister [made a \\$10 million commitment](#) to UNC-Chapel Hill that included a collection of nearly 50 works of art valued at \$5.5 million for the Ackland Art Museum in addition to expanding an endowment dedicated to cardiovascular disease research at the **McAllister Heart Institute at the UNC School of Medicine**. McAllister, who passed away in July 2018, was a 1966 School of Medicine alumnus.

FREE AND LOW-COST PUBLIC PROGRAMS PRESENTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH “WAY OUT WEST”:

2nd Friday ArtWalk: Curator’s Keynote

June 14 | 6:00 PM

An illustrated introduction to “Way Out West” by its curator **Dana Cowen**, Sheldon Peck Curator for European and American Art before 1950. The galleries will remain open until 9 PM for the Museum’s monthly 2nd Friday ArtWalk evening hours. *Free; RSVP encouraged at ackland.org*

Music in the Galleries: Ryan Dial-Stanley

June 16 | 2-3 PM

Ryan Dial-Stanley, a member of the Lumbee Tribe, is a well-known flutist, performing artist, and educator. Mr. Dial-Stanley is currently a student in the UNC School of Medicine majoring in Clinical Lab Science. He has traveled across the state of North Carolina presenting programs on the history and culture of the Lumbee Tribe. He is also the co-chair of the Carolina Indian Circle and President of Phi Sigma Nu, the first Native American Fraternity. *Free, seating is first come first served.*

Family and Friends Sunday: Cartography

Learn about how maps served the artists of “Way Out West”

June 23 | 2-5 PM

Listen to stories about exploration chosen by Chapel Hill Public Library children’s librarians. See maps of the U.S. and meet cartography expert **Renée Bosman** from UNC Libraries. Watch the first of three selections from **PBS’ National Parks** documentary series to glimpse some of the natural wonders featured in the works of “Way Out West.” Enjoy exploring the art on view with a themed scavenger hunt and hands-on art-making activities for all ages. *Free and open to the public.*

Guided Tour: “Way Out West”

June 28, July 5, July 18, July 24; August 1, August 8, August 16, August 21, August 22, August 23 | 1:30 PM

Free, drop-in tour of “Way Out West,” led by an Ackland docent

2nd Friday ArtWalk: Pop-Up Exhibition of Artist Books

July 12 | 6-8 PM; Museum open 'til 9 PM

View artist books depicting images of the American West from the Sloane Art Library collection. Hear about “A Reader’s Guide to ‘Way Out West’” from Susan Brown, Director of the Chapel Hill Public Library. *Free and open to the public. Part of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro 2nd Friday ArtWalk.*

Art Adventures: “Painting” the Landscape with Pastels

July 13 2019 | 10:30 AM, 1:00 PM, 3:00 PM

\$5 per child; free for members at the Household level and above. RSVP at ackland.org

Family and Friends Sunday: The Great Outdoors

Consider the physicality of creating art featuring mountains, cliffs, and canyons.

July 28 2019 | 2-5 PM

Learn about rock climbing in our courtyard with **Triangle Rock Club Durham**. Learn how art and nature intersect at North Carolina State Parks with **Anjanée Bell**, Director of Arts in the Parks. Hear from **Johnny Randall**, the NCBG Director of Conservation. Catch the next selection of our **PBS National Parks** screenings in ART&. Enjoy exploring the art on view with a themed scavenger hunt and hands-on art-making activities for all ages. *Free and open to the public.*

Panel: Perspectives on “Way Out West”

August 9 2019 | 6 PM (Museum open 'til 9 PM)

Elizabeth Broun, Director Emerita of the Smithsonian American Art Museum

John Coffey, Deputy Director for Art and Jim and Betty Becher Curator of American and

Modern Art at the North Carolina Museum of Art **Dana Cowen**, Sheldon Peck Curator for

European and American Art before 1950 at the Ackland Art Museum. *Free. RSVP requested at*

ackland.org. Part of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro 2nd Friday ArtWalk.

How the West Was Told: An Evening of Art and Literature at the Ackland

August 9 2019 | 7 PM

Register for a book discussion program with Carolina Public Humanities that pairs “Way Out West” with Leslie Marmon Silko’s *The Storyteller*. The discussion of the book and a look at the art will be facilitated by UNC lecturer Jennifer Howard and Ackland Director of Academic Programs Carolyn Allmendinger. *\$38 per person (includes a copy of the book, light refreshments, and a reserved seat at the Panel: Perspectives on “Way Out West”). RSVP required; registration opening soon at ackland.org*

Art Adventures: Way Out Weaving

August 10 2019 | 10:30 AM, 1:00 PM, 3:00 PM

\$5 per child; free for members at the Household level and above. RSVP at ackland.org

Music in the Galleries: Brian and Mary Lewis

August 18 2019 | 2-3 PM

Vintage Country Music by Brian and Mary Lewis, with Nancy Bierman (bass)

Free, seating is first come first served.

Family and Friends Sunday: Protecting Our Environment

August 25 2019 | 2-5 PM

On the final day of “Way Out West,” explore the natural environments depicted in the exhibition with an eye towards protecting them for the future. Meet **Alan Weakly**, the Director of Herbarium at the North Carolina Botanical Garden, to learn about North Carolina’s native plants. Watch the last selection from **PBS National Parks** in ART&. At 3:30 PM, join “Way Out West” curator **Dana Cowen** for a Last Look Tour. Enjoy exploring the art on view with a themed scavenger hunt and hands-on art-making activities for all ages. *Free and open to the public.*

Last Look Tour

August 25 2019 | 3:30 PM

Last Look Tour of “Way Out West” led by exhibition curator **Dana Cowen**, Sheldon Peck Curator for European and American Art before 1950. *Free, no RSVP needed.*

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About the Ackland Art Museum: Featuring a year-round calendar of special exhibitions and dynamic public programs, the Ackland Art Museum on UNC-Chapel Hill’s historic campus is a local museum with a global outlook that bridges campus and community. Admission to the Ackland is free and accessible to all. The Ackland’s holdings include more than 18,000 works of art. The collection spans all cultures and time periods, showcasing the breadth of human creativity. A vital teaching resource, the museum’s mission is the art of understanding. Visitors can connect with the complexity and beauty of the wider world by getting close to art—the familiar, the unexpected, the challenging. The Ackland Art Museum is located at 101 South Columbia St. on the UNC Chapel Hill campus. Museum hours are Wednesday through Saturday 10 AM - 5 PM, and Sundays 1 PM - 5 PM. The museum is open until 9 PM for Chapel Hill-Carrboro’s monthly 2nd Friday ArtWalk. More information is available at ackland.org.

Image credit: Thomas Moran, American, born in England, 1837-1926: *Virgin River, Utah* (detail), 1908, oil on canvas, 20 x 30 in. Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The Hugh A. McAllister, Jr., M.D. Collection, 2019.15.22.