

# *Out West*



## **The Great American Landscape**

Organized by Meridian International Center in  
cooperation with the National Art Museum of China

# Participating Artists

<i>Page Allen</i>	<i>Patrick McFarlin</i>
<i>Duke Beardsley</i>	<i>David Meikle</i>
<i>Gregory Botts</i>	<i>Ed Mell</i>
<i>Dana Boussard</i>	<i>Robert Moore</i>
<i>Susan Brearey</i>	<i>Arlo Namingha</i>
<i>Charlie Burk</i>	<i>Dan Namingha</i>
<i>Julie Chapman</i>	<i>Lisa Nankivil</i>
<i>Russell Chatham</i>	<i>Davi Nelson</i>
<i>Elijah Cobb</i>	<i>Blake Neubert</i>
<i>Dudley Dana</i>	<i>Tom Palmore</i>
<i>Monte Dolack</i>	<i>Neil Patterson</i>
<i>Michael Drury</i>	<i>Howard Post</i>
<i>Dick Evans</i>	<i>James Randle</i>
<i>John Fincher</i>	<i>Kevin Red Star</i>
<i>Chuck Forsman</i>	<i>Thom Ross</i>
<i>Stephanie Frostad</i>	<i>Robert Seabeck</i>
<i>Tom Gilleon</i>	<i>A. D. Shaw</i>
<i>George Gogas</i>	<i>William Shepherd</i>
<i>Daniel Hole</i>	<i>Steven Shores</i>
<i>Donna Howell-Sickles</i>	<i>Gary Ernest Smith</i>
<i>Keith Jacobshagen</i>	<i>Jaune Quick-to-See Smith</i>
<i>James Floyd Jones</i>	<i>Kathryn Stats</i>
<i>Gary Kapp</i>	<i>Luis Tapia</i>
<i>John I. King, Diné (Navajo)</i>	<i>Victoria Taylor-Gore</i>
<i>Mark Knudsen</i>	<i>Theodore Waddell</i>
<i>Rhett Lynch</i>	<i>Parvin Zabetian</i>
<i>William Matthews</i>	
<i>Gordon McConnell</i>	

# *Out West*

## **The Great American Landscape**

February 16 -  
March 4, 2007

at

Meridian International Center  
Washington, D.C.

Presented by  
Meridian International Center

in cooperation with the  
National Art Museum of China

**Message from Ambassador Stuart W. Holliday**  
**Meridian International Center**

**M**uch has been written on the relationship between the United States and China. Whatever one's particular view, this relationship will be a defining one for the world during this century and beyond. Through this exhibit, we hope that the Chinese and American people will come to know more about each other—in particular the heritage of the American West and its natural beauty. This is important as China looks to develop and preserve its vast western region. The artists represented in this exhibit are all “cultural ambassadors” who are helping Meridian carry out its mission of promoting international understanding, and we thank them for their work.

I am grateful to our Chinese partners, The National Art Museum of China, the Embassy of China, and American supporters, in particular American Airlines, Anheuser-Busch Foundation, FedEx Corporation, and Tyco International, for their help and cooperation in making this exhibit possible.

We hope that all who see this exhibit will see beauty, creativity, and friendship.

**Ambassador Stuart Holliday**  
**President**  
**Meridian International Center**

**Message from His Excellency Zhou Wenzhong  
Ambassador of The People's Republic of China to  
the United States of America**

I am pleased to extend my warm congratulations on the opening of the exhibition, *Out West: The Great American Landscape*, at the National Art Museum of China in late March in Beijing and wish to send my warm greetings to everyone attending this wonderful exhibition.

Arts are a window on the history, life and spirit of a nation. *Out West: The Great American Landscape*, featuring a stunning array of western American art depicting legendary cowboys, dramatic Western landscapes and Native American culture, will showcase to the Chinese public the diversity and richness of American culture and heritage, and enhance the spirit of understanding and respect between our two countries and peoples.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to those involved in making this exhibition possible. My special thanks go to the Meridian International Center for its continuous efforts to support and take part in the China-U.S. culture exchange, which helps strengthen the bonds of cooperation and friendship between our two great nations.

Best wishes for an outstanding exhibition.

**His Excellency Zhou Wenzhong  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's  
Republic of China to the United States of America**

## Looking West: The Evolving American Landscape **Amy Scott**

**I**n 1893, 50,000 men, women, and children lined up just outside of Guthrie, in Oklahoma Territory. At the sound of a pistol shot, they raced into the horizon to stake a claim to a piece of what was then called “no man’s land”—territory recently opened by the U.S. Government for settlement. By 1905, more than 150,000 settlers had carved up six million acres of this “no man’s land” and paved the way for Oklahoma statehood.

Much of the West opened to settlers in a similar manner. The land the “pioneers” laid claim to was not, in fact, no man’s land. It was occupied by indigenous Indian tribes, like the Cherokee in Oklahoma. The Cherokee had legally owned the land sought by the settlers, but had been divested of it a few years earlier. Now Indians and settlers had to share the vast western spaces.

Most Indians did not conceive of land in the same, proprietary terms that more recent arrivals did. For many native peoples, the land was not something to control and carve up, but a storied place in which the experience of generations was inscribed. In this sense, land could be inviting and dangerous, generous in abundance or spiteful in its scarcity. Native people knew both aspects of the land well, as part of a cyclical and regenerative world. American Indians to this day have a great reverence for nature, the land, and the animals whose habitat it is.

As the ownership of the land changed, so did the lives of its residents, old and new. All across the West, settlers pushed onward—by wagon, on horseback and on foot—often encountering hardship, hostile Indians and other dangers in the uncharted territory. Thus began the development of the towns and cities, ranches and reservations and the still vast empty spaces of today’s West.

With widespread settlement, the western landscape took on new meaning. The first eastern artists to see the Rocky Mountains or California’s Yosemite Valley beheld a place of spectacular natural beauty, a space of powerful symbolism and considerable potential, both economic and artistic. By the mid-1860s, artists had begun to attach both religious and political meanings to these and other western lands, portraying them as natural riches available for those citizens spiritually and morally worthy of America’s bi-coastal destiny. For a nation lacking in a cohesive, cultural foundation like that of Europe, the western landscape was physical evidence of both America’s geologic past and its future as an international cultural force. Surely a place this rich in beauty and resources was destined for greatness. Differences in visions of the land between the settlers and the indigenous peoples sometimes caused conflicts, many of which are still being resolved.

Iconic views of the western landscape by artists—painters such as George Catlin and Albert Bierstadt, the photographer Ansel Adams,

filmmaker John Ford, and others—are well known today. Because these artists often traversed a fine line between art, illustration, and entertainment, art of the American West has long had a uniquely popular and emotionally resonant dimension. This in turn has given western art special status, as critics either vigorously defend, debate, or ignore it altogether. Increasing interest in western imagery as an important source within American art has led to a broadening of this trend in both directions: art historians, museums, and critics have begun to re-think the work of historic and later artists as part of a larger American picture. This historic, mythic place, and its relationship to the contemporary West, has recently inspired a much larger body of artistic work. Today, not only iconic western resources such as land and water, but also religion, ritual, and even urban industry, are drawing the attention of artists.

This crucial idea of the West as a vibrant artistic place inscribed with multiple meanings is at the heart of the exhibition *Out West: The Great American Landscape*. The artists represented bring a number of these concepts to our attention in ways designed to make us think more carefully about the West. The show positions the western landscape as a space of both romantic beauty and a contested site that can be seen in several ways. Classic scenes of iconic places such as Canyon de Chelly or the Grand Canyon are here, but so are highways and roadsides, the actual means of transit between the two that we all know to be there but seldom see as part of the landscape itself. Highways, and the cities they connect, are of course part of the West. While the show focuses on the big and open spaces in between, we nonetheless are left with a sense of transit between the two, between old and new, historic and modern. The West has long been a place of movement after all, which becomes a central theme of the selection, as we pass from one space to another, often via horse, or wagon, but also in cars. This notion of movement is countered by the equally significant presence of fences and boundaries, the ranches, posts and wire that divided the West in the late nineteenth century, separating public from private spaces, people from land, neighbors from friends and enemies alike.

*Out West* sees the landscape as a big sky, the body of a horse, a Hollywood movie, even a highway. As it asks us to consider new versions of the West alongside the old, the exhibition reveals current and past cultural meanings of landscape and challenges us to broaden the way we see, understand, and use these same spaces. Because the West is an increasingly urban place where people of Native, European, Asian, and many other backgrounds live, this power to re-think or re-imagine the land now comes with even greater responsibility.

**Amy Scott**

**Curator of Visual Arts**

**Autry National Center, Los Angeles, Calif.**

## INTRODUCTION

Message from

**Nancy Matthews, Meridian International Center**

In April 2004, *Ancient Threads, Newly Woven* opened at Meridian International Center in Washington, D.C. This exhibition, which focused on China's western region and the Silk Road, was organized by Meridian, in cooperation with the China International Exhibition Agency. The delegation present at the Washington opening included our Chinese curator and some of the participating artists. It was during their visit that the idea of continuing a meaningful exchange was discussed. Thus the idea for an exhibition of the American West to tour China was born.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington and the Ministry of Culture in Beijing were enthusiastic about the continuation of the project. The U.S. tour of *Ancient Threads* would open vistas for Americans on China's distant western regions; an exhibit on the American West would do much the same for Chinese audiences, giving them a glimpse into this unique part of America. It is through such exchanges that increased mutual understanding comes about.

Now, three years after those original discussions began, we present *Out West: The Great American Landscape* as our return offering to the Chinese people. We have collaborated on this endeavor with the prestigious National Art Museum of China. The Museum's Director, Mr. Fan Di'an, has been a true partner in the project, working with us to organize the tour and to print the Chinese version of the catalogue, as well as giving the exhibition prime space at the Museum. Also working on the exhibit organization is Ms. Xu Hong, who was the Chinese curator of *Ancient Threads*. The Ministry of Culture and the Chinese Embassy have given their full support to our efforts.

The works included in *Out West* have been gathered from museums, galleries, collections and individual artists across the western states. Choices have been difficult because of the vast number of wonderful artists inspired by the West. Pamela Bailey, former Curator of the Mobil Collection, who has worked on several Meridian exhibitions, and Nancy Matthews traveled to four different areas in search of works to include: Cody, Wyoming; Missoula Montana; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Salt Lake City, Utah. In these central places for Western art, we found artists from all over the West. With the help of a broad network, we have gathered additional works from



California, Colorado, Idaho, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Washington State. Some artists work in many places.

The exhibition focuses on an expanded definition of landscape, to include cultural, artistic and personal landscape. The vast skies, the mountains, the cowboys, the Native Americans and the grand animals who share the land are all here. The film world, which introduced so many to the American West, is also included in the display of some vintage movie posters and lobby cards.

We are pleased that the National Geographic Museum has organized a companion photographic exhibition, *Under the Big Sky: Images of the American West*, featuring some of their best known photographers. This exhibition will travel with *Out West* on its China tour.

Their travel to China makes these collections very special. Together they serve as an ambassador to our Chinese friends, seeking to acquaint them with one of the most magnificent areas of America and to present a real sense of place. *Out West* and *Under the Big Sky* will visit six cities in China, where they will be shown at major museums:

**Beijing:** National Art Museum of China

**Urumqi:** Urumqi Art Museum

**Xi'an:** Shanxi Art Museum

**Shanghai:** Shanghai Art Museum

**Qingdao:** Qingdao Modern Art Center

**Hong Kong:** Heritage Discovery Centre.

*Out West* has been made possible by the generosity of our sponsors: American Airlines, Anheuser-Busch Foundation, FedEx Corporation, and Tyco International. The exhibition tour and Chinese language catalogue production have been made possible by the National Art Museum of China. Upon its return from China in late 2007, the exhibition will be on view in Missoula, Montana.

**Nancy Matthews**

**Co-Curator, *Out West***

**Vice President, Arts and Cultural Affairs**

**Meridian International Center**



## Dick Evans

*Five Red with Green*, 2006

Acrylic on canvas

48" x 48"

Courtesy of Joyce Robins  
Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dick is a New Mexico artist.

*I seldom begin a painting with any particular goal in mind. I often start by simply loading a brush with*

*a color and making a stroke. As I react to the form, I lay down the next stroke, and the entire painting thus evolves.*

*I love the New Mexico landscape. I love to look at any landscape, or cityscape, or interior. All that information is continually filed away, sometimes only reappearing years later, and I say, "Oh, yes! I painted that last year in one of my works."*

*I like the viewer to experience increased awareness through my work. Hopefully, this can lead to heightened emotional and intellectual richness for the viewer. This applies to me as well: I probably learn more through experiencing my paintings than does any other viewer!*

## John Fincher

*The Old Corral*, 2005

Oil on linen

40" x 60"

Courtesy of Gerald Peters Gallery,  
Santa Fe, New Mexico



John lives in New Mexico.

*The inspiration for my painting stems from the split rail fences and old corrals of the western United States. I have abstracted these weathered wood forms (with an eye to the past) in a composition which has historical reference to an early Italian movement called "Futurism." All of my work, both past and present, is informed by the spirit of the West, my home for 30 years.*



## Chuck Forsman

*Lines of Site*, 2002

Oil on masonite panel

44.75" x 70.75"

Courtesy of Gerald Peters  
Gallery, Santa Fe, New  
Mexico