

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Changing Perceptions
of the
Western Landscape

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

What is landscape art? Since antiquity humans have depicted our relationship to the place where we live. The land and our impact on it is the subject of landscape art. It includes anything an artist wants to depict in the landscape from natural to man-made elements such as fences, factories and vehicles.

Landscape art is as varied as the artists who create it. Through paintings, sculptures, photography and prints, artists challenge us to look at the environment in new and surprising ways. Some art makes us aware of the human impact on the environment, while other art may encourage us to look closely at elements of the landscape we ordinarily overlook.

Landscape is central to understanding the place where we live. The artists in this exhibition provide us with a new perspective on the Western landscape that we inhabit. Through exploring artwork in this exhibition students can immerse themselves in places both familiar and new. They can examine the issues surrounding our impact on the environment. Students can also reflect on these experiences and begin to understand their personal connections to nature.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Included in this guide are suggested grade-level appropriate activities to prepare students and teachers for their visit. The activities use art as a springboard for exploring close looking, questioning and personal meaning for students. In addition, follow-up activities provide students with creative ways to reflect on their museum visit. Following these activities are full-color images of select artwork in the exhibition and other landscape art on display at The Museum.

What is in the Landscape?

Grades K – 3

DESCRIPTION

Many artists record what they observe in nature. In this activity, students will explore and identify aspects of the Western landscape portrayed in both historical and contemporary artwork.



John Fincher, *The Burning of Albuquerque*, oil on canvas, 42.5 x 55 in.

WARM UP

A landscape is a painting that shows the natural scenery a person would see outdoors, such as mountains, trees, and rivers. Ask students what types of things they like to do outdoors. Have they noticed mountains, trees and rivers when they were outside? What other features have they seen? If time permits, show students pictures of the Sandias, the Rio Grande and cottonwoods and discuss how these are part of their natural environment.

EXPLORING THE ARTWORK

While looking at the images provided, assist students with the following questions to help them examine the artists' depictions of the Western landscape.

What do you see in this artwork? Talk about which of these things you would find in nature.

What details of nature did the artist paint or draw? For example, point out the colors of the sunset in the John Fincher painting, *The Burning of Albuquerque*.

What do you think this place is like? In Wes Hemphill's painting, *Counterthesis*, the environment looks damaged. There are no leaves on the trees, no grass on the ground and no color to the landscape.

What do you like about this artwork? Encourage students to talk about what they notice in the artwork and if they like certain colors or other elements of the work.

ARTWORKS TO EXAMINE

John Fincher, *The Burning of Albuquerque*
Kenneth M. Adams, *Untitled* (landscape)
Charlie Burk, *Sundance*
Wes Hempel, *Counterthesis*

AFTER THE TOUR

Try this activity to further explore the Western landscape in your classroom.

CREATE

Have students create their own pictures of a landscape. Students can create a picture from memory such as one of their backyard, or go outside and make a scene based on something they observe. Ask them to talk about their pictures to the larger group.

What is your Perspective?

Grades 3 – 5

DESCRIPTION

Some artists express their ideas about the landscape by including as much as they can while others are interested in observing the details of something close-up. In this activity students will compare and contrast the elements of artwork that show close-up and more expansive views.



Charlie Burk, *Sundance*, oil on canvas, 72 x 96 in.

WARM UP

Explore these different views with the students by looking at the environment that surrounds the school. Find a tree and ask the students to describe what they see. Then take a leaf off the tree and ask students to describe it. What do they notice about the leaf when it is not part of the larger tree?

EXPLORING THE ARTWORK

While looking at the images provided, assist students with the following questions to help them examine the artists' depictions of the landscape.

What do you see in this artwork? Review what is in the foreground (front), middle ground and background of the work where appropriate.

What details of nature did the artist emphasize? For example, in Charlie Burk's painting, *Sundance*, point out the multi-colored blades of grass that indicate the reflecting sunlight.

What do you think this place is like? Why do you feel that way? In Vincent Valdez's painting, *Burn, Baby Burn*, of a fire outside of Los Angeles, the natural landscape seems small in comparison to the city.

What do you like about this artwork? Encourage students to talk about what they notice in the artwork and if they like certain colors or other elements of the work.

ARTWORKS TO EXAMINE

Charlie Burk, *Sundance*

Guy Laramée, *The Grand Library*

Vincent Valdez, *Burn, Baby Burn*

Erika Osborne, *Looking for Moran*

AFTER THE TOUR

Try this activity to further explore depictions of the landscape in your classroom.

CREATE

Have students create two different drawings of the same landscape, one full-sized and the other a close-up of it. Ask them to write a paragraph describing the difference between the two.

What is the Message?

Grades 6 – 8

DESCRIPTION

Some artists create art to make us aware of our impact on the environment. In this activity, students will analyze works of art to determine the message each artist is making about the environment. Students will be encouraged to create their own artwork to raise awareness about an environmental issue that is important to them.



Wes Hempel, *Counterthesis*, oil on canvas, 56 x 80 in.

WARM UP

Have a discussion to determine the environmental issues students are aware of. What issues are the students most concerned about and why?

EXPLORING THE ARTWORK

While looking at the images provided, assist students with the following questions to help them examine the artworks to determine the environmental statements.

What do you see in this artwork?

What details did the artist emphasize? For example, in Wes Hempel's painting, *Counterthesis*, the landscape looks damaged and dying while the two figures stand on what appears to be a water tank or well that holds a precious commodity in the West.

What do you think this place is like? Why do you feel that way?

What do you like about this artwork? Encourage students to talk about what they notice in the artwork and if they like certain colors or other elements of the work.

ARTWORKS TO EXAMINE

Amelia Bauer and Robert de Saint Phalle, *Manifest Destiny*

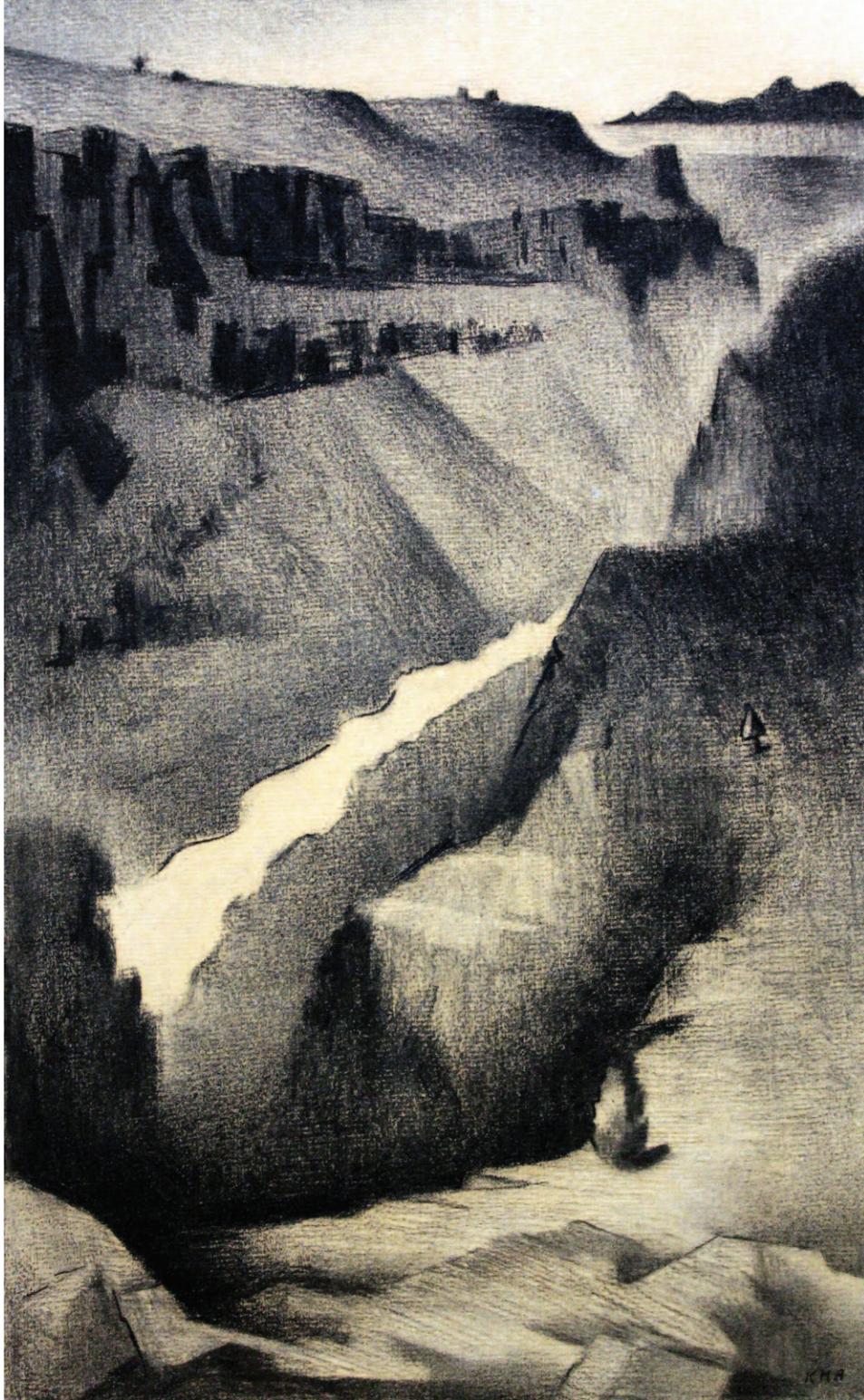
Donald Woodman, *Yellow Peril*

Erika Osborne, *The Chasm of Bingham*

Wes Hempel, *Counterthesis*

CREATE

Have students create their own work of art about an environmental issue that is important to them. If time permits, they can do additional research on the topic. Students can either work individually or in groups if they share a similar issue. Have them discuss their work and the message it conveys to the larger group.



Kenneth M. Adams, *Untitled* (landscape), charcoal on paper, 15 x 9 1/2 in.



Charlie Burk, *Sundance*, oil on canvas, 72 x 96 in.



Amelia Bauer and Robert de Saint Phalle, *Manifest Destiny*, carbon fiber, epoxy, enamel, polyurethane, and steel, 12 x 96 x 48 in.



John Fincher, *The Burning of Albuquerque*, oil on canvas, 42.5 x 55 in.



Wes Hempel, *Counterthesis*, oil on canvas, 56 x 80 in.



Guy Laramée, *The Grand Library*, carved books on steel framework, 60 x 96 x 36 in.



Vincent Valdez, *Burn, Baby Burn*, oil on canvas, 96 x 144 in.



Donald Woodman, *Yellow Peril*, multi-panel print on canvas, 150 x 176 in.



Alan Paine Radebaugh, *Ghost of Sea: King's Cake*, 2010, oil on canvas, 50 x 120 in. Lent by the artist

EXHIBITION DATES

May 18 – September 1

 **The Albuquerque Museum**
OF ART AND HISTORY

19th and Mountain Rd NW (505) 243-7255 or 311 • NM Voice/Relay or 711
Cultural Services Department, City of Albuquerque. Richard J. Berry, Mayor • www.cabq.gov/museum

