

Sale is second to show at the Autry's American West exhibit



Kim Wiggins' "Stampede 1866, Goodnight Loving Trail," oil on linen, 48x60 in. (Courtesy of the Autry National Center)



By **Steve Appleford** · Contact Reporter

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For decades, Los Angeles and surrounding cities have been a center for art and artists, with major venues like the Getty and the Museum of Contemporary Art, and entire movements rising from local groups of artists. The focus is often on the contemporary, the modern, post-modern and the aggressively forward-leaning.

There is also a place for more traditional painters of landscapes and quintessentially American scenes at the Autry National Center in Griffith Park, where its annual "Masters of the American West Fine Art Exhibition and Sale" is in its final weeks.

"They have great talent here that I call aesthetic realists," says Peter Adams, one of the 75 artists included in the show. He's been included in the annual Autry exhibition for more than a decade, his water-themed landscapes representing just one of many sides of the western theme. "They come from all over the United States, though it's mostly Western in concept."

"A hundred years ago, the traditional artists were on top of the heap. They didn't let modern artists into their museums, and it absolutely reversed. Since about 1920 or '30, those museums haven't shown more traditional artists. We're very thankful that the Autry is doing that."



"Navajo Skyline" by John Bye, acrylics on linen canvas, 30x50. (Courtesy of the Autry National Center)

In the show, William Acheff depicts American Indian culture in the style of the great Dutch still-life painters. Iowa-born Lori Forest paints vivid wildlife scenes, including her "Riverwalk," depicting a massive bull elk walking down a stream. Native American sculptor Doug Hyde carves scenes of Native culture in bronze and stone.

Adams points to work of Howard Terpening, whose "The Honor of Being Pipe Carrier" depicts an American Indian warrior on horseback galloping down a hill, far in advance of other Native riders. Terpening specializes in Native American scenes. "He's really an expert — like an anthropologist on how they lived and the different rituals they performed," Adams says. "They really become quite stalwarts in that field. It's fascinating to discover."

There are also pieces that depict the specific experiences of Chinese-American immigrants and African Americans landing in the West.

"It affects a lot of people, especially a lot of kids that come," says Adams, who lives in Pasadena. "You see hundreds of kids at one time going through the exhibition. They get a great sense of their cultural heritage in the West."



"Summer Morning at Russian Gulch" by Peter Adams. (Courtesy of the Autry National Center)

Since 1993, Adams has also been the president of the California Art Club, founded in 1909 by early plein air painters in the state. The Art Club is hosting its own 105-year anniversary exhibition at the Autry shortly after the "American West" show closes on March 20, and among its 200 artists will be several with pieces in both exhibits.

"It's got a little bit more L.A. flavor to it," Adams explains. "There are people with tattoos or kids on roller skates and Venice Beach and so forth. We also have a lot of landscape artists who paint things like traffic jams on freeways."

Adams has four pieces in the "Masters of the American West" show, and three have already sold. But Adams says he is less impressed by the success of sales to collectors than he is the bigger picture represented on the walls.

"That's very fortunate," he says of the sales, then adds, "but quite frankly to be in the show is the important thing. Sales aren't so much. Being included in that category of these fine artists is really the most important thing. The sales are just icing on the cake."

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What: "Masters of the American West Fine Art Exhibition and Sale"

Where: The Autry, 4700 Western Heritage Way, Los Angeles

When: Through March 20. Open Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Mondays.

More info: theautry.org and (323) 495-4252

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