

Masters of the American West

Autry National Center, January 31-March 8



Jenness Cortez, *The Legend Makers*, acrylic, 24 x 36.

WHEN SOME of the most admired and accomplished artists in the country set aside their best work so that it can be part of one particular show, you know that show is among the cream of the crop. For the past 18 years that has been the case with the Masters of the American West show at the Autry National Center in Los Angeles. This year's event, which runs from January 31 through March 8, features 79 undisputed American masters of painting and sculpture inspired by the historic, mythic, and contemporary West.

This year's top-shelf lineup includes Bill Anton, Howard Terpning, William Acheff, George Carlson, Morgan Weistling, Tammy Garcia, and Mian Situ. Along with large-scale signature works by established and emerging artists, the show features a popular miniatures wall. In addition, several guest artists take part. Opening-day events include a

talk by award-winning sculptor Walter Matia, a panel discussion with collectors, and a chuck wagon luncheon and awards presentation. On Saturday evening a cocktail reception and fixed-price sale take place, with all artwork remaining on view through March 8. The show raises funds for the Autry's ongoing programming and projects.

"The artists are so committed, and the art is phenomenal," observes longtime Autry trustee John Geraghty, who founded the invitational show and serves as special advisor. That commitment is exemplified by such artists as Wyoming-based wildlife and landscape painter Tucker Smith, a participant almost since the show's inception. Although he is currently hard at work preparing for an important wildlife exhibition, he made sure to set aside an exceptional piece for this show: *FORAGER*, which portrays an

enormous grizzly with sharp eyes fixed on a mountain stream, ready to pounce on a meal.

Logan Maxwell Hagege's striking signature offering, *IT'S A NEW LIFE*, diverges from much of the Los Angeles-based painter's work in that its subjects are interacting, rather than quietly absorbed in thought. Several American Indian figures stand together, talking, while two others gaze off from a hillside and billowing clouds gather in the distance. The composition and its intriguing title spark curiosity, and Hagege invites viewers to "bring their own story into the piece."

The extraordinary artistic diversity represented at the show is reflected in the inclusion of Pennsylvania artist Robert Griffing, whose paintings offer a glimpse into the world of 18th- and early 19th-century Eastern Woodlands Indians. Griffing bases his well-researched, deftly rendered imagery on diaries, letters, and other historical documents of the time. *PUSHING THROUGH THE BILLOWS*, for example, depicts Ottawa Indians muscling their six-man birch-bark canoe through crashing breakers on Lake Erie. While not expressly a western theme, Griffing notes that for the East Coast's earliest European inhabitants, western Pennsylvania was the West. "It all ties in," he says of his contributions to the show. "It's all part of the big American story." —Gussie Fauntleroy

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www.theautry.org/masters

See more work at www.southwestart.com/events/masters-feb2015.



Robert Griffing, Pushing Through the Billows, oil, 46 x 50.



Oreland C. Joe Sr., Grandfather's Star Drum, Utah alabaster, 20 x 10 x 10.



▲ **Tucker Smith, Forager, oil, 20 x 24.**
◀ **Logan Maxwell Hagege, It's a New Life, oil, 34 x 50.**