



DIVERSE MEDIUMS OFFER

INTERPRETATIONS

OF THE WEST



Lady of Yellowstone | 48" x 60" | Oil on canvas | Kira Fercho

by MICHELE CORRIEL



Title? | xx"x xx" | medium? | Brenda Stredwick



Purple Mountain Majesty | 36"x 36" | Encaustic | Shima Shanti



One Strike | 48"x 60" | Mixed Media on Birch Panel | Dennis Bredow

In this summer's art feature, four artists speak to place in a way that broadens our idea of the West. Their works invite viewers to see beyond the surface and delve into the emotions and stories embedded within. Four diverse mediums offer rich explorations and new insights into complex visions of the West.

This season, Kira Fercho focuses on Glacier National Park and her connection with the topography that embodies an ancient spirituality going back to the Native people who have lived there for centuries and continue to have a presence. Working in an encaustic medium, Shimi Shanti conveys the peaceful tableau of tides and skies. The Courtney Collins Fine Art Gallery showcases painter Dennis Bredow whose work overlays history with nostalgia, touching on our collective consciousness of the West. Brenda Stredwick repurposes discarded materials like old cars and milk cans, truck hoods and oil barrels, to create a new way to think of our own histories.

Together, these artists offer visions of place that are both familiar and fresh. Their unique perspectives and mediums open doors to conversations about nature and the transformative power of art.

Dennis Bredow

COURTNEY COLLINS FINE ART



Home on the Range | 60" x 48" | Mixed Media on Birch Panel | Dennis Bredow



Little Big Horn | 48" x 36"



Les Cavaliers | 48" x 60"

Dennis Bredow filters his fine art through the lens of commercial art, drawing inspiration from Madison Avenue mid-century advertising. His work embarks across the rich visual landscape of the West, blending iconic imagery with the white-spark gleaming wink of a hero.

"I have always loved art and assumed I would need a realistic career," Bredow says. "At the time I still thought of fine art and commercial art as two separate things and so I studied graphic design and animation."

The idea of coupling finely drawn artwork alongside bold sales slogans that fairly jumped from the page both unsettled and enamored him.

"About 20 years ago I started painting for myself, and I found my love of advertising and illustration was rooted in this mid-century era," he says. "I love Rockwell and Leyendecker – all those beautiful illustrations that were done for cigarettes and Coca-Cola. I fell in love with that."

It's not hard to draw the line from advertising to fine art in Bredow's work. He seems to create a history in his art, by following the idea of a piece, whether he's adding actual pages as an underpainting, or "painting"

folds and creases into the finished piece. His search for the real within the confines of the surreal challenges the viewer to come to terms with the idea of nostalgia.

"I never thought about the marketability of it; I just painted what I liked," he says. "But what I found is that era has a broad appeal. It combines fine art and commercial art in a way – some people want an abstract painting, on the wall – but these land in an area where people can picture it in their home or it calls back to some memory of growing up, or their childhood."

However, when looking at a Bredow piece, don't stop looking after the initial impression. There is so much more to the work. There might be old pages from newspapers underneath the first coat of paint, peeking through the colors. There might be a quote, or a title, an ad for Western Saddle, or old Daisy BB gun targets, hinting at the underlying impetus for the painting. There's always a little bit more to discover.

Despite his traditional background in graphic design, or perhaps because of it, Bredow's artistic inspiration took a transformative turn upon visiting the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). He found himself profoundly moved by the work he encountered.

The combination of photography and text by John Baldessari, the compelling wittiness of Barbara Kruger, and Shepard Fairey's textile works left their mark on him.

"After I saw a show of Shepard Fairey's textile work in person, his handmade paper with printed graphics on top, I found so much inspiration," Bredow says. "I started playing with collage and painting with a trowel. I fell in love with it; it forced me to loosen up and embrace imperfection."

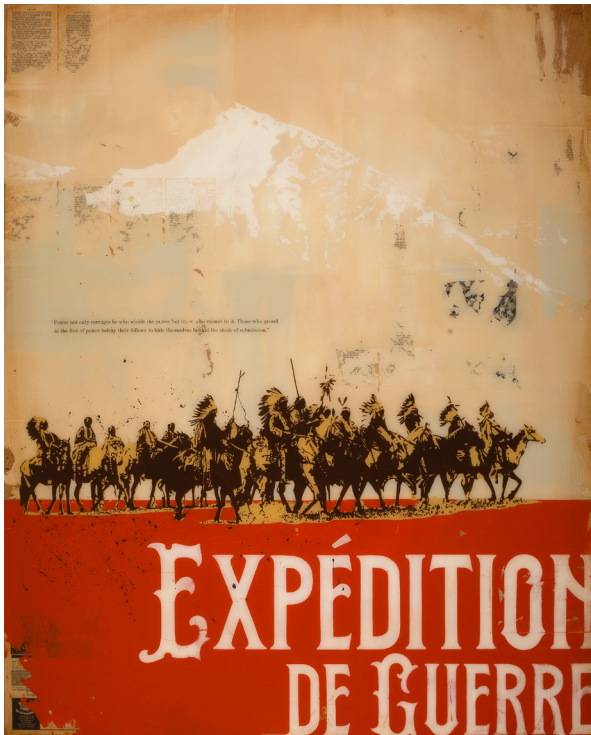
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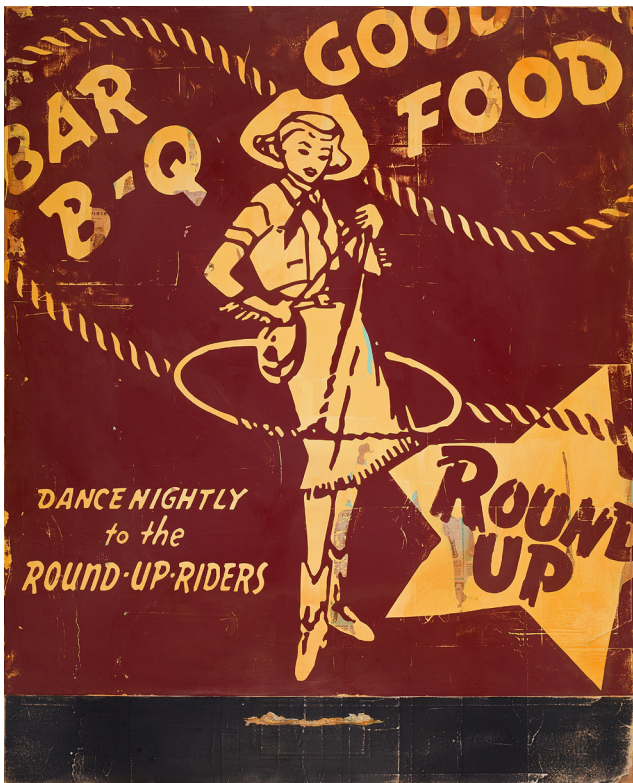
—Dennis Bredow, Artist



Expedition de Guerre | 48”x 60”



Le Sentier Cherokee | 48”x 48”



Round Up | 48”x 48”

Looking at his practice through the idea of showing the vulnerability of his work opened him up to texture and depth and gave him a place where his art seemed to find a home. “When I started sanding it, I had this thought that this work could have been done in the ‘50s,” Bredow says. “I would sand it, touch it up again, aging it and giving it a past, a modern retelling.”

The show this summer at Courtney Collins Fine Art in Big Sky is titled Striking West. The gallery opening will be July 2. The show, based on vintage Western matchbooks (only much larger, 60” by 48”) speaks to a point in time when bars and restaurants all had bowls of matchbooks available to their customers.

“I’m trying to use a lot of the elements, creases, folds, staple holes; I love vintage packaging and the idea of playing with scale,” he says. “Graphically, they are so appealing, they had to read quickly.”

Many of the paintings are Montana-based, like *One Strike, One Ride*, inspired by a matchbook from the 1941 Great Falls Ro-deo. The magic of Bedow’s works are the treasures beneath the paint. In this one there are advertisements from an old newspaper. The result is like stepping into a time warp. Of course, the painting is exponentially larger than an actual matchbook, but the color and the authenticity of imagery is transpor-tive.

They all have what Bredow calls “that matchbook charm,” which might be translated into vinyl barstools and gouged wood tables, with a waitress serving bourbon and branch water, to keep company with the ashtray and matchbook sitting on the table.

“My grandparents smoked, every restaurant had them, but there is something very nostalgic about it, to me, it’s the nexus of advertising and art,” Bredow says.

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—Courtney Collins, Owner, Courtney Collins Fine Art



Ski in Featherfleece | 48”x 48”



John Wayne Slept Here Pioneer | 48”x 60”

Courtney Collins, owner of Courtney Collins Fine Art, is impressed by how Bredow does his research for all his pieces. “He does have such an awareness of his own art in terms of the history of art,” she says. “He’s so thoughtful, he has so much content and information. He really does his homework.”

One of the things Collins loves about Bredlow is how his work sells itself. “I have a collector who collected 15 of his pieces,” she says. “That really speaks to the kind of appeal he evokes from viewers of his art. This collector bought five pieces and commissioned six more and then bought several more after that. People come into the gallery and it’s like something they’ve never seen before.”

She appreciates the complexity of his work, the layers, and the connotations that his work brings to mind. “His background in advertising and film are so important in his art,” Collins says. “It informs his work in an authentic way, and it gives his work substance. Last year he did a series based on Louis L’Amour books ... he managed to capture the romance and grit of the American West.”

Five years ago, Bredow finally made it to Montana, a place he’d always wanted to visit. Walking around in Big Sky, he happened into Collins’ gallery.

“I spent an hour in there,” he recalls. “Then I started following her gallery on the socials. I told my wife if I ever get into a gallery in Montana, that’s the gallery I want to be in.”

Then opportunity knocked. Now Courtney Collins Fine Art represents all of Bredow’s work and is his only gallery on his website.

“I couldn’t ask for anything more,” Bredow says. “Courtney is passionate about art and has been a tremendous partner. It is truly a dream come true for me.”



Learn to Ski | 48”x 48”