

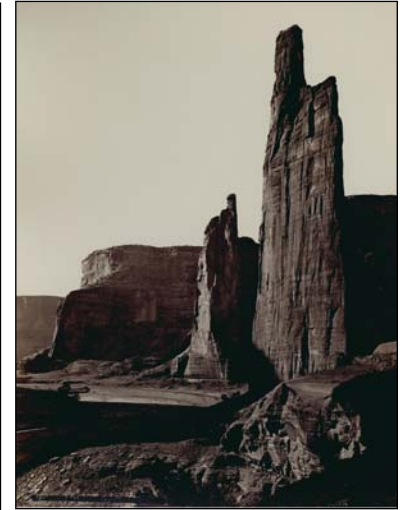
PICTURING THE WEST: MASTERWORKS OF 19TH CENTURY LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY



William Henry Jackson
Cascades from Mt. Blackmore, M.T.,
ca. 1871-73



Carleton E. Watkins
The domes from Sentinel Dome, 1866



John Hillers
Captains of the Cañon (Spider Rock),
Cañon de Chelley, Arizona, 1879

There is in the entire region of the [Shoshone] falls such wildness of beauty that a feeling pervades the mind almost unconsciously that you are, if not the first white man who has ever trod that trail, certainly one of the very few who have ventured so far. From the island above the falls you may not see the great leap that the water takes, but you will certainly feel sensible of the fact that you are in the presence of one of Nature's greatest spectacles as you listen to the roar of the falling water and gaze down the stream over the fall at the wild scene beyond.

- Timothy O'Sullivan

If this business don't give us a living we will go and squat on some government land and raise spuds.

- Carleton E. Watkins, in a letter to his wife

art2art is pleased to have assembled this focused survey of 19th century American Western landscape photography which – in terms of sheer print quality – is arguably the finest such survey in recent memory. The show presents some of the most sumptuous mammoth-plate work extant by Carleton Watkins, William Henry Jackson, Eadweard Muybridge and F. Jay Haynes, and provides a great opportunity to compare and contrast their approaches to capturing the “sublime” in the unspoilt Western landscape.

The exhibition title itself involves a subtle double-entendre: not only are these pictures of the West (of course), but it makes us ruminant on the fact that, to a large degree, pictures such as these were the means by which the American public came to understand the Western frontier in its collective mind's eye. In other words, just as in the mid-20th century, America's collective picture of the West came largely through Hollywood (the films of John Ford and his peers), so

too, in the second half of the 19th century, it was really Watkins who taught America what Yosemite looked like, prior to its designation as the nation's first National Park; likewise Haynes with Yellowstone; and Jackson, John Hillers, and Timothy O'Sullivan with the mountain West through their roles as the expeditionary photographers in the official geological surveys conducted by Hayden, Powell, Wheeler and King.

As highlighted in the accompanying text panels, Picturing the West resonates with museum audiences on several different levels simultaneously. It is, first of all, a visual synopsis of the Era of Exploration in American history, and a touchstone for discussion of the issues involved in the opening of the American West. Secondly, the show works on a purely aesthetic level: a great Watkins mammoth plate is now seen as comparable to a great painting by Thomas Cole, Thomas Moran or Albert Bierstadt. And thirdly, through their memorable pictures, we come to know a truly colorful group of American pioneer-artist-entrepreneurs, ranging from Haynes, the multi-tasking concessionaire of Yellowstone; to Hillers, whose spiritual communing with the Indians led them to christen him "Myself in the Water"; to Muybridge, who adopted his unspellable name after emigrating from England, beat a sensational murder rap, and – thanks to a famous wager involving Leland Stanford – invented stop-action photography and secured his place in history as the "Father of the Motion Picture."

A small selection of rare East Coast mammoth plates is also included for purposes of comparison, most notably a triple-mammoth Jackson panorama of Lake Placid, NY.

THIS EXHIBITION FEATURES WORKS BY:

- Henry Hamilton Bennett
- F. Jay Haynes
- John Hillers
- William Henry Jackson
- Thomas Johnson
- Eadweard Muybridge
- Timothy O'Sullivan
- Carleton E. Watkins



William Henry Jackson
Lake Placid and Mirror Lake from the Stevens House, Adirondack Mountains, 1902

EXHIBITION INFORMATION

- Number of photographs: 35
- Frame sizes: various from 18 x 22 inches to 28 x 88 inches
- Linear feet: 210
- Rental fee: \$20,000 for 8 week rental

Additional weeks may be booked for an extra 10% per week.