



Branding the American West: Paintings and Films, 1900–1950 (The Charles M. Russell Center Series on Art and Photography of the American West)

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Artists and filmmakers in the early twentieth century reshaped our vision of the American West. In particular, the Taos Society of Artists and the California-based artist Maynard Dixon departed from the legendary depiction of the “Wild West” and fostered new images, or brands, for western art. This volume, illustrated with more than 150 images, examines select paintings and films to demonstrate how these artists both enhanced and contradicted earlier representations of the West.

Prior to this period, American art tended to portray the West as a wild frontier with untamed lands and peoples. Renowned artists such as Henry Farny and Frederic Remington set their work in the past, invoking an environment immersed in conflict and violence. This trademark perspective began to change, however, when artists enamored with the Southwest stamped a new imprint on their paintings.

The contributors to this volume illuminate the complex ways in which early-twentieth-century artists, as well as filmmakers, evoked a southwestern environment not just suspended in time but also permanent rather than transient. Yet, as the authors also reveal, these artists were not entirely immune to the siren call of the vanishing West, and their portrayal of peaceful yet “exotic” Native Americans was an expansion rather than a dismissal of earlier tropes. Both brands cast a romantic spell on the West, and both have been seared into public consciousness.

Branding the American West is published in association with the Brigham Young University Museum of Art, Provo, Utah, and the Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas.

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