



For Immediate Release

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Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens Presents: *Knowing the West*

Exhibition Presents a Fresh Look at Art and the Cultures of the American West

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — March 7, 2025 — The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens presents *Knowing the West*, the first major traveling exhibition to embrace and explore the American West as a place shaped by people of many nations and life experiences. *Knowing the West* will be on view from March 28, 2025 until August 31, 2025.

"For those of us who have never lived in the American West, and even for those who have been lucky enough to call it home, [Knowing the West](#) is an incredible opportunity for learning," said Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, Ph.D., George W. and Kathleen I. Gibbs Director and CEO of the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens. "This exhibition invites us to discover new truths about this iconic region of America by exploring stories told by the many people who have shaped its culture over the centuries."

Americans often feel they "know the West," whether informed by direct experience or popular culture. Visions of landscapes and people tangle with ideas of conflict, freedom and nostalgia. *Knowing the West* embraces preexisting impressions of the American West and presents a wide variety of artwork from diverse makers from the 19th to early 20th centuries — adding richness to what is often a simplified view of this vast and complex terrain. [Knowing the West](#) offers a broader and more inclusive view of the Western United States by celebrating the stories of communities who have often been overlooked; in this way, it serves as a model for how to re-contextualize American art.

To enhance the visitor experience during *Knowing the West*, a special pop-up Cummer Shop will offer a curated selection of books, prints, apparel, and other unique items that celebrate the exhibition's themes. The shop will feature an exciting fully illustrated companion catalogue to the exhibition, which centers Native voices and multiple perspectives through a series of essays by more than 20 authors including curators, curatorial advisors and scholars.

The Cummer Museum's current exhibition season, focused on the theme "Centering the Land and Voice," explores the stories that emerge from our profound connection with the natural world. Museum guests and members are encouraged to enjoy programs and experiences that celebrate our individual and collective connection to the land's beauty and discover how art can inspire us to become more mindful stewards of our planet.

Knowing the West is organized by Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas, and co-curated by Mindy N. Besaw and Jami C. Powell with influence and input from a curatorial advisory council.

Exhibition Related Programs:

Curators in Conversation: Knowing the West with Mindy M. Besaw and Holly Keris

Join Mindy N. Besaw, Ph.D., exhibition co-curator and curator of American Art at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, for a deep dive into the exhibition, *Knowing the West*, and get to know some of the hidden stories behind the art and the West.

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

7 to 8 p.m.

\$5 for Members | \$25 for Future Members

Cummer Connects: Embracing Our World Together

Join us for a day of art, music, stories, dance and immersive experiences with a variety of community partners. Explore the beauty and significance of the outdoors through the *Knowing the West* exhibition and the Cummer Gardens, and deepen your connection to nature. Let's come together to honor our planet, Northeast Florida and our people.

Saturday, April 19, 2025

11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Free with Museum Admission | All Ages

Registration Required for Certain Events

Make & Take: Reed Basket Weaving

Discover the art and tradition of basket weaving! Learn the techniques behind creating beautiful, functional, double-wall reed baskets inspired by Cherokee heritage.

Tuesday, May 27

5 to 7 p.m.

\$25 for Members | \$35 for Future Members

Ages 12+ | Materials Included

Cowboy Cocktails: Recipes Inspired by the American West

Step back in time and sip your way through history with this unique American West-themed cocktail workshop. In partnership with local distillery Burlock & Barrel, this engaging experience dives into the spirits and libations that fueled the rugged frontier of the 1800s. Using authentic techniques and premium spirits, this workshop blends history, hands-on mixology and a touch of Jacksonville flair for an unforgettable evening of spirited exploration.

Tuesday, July 1

7 to 8 p.m.

Ages 21+

\$40 for Members | \$55 for Future Members

Art Adventures: Youth Workshop: Reed Basket Weaving

Inspired by Native American weaving techniques, children will create their very own woven baskets using natural reed materials. They will discover the history and cultural significance of basket weaving, exploring how Native American tribes used this skill for both practical and artistic purposes.

Saturday, July 19

11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Ages 7 to 11

Members \$30 | Future Members \$45 (per session)

Hand-Building Clay Workshop with Artist Sonia Nowak-Vera

Join us for a six-session workshop led by renowned artist Sonia Nowak-Vera. Learn hand-building techniques to create a personalized jug or bowl inspired by the Knowing the West exhibition.

Six-session workshop, Sundays

12:30 to 3:30 p.m.

- *July 13, 20, 27: Design & Form*
- *August 17, 31: Decorate*
- *September 21: Share and Celebrate*

\$350 for Members | \$525 for Future Members

Ages 18+ | Materials Included

Make & Take: Bead and Leather Bracelet Making

Explore Native American artistry through bead and leather bracelet making. In this session, you'll learn beading techniques and work with a leather cord to create a unique, handcrafted Native American-inspired bracelet.

Tuesday, July 29

5 to 7 p.m.

\$25 for Members | \$35 for Future Members

Ages 12+ | Materials Included

Native Cuisine Workshop with Saturiwa Trading Co.

Ages 16+

Discover the rich culinary traditions of Native American cuisine with Mike Stowers of Saturiwa Trading Co. Drawing from his deep knowledge of Indigenous foodways, Mike will guide participants through the preparation and history of traditional dishes, while exploring the cultural significance of native ingredients and cooking methods. This hands-on experience offers a unique opportunity to connect with Jacksonville's heritage, celebrate its natural bounty and savor the vibrant tastes of authentic Native American cuisine.

Saturday, August 9

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

\$40 for Members | \$55 for Future Members

Ages 16+

Artful Storytime

Monthly, Every Third Thursday

11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

\$5 per child for Members | \$10 per child for Future Members

Ages 2 to 6 with an Adult

Forest Inspired by Knowing the West and the Cummer Gardens

Thursday, May 15, 2025

Explore tales of forest adventures and the creatures that live among the trees. Afterward, unleash your child's creativity in the studio with a forest-inspired art activity!

Native American Tales Inspired by Knowing the West

Thursday, June 19, 2025

This adventure is inspired by the timeless Native American tales from the West, where each story is a thread in the rich fabric of tradition, wisdom and connection to the land. After the tales unfold, unleash your child's creativity in a hands-on art activity that brings the spirit of the West to life.

Animals Inspired by Knowing the West

Thursday, July 17, 2025

Discover the wild world of animals! From the soaring eagle to the curious squirrel, each animal has its own story to tell. After the story, participants will go to the studio for a hands-on art activity.

2024-2025 Cummer Museum of Arts & Gardens Exhibition Presenters include: Season Presenters - City of Jacksonville and Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville; Lead Sponsor - The Robert D. Davis Family Endowment and the Schultz Family Endowment; Celebrated Sponsors Director's Circle Donors at the Cummer Museum.

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About the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens:

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens stands as a beacon of culture and inspiration in Jacksonville, Florida, proudly showcasing an impressive collection of art and stunning historically significant gardens. Founded in 1958 by the visionary Ninah Cummer, a powerful woman deeply committed to her community, the museum reflects her passion for art, gardens and education. Ninah's dream was to create a space where the beauty of fine art and nature could be appreciated and shared with all, and she succeeded in transforming her family estate into this remarkable institution. The museum boasts an exquisite collection that spans from ancient to contemporary art, including European masterpieces and American works that resonate with the spirit of the region. Complementing the art is a series of beautifully landscaped gardens along the St. Johns River that invite visitors to explore and find tranquility amidst nature's splendor. This harmonious blend of art and nature not only enhances the visitor experience but also embodies the essence of creativity and serenity that defines the Cummer Museum, making it an essential destination for art lovers and nature enthusiasts alike. As a landmark in Jacksonville, the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens not only honors Ninah Cummer's legacy but also serves as a vital cultural hub for education, creativity, and community engagement. It stands as a testament to the power of one woman's vision and her enduring impact on the arts in the community.

About Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

The mission of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is to welcome all to celebrate the American spirit in a setting that unites the power of art with the beauty of nature. Since opening in 2011, the museum has welcomed more than 12.2 million visitors across its spaces, with no cost for admission. Crystal Bridges was founded in 2005 as a non-profit charitable organization by arts patron and philanthropist, Alice Walton. The collection spans five centuries of American masterworks from early American to current day and is enhanced by temporary exhibitions. The museum is nestled on 120 acres of Ozark landscape and was designed by world-renowned architect Moshe Safdie. A rare Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house was preserved and relocated to the museum grounds in 2015. Crystal Bridges offers public programs including lectures, performances, classes, and teacher development opportunities. Some 418,375 school children have participated in the Willard and Pat Walker School Visit program, which provides educational experiences for school groups at no cost to the schools. Additional museum amenities include a restaurant, gift store, library, and five miles of art and walking trails. In February 2020, the museum opened the Momentary in Downtown Bentonville (507 SE E Street), conceived as a platform for the art, food, and music of our time. In 2026, Crystal Bridges will complete a nearly 100,000 square foot expansion that will allow the museum to expand access for all. For more information, visit CrystalBridges.org. The museum is located at 600 Museum Way, Bentonville, Arkansas 72712.