

TACOMA ART MUSEUM

MEDIA RELEASE

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Explore film, painting, politics, and “parkitecture” at TAM’s Symposium of Western American Art: Artists Drawn West

Tacoma, WA - Tacoma Art Museum’s second annual Symposium of Western American Art aims to address the evolving definition of the West and its legacy in American arts. Enrich your understanding of the arts through this lively day of interdisciplinary learning and entertainment. Guest speakers include film historian [Mark Harrison](#), artist [Mian Situ](#), Native American scholar [Scott Manning Stevens](#), and architectural historian [Richard Guy Wilson](#). Discover how travel through the American West captivated and inspired artists, changed the direction of film in the 1950s, and launched a new style of “parkitecture” in our National Parks.

“Last year’s symposium was a great success with exciting speakers and inspiring new ideas around the intersection of art, culture, and the environment. We’re building on that momentum this year and welcome more curious learners to partake in innovative, cross-disciplinary discussions,” says TAM’s Director of Education Samantha Kelly. “This year is also the 100th anniversary of the National Park system, and I am particularly eager to learn more about ‘parkitecture’ with Richard Guy Wilson. I am excited to meet Mian Situ after having enjoyed his paintings in our Haub Family Galleries. Everyone will learn from local film director, writer and instructor Mark Harrison, and we’re delighted bring the noted scholar Scott Manning Stevens back to TAM. It will be a great day for connecting people through art.”

The symposium is open to the public and is particularly relevant to enthusiasts and students of art, history, the environment, and the American West. The event takes place Saturday, April 23. Check in starting at 9:00 am and enjoy a complimentary continental breakfast. Morning sessions are followed by a lunch break – participants can order a boxed lunch when they book tickets – and time to visit the galleries; afternoon sessions wrap up by 5 pm. Tickets are available through TAM’s [website](#). Seating is limited.

Mark Harrison teaches at The Evergreen State College, where his courses include *The Western Film Genre and the American Frontier Myth*; he formerly taught at University of Washington as Head of the MFA Professional Directing Program. Harrison has enjoyed extended residencies as a visiting professor in American Studies at Universität Hamburg in Germany and at the University of Hyogo in Kobe, Japan, where his students learned about the Western film genre as a reflection of American culture. As a professional director and writer, Mark’s work ranges from theatre and opera to film and television. Hear Harrison’s insights about how myth and reality shaped films as he speaks on [The Imagined West: Hollywood and the Art of the Frontier](#).

Award-winning oil painter [Mian Situ](#) was born in China, where he earned a Bachelor and later a Master of Fine Arts at Guangzhou Institute of Fine Art. After working as an art instructor in China, he lived in Canada and then emigrated to the United States in 1998. He currently resides in California, and during recent years, has been inspired by western historical themes. Two of Situ’s paintings are part of TAM’s Haub Family Collection of Western American Art: *The Entrepreneur – San Francisco* (2006), and *Beef, Beans and Biscuits* (2004). Through his lecture, [Stories on Canvas: The Early Chinese Immigrants’](#)

Experience, Situ will share with the audience his research and work on historical Chinese American subjects and how he has incorporated those historical experiences into his paintings.

[Scott Manning Stevens](#), a citizen of the Akwesasne Mohawk nation, is Director of the Native American Studies program at Syracuse University in New York, where he also teaches courses in English and Art History. His symposium talk will explore the challenges faced by artist-explorer John Mix Stanley as he traveled across the United States in the 1840s and 50s, with a focus on the complexities of Native American politics and diplomacy. Among his many publications, Dr. Stevens co-authored the collection catalogue *Art of the American West – the Haub Family Collection at Tacoma Art Museum*, published in 2014, and is a co-editor and contributor to the recent collection of essays *Why You Can't Teach United States History without American Indians* (U of North Carolina Press, 2015). He holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University.

You may recognize architectural historian [Richard Guy Wilson](#) from his commentary in the former television series *America's Castles*. He holds the Commonwealth Professor's Chair in Architectural History at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Wilson's specialty is the architecture, design and art of the 18th to the 21st century both in America and abroad. He will speak about the relationship between painting, architecture and nature, and the unique form of American design that resulted from our fascination with wilderness, "... a particular art form that is both crude and sophisticated and included America's greatest landscape creations, the National Parks." His talk will examine the work of major American designers Henry Hobson Richardson, Gustav Stickley, Kirtland Cutter, William Reamer and Mary Colter. Wilson has authored 16 books related to American and modern architecture. He is frequently welcomed as a lecturer for universities, museums and professional groups, and has curated a number of museum exhibitions.

The symposium also offers the opportunity to view TAM's current exhibitions. Tickets are \$25.00 or \$15.00 for TAM members and students; order at www.TacomaArtMuseum.org/Symposium2016, or by calling 253-272-4258.



Image Credit: Mian Situ, *Beef, Beans and Biscuits*, 2004. Oil on canvas, 32 x 40 inches. Tacoma Art Museum, Haub Family Collection, Gift of Erivan and Helga Haub, 2015.29.16.

The 2016 TAM Symposium of Western American Art is generously supported by the Peters Family Foundation.

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About Tacoma Art Museum

Celebrating 80 years, Tacoma Art Museum is an anchor in the city's downtown and a gathering space for connecting people through art. TAM's collection contains more than 4,500 works, with an emphasis on the art and artists of the Northwest and broader American west. The collection includes the largest retrospective museum collection of glass art by Tacoma native Dale Chihuly on continued view; the most significant collection of jewelry by Northwest artists; key holdings in 19th century European and 20th century American art; and one of the finest collections of Japanese woodblock prints on the West Coast. In 2014, TAM welcomed a gift of 295 works of western American art in the Haub Family Collection, one of the premier collections in the nation and the first major western American art museum collection in the Northwest. The Haub gift also included \$20 M for new galleries and endowed funds. In January 2016, TAM announced the gift of the Benaroya Collection, including 225 works of art. The Benaroya gift also includes nearly \$14 M in funding for new gallery space to showcase the collection and an endowment for a dedicated curator and care of the collection. The Haub Family Galleries opened in 2014; the Benaroya addition is expected to open in fall 2018.

HOURS – Tuesdays–Sundays 10 am–5 pm

ADMISSION – Adult \$14; Student (6-17), Military, Senior (65+) \$12; Family \$35 (2 adults and up to 4 children under 18).

Children 5 and under free. **Third Thursdays free from 5–8 pm.** Members always free.

CONTACT – 253-272-4258, <http://www.TacomaArtMuseum.org>