



Another Perspective: Interpretations of the Landscape

The wide, open skies and expansive prairies of the Great Plains inspire many artists to create varied interpretations of the natural world. Some produce breathtaking vistas that evoke an emotional response to the sublime quality of this region's landscape. Others capture the intimate details and quiet moments found in the prairies and hills. Many artists are concerned with the human impact on the land and the environmental consequences that it can have, while others are more interested in simply recording its beauty.

The works in this exhibition may fall into any of the categories listed above, but they were all chosen because the artists who made them approached their subject matter from a unique vantage point. Some use abstract mark making, others utilize unconventional materials, while still others employ inventive compositions. The motivations and desired outcomes are different for each artist, but they all present an engagement with the landscape that encourages the viewer to look at it from another perspective.

Doug Cheng

Encroachment, 2003

Styrofoam, burlap, and paint

Gift of the Mark & Carol Moseman Collection of Agrarian Art

With *Encroachment*, Doug Cheng subtly comments on issues facing the Great Plains landscape. Utilizing the non-traditional materials of Styrofoam and burlap, Cheng sculpts contoured agricultural fields that are being invaded by a dark shadow in the lower portion of the work. Although not explicitly stated by the artist, the shadow could represent a multitude of dangers facing the land, such as human intervention or the effects of climate change.

Terry Evans (b. 1944, Kansas City, MO)

Cemetery, McPherson County, Kansas, 1991

gelatin silver print

Purchased through the generosity of the Friends of the
Center for Great Plains Studies

This image comes from landscape photographer Terry Evans's *Inhabited Prairies* project, in which she explored the human impact on the land as seen from above. As a passenger aboard a Cessna 172, Evans witnessed how the land was both abused and nurtured. She notes that "[T]hese photographs are neither a critique of land use nor a statement about the irony of its beauty. The photographs are not about abstract visual design; they are about specific places. They show marks that contain contradictions and mysteries that raise questions about how we live on the prairie."

Robert F. Gilder

(b. 1856, Flushing, NY; d. 1940, Bellevue, NE)

Autumn on the Missouri, n.d.

oil on canvas panel

Gift of Dr. John and Elizabeth Christlieb

Untitled (Landscape), n.d.

oil on canvas

Gift of Mildred R. Goosman

Robert Gilder worked as a professional journalist for most of his life and earned lasting recognition as both an archaeologist and artist. Born in Flushing, New York, Gilder came to Omaha in 1887 and worked for the Omaha World-Herald first as a typesetter, then as a reporter and editor for almost twenty-five years before he retired in 1919. In his free time Gilder took long walks on both sides of the Missouri River, possibly seeking promising sites for landscape paintings. He often painted outdoors and based much of his work on experiences in the Missouri River basin, especially the Fontenelle Forest area. The two landscapes seen here demonstrate his Impressionist technique, which is characterized by broad, broken brushwork and a focus on the atmosphere of the specific place he was depicting.

Edward Glannon

(b. 1911, Pittsburgh, PA; d. 1992, Roslyn, NY)

Farm with Pond, n.d.

watercolor on paper

Gift of Joseph Glannon, Thomas Glannon, and Patricia Wiley

From a young age, Pennsylvania native Edward Glannon felt a deep connection with the natural world. Working as an artist and art teacher for most of his life, Glannon also spent time traveling throughout the United States, noting that “[t]he land has a different accent in different places, but it can be very beautiful in almost any place.” In his late forties, the artist began working with the medium of watercolor, and soon used it to record the American landscape. Glannon loosely renders the landscape in this work, not providing the viewer with much detail in the composition or title. Yet, this bucolic scene is one familiar and beautiful to many who live an agrarian life on the Plains.

Webster Grayson

(Cherokee, b. circa 1958, active Tahlequah, OK)

To Water, To Water, 1976

gouache on panel

Gift of Patricia Janis Broder and Stanley H. Broder

Cherokee artist Webster Grayson's evocative composition was selected for this exhibition because of its unique depiction of landscape—more specifically, the near absence of it. Here, Grayson focuses on the figures moving across an empty space toward the abstracted, vividly colored horizon. The artist's poem on the back of the painting adds meaning to the scene:

"To water to water
following in the footsteps
of our elder father
the end of the vision
We go on our mission
purity bird fly in the sky
show us the streams to purify."

Lisa Grossman (b. 1967, Pennsylvania)

Sunlit Prairie, 2000

oil on canvas

Gift of the Mark & Carol Moseman Collection of Agrarian Art

Lisa Grossman depicts the landscapes of Eastern Kansas and the Kansas River Valley. Grossman paints *en plein air* (or out of doors), which is a method many artists use to capture the landscape's changing light and atmosphere at specific times of day. The artist notes that "[my] work has always been about shifts and ephemerality. I'm not so much trying to freeze moments in time as much as I am attempting to convey my first-hand experiences of the way it felt to be there, [rather] than how it looked." With *Sunlit Prairie*, Grossman demonstrates this interest in capturing a landscape's atmosphere and mood, using broken brushwork and subtle tonal shifts to lend a sense of immediacy and movement to the scene.

Delbridge Honanie (Hopi, b. 1946, Winslow, AZ)

Flute Society, 1973

acrylic on canvas

Gift of Patricia Janis Broder and Stanley H. Broder

Delbridge Honanie (“Coochsiwukioma,” which means “Falling White Snow”) is a founding member of Artist Hopid, a group of Hopi artists who began collaborating in the 1960s. The members of Artist Hopid used their art to share Hopi culture with the public, often experimenting with new ideas and techniques that incorporated traditional Hopi designs and concepts.

In August, when the sun meets the northernmost point in the sky, the Hopi Flute Society participates in a ceremony intended to bring the blessings of the summer’s final rains and stimulate the growth of corn and flowers. In this ceremony, the Hopi people also enact their ancestors’ emergence into the Fourth World, the final destination in the Hopi creation story. In this complex composition, Honanie depicts the activities of the Flute Society beneath the surface of the ground, painting vibrant symbols of water, fertility, and migration.

Keith Jacobshagen (b. 1941, Wichita, KS)

North, 1990

lithograph on paper

Purchased through the generosity of the Friends of the
Center for Great Plains Studies

Keith Jacobshagen is nationally recognized for his Plains landscapes, and his works are grounded in years of living in and experiencing the Plains environment in its multi-faceted conditions. He spends hours in the countryside near his home in Lincoln or slightly further afield in the Platte River Valley, making field studies in watercolor and entries in sketchbook journals, noting specific weather conditions, farming activities, and the state of fauna and flora. *North* is a seven-color lithograph that is part of a four-print set titled *Midwestern Landscape: In Season*. Here, the artist places the viewer at the opening of a road cutting through a long stretch of landscape, focusing our perspective on the seemingly endless horizon and abstract patterning of clouds and trees that lie ahead.

Janet L. Jarvis (b. 1962)

The Land, 1997

bag with glass beads

Gift of the artist

This beaded bag by Janet Jarvis comes from a series inspired by Great Plains literary works. Here, the source of inspiration is Willa Cather's *My Ántonia*, the 1918 novel that tells the story of late-nineteenth century Nebraska pioneers. Jarvis's detailed beadwork composition echoes the elegance of Cather's descriptions of the vast prairie landscape: "There was nothing but land: not a country at all, but the material out of which countries are made."

Howard Kaye (b. 1942, Los Angeles, CA)

Chimney Rock, circa 1985

gouache and charcoal on paper

Gift of the artist

Howard Kaye began his career as a painter in the 1980s, and today is known in Nebraska for his realistic watercolors and colorful depictions of cows. This work on paper—one of his earlier pieces—is a striking rendering of Nebraska’s well-known natural landmark, Chimney Rock. Kaye focuses his composition entirely on the craggy peak, silhouetting it against ominous clouds in the background to give the work a dramatic, almost cinematic tone.

Dwight Kirsch

(b. 1899, Pawnee County, NE; d. 1981, Colorado Springs, CO)

Mountain Landscape, 1946

charcoal on paper

Gift of Marjorie Stuff

Dwight Kirsch took a position teaching art at the University of Nebraska in 1924, and during his tenure at the University served as the chair of the art department and as director of the University of Nebraska Art Galleries. In 1946—the same year Kirsch produced this charcoal drawing of a mountain landscape—he brought artwork by famed European modernist artists such as Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and Marc Chagall to Nebraska for an exhibition. The influence of modern art, specifically European Cubism, is clear in Kirsch's use of fragmented forms and overlapping planes to define the landscape in this work.

Dwight Kirsch

(b. 1899, Pawnee County, NE; d. 1981, Colorado Springs, CO)

Winged Clouds over Mountains, 1977

watercolor on paper

Gift of JoAnn Kelly Alexander

Dwight Kirsch

(b. 1899, Pawnee County, NE; d. 1981, Colorado Springs, CO)

Flying Clouds over Sandia Peak, 1981

watercolor on paper

Gift of JoAnn Kelly Alexander

Dwight Kirsch

(b. 1899, Pawnee County, NE; d. 1981, Colorado Springs, CO)

Branches and Sky, 1960

watercolor on paper

Gift of JoAnn Kelly Alexander

Dwight Kirsch

(b. 1899, Pawnee County, NE; d. 1981, Colorado Springs, CO)

Clouds and Hills, Back to CO, NW from CSVH, 1978

watercolor on paper

Gift of JoAnn Kelly Alexander

The four watercolors displayed on this wall are just some examples of how Dwight Kirsch used this medium to convey the multifaceted beauty of the Great Plains landscape. In *Winged Clouds over Mountains* and *Clouds and Hills, Back to CO, NW from CSVH*, Kirsch highlights the wispy, voluminous forms of clouds as they parallel their respective undulating, vividly colored landscapes below. Both works were created during the last years of the artist's life while he was living in a retirement home in Florence, Colorado. *Flying Clouds Over Sandia Peak* similarly emphasizes the lyrical forms of clouds and is a souvenir of imagery Kirsch witnessed while visiting Albuquerque, New Mexico. Finally, *Branches & Sky*, the earliest work on this wall, shows the viewer the landscape from a different perspective, as the loosely rendered tree branches in the foreground draw the eye to the beautiful watercolor washes in Kirsch's Great Plains sky.

Kingsley “King” Kuka

(Blackfeet, b. 1946, Browning, MT; d. 2004, Great Falls, MT)

Untitled, n.d.

watercolor on paper

Gift of Edward Schmidt, Eleanor McAuliffe, and James Schmidt in honor of their parents Donald J. and Kathryn F. Schmidt

Kingsley “King” Kuka worked in a variety of fine art media, producing jewelry, bronze and steel sculpture, oil, acrylic, and watercolor paintings, and prints and drawings on paper. With his artwork, Kuka sought to convey an emotion or feeling and once stated, “I’m painting color and texture and Indian spiritualism with a mystical, ethereal look.” The delicate watercolor on view here embodies this desire and presents a quiet, intimate moment set in a winter landscape.

Dale Livezey (b. 1957, Ohio)

Blue Voice of Air, 1990

oil on canvas

Gift of the Friends of the Center for Great Plains Studies

Montana-based artist Dale Livezey is known for his intensely colorful and evocative landscape paintings. Livezey aims to capture the emotional quality of a place, creating dramatic depictions of real and imagined vistas. *Blue Voice of Air* is almost all sky, with blue at the top modulating into a warm orange horizon settling over the mountains below. The title references a line from the Pablo Neruda poem *I am grateful*:

“I am grateful, violins, for this day
of four chords. Pure
is the sound of the sky,
the blue voice of air.”

Milland Lomakema (Hopi, b. 1941, Shungopovi, AZ)

Kachina Kivas on San Francisco Peaks, 1973

acrylic on canvas

Gift of Patricia Janis Broder and Stanley H. Broder

Milland Lomakema (“Dawakema,” which means “House of the Sun”) is a self-taught artist and a member of the Artist Hopid. Drawing upon his Hopi heritage and beliefs, Lomakema employs bold color and stylized forms in his paintings. The Hopis believe that when their ancestors first entered the villages near the San Francisco Peaks in northern Arizona, they lived together with the Katsinam (plural form of “Katsina” or “Kachina”) who were spiritual beings that danced among them and brought rain for their crops. In this canvas, Lomakema depicts the life of the Katsinam as they might live in their mountain kivas (or rooms used for spiritual ceremonies), illustrating mural paintings on their kiva walls and prayer feathers that would have been ceremoniously gifted by Hopi chiefs to the Katsinam. The painting’s design conveys the separation between the viewer’s world and that of the Katsinam while simultaneously showing the connection between the two worlds through prayer.

Richard Martinez

(San Ildefonso Pueblo, b. 1904; d. 1987)

Pueblo, Corn, and Sky, n.d.

gouache on paper

Gift of Patricia Janis Broder and Stanley H. Broder

Born at San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico, in 1904, Richard Martinez (“Opa Mu Nu,” which means “Revolving Earth”) studied with Dorothy Dunn in the Studio program at the Santa Fe Indian School. Artists painting in the “Studio Style” employed flat, outlined fields of color to illustrate Native scenes. In this gouache painting, Martinez incorporates elements of the Studio Style with his signature approach to abstracted yet recognizable imagery, depicting the key elements of his landscape—pueblo, corn, and sky—with simple lines, forms, and colors.

Nadine McHenry (b. 1948, Valentine, NE)

Tree Collage, 2002

oil on canvas

Museum purchase

Nadine McHenry was raised on her family's cattle ranch near Valentine in the Nebraska Sandhills. *Tree Collage* comes from a series inspired by both the unique landscape of the Sandhills region and the action paintings of the Abstract Expressionist artists of the 1940s and 1950s. McHenry stated that this mid-century style provides "a way to capture the raw energy of wind and waving grass and to convey the rich textures of this unique area of the Plains." In this piece, the artist depicts the Nebraska landscape using gestural brushwork and collage to play with depth and create a sense of movement.

Nadine McHenry (b. 1948, Valentine, NE)

Evening Serenade, 2002

oil on canvas

Museum purchase

Evening Serenade is another painting from Nebraska artist Nadine McHenry's series depicting the Sandhills region. In works like this one, McHenry portrays a representational subject but experiments with color and abstract brushwork; as she noted, "this series is about paint as much as it is about landscape."

Kendall McMinimy (b. 1967, Ashland, KS)

Aggrandizement 1, 2016

acrylic and toner on birch panel

Museum purchase

Born and raised on the High Plains of Kansas, Kendall McMinimy's family grew wheat and raised cattle in an arid region dependent on the Ogallala Aquifer as a primary water source. *Aggrandizement 1* comes from the series *Cropping to Circles*, in which McMinimy took aerial satellite photographs he found online and transferred them to wood panels using a method inspired by Robert Rauschenberg's transfer drawings from the 1960s. With these enlarged images of crop circles, the artist seeks to draw attention to the Ogallala Aquifer's depletion, an environmental issue that faces farmers and ranchers on the Great Plains. McMinimy notes that "with this work I just wanted to look at a common element, something in society that we may overlook, and crop it out of the landscape. I'm trying to give people an opportunity to discover this controversy and start investigating."

Christina McPhee (b. 1954, Pomona, CA)

Near Matfield Green Four P.M., 1998

watercolor on paper

Fox Creek Midsummer Night, Z-Bar Ranch, Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, 1998

watercolor on paper

Gift of the artist

For Christina McPhee, “watercolor is a form of improvisation—a play of pure thought and nuance.” This improvisational quality is evident in these two works, both of which contain delicate, gestural lines and washes that hint at elements of the landscape but leave quite a bit to the viewer’s imagination.

Christina McPhee (b. 1954, Pomona, CA)

Quivira Mirage, 1998

watercolor, graphite, colored pencil, and collage on paper

Gift of the artist in honor of Frederick and Norma Luebke

Although born in Los Angeles, Christina McPhee grew up in eastern Nebraska and studied painting and printmaking at the Kansas City Art Institute. Her time spent in the Great Plains region influenced her landscape work; *Quivira Mirage* is an example of one of McPhee's late 1990s large-scale, mixed media drawings that uses powerful, gestural compositions to both allude to and abstract the landscape.

McPhee has stated that works like this one are about "layers of time and human presence, historical and current." This connection to the past and present is explored through the title of this piece—the name "Quivira" was given to a region in south central Kansas by Spanish explorer Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, who came to the area in 1541 in search of the famed seven cities of gold. Coronado instead found a fertile area of Plains land, and today, the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in this region is an inland salt marsh and sand prairie that serves as a haven for migratory waterfowl.

David Melby (b. 1942, Wichita, KS; d. 2014)

Missouri River Evening, 2003

oil on board

Gift of the Mark & Carol Moseman Collection of Agrarian Art

A poet, photographer, and painter, David Melby lived and worked on a farm that overlooked the Missouri River. The painting on view here displays the elements found in many of the artist's other abstract landscapes: an expansive, vibrant, and textured sky; a low horizon line; and a skillful capturing of light. Melby once noted that “[w]hile many artists attempt to imitate the landscape, my desire is to convey an inner landscape of poetic space, rather than a specific place.”

Lamont Richards (b. 1949, Miller, SD)

Diptych No. 16, 1989

pastel on paper

Gift of the Friends of the Center for Great Plains Studies

Diptych No. 16 demonstrates Nebraska artist Lamont Richards's fascination with the prairie landscape. A "diptych" refers to a work of art made up of two related parts, and throughout art history the term is often associated with religious altarpieces. Richards's two large-scale pastel drawings recall the grandeur of these historical altarpieces and give viewers a detailed close-up of Nebraska's Sandhills and its native grasses, including Big bluestem, Blue grama, and Indiangrass, among others.

Hills Snyder (b. 1950, Lubbock, TX)

Recluse, WY 11, 2018

colored pencil on paper

Anonymous gift, 2019

In 2016, Hills Snyder set out on a road trip through the American West, choosing his locations based on their names: Nowhere, Happy, Opportunity, Bummerville, Funk, and Recluse are just some of the towns he visited. Snyder did not select his destinations because they had unusual names, but rather because they suggested “emotional states, hoped for ideals, downers and reckonings...”

In each location—and in points along the way—he photographed anything that caught his eye, often focusing on less than noteworthy scenes and discarded objects.

These photographs were the basis for Snyder’s *Altered States* project, which consisted of a travelogue and a series of over 100 colored pencil drawings. Landscapes like *Recluse, WY 11* are both recognizable and abstract, demonstrating how the artist’s compositions suggest the contents of their source photographs while simultaneously stepping into the realm of the surreal.

Richard Terrell (b. 1940, Joliet, IL)

Sandhills #3, 2012

pastel on paper

Gift of the artist

Richard Terrell's exploration of the natural landscape has been continual and varied throughout his career. Terrell's pastel rendition of the Nebraska Sandhills is one of a few works included in this exhibition that depict this area of the state. In this unique interpretation of this region's topography, Terrell devotes most of the composition to the landscape's verdant, rolling hills, allowing just a sliver of blue—presumably a small body of water—to peek through the landscape.

George Tuck (b. 1942, Amarillo, TX)

Split Image, 1998

gelatin silver print

Gift of the artist

A University of Nebraska–Lincoln Professor Emeritus, George Tuck has photographed much of the Great Plains, including his birthplace in the High Plains of Texas. On sabbatical in the spring of 1998, Tuck drove over 10,000 miles across the Plains, documenting the landscape and people in a series he eventually titled *Flat Places and Interesting People*. This image was taken in Seibert, Colorado, located just off Interstate 70 and around 2 hours east of Denver. Tuck provides us with two scenes in one, prompting us to consider both the visual and contextual relationships that knit these images together.

Virginia Vaughan

Barn Light Near Rugby, North Dakota, 2011

oil on board

Gift of the artist

It Rained Today, 2005

oil on canvas

Museum purchase

Virginia Vaughan documents the changing American landscape with the loose brushwork and vivid colors associated with the Impressionist style. *It Rained Today* captures a fleeting rainstorm as it passes across the sky, while *Barn Light Near Rugby, North Dakota* comes from her series, *Passing America*. Inspired by the loss of her own family farm near Austin, Texas, with this series Vaughan set out to create a visual record of the vanishing American farm and agrarian lifestyle, generating over 100 of what she calls “drive-by paintings” that are based on scenes she witnessed while traveling cross-country by train or car.

Robin Walter & Sebastian Tsocanos

First Blanket of Frost on the Grass, 2014

archival pigment prints

Museum purchase

First Blanket of Frost on the Grass provides three intimate windows into the beauty of the Great Plains prairie and its grasses. In the summer and fall of 2014, Robin Walter and Sebastian Tsocanos traversed the Northern Great Plains on horseback to document the changing prairie landscape. They began their ride in Montana's hi-line, a thin stretch of country situated beneath the Canadian border, and wound 600 miles through the Northern Great Plains into the foothills of Wyoming's Big Horn Mountains. Photographs from their three-month long expedition celebrate the wild that remains in this massively transformed landscape.

Gwen Westerman

(Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota Oyate, b. 1957, Camden, AR)

Wildfires Up North, 2015

hand-dyed commercial cotton

Purchased through the generosity of the Woods Charitable Fund

This textile piece by Gwen Westerman was inspired by the skies of the Canadian province of Alberta and the atmospheric effects left by large wildfires that burned there during the fall of 2015. Here, Westerman depicts a Plains landscape using materials that came from the land. To achieve the unique variations in pattern and fabric color, the artist mixed pigment with snow gathered from outside her home in Mankato, Minnesota. She then dyed raw cotton fabric with the mixture, and as the snow melted, the pigment was dispersed through the fabric.

Walter Blakelock Wilson

(b. 1929, Auburn, NY; d. 2011, Tubac, AZ)

Moonlight Over the Great Plains, 2010

oil on canvas

Gift of the artist

This luminous vista of a gridded, Great Plains landscape was painted in the last years of artist Walter Blakelock Wilson's life, but its aerial composition is part of a larger theme present throughout Wilson's career. A pilot in the United States Air Force, Wilson served in the Korean War and continued to fly privately after he was discharged. Of the experience flying above the land, Wilson stated: "Alone—detached from the earth—life changes perspective. Details dissolve into lyric, rhythmic land forms, flowing in vast vistas of light, air, and spatial beauty."