



CLYDE ASPEVIG
LANDSCAPE & BEYOND

EXHIBITION DATES:

June 5 through July 31, 2016
Mondays through Saturdays 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sundays Noon until 5 p.m.

Director's Statement

It was early in the 90s when I received a call from my artist friend, Bob Barlow. He wanted to introduce me to his friend Clyde Aspevig, who Bob said was perhaps the most talented artist he knew. If you know Bob Barlow's circle of artist friends, you realize that this was high praise indeed, since he knows and has known many of the finest artists living in the Rocky Mountains and beyond. It's been over 25 years since that fateful phone call and introduction, and I'm happy to say that Bob Barlow's endorsement of his friend's talents not only came to fruition but has received the accolades of museums and collectors throughout the world.

In the intervening years we have enjoyed an amiable relationship with Clyde Aspevig, and the Bradford Brinton Memorial & Museum featured his work in two major three-person shows as well as in many of our Brinton Biennial exhibitions. **Landscape & Beyond**, however, is the first time we have ever been fortunate enough to feature Clyde Aspevig's work in a one-person show, so The Brinton Museum is pleased to have the opportunity to share this good fortune with you, our patrons.

Kenneth L. Schuster Director & Chief Curator

Curator of Exhibitions Statement

I have been curating art and art exhibits for over three decades and a definitive answer to the question 'what defines a work of art as good or fine art' can still be elusive. I've had more artists and art professors than I can remember wax poetic about the use of line, color and composition, about emotion and feeling. Ultimately, there is a sixth sense within us that says this or that painting has the 'it' factor. It's a great painting. It's a superb drawing. We just intuitively know when the work is really good. There was never a question about the artistic merit of Clyde Aspevig's art. His incredible landscape paintings are good. Really good. There is a genuineness to his art that transports the viewer to a time and place that pulls you right into one of his spectacular Western scenes. This is the 'it' factor that cannot be taught in a classroom; it is simply born within in us.

As an outsider who relocated to Wyoming, I truthfully appreciate the deep connection that persons living in the West have to the land and the endless inspiration it offers. It's a special place and Clyde knew this even from a young age. It's a love for the land and an extraordinary desire to preserve its magnificent beauty that makes such a profound connection in his art. I am delighted to have the opportunity as the Brinton's Curator of Exhibitions to work with such an exemplary talent as Clyde.

Barbara McNab Curator of Exhibitions

Landscape & Beyond

Clyde Aspevig is an internationally renowned artist who has received many awards. His landscape paintings hang in private collections and museums across the country and he is sought after for his talks and painting demonstrations. In 1997 my mother, older brother and I traveled to the Gilcrease Rendezvous at the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma at which he was the featured artist. I stood beside a couple viewing the painting, “St. Mary’s Inlet,” where mountains dominate the background above resplendent autumn foliage. In the foreground, a river laced by sandbars, spreads across the width of the canvas. I heard the woman comment, “You can almost hear the water.”

I am neither an art critic nor an artist, so I take a visceral approach to a painting. When I look closely at Clyde’s paintings I see brushstrokes, a white line here and specks of yellow there, a palette of colors that, to my untrained eye, seems random. Then I step back and my mind, through some trick of the brushstrokes, fills in the details that make up the whole of the painting and I experience it with all my senses and emotions. I am part of the interplay of sunlight and clouds that dance across the land. I can hear grass rustle in the wind, feel the tension as a darkened sky portends a late afternoon thunderstorm, and witness the raw beauty in the coruscating flash of lightning.

J.Brooks Joyner, Director of the Gilcrease Museum in 1997 wrote, “Clyde Aspevig has achieved for American landscape painting in our lifetime, what Thomas Moran accomplished in his, by reminding us of the spectacular and enduring beauty of our Western wilderness.”

I would venture that Clyde’s art has gone far beyond the Western wilderness. Perhaps we need to modify our definition of “landscape.” In his paintings, Clyde captures the honesty and authenticity of the moment, whether it is drawing the viewer’s eye to a thread of lambent light lingering on a slight rise in the prairie after sunset, or the humor of a dog’s long stretch leaning into a bowl of scrambled eggs and the soft light of a new day, or the inner landscape of a garden where a sunflower, no longer raising its youthful head to the sun, but in its seed-laden maturity, bows to the earth from which it came.

Because I am a writer, I approach Clyde’s paintings with a sense of story. Take for instance, “A Craftsman’s Shop”: I look for the narrative. What hands used these tools and for what purpose? I see the character of the craftsman in the neat placement and hang of the tools. The clock on the wall, the inactivity, even the light filtering in through the murky windows sets the tone and suggests the stoppage of time.

Because Clyde is my brother, there are stories that only he and I and our older brother share. In “Foxtail Serenade” the foxtail grasses glisten and I see a family story. Glued in our mother’s scrapbook of her recollections of growing up on a northern Montana homestead is a stalk of foxtail grass. She labeled it, “Foxtails. Pretty in the sunlight when fresh and green.” Family photos and handwritten stories are interspersed with pressed plants of the prairie – wild roses, sweet peas, scarlet globe mallow she called a tomato flower, even a dandelion and bindweed! Nature is the background to our family story; one would not be complete without the other.

**Like all the microbes and nematodes and plants and minerals that combine to form productive prairie soil, which then supports birds and animals and people, the elements of a painting need to complement and support one another. Each*

element is important, but if you see only the parts, you lose the whole. And if you look only at the whole, you miss the value of the parts.

The lightning painting brings to mind our father, who saw a thunderstorm during planting season as an opportunity to go on vacation. Knowing rain would turn the fields to gumbo mud and render a tractor immobile for days, our parents packed the car and within a few short hours we were aiming for a camping trip in Glacier National Park. Our mother would point out the cloud shadows racing on the ground or the purple hue of the Sweet Grass Hills. With the miles ticking by, our parents would sing – “You Are My Sunshine”, “Row Row Row Your Boat” – and we three kids sat snug in the backseat with the scenery streaming by. Soon, the prairie rose to meet the Rocky Mountain Front and we entered the park. Our mother, with sheer delight, would announce the plants in the alpine meadows. “Isn’t the beargrass beautiful? Look! Shooting Stars!” and “The Indian Paintbrush is so red this year!” Our father, a restless man, seemed to find calm in a change of landscape. I can still feel the joy of those weather-driven spontaneous vacations and hear the music when I look at my brother’s paintings. In fact, many of his paintings have musical titles: “Prairie Song”, “Serenade”, “Evening Harmony”, “Prairie Jazz”, “Lightning Dance”, and a landscape entitled “Beethoven”.

As children, we spent a great amount of time in the outdoors, the pastures and coulees, the trees in the windbreaks, the inner sanctum of a weathered barn, or the high reach of a haystack. We discovered bugs, snakes, and baby birds in ground nests. We played on granite rocks deposited eons ago by receding glaciers; we chased after tumbleweeds; we made tunnels in sweet clover. Clyde and his wife and fellow artist, Carol Guzman, have invented a name for what we did naturally as kids: landsnorkel.

Land snorkelers wander through nature with no intention of hiking to a destination...Each blade of grass, rock, or creature has some connection to us...Our imagination and creativity are enhanced and richens our lives in a healthy and productive way. Land snorkeling is reestablishing the ancient connections to our landscape. We open up all of our senses to experience the hidden treasures of nature. We look closely at things – like a feather found in the grass, a wing design, a rock’s texture, and the pattern of a tree growing. www.landsnorkel.com.

To understand this is to understand what lies beyond Clyde Aspevig’s landscape paintings. It is up to you to accept his invitation; enter into the painting and landsnorkel, if you will. Bring your own experiences and discover new ones. When you leave the gallery, perhaps you will view the world in a slightly different way. Perhaps you will find the wonder in the quotidian and renew your awe at the extraordinary aspects of the natural world. Clyde’s paintings invite you to find a relationship with landscape beyond what you knew possible.

**I look at painting like I look at life itself: each new discovery or thought opens up a whole new set of possibilities.*

Karen Aspevig Stevenson



Beginning of Spring, oil on linen, 30" x 40"
Private Collection



Blooming Sage, oil on linen, 40" x 60"



Cutbank on Timber Creek, oil on linen, 16" x 20"



Daphne's Garden, oil on linen, 20" x 30"
Private Collection



Family Ties, oil on linen, 48" x 48"



Hawthorn Meadow, oil on linen, 18" x 24"

Private Collection



In Search of Dinosaurs, oil on linen, 11" x 14"



Old Fence Line with Little Rockies, oil on linen, 16" x 20"



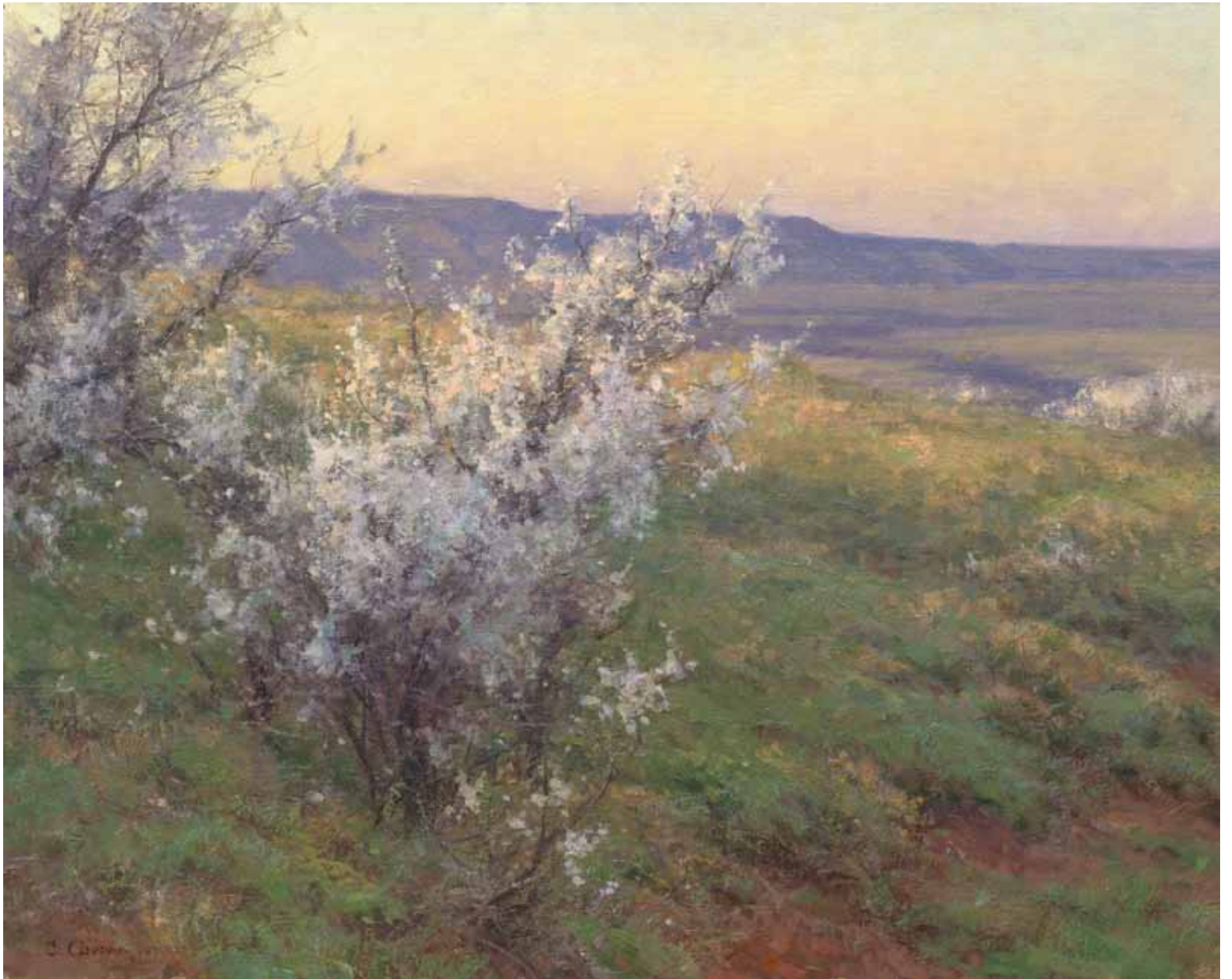
Planetary Alignment, oil on linen, 36" x 40"
Private Collection



The Dipping Pool, oil on linen, 18" x 24"



Thunderstorm, oil on linen, 40" x 48"
Private Collection



Wild Plum, Ft. Smith, MT, oil on linen, 24" x 30"

Private Collection



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