

GUEST COLUMN |

Let land, art, people share history of sacred grounds

As you travel on Brinton Road through Big Horn driving along the lower lane, or the upper road, time slows down. Rolling fields and meadows, cattle and horses, here and there, the ever spectacular views of the majestic Bighorns lets the mind take a breather.

The first sight of The Brinton Museum before you enter the property is the horse barn built by Bradford Brinton for his thoroughbreds. It sits just to the north of picturesque Little Goose Creek.

Once on the museum grounds, Little Goose Creek Lodge and the historic ranch house are to the right, and on the hill is the Forrest E. Mars, Jr. Building. Find a parking space, tie your shoes and be sure to check in at the reception desk for tours.

You are a visitor on land that was once the lands of the Apsáalooke, Cheyenne, both Tsistsistas and So'taeo'ó, Lakota and Arapaho people. It was the Scotsman William Moncreiffe in 1892 who established the Quarter

Circle A Ranch and brand. It was Bradford Brinton who in 1923 bought the Quarter Circle A headquarters, 640 acres, which today comprises The Brinton Museum.

There is a lot to take in. The people. The history. The land. In a nutshell, it's what The Brinton is all about — preserving and interpreting the art and history of the people and the land, bringing both to life through exhibitions and educational programs.

Northern Arapaho artist Robert Martinez from Riverton is featured in a one-person show of his vibrant paintings and ledger drawings in the Jacomien Mars Reception Gallery. Martinez uses historical references to create a contemporary statement in art. A founding member of the Creative Indigenous Collective, he is a voice for promoting and expanding our knowledge of indigenous art and indigenous artists.

Martinez was born on the Wind River Reservation and is a winner of the prestigious 2019 Governor's Arts Award. His work blends



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Native inspiration and history with modern culture to create portraits such as "Hello Cowboy," a drawing of a Native cowboy holding a Hello Kitty cellphone to take a selfie. "The Art of Robert Martinez" continues at The Brinton through Labor Day.

If you're fortunate to be at the museum July 17, you can experience Crow American Indian Parade on that Saturday. Six members of the Apsáalooke (Crow) Nation will dress in full regalia with six horses to parade on The Brinton grounds. The parade route begins at the horse barn and ends at the Helen Brinton Education Pavilion. Crow member Mardell Plainfeather will present a program about the beauty of Crow American Indian adornment and the longstanding

tradition of Crow Parade of the Apsáalooke People.

In 1951, Crow tribal member Lucy Yellowmule made history by becoming the first Native American Indian rodeo queen of the Sheridan WYO Rodeo. This was, as we say, a "very big deal." She was 16 years old. Lucy and her marvelous white horse opened the door for the first All-American Indian Day and national Miss Indian America Pageant, which took place in 1953.

The legacy of her extraordinary achievement and its impact on those who followed were instrumental in bridging the racial gap between Native Americans and the Sheridan community. On July 14 this year, an All-American Indian Days Remembrance Event takes place at The Brinton Museum.

The lure of the land — the beauty of the West — is the focus of the Bighorn Rendezvous art exhibit — July 10 to Aug. 21 — which showcases works by 12 nationally-known artists from the region and beyond. Like

so many accomplished artists drawn to the area for its magnificence, the tradition of painting western scenes and landscapes will continue for as long as artists paint and sculpt. Don't miss Bighorn Rendezvous Quickdraw Aug. 21 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. It's your chance to walk about the property and talk with artists who are working at their easels, painting en plein air.

And who can say, maybe as you stroll through the grounds of the Quarter Circle A the whisper of the wind will tell of cowboys who once rode the foothills on range-weary horses, calling to longhorns to giddy-up and move along. Or perchance the soft rustle of leaves in the tall cottonwood trees will speak of Crows and Cheyennes who once lived on these lands.

Or perhaps you will simply discover that art and history enrich the mind and are good for the soul.

BARBARA MCNAB is curator of exhibitions at The Brinton Museum in Big Horn.