

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Autry Museum of the American West Presents New Exhibition
Desert Dreams and Coastal Currents

February 14–March 29, 2026



Ed Mell, *Cascading Canyon Storm*, 2021. Oil paint on linen canvas. Autry Museum of the American West, Masters of the American West James R. Parks Trustees' Purchase Award, 2021

The Autry Museum of the American West's latest exhibition, *Desert Dreams and Coastal Currents*, traces the parallel rise of Southern California and the Southwest as hubs of artistic innovation— and the lasting impact of these legacies on how we see and experience these places today. Around the turn of the twentieth century, artists seeking subject matter that felt at once recognizably American yet untainted by the industrial modernism of East Coast cities flocked to places like Laguna Beach in Southern California, or Taos and Santa Fe in Northern New Mexico.

These different but complementary impulses became the basis for organizations such as the California Art Club (founded in 1909), the Laguna Beach Art Association (founded in 1918), and the Taos Society of Artists (founded in 1915), fostering a sense of shared artistic values based on regional character.

The images they generated—of sun-washed hills, dramatic deserts, and portraits of Pueblo life—have influenced regional identity, artistic production, and tourist expectations ever since. By showcasing historical work alongside contemporary art that reimagines these traditions, *Desert Dreams and Coastal Currents* speaks to the ongoing exchange between art and place that continues to influence how we see the West today. The exhibition includes more than 50 artists, including Maynard Dixon, Carlos Almaraz, Harry Fonseca, and Fritz Scholder, and is curated by Autry Museum Executive Vice President of Research and Interpretation Amy Scott.



Maynard Dixon, *Iesaka Waken*, 1922. Oil on canvas. Autry Museum of the American West, The Elias Jackson Baldwin Memorial Collection, gift of Mrs. Anita Baldwin



James Doolin, *Primal Landscape*, 1993; Gift of Lauren Doolin McMillen

About the Autry Museum of the American West:

The Autry Museum of the American West is dedicated to exploring and sharing the stories, experiences, and perceptions of the diverse peoples of the American West, connecting the past to the present to inspire our shared future. The museum presents a wide range of exhibitions and public programs—including lectures, film, theatre, festivals, family events, and music—in addition to scholarship, research, and educational outreach. The Autry's holdings comprise more than 600,000 artworks and cultural objects, including one of the largest and most significant collections of Native American materials in the United States. For more information, please visit <https://theautry.org/creative-continuities>.

The Autry Museum of the American West acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands). We recognize that the Autry Museum and its campuses are located on the traditional lands of Gabrielino/Tongva peoples, and we pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), 'Ahihirom (Elders) and 'Eyoohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present, and emerging.

Autry Museum of the American West

4700 Western Heritage Way
Los Angeles, CA 90027-1462

Museum and Store Hours:

Tuesday–Friday 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Saturday–Sunday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

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