

Sylvia Watchman helped her family tend to peach trees when she was a child. Now, she's helping to reintroduce the trees to the Navajo Nation's Canyon de Chelly via the Peach Tree Project.



THE FRUITS OF HER LABOR

When Sylvia Watchman was a child, she helped her family tend to the peach trees they planted in Canyon de Chelly. “Sometimes we’d sit in the sun and eat the peaches,” she says. “Sometimes they were a snack. Sometimes they were a whole meal.” Today, with support from the Peach Tree Project, Watchman and other Navajos are working to restore this heritage crop to the canyon. But drought, expense and invasive species are making things difficult.

BY KELLY VAUGHN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY JULIEN McROBERTS

SYLVIA WATCHMAN’S JEEP BOUNCES LIKE A BUG THROUGH CANYON DE CHELLEY, the nail-polish-red Rubicon plowing through sand and between sandstone walls, its tires chewing through the terrain like teeth.

It’s early September, and the peaches are ripening. So, we go to find them in tiny groves, to explore a new generation of ancient fruit thriving in an unexpected place. “When I was growing up,” Watchman says, “we would play in the ruins, even though we weren’t supposed to. We always found peach pits, and my grandmother would say that they had been there for ages.”

Agriculture — though not specifically peach cultivation — has long been dominant in the canyon, beginning with the Basketmakers and Ancestral Puebloans, who grew fields of corn and squash. The Hopis nurtured them, too. The Navajos nurture them still. And when Watchman was a child, she helped her family tend to the peach trees they planted.

“We would talk to Mother Earth and Father Sky and bless the peach seeds with corn pollen,” she says. “Sometimes we’d sit in the sun and eat the peaches. Sometimes they were a snack. Sometimes they were a whole meal.”



ABOVE: Watchman and Ron Garnanez break up clods of dirt as they prepare to plant a young peach tree at the bottom of the canyon.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Because of lower rainfall, peaches grown in Canyon de Chelly are likely to be smaller than those grown in wetter locations.

people, she patiently answers questions about peaches and the logistics of growing them in the canyon's sandy earth, asking for input from Ron Garnanez and Eileen Braziel — a Navajo-Churro shepherd and weaver from Shiprock, New Mexico, and an independent curator and fine art dealer from Santa Fe, respectively. They're helping to reintroduce peaches to the canyon via the Peach Tree Project, which began in 2018. Its mission is to raise funds for the planting, nurturing and maintenance of the trees in the canyon.

"Peaches are a sacred food," Garnanez says. "They give peach tree nourishment to old bones." So much so that he's going to grow some at his farm in Shiprock, then transport them to the canyon later this year. "They need to be cultivated," he adds. "[In 2020], we'll have strong trees. We're growing the real thing. Our ancestors lived with these trees, talked to them."

Watchman nods. Tears build in her eyes the way water does behind a dam.

"Everything has feeling," she reminds us. "Everything communicates with everything, in the dark world and in the light world. My aunt would communicate with the trees. She always said that you had to talk to them. And the elders would do

The night before we venture into Canyon de Chelly, Watchman sits in a hotel restaurant just outside the national monument, which was designated in April 1931. Dressed in a T-shirt and wearing the traditional silver and turquoise jewelry of her

that. It's possible for someone to pick up the tradition."

Together, Garnanez and Watchman explain what it means to restore a heritage crop to the canyon. And what that symbolizes in terms of endurance, resiliency and hope for the Navajo people.

THE KUNLUN MOUNTAINS ARE ONE OF THE LONGEST mountain ranges in China, stretching for more than 1,900 miles and creating the northern edge of the Tibetan Plateau. According to legend, Emperor Wu of Han sent a legion of men to find the source of the Yellow River, and the men gave the name "Kunlun" to the mountains they found there. There's no direct translation of the word, but some stories report that gods and goddesses live in the range. Others tell of mythical creatures and plants.

But fact tells us that this region was where peaches were first cultivated, and experts have unearthed fossil records of peaches in Kunming, China, that are an estimated 2.6 million years old.

How, then, did they make their way to Canyon de Chelly, more than 7,500 miles away? It's most likely that people, through natural migration, moved the peaches across Asia and the Middle East (they once were believed to have originated in Persia, thus their scientific name, *Prunus persica*), then on to Europe.

The fruit came to the New World by way of Spanish explorers, and by 1600, peaches were documented in Mexico. By the early 1700s, they'd made their way to the desert Southwest and Canyon de Chelly. And they flourished: cradled by deep, sandy soil; warmed by summer sun; and chilled by winter winds.



The clingstone peaches became so valuable, the Navajos used them as barter, earning livestock, other produce and crafts in trade.

But then the armies came.

First, in retaliation for Navajo raids on Spanish settlements, Lieutenant Antonio Narbona and his men marched into the canyon in 1805, killing 115 Navajos and capturing about 30 more in Canyon del Muerto, the northern branch of the gorge. The Narbona Panel, a pictograph drawn in striking detail on one of the canyon's sandstone walls, depicts the massacre. But still, the peaches endured. In fact, by 1853, Henry Linn Dodge, who served as a liaison to the Navajos, had documented "abundant peaches of a superior quality."

A decade later, Kit Carson received his orders from General James H. Carleton.

"Henceforth, every Navajo male is to be killed or taken prisoner on sight," the orders read. "Say to them, 'Go to the Bosque Redondo, or we will pursue and destroy you. We will not make peace on any other terms. ... This war shall be pursued until you cease to exist or move. There can be no other talk on the subject.'"

In his 1976 work, *The Book of the Navajo*, historian Raymond Friday Locke described the assault.

"As [Albert W.] Pheiffer started westward down the canyon, Carson sent a detachment of 50 men to scout the mouth of the canyon system," he wrote. "There, the troops fought a short skirmish with some Navajos, killed 11 and captured two

women and two children and about 130 sheep and goats. ... Pheiffer continued to lead his troops down the floor of Canyon del Muerto toward the main branch of the canyon, where the snow lay 2 feet deep. Once again Navajos appeared on the heights of the canyon walls to hurl stones, pieces of wood and curses down on the Americans. But these half-starved protesters were not the proud warriors of yesteryear. The Americans ignored them, but did kill three men who came within range of their muskets. Pheiffer rode on down the canyon, burning hogans and food caches and killing all livestock he found."

The Navajos were exhausted and hungry. They were cold. But the Army showed no mercy. Carson, whose nickname was "The Rope Thrower," told a group of Navajos seeking to surrender to return to their people and tell them they had 10 days to appear at Fort Canby, New Mexico.

Later that day, the Army ravaged the crops at the mouth of the canyon. "It took me and 300 men most of the day to destroy a field of corn," Carson reported. Shortly thereafter, he left for Fort Canby in an effort to beat the Navajos there. But before he departed, he ordered the pillaging of all Navajo property within the canyon, including the nearly 5,000 peach trees that grew there.

"By the time Pheiffer and Captain Asa B. Carey were finished with this task and were ready to leave for Fort Canby on the morning of January 17, another 200 Navajos had

BELOW: Watchman's granddaughter Kayah climbs a tree to retrieve some peaches.
OPPOSITE PAGE: Watchman holds heirloom peach pits, the basis of the planting project.

surrendered, 23 had been killed, 34 had been taken prisoner — and the spirit of the Diné had been broken," Locke wrote. "As news of what the Americans had done at Canyon de Chelly spread through the hidden camps, the Navajos realized they had already lost the land they'd fought to keep."

There were holdouts — of both people and peaches — hidden away in narrow passages and secret side canyons, where the soldiers couldn't decimate them. But by mid-February 1864, there were 1,200 Navajo people at Fort Canby, and come March, the Long Walk to Bosque Redondo had begun. In 1868, after four years of exile, the government allowed the Navajos to return home.

"WHEN I'M AWAY FROM THE CANYON, I FEEL lonely," Watchman says as she steers the Jeep toward her home on the canyon's floor. "When I come back, I'm happy. The canyon always feels really good to me."

Several years ago, she took a trip to San Francisco with some friends. Despite the change of scenery, she'd left her heart somewhere else.

"All during that time, my mind was on the canyon," Watchman says. "I felt out of place, like I needed to come home. It was like leaving a child behind."

And so, she tends her peach trees like children. They cluster in a grove on her property, flanked by the canyon's walls and guarded by a scarecrow with an orange face and a black hat. Sometimes, Watchman waters the trees with a white enamel coffee pot that belonged to her aunt, who died last year. It's a subtle tribute to the past and a hope for the future.

"I hope that if we get more trees, people will be inspired to fix fences," Watchman says. "Even small rocks can make a big cliff."

There are a number of obstacles to growing peaches in Canyon de Chelly, drought and lack of easy access to water chief among them. Young trees are expensive, too, and transporting them can be challenging. And then there's the matter of birds stealing the fruit, the specter of a fruit-hungry black bear, and invasive Russian olive trees choking out other vegetation and stealing what little water exists underground.

And so, Wilson Hunter wears the slow smile of a man who's doing everything he can with very few resources. As a management assistant at Canyon de Chelly National Monument, he works with the canyon's community and participates in some of the projects there, including one with the Student Conservation Association, which for several years sent a work crew to the canyon during the summer. The SCA cleared that invasive vegetation, repaired hogans, replaced boards on bridges and helped with other needs.

Funding issues canceled the SCA program in 2019, but it's coming back this year, Hunter says. He hopes to find another organization to help with the Peach Tree Project, but in a broader sense, he hopes Navajo students will be inspired to return to the canyon to give back.

"I grew up in the canyon," Hunter says. "If we needed water, we could dig our hands into the earth on the edge of the wash: water. That's not the case anymore. Getting the interest of young people to become caretakers is so important. It will



bring life back to the canyon. There has to be some stewardship here."

As it relates to the peach trees, much of that stewardship, unfortunately, must be financial. Trucking in water to nourish the peach trees and other crops is expensive, but it's necessary: Chinle, the town adjacent to Canyon de Chelly, receives an average of only 9.58 inches of rain each year. Peach trees generally require 36 inches to thrive; as a result, Canyon de Chelly peaches may be smaller than mature fruit grown elsewhere.

But they're beautiful.

On this September day, Watchman picks a bushel. It's as though the fruit has absorbed the colors of the canyon walls. Yellow. Pink. Orange. Amber. Rose. Coral. They're the colors of a sunset over Spider Rock. The colors of the sand from which the peaches grew.

"My grandfather was a chief," Watchman says. "He begged a soldier to let him go back. He missed these walls so much."

There is heartbreak in these peaches. Healing, too.


We each take a bite from the fruit Watchman has handed us. It isn't quite ripe, but it's not underripe, either.

The peaches are little mysteries.

The skin snaps. An initial burst of sour melts into sweet. Braziel tastes it, too.

"Oh, I see what you mean," she says. "These are different. Delicious."

She's responsible for many of the new trees, having helped to facilitate a partnership with the International Land Sensitive Art Foundation, which continues to fund the project. She also encourages visitors to curated exhibitions — and from around the world, via her website — to donate \$200, the cost to purchase, plant and maintain a tree in the canyon.

And for Watchman and Garnanez and the countless other Navajos attempting to reclaim this part of their cultural and spiritual heritage, it matters. Take it from Watchman: "All of these trees are the grandmas now." 

• For more information about the Peach Tree Project, visit eileenbrazielart.com/peach-tree-project.





Ponderosa pines and other evergreens blanket the rolling hills of the Blue Range Primitive Area.
GEORGE H. H. HUEY

BLUE RANGE PRIMITIVE AREA

By KELLY VAUGHN, PHOENIX, ARIZONA

The magnolia bloom in Phoenix is fleeting. White petals, moved by the heat of April, unfurl from conical centers. Quickly, though, those petals yellow and curl, wilting into summer the way shadows melt around corners.

There is one Southern magnolia tree in my neighborhood, down the street and around a corner, rooted on the edge of a yard so pretty, it seems painted on. When the season is ripe with the bloom, I remember to walk past that tree — it reminds me of time spent as a child in New Orleans, a town where the trees are indigenous. Monstrous. Many.

I realized I missed this year's bloom when I woke up one morning about an hour before the light did. The window was open, and I heard a car fly down the street, its stereo bass pounding from a quarter of a mile away, going *who-knows-where?* and *to-what-end?* in our collective time of isolation. The brain is a funny thing turned on before it is tuned in.

The car left a chorus of night birds in its wake, and I remembered how whole I felt when I listened to the night birds in the Blue, and felt what a thing it was to be lonely in the big city and longing for loneliness in wilderness, under a field of stars so thick it seemed to warm the Earth below it.

Technically, the Blue, which spans just under 500,000 acres in Greenlee County along the far eastern hem of the state, is the last primitive area in the national forest system. New Mexico and its own Blue Range Wilderness are just a sneeze away, and Arizona's Blue achieves many of the same protections as a designated wilderness area — with a few caveats. As with many things, those caveats are political and philosophical. And that makes them a story for another time.

But, oh, the Blue is wild. Terrain varied and unpredictable. Elevations ranging from 9,100 feet along its rim to 4,500 feet at its terminus near Clifton. It is cut by its namesake river, which runs nearly 51 miles, north to south, and that water nourishes a rich and motley plant life — gold and purple daisies, ferns with names I don't know, grasses, aspens, evergreens, fluffy pink New Mexico locusts.

It nourishes animals, too. When first I went there — on assignment for this magazine — in the fall of 2014, I slept in a tent between two packs of wolves. Their howls cut the night air like a sharp scissors blade through organdy cloth, and I wrote then that “people are the out-of-place things in the Blue.” I hope it's still true.

In other wild places, I've thought often about those wolves and their cries and that field of stars and that sense of being very small in a very big place — so much so, I wondered if they haunted me. Now, in isolation, I realize that they don't. They moved into my chest and live there now with the magnolias and a thousand other memories.

So, come summer, or as soon as we can find loneliness in wilderness again, my feet will find the Blue, where it's likely the locust bloom will have come and gone, wilting into summer the way shadows melt around corners.

FOCUSED ON THE WEST

Jay Dusard says he's not a cowboy, but he's had a lifetime love affair with the West — and with the cowboys, cowgirls and ranchers who inhabit the landscape. Those people would become the subjects of his critically acclaimed portraits, many of which are featured in *The North American Cowboy: A Portrait*, a book made possible by a fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation.

BY KELLY VAUGHN

JAY DUSARD will settle for the chile relleno, he supposes. The enchiladas he's loved for years are no longer on the menu at the Gadsden Hotel's lobby restaurant.

The hotel, it seems, is a little bit different now. The border town of Douglas is different, too. So many things are. And that's OK with Dusard, so long as he has his horses and his memories. And his photographs. And some Mexican food from time to time.

Dusard wears his fawn-colored felt hat when we meet in the hotel lobby. It is a Tuesday, mid-December, and the leaves cling to the trees outside as though they're not quite ready for desert winter. Inside, the halls are decked for Christmas.

"Isn't it just beautiful?" Dusard asks.

It is.

A former architect who became one of the country's foremost Western photographers, Dusard has long explored this region of the state, appreciated the angles of its mountains, the lines and spaces of its grasslands, the sometimes hardened and sometimes softened faces of its people.

Jay Dusard, shown on his property in Douglas, has spent a lifetime honing his unique approach to portrait photography — one that never employs artificial lighting or reflectors.

Scott Baxter



So, before lunch arrives, we are scrolling through more than 50 years of photographs. His early work. His favorite work. The macro photographs he's made of late — a piece of railroad equipment, for example — that are of particular interest to him. Dusard's 83-year-old hands are nimble across the keyboard. Behind his glasses and underneath his graying mustache, Dusard smiles. His face is not hardened, despite the time he has spent outside in his lifetime. But it isn't softened, either. It is the face of a man who has been a main or ancillary character in many, many stories.

Dusard stops at a particular image of the Mule Mountains that he made one afternoon after planning it for years. It was a scene he had driven past countless times, but the scene was never quite right. It is the kind of shot that a photography curator or editor would say required vision, forethought, planning. Persistence. In it, the mountains look like folded silk under a sky painted with clouds. Brushy grassland in the foreground. All angles and lines and spaces. The decisive moment.

Dusard is proud of it.

There is awe in and of it.

"I think I've just always had an appreciation" — there is a pause here, six, maybe seven heartbeats — "for land," he says.

DUSARD, BORN IN ST. LOUIS in 1937, remembers his childhood fondly. His father, a traveling salesman, moved the family all over the country — to places such as Oklahoma City; Metairie, Louisiana; Marion County, Illinois; and Hollywood, Florida.

But there was something about the River City that still sings loudest to the photographer.

"Charlie Russell was born in St. Louis," Dusard says. "So that's kind of a big deal to me, because he's such an iconic figure in Western art. There's particular pride for me, too, having been born west of the Mississippi."

He is speaking, of course, of Charles Marion Russell, the great American painter and sculptor who long ago earned his spot in the Hall of Great Westerners at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.

He is speaking, too, about his lifetime love affair



LEFT: Nearly all of Dusard's portraits, including this shot of singer-songwriter and former rodeo rider Ian Tyson, include the entire subject. In Dusard's words, there's "nary a mugshot in the entire wagonload."
ABOVE: In addition to his portrait work, Dusard is an accomplished landscape photographer. He made this image in Canyon del Muerto at Canyon de Chelly National Monument.

with the West. With the cowboys, cowgirls, ranchers and horses who inhabit the landscape, the people who would become his ultimate subjects. To some degree, that affair began when Dusard was just a boy. Much of his childhood was spent on his grandfather's farm, growing corn, soybeans and oats. He was driving a tractor by age 6. Later, he worked for his uncle, Harvey May, on May's farm in Southern Illinois.

"I was a farm kid," he remembers. "I went to one-

room schools. Those were great, and I think that when we lost a lot of those, we lost some wonderful education situations. In a one-room school, there would be one teacher and a bunch of students in first through eighth grades." One year, Dusard was the only fifth-grade student in the school.

"I really dearly loved my uncle," he says. "He was an airplane mechanic in World War II. Once, he told me, he went 30 days in cold, wet England without a change of clothes." As Dusard grew into a teenager, he was out mowing and helping when May's family worked to bale up neighboring farms' hay.

"I don't think he had much in the way of hayfields, but he was the first person for miles to have a baler," Dusard remembers. "It was a New Holland baler, and we'd bale hay for all of the neighbors."

He found tenderness, and reverence, in working the



land. And he developed an early appreciation for the environment.

“It’s an interesting thing to be a tractor-enabled farm kid and to be plowing ground,” Dusard says. “Of course, it’s a big no-no environmentally, but it was also the way things were done back then. I can remember being on a tractor, moving through a field, pulling a plow. You could look back and see this continuum of earth being transformed. That struck me as a rather elegant experience, but the plow really hurt the land. People will agree to that now. They might even say that it led to the Dust Bowl and the diaspora of people leaving because they couldn’t make a living on the land.”

EVENTUALLY, DUSARD left, too — to study architecture at the University of Florida. He needed an arts elective and enrolled in a painting class. There, a librarian handed him a book of photographs by Aaron Siskind.

“That book really opened my eyes to the art of photography,” Dusard says, smiling. His speech has slowed a little since his stroke a few years ago, but his eyes are bright with the excitement of remembrance. “I promised myself

Dusard’s dedication to print quality, along with his environmental portraiture work, led to a pivotal fellowship with the Guggenheim Foundation in the early 1980s. Scott Baxter

that I’d learn photography. Maybe even get good at it.”

After college, Dusard spent two years as an engineer officer in the U.S. Army. It was a time of relative peace, and Dusard initially was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas — “smack-dab in the heart of ranch country.” In 1962, he bought his first horse, a ranch-broke 4-year-old gelding named Buck, and started spending time with rancher Will Dockery on Dockery’s cattle lease.

The following year, while stationed at Fort Polk, Louisiana, Dusard was ordered to take a fallout shelter analysis course at the University of Arizona, and he and a friend, Lieutenant Robert Lytton, made the slow drive westward. As they climbed over the lizard’s spine of the Chiricahua Mountains, they met a fire lookout who told them about a mountain lion hunter. The hunter was the rancher Warner Glenn.

On weekends thereafter, Dusard and Lytton explored Southern Arizona, arranging it so that one day they met Glenn himself. A face rendered fascinating by life on the range.

“In the morning, Bob and I rode out with Warner to range-brand some newborn calves,” Dusard recalls. “Most of the babies were lying down, so it was no test of skill for us to dab our loops on them. After a pleasant morning, as we were departing, Warner invited us to come back before we left Arizona. On our second visit, I told Warner that I was getting discharged soon, and boldly asked if a neighboring rancher might possibly take a chance on this able-bodied tenderfoot. Later, back at Fort Polk, a letter from Warner read, ‘Why don’t you come out and work for us?’”

The experience was so precious to the budding young ranch hand that in 2015, he, the photographer, dedicated his book *Icons: Portraits 1969-2015* to Glenn’s late wife, Wendy, writing, “In the autumn of 1963, Warner and Wendy Glenn welcomed this wide-eyed pilgrim onto their ranch and into their lives of exemplary pastoralism alongside a then-peaceful international border. The richness of this experience, albeit brief, changed the trajectory of my life.”

Dusard had landed in Arizona for good. And in late 1965, he picked up an 8x10 view camera.

HE STARTED with Northern Arizona landscapes. But in 1969, the painter Rose Mary Mack, a friend of Dusard’s, asked him to make her portrait for a traveling exhibition of her work.

He had been working the landscapes, printing, making enough inroads in the field to garner the attention of the faculty at Prescott College, where he was a year into teaching when Mack’s request came. Dusard was then working with a man he calls his “true mentor”: Frederick Sommer, the artist whose images balanced on a delicate edge between reality and the experimental. Naturally, Dusard protested. He was and could only be a landscape photographer.

His subject replied, “You’ll do fine.”

So he did. Going far, far above the bar.

The resulting image wasn’t a photograph. It was a work of art. There were no lights. No reflectors. Just a portrait of the artist against a stone wall. A ladder. Her paintings. A twin bed made up, maybe for the shoot. A small rug. A perfect houseplant. A moment. In a minute. In an hour. In a day.

Later, Dusard would write, “My rather formal approach to photographing people in relation to settings consistent with their life and livelihood can legitimately be considered environmental portraiture — a label that exemplifies the work of the late Arnold Newman. A foolish consis-

tency or not, practically every one of my portraits includes the entire person or persons. Nary a mugshot in the entire wagonload. Without exception, I have never used artificial lighting, not even reflectors. I invariably seek soft, revealing light — the shady side of just about everything — when my prayers for cloud cover are denied.”

For years, the Guggenheim Foundation was uninterested in Dusard’s landscapes. But then he started printing portraits — and he is, as gallerist Terry Etherton once called him, “a fanatical printer,” aided often by Carlos Mandelaveitia.

His approach to environmental portraiture and print quality piqued the foundation’s interest. And in 1981, it awarded him a fellowship.

Cloud cover guaranteed.

Over the next two years, Dusard traveled 25,000 miles, and rode and photographed at some 45 ranches, in the United States, Canada and Mexico. It was important, Dusard says, to do the same work as the men and women he was photographing: “If I was a part of it, the people I was photographing would trust me. They’d be more comfortable when the camera came out.”

The resulting work was *The North American Cowboy: A Portrait*, 123 pages of delicately constructed photographs. Widely lauded by critics and contemporaries alike, the book remains a triumph of portraiture.

It’s a characterization upheld by Scott Baxter, who made Dusard’s portrait for this story and who, too, has long photographed working cowboys and cowgirls across the West. Dusard authored the foreword to Baxter’s own book, 2012’s *100 Years 100 Ranchers*.

“I really think Jay’s Guggenheim work will stand the test of time,” Baxter says. “It is one of the most complete works in Western photography. That’s largely because of Jay’s persistence, his patience. He makes sure he gets it right, and I carry that with me.”

BACK AT THE GADSDEN, the chile relleno is “just fine, thank you.” The plates have been cleared, and the lunchtime crowd is thinning. Dusard slows through that highlight reel of images on his laptop. He has remembered each setup, each interaction. The stories fall out of him like salt from a shaker.

But outside, the light begins to change on the trees, and it is time for Dusard to head home. A strong handshake. A tip of that fawn-colored felt hat.

In the months since our meeting, Dusard has been writing, sending — from time to time — rich reflections about his life. In February, a 541-word essay about working with Warner Glenn arrives, its first sentence Dusard’s summary of his life and his work.

“I am not a cowboy,” he writes. “I’m a photographer with a degree in architecture and an abiding love of art.” **AH**

MEET THE MASTER

Thomas Moran, Gunnar Widforss, Bruce Aiken, Ed Mell ... some of the country's most renowned artists have offered their visual interpretations of the Arizona landscape. Among that elite group is Maynard Dixon, who is considered the master painter of the Southwest. The story of his life is pretty impressive, too.

BY KELLY VAUGHN

IT IS A SUMMER DAY in Columbus, Ohio, in 1999, and the woman stands with her arms clasped loosely in front of her. She wears a black long-sleeved shirt and khaki shorts. Her hair is bright blond and pulled back with a black butterfly clip. She is anxious, but not overly so. Her posture never varies.

In front of the woman stands Nan Chisholm, a New York-based art expert, and before her, on a big wooden easel, is an original Maynard Dixon oil painting titled *I Looked on My Valley and It Was Beautiful*. It shows a man in profile, looking out into a great gray landscape, his own clothes painted in muted tones to complement the rock on which he's sitting. He wears a brown hat. A gun is holstered at his hip. His boots are laced to mid-shin. The painting dates to San Francisco, circa 1912. It has been handed down over generations in the blond woman's husband's family.

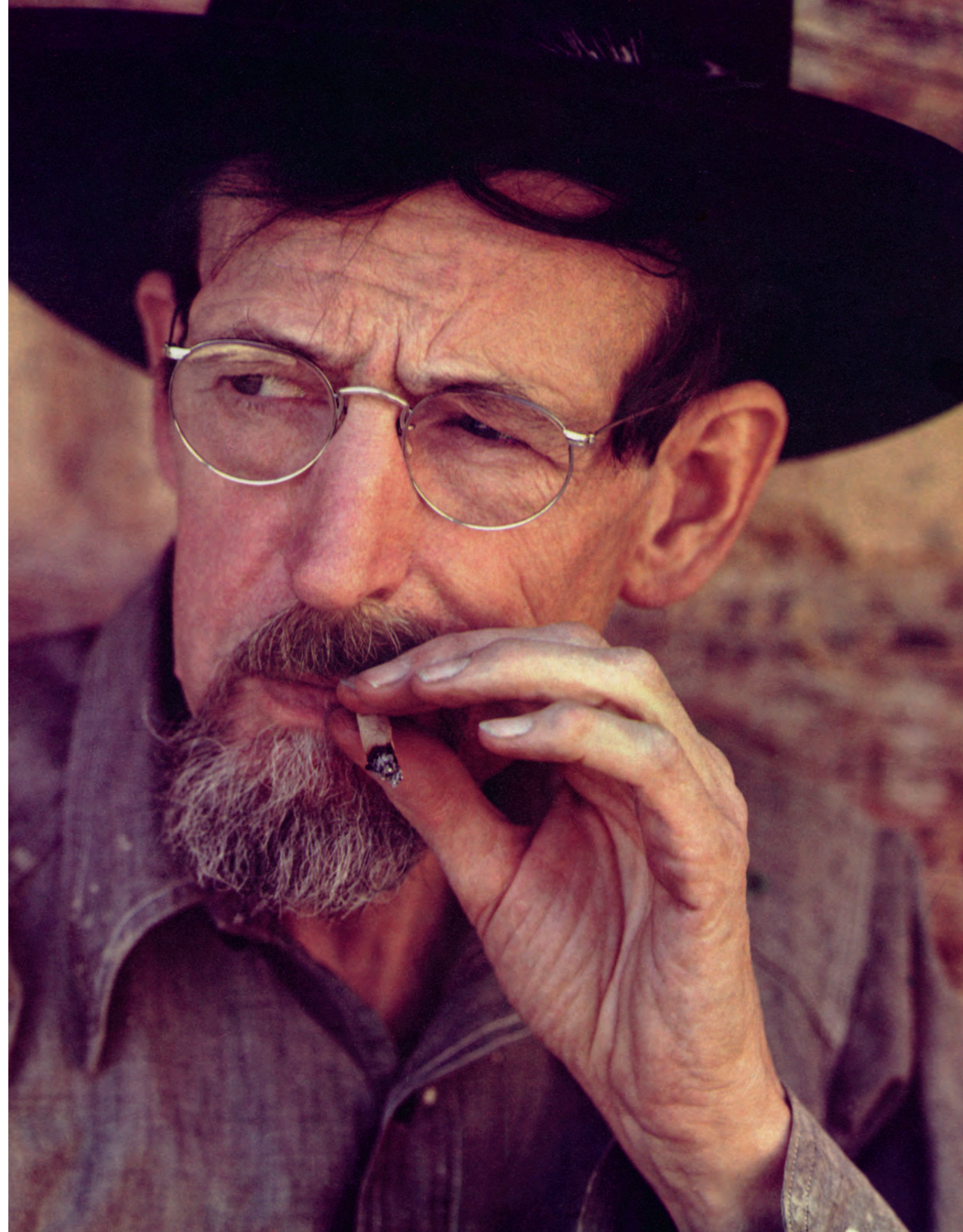
This segment of *Antiques Roadshow* is only two minutes and 15 seconds long, but there is a sense of a looming climax — that when Chisholm tells the blond woman how much this painting is worth, there will be awe, crying, whooping, jumping.

Instead, the woman coolly says, “Well, isn't that something?”

Chisholm valued the Dixon between \$20,000 and \$30,000 if it were to go to auction. Upon reappraisal in 2013, it had grown in value — to somewhere between \$150,000 and \$250,000.

That is something. But it's no real surprise, either. Dixon was, after all, the consummate painter of the American West.

A portrait shows artist Maynard Dixon in Tucson in his later years. Dixon and his third wife, Edith Hamlin, split their time between Tucson and their summer home in Mount Carmel, Utah.
MARK SUBLETTE MEDICINE MAN GALLERY





**EARLY PROMISE:
SAN FRANCISCO TO NEW YORK**

Unpacking Maynard Dixon feels a lot like wading into very deep, very wide water. There are plenty of stories. Hundreds of documents. Experts galore. Paintings and quotes and letters and interviews. Legend and lore repeated time and again. Waves of images. But we can't talk to the man himself — he died in 1946. Instead, we hope to hear his voice through his paintings, and through the legacy contained therein.

Born in Fresno, California, in 1875, Dixon was the only child of Confederate veteran Harry St. John Dixon, an attorney, and Constance Maynard Dixon, the daughter of a Navy officer from San Francisco. From his mother, Dixon learned an appreciation for classic literature and drawing. From his father, he “absorbed ... strict standards along with a family culture based on the code of honor of the Southern aristocracy,” writes Dixon scholar Donald J. Hagerty in *A Place of Refuge: Maynard Dixon's Arizona*. “For Dixon's father, it was the ‘damn Yankee.’ For Dixon, it [eventually] became the ‘damn businessman’ or the ‘damn smart-arty artists,’ those who ran with whichever style was in vogue.”

Prone to bouts of frailty because of his severe asthma, Dixon spent a fair amount of time inside the family home: sketching the lines of the San Joaquin Valley, creating illustrations for the scenes he read in novels, using local cowboys and cattle as the subjects for his early portraits. By the

ABOVE: Dixon's second wife, Dorothea Lange, photographed him on a walk with their sons, Daniel and John, in the 1920s.

COURTESY OF MAYNARD DIXON LEGACY MUSEUM

RIGHT: *Home Again*, a whimsical self-portrait in colored pencil and graphite, dates to 1903. At the time, Dixon was finding success as an illustrator for magazines, advertisements and books.

MARK SUBLETTE MEDICINE MAN GALLERY

time he turned 16, he'd grown some confidence, too, and mailed two of his sketchbooks to acclaimed Western artist Frederic Remington. The response was both encouraging and cautionary.

“You draw better at your age than I did at the same age,” Remington wrote. “If you have the ‘sand’ to overcome difficulties, you could be an artist in time. No one's opinion of what you can do is of any consequence — time and your character will develop that. ... Art is not a profession which will make you rich, but it might make you happy — its notaries are all sacrifices, but you are the master of your own destinies. Another thing — never cheapen yourself — you do not know it, but to be a successful illustrator is to be fully as much of a man as to be a successful painter, so I do not think many young men help themselves financially in that way. If you want to get a living while studying, that is very hard — it can be done, but circumstances, and not men, are responsible.”

Two years after his correspondence with Remington, Dixon moved to San Francisco to attend the California School of Design. But after three months of studying there, he quit, determined to pursue an education on his own. He jumped into the world of illustration with both feet, publishing a series of sketches in *Overland Monthly* in 1893. By 1902, his work was appearing in *Sunset* magazine.

“I would call the years between 1893 and 1912 Dixon's ‘illustration period,’” says Mark Sublette, a Dixon scholar



and the owner of Tucson's Medicine Man Gallery and the Maynard Dixon Museum, home to approximately 150 Dixon works. “He was highly successful and moved to New York after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.” Indeed, the earthquake so decimated the city that Dixon had little choice but to leave. New York, it seemed, would be his best bet in terms of marketing his art.

From there, his illustrations appeared in magazines, in national ads and even in a number of books. And Dixon's artistic circle was growing. In the Big Apple, he worked and socialized with painter Robert Henri, who led the Ashcan School artistic movement. And when he could, he visited the city's innumerable museums, studied American art and practiced his own easel painting.

But in 1912, dismayed by commercial depictions of the American West, Dixon returned to San Francisco with his wife, Lillian West Tobey, and their young daughter. He opened his studio at 728 Montgomery Street, in a three-story brick building that dates to the early 1850s. The building was severely damaged during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake but has since been restored and reopened with commercial and living space. The building has been on the San Francisco Planning Department's dedicated landmarks list since 1969, and it was within its walls that Anita Baldwin — the daughter of mining magnate E.J. “Lucky” Baldwin, and one of the wealthiest women in America — commissioned Dixon to paint four murals in her new home, Anoakia, in Arcadia, California.

The gig changed Dixon's life. The murals' subjects were Plains Indians, and their significance was immense. “He's written up in the *Los Angeles Times*,” Sublette says. “He gets rave reviews, and now he has this benefactor in Baldwin.”

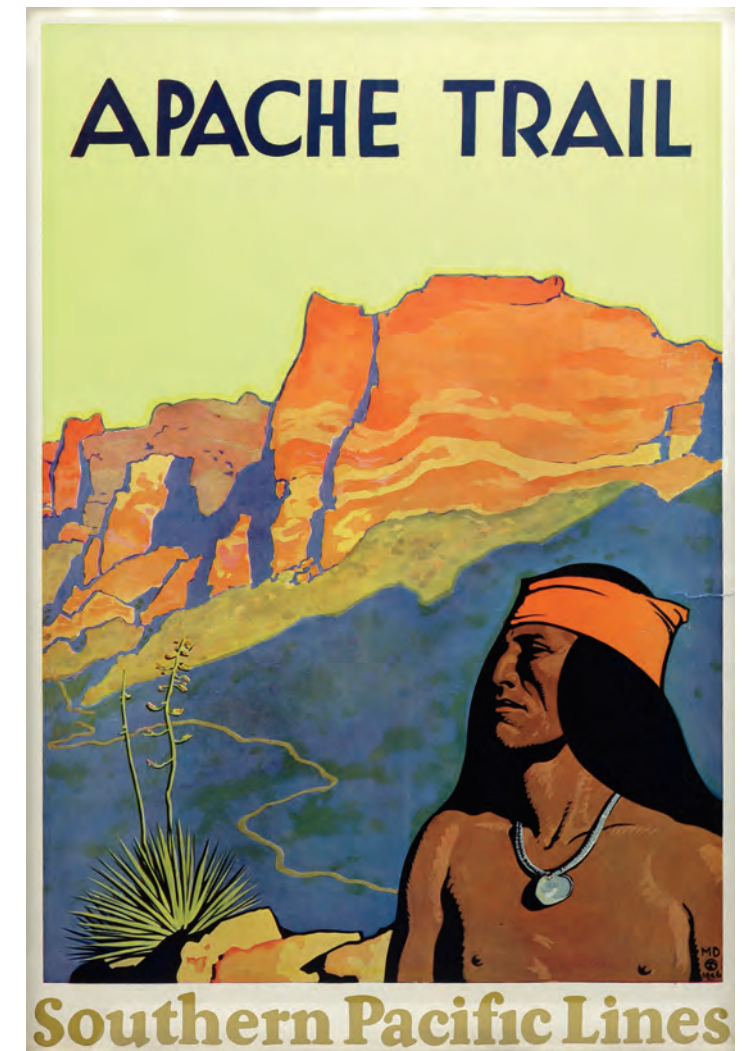
By his own account, Maynard Dixon was no longer just an illustrator: “As a painter, then, I date to 1912.”

ARIZONA: EAST TO SEE THE WEST

Of course, Dixon had been painting all along, but now, it seemed, he had a renewed sense of purpose — and much of that was focused on documenting the West. In 1900, inspired by friend and mentor Charles Lummis to “go east to see the West,” Dixon crossed into Arizona Territory for the first time. His first stop was Fort Mohave, where he immediately endeared himself to the people who lived there: sketching their portraits, hearing their stories, giving them 25 cents in turn.

His travels next took him to Prescott, where he met with poet Sharlot Hall, then on to Jerome. He hiked to the ruins of Montezuma Castle, near Camp Verde, before making his way to Phoenix — the capital of the Territory, with a population of 5,000.

“Attracted by Arizona's Hispanic culture, he moved on to Tempe, creating numerous drawings of Mexican laborers and their residences,” Hagerty writes. “Dixon stayed in



ABOVE: Dixon illustrated this Southern Pacific railroad ad, featuring Arizona's Apache Trail, in 1926.

MARK SUBLETTE MEDICINE MAN GALLERY

LEFT: The artist's work graced the cover of *Sunset* magazine in July 1904.

COURTESY OF MAYNARD DIXON LEGACY MUSEUM



their homes, enjoying the hospitality, and in the starlit evenings the people taught him to sing Spanish songs.”

In a letter he sent to writer Elwyn Hoffman, Dixon reflected on the adventure: “For me it has been for the past two months a checkered layout of Indians, cactus, rocks, sunlight, antiquities, mesas, Mexicans, adobes, Spanish songs — and salt pork.”

Over the next decades, Dixon returned often to Arizona, including during a 1902 Santa Fe Railway commission he accepted. During that trip, he traveled to the Hopi villages of Oraibi, Polacca and Walpi, where he sketched the people, their gardens, their shelters and more. In late August 1902, he traveled by freight wagon to Ganado, where he met trader John Lorenzo Hubbell. The two became fast friends, and Dixon’s visit lasted two months. After his departure, he and Hubbell corresponded until the latter’s death in 1930.

As much as Dixon admired Hubbell, he fell in love with the landscape of the Navajo and Hopi nations. His journal

ABOVE: *Yonder the Navajos*, an oil painting on canvas, dates to 1921 and depicts a panorama of high-desert hills and plateaus. Like much of Dixon’s work in the 1920s, it exudes the artist’s admiration for the expansive American West.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, 1974

RIGHT: Dixon’s *Hopi Interior (Sichomovi Arizona)*, painted in oil in 1923, was one of many works inspired by the artist’s time among the Hopi people.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, 1937

reveals the depths of that affection.

“On the map of Arizona, Navajoland appears as a great empty place, decorated with a scattering of curious names: Jeditoh Springs, Skeleton Mesa, Canyon del Muerto, Agathla Needle, Nach-tee Canyon, Monument Valley, the Mittens, Pei-ki-ha-tsoh Wash — all hinting at a far strangeness,” he wrote. “A vast and lonely land it is, saturated with inexhaustible sunlight and astounding color, visible with unbelievable distinctness, and overspread with

intense and infinite blue. Its long drawn levels are a setting for the awesome pageant of gigantic storms advancing under sky-built domes of clouds, trailing curtains of rain and thin color-essence of rainbows.”

He painted the landscapes of Northeastern Arizona with the same sort of poetry we find in his writing about the place, and he returned often to its themes. In 1912, the National Academy of Design accepted his *The Trail to Pei-ki-ha-tsoh* in its annual exhibition, and in the years that followed, Dixon generated countless paintings of the Navajo and Hopi people he met.

“He had a real love for these people,” says Kenneth Hartvigsen, the curator of American art at the Brigham Young University Museum of Art, which maintains an extensive Dixon collection. “That’s part of what makes him so special. He was an outsider. He had to travel to visit, and he did it in a way that feels personally authentic. His creative inventions came from a place of support and love.”

On some level, too, Dixon may have been trying to make amends for work he did as an illustrator for books and advertisements. Some of that work played into the stereotypes of the American West that capitalized on cultural insensitivity; later in his career, Dixon sought to dispel those stereotypes.

Another trip to Arizona, in 1915, would mark the beginning of a shift in Dixon’s painting style, as well as the beginning of the end of his first marriage. The family began their journey in Tempe, staying for two weeks while Dixon’s wife and daughter acclimated. From there, they went to Globe, then Holbrook to meet with Hubbell. Finally, they moved on to Flagstaff and the Grand Canyon.

Surprisingly, Hagerty writes, the latter proved only mildly inspirational: “Dixon made a few half-hearted oil

sketches and drawings there, but the large numbers of tourists dampened his desire to paint. More likely, he felt the Grand Canyon was not sufficiently remote or isolated enough for his purposes.”

Ultimately, Dixon produced about 30 landscape sketches on the trip, along with handfuls of drawings and at least five large canvases. He was exploring impressionist colors and incorporating other techniques he’d seen on display earlier that year at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, a show in which one of his three entered pieces received a bronze medal. He was, it seemed, both energized and exhausted.

After the trip, however, life in San Francisco would be difficult. His wife fell deeply into alcoholism, struggling for another two years until she and Dixon divorced in 1917. Broken by the loss of his family, Dixon traveled to Montana on a commission from the Great Northern Railway, then accepted a position with outdoor advertisers Foster & Kleiser.

He wouldn’t return to Arizona for five years.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION: BREAKING THE MAN

“The West lends itself to a romantic, symbolic network of ideas,” Hartvigsen says. “Dixon was trying to find himself, but he was also trying to find the truth in these places — and *our* truth in these places. He was in service to us, to discover what these landscapes feel like and mean to us. The landscapes pushed him away from illustrations because he realized there were truths to be found. Still, we have to search for them and be engaged with them.”

We feel that search in Dixon’s poetry, in references to “the dim and wandering ghost of wilderness tribes disappearing into the blue and empty ether.” We see it in the paintings he produced between 1915 and 1920, too, and again in those he created between 1920 and 1931, an era Sublette refers to as the artist’s “cloud period.” In this body of work, many of the skies he painted are ripe with white and gray harbingers of shade and rain. *Evening and Afterthought* is an example; *Cloud World* is another. *Moonrise Over the Desert* is more subtle. In all of them, there is a sense of inherent admiration for the unbroken expanse of the American West. A longing to be there again.

That opportunity came to Dixon in 1922, when he and his second wife, photographer Dorothea Lange — they married in 1920 — crossed the California-Arizona state line, making the long journey to Kayenta at the invitation of John Wetherill. They stayed for four months, traveling deep into the backcountry of Navajoland — to places such as Tsegi Canyon, Betatakin, Black Mesa, Monument Valley and the long sandstone reaches of the spaces in between.

Another trip, in 1923, this time with Baldwin and Lange, resulted in another lengthy stay. According to Hagerty, “Baldwin’s camping equipment was outrageous, Dorothea





thought — ten tents shaped like Chinese pagodas, with the food mostly in cans, including caviar. Reluctantly, Lange served as camp cook, preparing meals for Dixon, Baldwin, her bodyguard and two drivers. ... When Walpi's annual Snake Dance commenced, tourists who came to see the event clustered around Baldwin's luxurious, incongruous encampment. Dixon shunned the crowds, enjoying the hot August winds sweeping over the mesas with the drama of sailing clouds bringing the promise of rain."

Even after the women left, Dixon stayed on, living for another four months with Namoki, a Hopi snake priest and elder, and Namoki's brother, Loma Himma, drawing scenes from their daily lives. Dixon returned to San Francisco with his sketchbooks full. Many of his cloud paintings originated from those pages, as did stunning portraits of the Navajo and Hopi people he encountered during the visit. Twelve of his Arizona paintings were put on display at New York's MacBeth Gallery.

"Dixon had really beautiful, sensitive treatment of figures," Hartvigsen says. "While he's best known for his

landscapes — and his landscapes are astounding — he really did have a sense of the human form and of capturing the personality of the sitter."

And it seems the Hopi way was fully imprinted on Dixon by the mid-1920s. Lines from his poem *Little God* reveal the depth of his admiration for the people and their practices:

*So — you fooled me little Katchina, did you?
Strange little terrible tufted god,
inscrutable small symbol of old mysteries,
painted, grim-visaged, austere,
enigmatic behind your savage green mask,
hanging there on the pearl-white earthen wall, —
so — you eluded me, did you?*

*Yes, — but already I have charted the theme:
the long step-down pattern of rectangular mesas,
the dreaming three-domed symbol of thunder clouds,
the mystical slow growing of tasseled corn.
I will draw forth the ghosts of your cliff-swelling fathers,
I will conjure old Betata Kin back to life,
and in my visions will live again Kit Seel and Sikyatki.
I will yet somehow divine your mysterious meaning.
Look out, little Katchina,
bright painted small inscrutable god,
perhaps I shall more than half know you.*

In ways, Dixon did divine the mysteries of the Hopi Tribe when he returned to San Francisco, painting even more portraits of the friends he made there.

"He really does some great work [in] 1922 and 1923," Sublette says. "And I think that in 1927, he had something like 18 museum shows across the country. Then, of course, he gets the commission to paint the mural inside the [Arizona] Biltmore hotel in Phoenix [see *The Paintings on the Wall*, page 46]. Just as he finishes that, the stock market crashes and the country descends into the Great Depression."

So, too, did Dixon.

"Everything went downhill for him in terms of sales," Sublette says. "Over the next five years, he only sells a couple of dozen paintings."

Financially strained and creatively frustrated, Dixon, Lange and their two sons, Daniel and John, once again went east — this time to Taos, New Mexico, where they stayed for seven months in 1931, living in a home loaned to them by Mabel Dodge Luhan. "Well, if I can drag it out here until Christmas, I might show something myself — though it will be hell trying to out it," Dixon wrote to his friend Harold von Schmidt. "Other than financially, we are going fine and wish you the same." It was a critical time in the artist's career, but he came out of it with a series of paintings that were extraordinary, according to experts.

"He creates some fantastic paintings in New Mexico," Sublette says. "This would be yet another great period for



Hopi Man (left), painted in 1923, and *Young Matron, Sichomovi Arizona* (above), painted in 1923, are among many portraits Dixon created of the American Indians of Northeastern Arizona. These two oil paintings illustrate Dixon's reverence for the Hopi people — a reverence that also is evident in the artist's poetry.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, 1937



LEFT: *Man Against Rock*, a mixed media work from April 1934, depicts humans as small, insignificant figures — a perspective shaped by Dixon's time documenting the construction of Boulder Dam the same year. MARK SUBLETTE MEDICINE MAN GALLERY

BELOW: *Forgotten Man*, an oil painting also from 1934, is among Dixon's Great Depression-inspired depictions of the downtrodden. BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, 1937

RIGHT: *Shapes of Fear*, a more abstract work from the early 1930s, illustrates Dixon's own anxieties about the Depression. MAYNARD DIXON, *SHAPES OF FEAR*, 1930-1932, OIL ON CANVAS, SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM, BEQUEST OF HENRY WARD RANGER THROUGH THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN

sal dam an immense work compared to man, but a peanut compared to its setting. A bewildering display of engineering for the understanding of which I had not the least preparation in past experience. It gave me an impression of concealed force — and of ultimate futility.”

The paintings Dixon created during the Great Depression speak overwhelmingly to that theme. *Shapes of Fear* is a drab tableau of faceless characters huddled together in robes — an expression, Sublette says, of Dixon's own fears about the Depression. In *No Place to Go*, we see a man in work clothes with a pack strapped to his back. He is backed against a wooden fence, with nothing but rolling hills and the ocean behind him — everything in shades of brown, blue and gray. *Forgotten Man* served as the thesis for Dixon's *Forgotten Men* series.

“That painting, in particular, really shows a direct tie between Lange's photography and Dixon's own work,” Hartvigsen says. “The angle is very, very similar to the *White Angel Breadline* photo. And I think there were times during the Depression where he saw himself in some of those men. He thought, *That could be me*. There's a period here where they really had very little.”

Dixon's own records indicate he created 282 pieces between 1930 and 1935, the year he and Lange divorced.



him. But as he and Dorothea are driving back to California with the boys, they're seeing the great exodus of people — the Okies — migrating west for opportunities, and it really strikes him. At this point, Dorothea starts to get involved with social causes and understanding.”

Dixon did, too, by default — Lange's *White Angel Breadline* photograph, which dates to 1933, catapulted her into the national conscience, and she became the most well-known documentary photographer of the era.

In the years that followed, Dixon was immersed in painting the everyday people he encountered on the streets of San Francisco. The colors he chose were darker, more muted. The lines he used resembled the lines of Lange's photographs. Their subjects were similar, too — picketers, dockworkers, maritime strikers, the homeless. In 1934, he was awarded a Public Works of Art Project grant to document and paint the construction of Boulder Dam (now Hoover Dam) on the Colorado River at Black Canyon.

“He's there for a month,” Sublette says. “In that time, five men die. The hospital's full. He sees his brother-in-law — a really bright, educated, erudite guy — is down to doing physical labor. Dixon really starts to wonder what this country had come to.”

In his own reflection on the project, Dixon wrote: “I found there a dramatic theme: Man versus Rock; the colos-



TO TUCSON: FOR GOOD

Edith “Edie” Hamlin had high cheekbones and long eyelashes, but — more importantly to Maynard Dixon — she was an artist, too, painting the West in a way all her own. And she loved him. Despite a 30-year age difference, they married in 1937.

The same year, Herald R. Clark, the dean of BYU's College of Commerce — there was no art school at the university at the time — approached Dixon, having seen some of his social realism paintings in a St. Louis newspaper. The men struck a deal: Clark would purchase 85 pieces for \$3,700, forming the basis of the university's art collection.

“Dixon, of course, wanted to seal the deal with a toast,” Hartvigsen says. “Clark, being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, declined. So, they sealed the deal over a shot of milk.”

Financially secure for the first time in years, the Dixons moved to Tucson in 1939, splitting their time between 2 acres on Prince Road and their summer home in Mount Carmel, Utah [see *Maynard Dixon Legacy Museum*, page 34]. Dixon was aging rapidly, his lungs rattled by the cold winds of San Francisco and emphysema from years of smoking hand-rolled cigarettes.

Tucson, it seemed, made Dixon feel lighter somehow, as he reveals in his poem *Sun-Land*:

... I feel the inescapable pull of the earth, —
the deep old Earth pulling me back to her.
But now as the changeable colors of days
wheel with increasing velocity past my sight
these eyes of mine grow steadier,
my heart grows stronger,
and from the deep old Earth I know knowledge of things,
wonderful things I could never have known before;
and yet — where is the vast arc and the rainbow edge of the dream —
that marvelous Dream —
I could never have dreamt, except —
except in the Sun-Land.

During the early 1940s, the couple traveled throughout Arizona and hosted a number of friends and contemporaries — including photographer Ansel Adams — in their Tucson home, an ochre-colored adobe with a thunderbird emblem emblazoned on its address plaque and a single cottonwood near the patio. The tree began to appear in many of Dixon's paintings.



ABOVE: Dixon and his third wife, Edith Hamlin, work near their Tucson home in a 1940 Chuck Abbott photo.
MARK SUBLETTE MEDICINE MAN GALLERY

RIGHT: Dixon's "cloud period" produced oil paintings such as 1924's *Remembrance of Tusayan, No. 2*, one of the artist's best-known portrayals of the American West.
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, 1998



"He knew its leaves, rotating and rattling, might fore-shadow the arrival of rain," Hagerty writes. "When enough frosty nights prevail in autumn, the cottonwood's foliage turns from bright green to shining yellow, the spade-shaped leaves like little mirrors throwing shimmering light on the adjacent terrain. The tree is often solitary, tolerating little between it and the sun and wind, as did Maynard Dixon, who made it a personal symbol in many canvases."

By 1945, though, the artist was collapsing, tied con-

stantly to an oxygen tank. Still he painted.

"To those who saw him then, he appeared a lean, weathered man with drooping mustache and chin beard, sketchbook and pencil always clutched in his left hand," Hagerty writes. "But those who looked closely saw that his blue eyes still incessantly searched the desert horizon."

On November 13, 1946, Hamlin found Dixon unconscious in his wheelchair. He died a few hours later. His ashes went to live in a Hopi bowl he'd brought back from Walpi in 1923. Hamlin returned to San Francisco in 1953

and worked to preserve Dixon's legacy until her own death in 1992.

It isn't easy to articulate that legacy, and it can't simply be explained by the value of Dixon's paintings today — the "Well, isn't that something?" aspect of it all. Dixon's paintings are a testament to the romance of the American West and its people.

"When you talk about 'the West,' you almost always want to talk about the Old West," Hartvigsen says. "The Hollywood cowboy and Indian stories. You have the

essentialist narrative of the Native peoples as being these perfect societies that had no strife. I think that Dixon, while very much part of that and being inspired by that, was always digging and drilling down to find something real. I think he was trying to find himself and a place where he felt comfortable and safe and protected, and the landscape of the West provided that for him. That's his legacy. As much as there is a process of imagination with him, it was in service of finding the truth of the American West." [AH](#)

Thuy's Noodle Shop

There are many reasons to visit Bisbee, including its quirky shops, galleries and B&B's. There's even a Vietnamese restaurant, which features the soups, noodles and rice dishes that chef Thuy Dang enjoyed as a kid.

KELLY VAUGHN

Editor's Note: At press time, this restaurant was open. However, with restrictions and challenges related to COVID-19, that could change. We encourage you to call ahead, and consider takeout as another option.

When Thuy Dang (pictured) moved to Bisbee from Vietnam nine years ago, she desperately missed the flavors of home — the spices, the heat, the way everything blended together to create steaming bowls of soup, noodles, rice, more. So, while her husband was at work, she Skyped with her friend.

Through those video chats, spanning more than 8,500 miles, Dang built enough culinary knowledge to create an extensive menu of the food that had comforted her for decades. A year and a half later, she opened Thuy's Noodle Shop to share

those flavors with the people of Bisbee.

And, luckily, among her customers' favorite dishes are the ones that Dang most likes to cook.

"The beef noodle soup and the chicken curry are really popular," she says. "And even I eat the beef noodle soup every day."

Featuring thinly sliced beef in a homemade broth, the soup is accented with five traditional pho spices — star anise, whole cloves, cinnamon, cardamom and coriander seeds — along with white and green onions, daikon and rice noodles. Topped with bean sprouts, cilantro, lime and Thai basil, it's warm and refreshing at once.

And then there's the curry. Made with sweet potato and carrot, and served with your choice of rice or rice noodles, it's rich with a kick. Other traditional menu

offerings include gà kho xá, chicken with lemongrass, jasmine rice and vegetables; bún chả giò, two fried rolls featuring pork and shrimp or vegan ingredients, served with noodles, fish sauce and sweet chile sauce; and gỏi cuốn tôm thịt, a fresh spring roll filled with pork, shrimp, cucumbers, carrots, lettuce, cilantro and mint, and served with Dang's special hoisin-peanut sauce on the side.

Many of the entrées can be made vegetarian or vegan, and all of them are made with love by Dang herself. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19 over the past year, Dang has adapted, just as she did when she moved from Vietnam. A recent move to Tombstone Canyon Road from Naco Road means she has more space, heat in the winter and air conditioning in the summer. And while her focus is on preparing takeout orders right now, she's looking forward to having customers dine in again.

"I love Bisbee and the people who live here," Dang says. "There are super families who have always supported my business. I miss having them in the restaurant the most."



BISBEE Thuy's Noodle Shop, 207 Tombstone Canyon Road, 520-432-9169, facebook.com/thuysnoodleshop