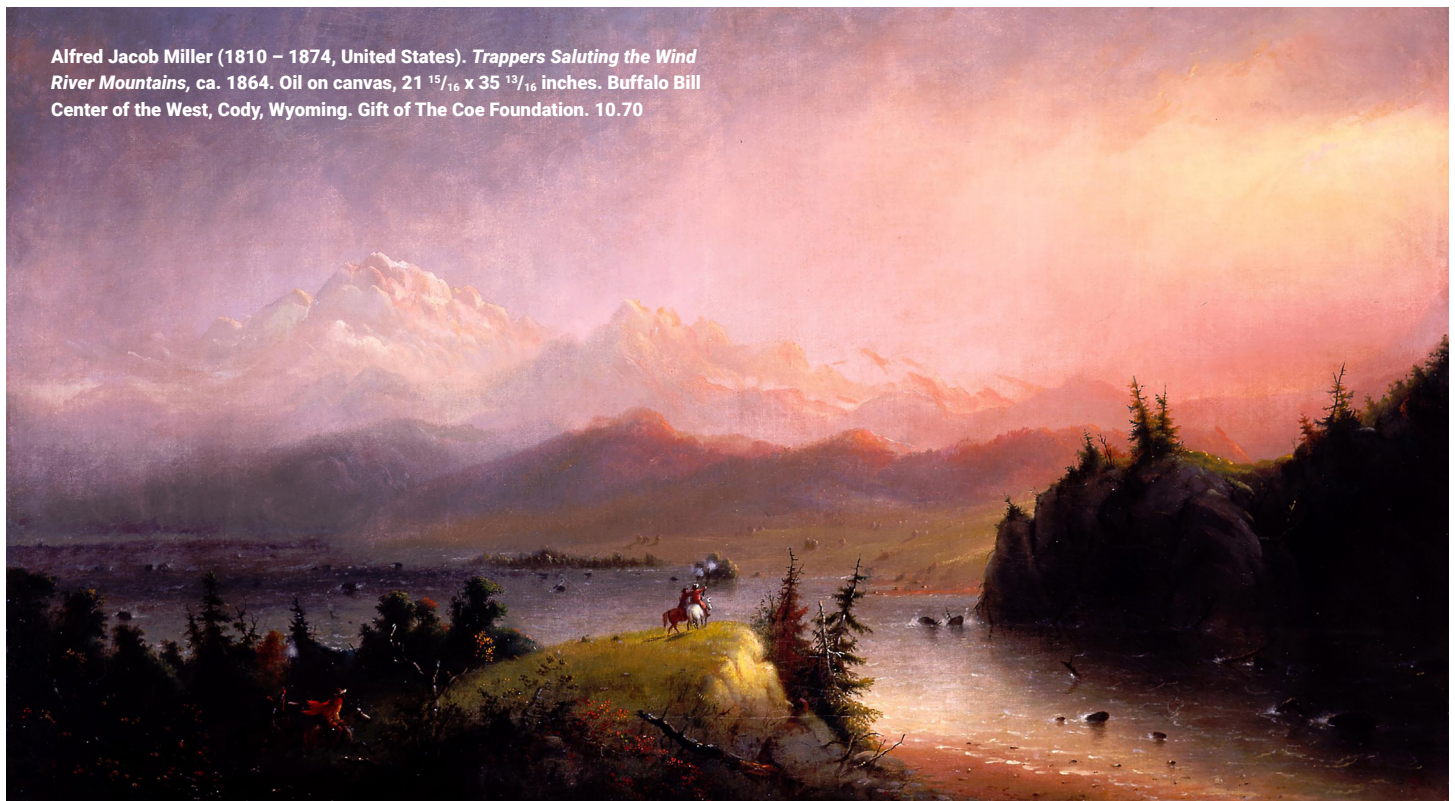


Buffalo Bill Center of the West to open two exhibitions united across subject and time.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE MAY 2, 2023

This summer, experience Wyoming's Green River through art, artifacts, and stories at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. Two special exhibitions invite visitors to vicariously journey along the Green River with artist Tony Foster (b. 1946) and historical painter Alfred Jacob Miller (1810–1874).

Alfred Jacob Miller **REVISITING THE RENDEZVOUS IN SCOTLAND AND TODAY**



Alfred Jacob Miller (1810 – 1874, United States). *Trappers Saluting the Wind River Mountains*, ca. 1864. Oil on canvas, 21 ¹⁵/₁₆ x 35 ¹³/₁₆ inches. Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, Wyoming. Gift of The Coe Foundation. 10.70

The Center of the West and the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art debut the exhibition, *Alfred Jacob Miller: Revisiting the Rendezvous—in Scotland and Today*, in Cody, Wyoming, on May 20, 2023. The exhibition remains on view through October 22, 2023, and travels to the Eiteljorg in 2024.

Revisiting the Rendezvous features more than 50 paintings by American artist Alfred Jacob Miller, who attended the fur traders summer rendezvous of 1837 held in the Green River Valley in what is today Wyoming. Miller was among the earliest artists of European descent to venture into the heart of the Rocky Mountains, as invited by a wealthy Scottish adventurer, William Drummond Stewart. Though this would be Miller's only trip west, he spent the rest of his career revisiting and romanticizing the experience through his art.

This exhibition provides fresh perspectives on Miller's paintings made especially for Stewart's Murthly Castle, ranging from intimately scaled watercolors to large oil paintings (one measuring eight feet wide). The show presents a unique opportunity to view a significant number of these reunited "Murthly Castle Millers." The paintings were inspired by Miller's 1837 journey, displayed in Stewart's Scottish estate, and then dispersed throughout the world following Stewart's death. Amazingly, many ended up in collections around Wyoming, returning to the place that first sparked Miller's imagination.

To celebrate the significance of regional holdings and the prevalence of “Murthly Castle Millers” among them, *Revisiting the Rendezvous* draws solely from collections in and around Wyoming. Lenders include Naoma Tate, J. Joe Ricketts in association with the Ricketts Art Foundation, the National Museum of Wildlife Art in Jackson, and the American Heritage Center (AHC) at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. The AHC is lending 8 paintings from its impressive Graff family collections.

These important loans are supplemented by 21 paintings and 1 chromolithograph from the Center of the West’s group of 33 works by Miller, which includes 11 of the 87 small watercolors Miller made for Stewart as a visual memoir of their journey. Miller’s subjects for these were primarily Native peoples they met and with whom they traveled, interesting geological formations, landscapes, hunting scenes and animal encounters, and Stewart and his companions. Each of these subjects is highlighted in the exhibition.



Alfred Jacob Miller (1810 – 1874, United States). *Greeting the Trappers*, ca. 1850s. Watercolor on paper, 6 ½ x 9 ½ inches. Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, Wyoming. Gift of The Coe Foundation. 8.70

Artifacts related to the fur trade era in the American West are juxtaposed with Miller’s paintings to complement and complicate the stories his fanciful art relays. Drawn from the Center of the West’s diverse collections, these objects range from intricately beaded moccasins to well-used Green River knives, to an adorned saddle. Items created by Crow and Shoshone peoples offer counterpoints to Miller’s depictions of Native identities and assert other ways of storytelling, as through the adornment of everyday and specialty objects.

A variety of experts offer interdisciplinary insights into the objects on view, and 8 paintings are accompanied by historian/playwright Gregory Hinton’s recorded narration of Miller’s own descriptions of the works. These descriptions are drawn from the artist’s *Rough Draft for Notes to Indian Sketches*. Nearly half of the objects on the checklist will be accompanied by recorded visual descriptions. Both Hinton’s narration and the descriptions are accessible by QR codes.

Visitors to the exhibition can immerse themselves in two theatrical stage sets, professionally constructed by Indianapolis-based set designers, with counsel from historians and the exhibition’s curators, and based on Miller’s art and other primary sources. One artistically evokes Stewart’s campsite at the 1837 rendezvous and the other, a fictitious room at his Scottish estate. Conceived in the spirit of “period rooms” and as a nod to Miller’s and Stewart’s own penchant for theatricality, these scenes allow visitors to imagine themselves stepping back in time. Another area invites young visitors (or those young-at-heart) to try on a mountain man’s capote, sling a “possibles bag” across their chest, and take a picture against a reproduced Miller landscape backdrop.

In addition to sharing Miller’s compelling art and story with new and broader audiences, this special exhibition contributes to scholarship on the artist and his patron by expanding upon earlier, seminal research.

Revisiting the Rendezvous is presented in the Anne & Charles Duncan Special Exhibition Gallery at the Center of the West and is sponsored by Marilyn B. Dunn, Margaret and William Frère, Karen and Grant Gregory Family, the Estate of Linda Miller, Linda Spencer Murchison and Reid Murchison, Marnie S. Pillsbury, Sage Creek Ranch, Maggie and Dick Scarlett, Naoma Tate and the Family of Hal Tate, Lisa and Bill Wirthlin, and the generous support of others. At the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, the exhibition is dedicated to Peter H. Hassrick and William “Bill” Dwight Weiss.

The catalyst for this project was its organizers’ work on *Fur Traders and Rendezvous: The Alfred Jacob Miller Online Catalogue*. Launched in 2015 as a joint effort among The Ricketts Art Foundation, the Center of the West, and The Museum of the Mountain Man, the *Miller Online Catalogue* is the most extensive online database of Miller’s western paintings in institutional collections. Contributors Peter H. Hassrick (1941–2019) (Center of the West), Jim Hardee (*Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal*), and Karen McWhorter (Center of the West) each lent their expertise to this exhibition, for which McWhorter serves as organizer and curator in partnership with Johanna M. Blume of Eiteljorg. Nathan Bender, Dr. Ashlea Espinal, and Hunter Old Elk (all of Center of the West) also added immeasurably to the Cody presentation. New scholarly essays by McWhorter, Blume, and Espinal will be published online.

Tony Foster: Watercolour Diaries from the Green River



**Tony Foster (b. 1946, Lincolnshire, England). From *Lower Green River Lake Looking South South East*, 2022.
Graphite and watercolour on paper, with glass bead necklace by Chastity Teton, map, 45 ½ x 58 ½ inches.**

Running concurrently with *Revisiting the Rendezvous*, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West presents *Tony Foster: Watercolour Diaries from the Green River*, also in the Duncan Special Exhibition Gallery.

Coordinated in partnership with the artist and The Foster Museum in Palo Alto, California, the exhibition includes 16 paintings of locations on the Green River, whose source is in Wyoming. Most often discussed as the headwaters of the mighty Colorado River system, the Green—called the Seeds-kee-dee-Agie (Prairie Hen River) by Shoshone peoples—is deserving of focused celebration as a critical western waterway of great ecological and cultural significance.

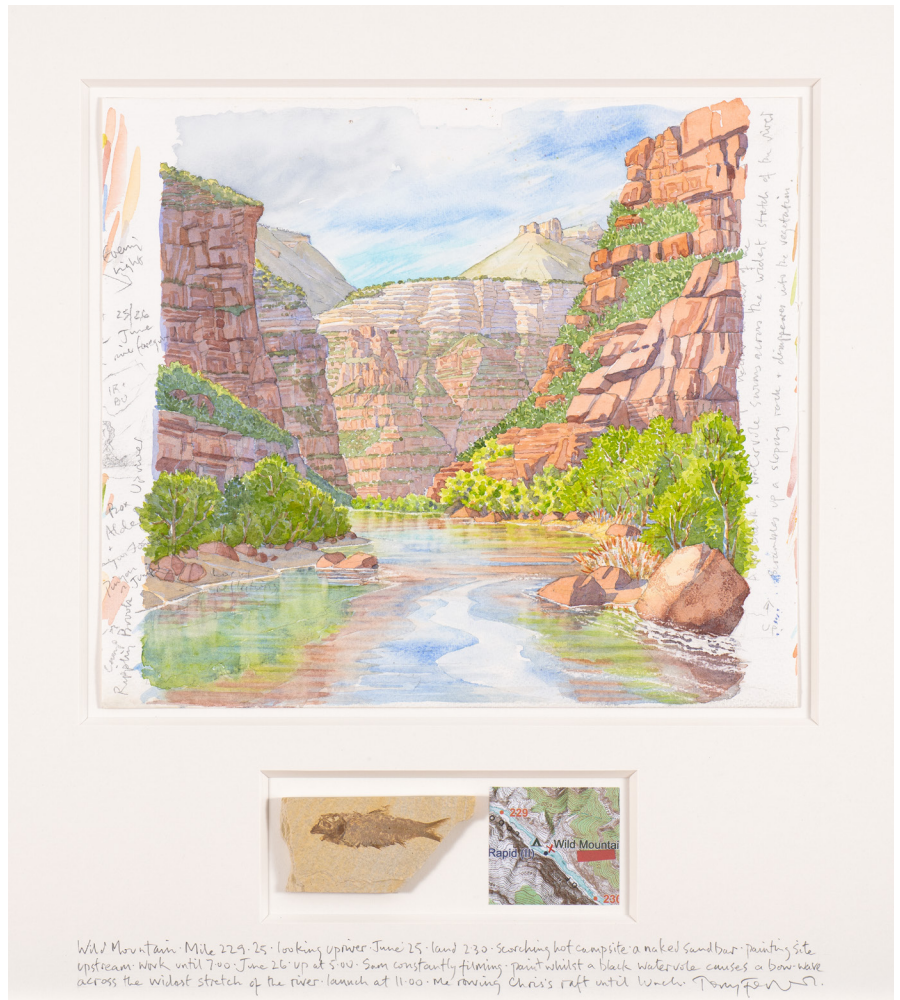
For forty years, Tony Foster has created artworks in the world's wildest places from the Arctic to the Tropics, and from Mount Everest to Death Valley, even sometimes working underwater to create paintings about coral reefs. Foster's "Journeys" often involve multiple expeditions and can take years to complete, some like the Green River are specific to a particular place while others explore a conceptual idea at locations throughout the world. He often works at large scale and completes as much of his watercolors as possible in the field—in rugged, remote locations amid unpredictable weather conditions. He never paints from photographs referenced later, instead gleaning as much as possible from direct observation and only finishing his works in his studio in Cornwall, England. His beautiful and highly detailed paintings also include handwritten notes and mounted "souvenirs" that take the form of small sketches, collected or

purchased objects, or bits of maps, which relate to his personal experiences of the places and their histories. The artist pays tribute to the river's geology by including Green River Formation fossils in some of the works. Near Foster's artwork, numerous examples of these impeccably preserved fossils from the Eocene Epoch will be displayed.

Foster made his Green River paintings between 2018 and 2023, inspired by several trips to the American West during that time. *Watercolour Diaries from the Green River*, Foster's eighteenth Journey, is a continuation of the artist's interest in physically and conceptually exploring waterways in the American West. Other work on rivers includes a journey on the Salmon River (*The Whole Salmon*, 2002), as well as journeys on the Colorado River (*Exploring the Grand Canyon*, 1988–89), the Missouri and the Clearwater rivers (*After Lewis and Clark*, 1998–99), and the San Juan River (*Sacred Places*, 2010–12).

An accompanying catalogue will situate Foster in context with historical artists; highlight the Green River's ecological uniqueness, significance, and current threats; and examine human relationships to the river across time. Essayists include artist Tony Foster; Karen McWhorter; Jim Ballinger, (Emeritus, Phoenix Art Museum); Lynette St. Clair (Cultural Preservationist); Kate Poole (Natural Resources Defense Council); Dr. Dorothy Merritts (Franklin and Marshall College); and Jack Schmidt (Utah State University).

A short film directed by David Schendel will be on view within the gallery. The film brings Foster's passion and process to life, presenting a collage of the artist's experiences from his Green River journeys. Viewers will join Foster on the trail as he pursues the ideal vantage point from which to paint Squaretop Mountain near the source of the Green River in Wyoming and accompany the artist on the river's southerly stretches as it runs below towering canyon walls in Utah. The film additionally sheds light on Foster's method of painting en plein air with an ultralight setup that he has honed to the essentials: one tiny paint box, one folding drawing board with the back routed out to save on weight, a small plastic deli container lid as a mixing tray, and several brushes. In the field, he unfurls a large piece of paper from an aluminum tube, clamping its deckled edge to the drawing board with binder clips, and sets to work seated on a simple folding stool. The artist's only indulgence is a regular tea break.



Tony Foster (b. 1946, Lincolnshire, England). *Wild Mountain Mile 229.25 Looking Upriver*, 2019. Watercolour and graphite on paper, with fossilized fish and map, 22 1/2 x 22 inches framed. Collection of The Foster Museum.

Foster's hope is to inspire people to think about "the absolute exquisite complexity and interest" of the places he visits. Through his artwork, he offers us an opportunity to vicariously travel to locations to which most will never venture. For Foster, this Journey, as part of his life's work, is "about looking at things in depth and thinking about them over a long period, and studying them, and trying to convey the sense of what it's actually like to sit in a place... absorbing the place."