



For immediate release – August 5, 2020

***Drawn to the West*, a feast of familiar landscapes featuring the work of artists from the 1880s to present day**

“It is a feast of familiar landscapes,” Chief Curator of Art and Heritage, Anne Ewen, describes the newest exhibition, *Drawn to the West*, on view at the Whyte Museum through January 2021.

For more than 130 years, artists have been drawn to western Canada, inspired by the vastness of the prairies and the magnitude of the mountains. This exhibition of 90 works, includes prints, watercolours, oils, photography, and mixed media, reflecting changes in artistic approaches over time.

At the heart of this exhibition are four paintings by the famed Canadian artist, Tom Thomson (1887–1917). Prior to 2013, it was unknown that Thomson had ever visited the Canadian Rockies, but after the discovery of one of his landscape paintings in a British shop, the search for answers became more fevered. After consultation with numerous authors, researchers, artists, and the Canadian Conservation Institute, it has been determined that these paintings were indeed painted by Thomson, however, there is still speculation surrounding their exact locations.

We are also pleased to feature a rare painting by famed American sublime mountain painter Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902) of the Bow River Falls c.1889, on loan from the Cincinnati Art Museum, courtesy of Hirschl and Adler Galleries, New York. On the 1889 trip, Bierstadt met up with Canadian painter Frederick Marlett Bell-Smith (1846–1923), who had painted in the Rockies every summer since 1887. The two artists set out together, spending September camping and sketching at Lake Louise and the Bow River Valley. On this trip, Bell-Smith deferred to the expertise of Albert Bierstadt for his compositional guidance and influence which ultimately renewed his interest of the Rocky Mountains.

Drawn to the West reaches forward from the past but also displays current artist interpretations of the landscape. With close proximity to prime artistic locations, the town site of Banff continues to be a destination for many artists.

The majority of works were chosen from the abundant selections at the Whyte Museum with some borrowed from private collections. This exhibition would not have been possible without the generosity of those lenders.

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Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies,
Banff, Alberta

The Whyte Museum inspires discovery and wonder where people and the Rocky Mountains meet. We share stories and explore the culture shaped by this mountain landscape. Our founders, Peter and Catharine Whyte, were local artists and philanthropists who wished to offer a place where people could gather and appreciate the culture and beauty of the area. Our programming is made possible through generous support from the Museum's Members, donors, and sponsors.

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