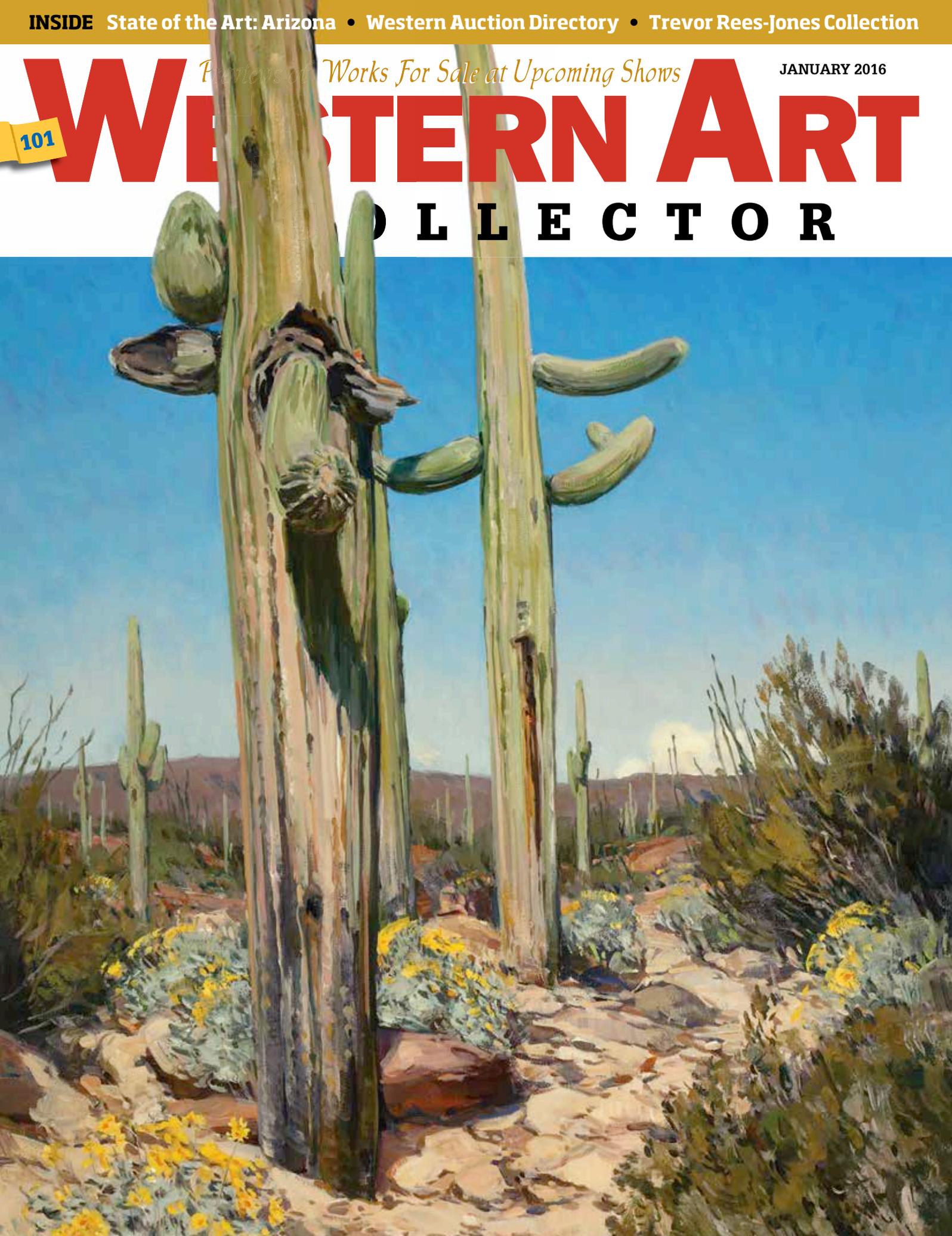


Previews of Works For Sale at Upcoming Shows

JANUARY 2016

101

WESTERN ART COLLECTOR



UPCOMING SHOW

Up to 12 works

Jan. 25-Feb. 6, 2016

Altamira Fine Art
7038 E. Main Street
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
(480) 949-1256

SHOW LOCATION SCOTTSDALE, AZ



DUKE BEARDSLEY

A'Horseback

Setting is what typically defines a cowboy painting, be it windswept plains on the Western frontier, rocky bluffs overlooking panoramic vistas, trickling mountain streams, or mazes of chamisa strewn with marching cattle. Setting explains the story, the time of the day, the mood and

tone, the action or lack thereof.

Duke Beardsley removes setting altogether and paints his horses and riders amid seas of monochromatic color, or in a repetitive pattern of cowboy silhouettes. He strips his subjects of their comfortable and familiar homes to allow their iconic shapes to find new meaning in

a void of color, where stories and mood and tone aren't given obvious clues to the meaning of the work.

"Color and pattern continue to be a means to an end for me. They're tools I use to intentionally remove the cowboy icon from the herd-bound and conventional trappings of the traditional Western landscape. What does the icon mean out here on its own? Does it still carry the traditional weight and provenance? Rugged individualism, heroic, tough?" Beardsley asks from his Colorado studio. "And what happens when you impose a decidedly and unapologetically romanticized icon in front of an equally stylized and romanticized *invented* background of a hundred floating cowboys? Today's West is changing as quickly as ever. And here in the Intermountain West, we are facing an unprecedented explosion in population. What will this ask of us all? What will it ask of the environment? Of the resources? Of ranching? Of the cowboy icon itself?"

The artist asks these rhetorical questions to himself in the voice of his viewers. He hopes that by removing the cowboy's world from his cowboy paintings, it forces his audience to begin to analyze what they're seeing, or maybe not seeing. These contemporary ideas are not common in traditional Western art, but that's one of the reasons Beardsley is such a unique entity among the top cowboy painters in the country—he straddles contemporary and traditional to such a degree that even his fans can't decide what camp he is in. He even gets comparisons to pop art, with his patterns of repeating images and iconographic worship of his subjects; Andy Warhol had Campbell's soup cans, and



San Pancho, oil, 72 x 60"



Chiquilla Azul, oil, 24 x 24"



Chiquilla Rosa, oil, 24 x 24"

Beardsley has cowboys.

"Ever since I was a child, I've had a case of hero worship with these images. I love the stylized and romanticized way they have been portrayed in everything from pulp fiction to Western films," he says. "My job is to break away from the usual confines and to get you to have your own dialogue with the piece."

Beardsley's new show, *Of a Wide County A'Horseback*, opens January 25 at Altamira Fine Art in Scottsdale, Arizona. The show will feature roughly a dozen works, including *San Pancho*, a 6-foot-tall piece that features a cowboy nearly to scale. Its imposing form and size will tower over viewers.

"I love painting big like that. It's just such a kinetic experience. These icons are instantly recognizable, but once you see one this big, it has a physicality to it as it fills your vision," he says. "I want people to stand in front of them and just say 'Whoa,' because they are having a visceral reaction to this large presence. The painting can envelop them." 🖌️

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to



www.westernartcollector.com

Duke Beardsley works in his Colorado studio.

