

APOLLO

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Many Wests: Artists Shape an American Idea



Night Crawlers and Earthworm (detail; 2006), Barbara Earl Thomas. Whatcom Museum, Washington D.C.

Ideas about the American West have long featured historical falsehoods and racist clichés. This exhibition at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C. (28 July–14 January 2024) aims to address such misconceptions with works by 48 modern and contemporary artists from the region’s marginalised communities. The opening section, ‘Caretakers’, focuses on the stewardship of land, language and culture, featuring watercolour drawings such as *Eagle Dancers* (1917) by Awa Tsireh alongside contemporary reinterpretations of traditional pueblo design by the likes of Ka’ila Farrell Smith. ‘Memory Makers’ explores how artists act as transmitters of cultural memory, using their work to highlight neglected histories of the West, while ‘Boundary Breakers’ includes artists such as Angela Ellsworth and Raphael Montañez Ortiz, who challenge the romanticisation of the West. [Find out more on the Smithsonian’s website.](#)