

Vocabulary

adjective – a descriptive word that modifies a person or thing such as emotional or lonely.

figurative - in art, figurative works are those which focus on people.

landscapes – landscapes are views of the land, which may include trees, grass, mountains, rivers, valleys, and more.

oil paint – a type of slow-drying paint that is oil-based and opaque.

still life – an artwork that focuses on arrangements of objects, such as flowers in a vase, fruit in a bowl, etc.

watercolor – a type of paint that is water-based and translucent. The visible white in the paintings is the white of the paper, where an artist has purposefully *not* painted.

Draw Your Favorite Artwork!

Family Gallery Guide

Dean Mitchell's American West

POVERTY & THE HUMAN SPIRIT

About the Exhibition

Most of the time, when you go to a museum to view an “American West” exhibition, you will see something very different from the art of Dean Mitchell. Typically, you will see large, grand paintings of the natural landscape, peaceful cattle herders, and cowboys atop rearing horses.



Dean Mitchell, *Pima Maricopa Relic*, 2012, oil, 11 x 22 inches

In his newest series, Dean Mitchell reflects on his visit to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. While in Arizona for an exhibition, Mitchell's friend took him to see the reservation. Mitchell describes the experience saying, “I was mesmerized by the poverty.” Dean Mitchell's goal with this exhibition is to draw attention to the struggles of those who live in an impoverished environment by focusing on the structures and scenery in this area. While the Salt River Indian Community is the focus, Mitchell has emphasized that this could be anywhere, including our own “back yards.” He hopes that this exhibition will inspire viewers to make a positive change in their own community.

Arizona



About the Salt River Indian Community

Located in the Phoenix metropolitan area, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community encompasses 52,600 acres and is comprised of two Native American tribes, each with their own distinct background and cultures: the Pima, “Akimel O’odham” (River People) and the Maricopa, “Xalychidom Piipaash” (People who live toward the water).



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Sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs
and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.



Find & Compare: Watercolor vs. Oil

Dean Mitchell is painter in watercolor, oil, and acrylic. These types of paint are very different. Watercolor paint is translucent, meaning that you can see through the paint and any white you see is the white of the paper. Oil paint is opaque, meaning you can not see through it. Often oil paintings also contain texture such as smooth areas and bumpy areas. Acrylic has the characteristics of both. Find these works below in the galleries, and write a “W” for watercolors, “O” for oils, or “A” for acrylics. Hint: Look at the labels!



Pick one of these four works, and pick one adjective for it: _____. Then, describe all the things you see in the space below.

About the Artist

Dean Mitchell was born in 1957 and raised by his grandmother in Quincy, Florida. As a young man, Mitchell grew up with few material possessions. At the age of 12 he began to save his lunch money for art supplies and with encouragement from his teachers, Mitchell went to and graduated from the Columbus College of Art & Design.



Dean Mitchell at work in his studio.

He later worked for Hallmark cards before deciding to dedicate his career to painting, earning numerous awards across the United States and internationally. For many years, Dean Mitchell has been well known for his figurative works, nostalgic landscapes, and still life paintings.

Look Closely

Did you notice that the each of the two sets of works on the previous page are of the same area? The top two, *Dry Rot* and *Dry Rot II* depict the same scene of a dried-out tree and a building with a rectangular window. In the bottom two, *Pima-Maricopa Reservation* and *Gravity*, we see another building, with a motorcycle leaning against it, large green trash cans, and a wooden post in front.

In each of the sets of works above, what differences do you seen between the oil and watercolor paintings?