

BONE CREEK

MUSEUM OF AGRARIAN ART

Agrarian Art Newsletter

Volume IV, Issue II
May 2011

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Calendar of Events:

Jim Hamil: Farmland USA

Until May 15, 2011

Dale Nichols:

Transcending Regionalism

May 20- November 18, 2011

Reception: May 28, 1-4pm

Featured guest- Nebraska Lt. Governor
Rick Sheehy

Dale Nichols Forum & Booksigning

June 12, 2011, 2:30pm

Dale Nichols Chautauqua

Adult education event with speakers,
teachers, musicians, and entertainers

July 16, 2011, 1-4pm

Curator's Note:

"I think that my memory paintings of my home state may be the only creations that I sign with full confidence."

– Dale Nichols (1904-1995)

These words have inspired many artists to paint what they know. Now Nichols' even greater impact on American Art and artists can be appreciated. Bone Creek's gala May 28th reception is the premier of the first national traveling retrospective and book on **Dale Nichols** and his artwork.

In 2003, I met **Ruth Nichols**, Dale's niece, who told me about Dale's daughter, **Joan Lenhart**. They had original source information about Nichols. It was urgent that this be included in American art history. In 2008, I initiated the first Nichols retrospective. Ruth Nichols invited Nebraska collectors to bring their art and memorabilia to be exhibited at Bone Creek. With Ruth's help I examined 48 objects and literature brought together for the first time in the catalogue, **Remembering Dale Nichols**.

In this publication I asserted that Nichols was the fourth major Regionalist; and that his full body of work transcended traditional Regionalism. A curator of a larger art museum saw our exhibit and indicated interest in launching a major national retrospective exhibit and catalogue on Nichols. David City was the home of Nichols and Bone Creek was launched in 2008 with Nichols' paintings as the cornerstone of the collection. Our new board courageously agreed to immediately begin this major project about our home town artist. In 2008 we decided to herald my thesis that Nichols was more than a Regionalist. We started work on the major national traveling exhibition and book, **Dale Nichols: Transcending Regionalism**.

To manage the project, I found and hired **Amanda Mobley Guenther**, Associate Curator. At first a catalogue was to include essays by myself, a number of prominent scholars, and Amanda. After reading some of her draft material, I decided to step aside and asked Amanda to write a complete book. This decision has given us more than a catalogue. We have a great book conceived and completed from start to finish by an inspired author with unequalled access to living relatives and original source material. It's been my privilege to foster this exhibition and book, and to watch it unfold in Amanda's capable hands.

With this project Bone Creek Museum of Agrarian Art has taken the biggest step to date in *our mission to be the national center for preserving, viewing and learning about exceptional agrarian art*. This is the first of other major scholarly Agrarian Art projects yet to come from Bone Creek. Please come see and celebrate this major milestone with us at the museum.

- Mark L. Moseman, Chief Curator



Dale Nichols, *When Day is Done*, 1951, Gold Seal Puzzle,
Private Collection Loan

Board of Directors:
Anna Nolan (Covault)
Mark L. Moseman
Allen Covault
Michael L. Moravec
Paul T. Perske
Ryan Cameron
Carol Moseman
Tim Wollmer

*Our Mission is to be the National Center for Preserving,
Viewing, and Learning about Exceptional Agrarian Art.*

Agrarian- pertaining to lands, fields, or their tenure

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MUSEUM OF AGRARIAN ART

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DALE NICHOLS TRANSCENDING REGIONALISM



May 20-
November 18
2011

Dale Nichols is the beloved son of David City, Nebraska. His work is the cornerstone of the collection of Bone Creek Museum of Agrarian Art. This year, Bone Creek unveils a retrospective exhibition of some of Nichols' best paintings from across the country. *Dale Nichols: Transcending Regionalism* is focused on bringing to light Nichols' devotion to the regional ideal and his drive to represent American culture in the broadest sense of regionalism.

Regionalism was an art movement that rose to greatest popularity in the 1930s and emphasized the unique subject and character of American society. Paintings dating from 1935 to 1972 establish Nichols not only as the fourth regionalist after Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton, and John Steuart Curry, but one who transcended the confines of the genre to achieve universal success in art. This exhibition represents Nichols' years on the farm in Nebraska and manifests those memories in a variety of styles and places. Nichols deeply believed that each of his paintings was a recreation of farm life. Though not exact locations, many of Nichols' paintings seem instantly familiar to viewers as they subconsciously resonate with his understanding of rural life.

End of the Hunt in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is Nichols' most famous work, fully encompassing his early style and theme of representational art. Nichols built his reputation and museums have built their collections from the success of this painting.

Regionalism was Nichols' springboard for experimentation. Inspired by Rockwell Kent, *Navigating Icebergs* (above) demonstrates Nichols' adventurous spirit for traveling and exploring other parts of the world, far from his Nebraska farmstead. *Navigating Icebergs* was painted from a combination of memory and invention. As one of his early expressions of abstraction and surrealism, this painting graced the cover of *Saturday Evening Post*, 1941.

Commissioned by Central Community College, *Platte Valley Summer* (below) breaks Nichols' typical standards of painting from memory. Nichols referred to photographs of an original barn and windmill near the school's campus. After presenting the painting to the school, Nichols remarked that he



had intentionally created order which "is essential for the good life" of Nebraska by adding the diagonal plowed row of wheat. One of Nichols' themes is to follow the rules of natural law and include "light, order, and love" in all of his forms and compositions.

Take a journey through Nichols' adventurous biography, inspiring paintings, charming commercial merchandise, and humorous personal letters on view through November 18.

Images: Above: Dale Nichols, *Navigating Icebergs*, 1941, canvas panel, From the Collection of Valentino Chickinelli, Omaha, NE. Below: Dale Nichols, *Platte Valley Summer*, 1969, oil on canvas, Collection of Central Community College, Columbus, NE.

NEWS from the field

Summer Destination- Bone Creek continues to be the top tourist destination in Butler County. The Mohler-Neary family (pictured below) lives in California and loves to visit. Call today to schedule a tour for your group. Bone Creek can give you more ideas to plan an entire day enjoying the agrarian landscape and attractions of Nebraska.



Working Together- The partnership between collectors and museums can be beneficial to both parties as well as to the general public. DeLynn and Esther Hay (below right) recently returned to Bone Creek to meet exhibiting Wisconsin artist Matthew Jacobson. Wayne and Beth Fricke (below left) have lent *Kansas City Stockyards* exposing the public to one of Jim Hamil's most iconic paintings. Some of these paintings or ones like them may return to museum collections for all to enjoy. Bone Creek is continuing to invent ways for visitors to take a 'piece' of the museum home with them and return often to learn, view, and experience Agrarian Art at its finest.



Meet the Board- Paul T. Perske, a member of the board since fall 2010, is serving as the marketing director for Bone Creek. Perske brings 10 years of experience in retail management and 10 years in the national wine industry to the marketing strategy of the museum. He is currently the Director of Sales and Distribution at James Arthur Vineyards, Lincoln. He lives in David City with his wife Paula, daughter Olivia, and cat Cupcake.



COLLECTION

Now on view: *With the Sage and Clouds* by Los Angeles based artist Logan Maxwell Hagege, a future exhibitor at Bone Creek. Boldly illustrating the strength of the first agrarians in North America, this landmark painting on loan from the Mark and Carol Moseman Collection has been installed in the Collection Gallery.



ARTIST WORKSHOP

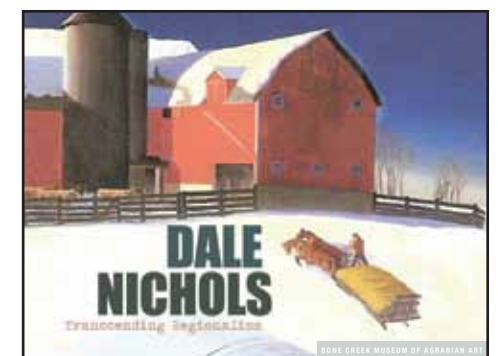
Renowned Kansas City watercolorist Jim Hamil provided a two day workshop as well as demonstrations with art students at Aquinas and David City High School. Hands-on art education is a priority to fulfill our mission of viewing and learning about Agrarian art by bringing exceptional artists such as Hamil to Bone Creek.



DALE NICHOLS CORNER



With over 200 pages and 100 color images, the first book about Dale Nichols will soon be available at museums across the country and can be purchased online at bonecreek.org. *Dale Nichols: Transcending Regionalism* goes far beyond an exhibition catalogue to examine the life of the artist, his artistic ideology, and his critical assessment of style and technique. Explore how he held firm to his Midwestern roots while he searched for adventure and truth. Cost is \$34.99 (tax and s/h not included).



BUILDING A LEGACY

The Board of Directors invites you to take part in building a nationally recognized museum in David City. "We hope to involve the local community as well as a broader network of supporters in this endeavor. We look forward to having a larger space for educational and multipurpose uses." said Anna Nolan (Covault), President. The board recently met to discuss long range goals

and how to implement them. These goals will involve fundraising components which include the annual fundraising drive, exhibition sponsorship, and endowment/capital campaign for sustainable operations and future facilities and programs. To learn more about opportunities and share in the vision go to bonecreek.org/join.php.