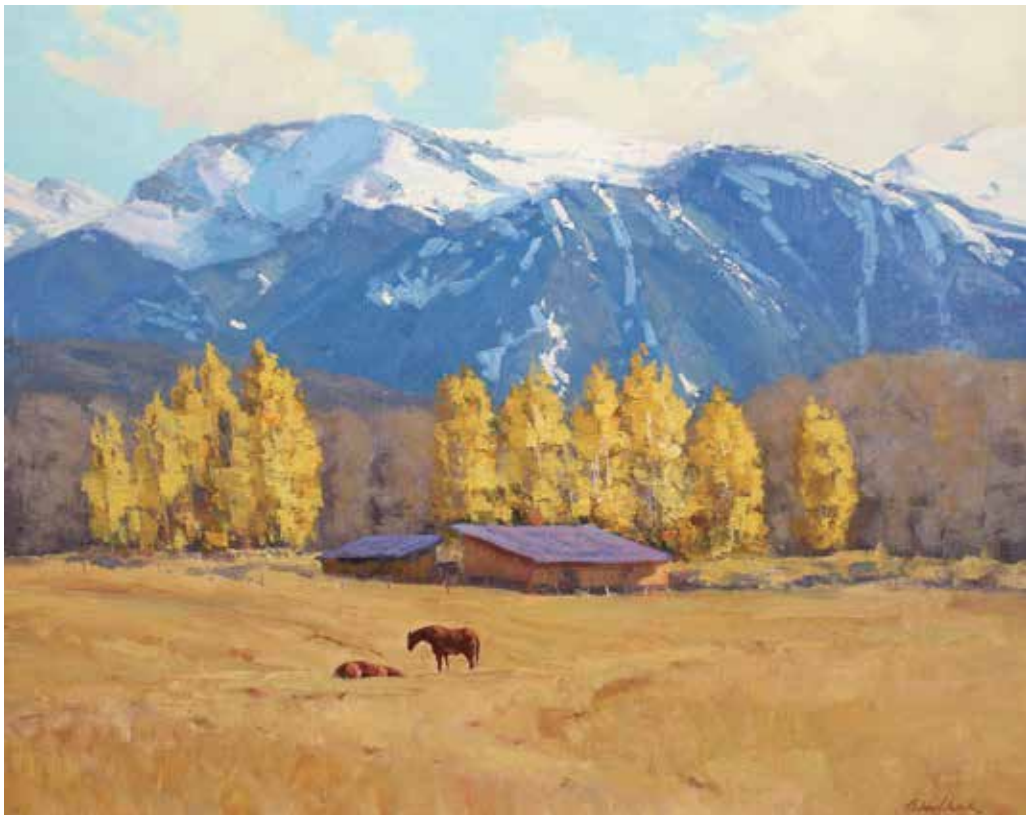


# Working the Land

A one-man exhibition celebrates the people and the land of rural America.

By Erin E. Rand



*Lazy Days*, oil on canvas, 16 x 20"

**B**art Walker creates paintings that capture the bond between rural land and the people that work it. His work is currently the subject of a one-man show titled *Tour the West* at the Bone Creek Museum of Agrarian Art in David City, Nebraska.

"Without realizing it, Bart Walker is more than a landscape artist, but an agrarian artist at heart," says Bone Creek curator Amanda Mobley Guenther. "He often chooses scenes that show a direct relationship of man's tenure to the land."

Though he's painted scenes from all throughout the West, Walker says there's something special about Eastern Idaho. "Everywhere you look, there's so much to paint," he says. "Right now, our home looks right out at the Teton range."

Walker used to spend most of his time painting outdoors. "Back in the early days, I would be outside all the time doing these little two-hour sketches," he says. Now he spends less time outside, but he still depends on those sketches. "I use my camera when I'm going to

be painting horses or cows, but the colors from sketches are so much more truthful than what you see in the camera."

When deciding on the subject matter for his paintings, he says, "I'm mainly looking for compositions that are pleasing. Something that will lead the viewer into the painting. Things like streams and rivers that give you a line to follow, or the reflections of the trees in the water. That kind of thing is very pleasing to me."

In *Last Cut*, a man works on his tractor

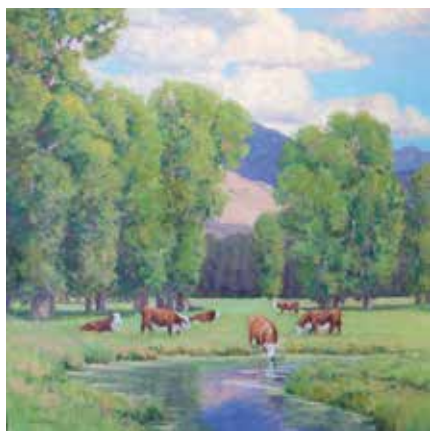


Clockwise from left:

*Potato Harvest*, oil on canvas, 14 x 18"

*Moving Pipe*, oil on canvas, 11 x 14"

*Cottonwood Retreat II*, oil on canvas, 30 x 30"



to harvest wheat for the last time in the season, with a mountain range visible in the background. "In this part of Idaho, the farmers are lucky to get two cuts of wheat because of the altitude and moisture," Walker explains. "This is one of our local ranchers making his final cut."

*Cottonwood Retreat II* depicts a park south of Jackson, with cottonwood trees dotting the landscape and cows munching on lush summer grasses. "They don't actually allow grazing on that land anymore," Walker points

out. "But I know a local family that owns property near there, and they ranched red Herefords, which I thought would be a nice complement to the early green grasses."

One of the works on view, *Potato Harvest*, was originally conceived as a commission. "A woman asked me to do the painting based off of a photo her husband had taken years ago," he says. "It was of a monastery in northern Utah, which is now long gone." When Bone Creek asked him to do an exhibition of agrarian art, he thought the painting would fit in perfectly, so he

asked for permission to create another version.

*Tour the West* remains on view at the Bone Creek Museum of Agrarian Art through March 12. ☞

### Tour the West Through March 12, 2023

**Bone Creek Museum  
of Agrarian Art**, 575 E. Street,  
David City, NE 68632  
(402) 367-4488, [www.bonecreek.org](http://www.bonecreek.org)