

## J.N. Bartfield Galleries, 76 Years Strong

BY JAMES BALESTIERI

GALLERY DIRECTOR, J.N. BARTFIELD GALLERIES

Founded in 1937, J.N. Bartfield Galleries celebrates its 76th year in business. Bartfield Galleries is the oldest gallery in the nation that specializes in artworks by the masters of the American West. We have a long and storied history of providing assistance to important private and public collections, helping to secure key artworks.

Bartfield Galleries continues to pride itself on its expertise in the field and is always seeking to acquire major Western, sporting and wildlife paintings and bronzes for individual clients and institutions. We feature works by early Western artists like Catlin, Bodmer, Bierstadt and Miller, as well as Western masters like Remington, Russell, Leigh, F.T. Johnson and Dixon. We have particular interest in the Taos Founders, including Blumenschein, Ufer and Higgins. Bartfield Galleries also has a long and successful record of selling works by fine sporting and wildlife artists such as Carl Rungius and Ogden Pleissner.

Four of the many major works we have handled are pictured here.

One of the numerous outstanding works by Frederic Remington that we have sold is "The Lone Scout," a 20-by-26-inch oil executed in 1906, when the artist had mastered his media and reached the summit of his artistic powers. The single Native American in a desolate and forbidding landscape watches over a thin waterhole that juts into the picture plane opposite his horse's nose. Dry scrub provides scant relief for the viewer's eye and the alkali mountain ridge beneath a hot, cloudless blue sky is almost Martian in aspect. The darkest and most palpable element in the painting is the shadow of mount and man. Where we would wilt, the brave's remarkable vigilance forms the core of the work.

Charles M. Russell's most impressive and iconic 1914 oil, "Whose Meat?," depicts the first moments in a standoff between man and "the beast that walks like a man" — a grizzly bear. The hunter, having just shot a bighorn sheep, sees an upright grizzly closing on his game. Holding his shying horses, he tries to mount his rifle. The moment is supremely tense, and Russell deftly heightens this by positioning the hunter on a slope of slippery boulders backed against a cliff face. Snow on the ground and the clouds rising behind the bear hint at a quick squall that might belie the beautiful snow-capped, sun drenched peaks in the distance and obscure the scene in freezing fog. "Whose Meat?" becomes "What Next?"

The majesty of Yosemite was one of the many spectacular natural wonders that Hudson River master Albert Bierstadt painted. In 1866, Bierstadt was commissioned to paint a picture for the rotunda of financier Le Grand Lockwood's home in Norwalk, Conn. Before the finished painting, "Domes of the Yosemite" — which measured 9½ by 15 feet — left the artist's studio, Bierstadt painted this smaller version so it could be reproduced as a chromolithograph. With great attention to textures, he gives us a view of Upper Yosemite Falls on the left and the Merced River winding its sinuous way toward Half Dome. The shafts of light and the framing of the composition give the effect of a window into a lost Eden.

N.C. Wyeth, known for his classic illustrations of novels like *Treasure Island*, also painted a number of magnificent Westerns and "Roping Horses in the Corral" is arguably the finest of these. Steeped in the dust and sweat of the cowboy's life and work, the painting is a study in power against power, muscle against muscle. The horses' nostrils flare. Their manes fly. Their eyes are wild and their sinews are braided tightly. As the two cowboys at the rear struggle to keep their feet, the figure nearest us plants his, and the effect is as if he is trying to weld his feet to the Western earth as he readies himself to throw his lariat.

To purchase, sell and consign artworks, visit J.N. Bartfield Galleries, located on the fifth floor of 30 West 57th Street, New York City, call 212-245-8890 or visit [www.bartfield.com](http://www.bartfield.com). Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 10 am to 5 pm.



N.C. Wyeth (1882–1945), "Roping Horses in the Corral," 1904, oil, 22 by 32 inches. Signed lower left and inscribed "Hash-Knife Ranch, Colo. 1904."



Frederic Remington (1861–1909), "The Lone Scout," oil, 20 by 26 inches.



Charles M. Russell (1864–1926), "Whose Meat?," 1914, oil, 30 by 48 inches.



Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902), "Domes of the Yosemite," oil, 21 5/8 by 33 9/16 inches.

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