



GORDON MCCONNELL  
"WILD RIDERS"

BAIR MUSEUM  
MARTINSDALE, MONTANA



*Steady Rider*, 2012, acrylic on canvas, 12 x 12 inches

## GORDON MCCONNELL

Gordon McConnell's rich, painterly imagery evokes the West of John Ford and black and white western films. In a McConnell painting, a stagecoach, a scouting party, a woman at the helm of a fast-moving wagon become allegories for a dramatic and vital West. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Mark Stevens wrote in his essay for McConnell's 2008 Ucross Foundation Art Gallery exhibit: "(McConnell) brings to his work a rare fullness of mind, an unusual ability to understand the West in the round. He understands revisionist history, yet loves the grand old themes; he's adept at postmodern irony, yet does not condescend to the cowboy."

The American West as a topic, or as a subject swept up by the popular imagination, has run a long course and it has not run out. It is still being explored, deconstructed and reconstructed. The momentum



*Bullion Stage*, 2012, acrylic on canvas panel, 14 x 18 inches



*How Lonely Does It Get?*, 2012, acrylic on canvas panel, 12 x 16 inches

gathered when the great railroads laid tracks towards the Pacific Ocean resulted in the literal population of the West, but the artists who sought to interpret its mythic pathos, and capture its light, space and horizon within a rectangle, that also has not run its course. Consider one recent example, the exhibition at the Robischon Gallery in Denver entitled *Appropriated: The Chronicled West*. While McConnell also appropriates or makes use of existing imagery as his source material, such as western films or documentary photography, his work has an edge. He mines both the imagery and the art and history behind it. The facts form the armature on which he lays his interpretation. He looks back to locate an image, and he uses it to look forward. The result is allegorical landscapes — restless, energetic, and of our time.

~Elizabeth M. Guheen

Learn more at [www.gordonmcconnellstudio.com](http://www.gordonmcconnellstudio.com).





left: **Holding 'Em**, 2012, acrylic on canvas panel, 16 x 20 inches

below: **Fancy Buggy**, 2011, acrylic on paper, 9½ x 22 inches

cover: **Victorian Cinema: Relay**, 2012, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 inches

