



Show Preview | Maura Allen & Denny Haskew

By: **Southwest Art** | May 15, 2017

Santa Fe, NM

Sorrel Sky Gallery, June 2-30, 2017



Maura Allen, *Defiance*, acrylic, 40 x 60.

This month contemporary western painter Maura Allen and Native American figurative sculptor Denny Haskew share timeless narratives of the American West in a heartfelt exhibition titled *Geography of Hope*. The show opens at Sorrel Sky Gallery on Friday, June 2, with an artists' reception at 5 p.m. "Both artists are authentic and express themselves on a spiritual level," says gallery owner Shanan Campbell Wells. "Maura lives, breathes, and celebrates the cowboy lifestyle, capturing the spirit of the West as it

stretches back in time and reaches into our futures. Denny's work conveys his innermost being. You can feel his emotion in his sculptures."

Allen introduces a dozen new acrylic paintings that feature her signature high-contrast silhouettes of cowboys, cowgirls, and other western imagery, but many of these pieces feature light or stark-white backgrounds that enhance details of color, texture, and movement.



"You're looking into the painting versus at the object," Allen explains. "I create more of a world inside. This approach allows people to be transported and think of their own stories of the West."

The Denver, CO, artist titled her latest collection Geography of Hope, borrowing an expression once used by the American historian and novelist Wallace Stegner. "He used it in many ways," she says, "one being the idea that the West represents possibility. People moved West after hearing stories about it; they got excited and interested. In this show I'm tying geography loosely to place, but to me it's bigger than that."

Some paintings have backgrounds that resemble rocky western topographies, and each piece is named after a western town. "It's a place, yes," says Allen, "but it's also the magic of the West." DEFIANCE, for example, portrays a cowboy's dogged stance as he watches a branding, his western gear aflame in searing reds and yellows. In DURANGO DAYS, vintage lettering inspired by a 19th-century bustier advertisement slinks behind the bold silhouette of a free-spirited modern cowgirl. "It's not a story about the Old West versus the new West, traditional versus contemporary," observes Allen. "We're on a continuum, and everything blends together."

contact information

866.878.3555

www.sorrelsky.com