

Mahonri Young

Open Studio July 2019



Gallery Portion:

Mahonri Young, grandson of Brigham Young, was born in Salt Lake City on August 9, 1877 and grew up surrounded by hard-working pioneers during a time when the wild west frontier was being tamed. As a boy, his parents encouraged his love of art. His father brought him clay to mold when he was sick in bed and his mother always made sure he had a pencils for drawing.

He attended one day of 9th grade, but was unimpressed. He figured if he already knew that he wanted to be an artist he was wasting his time doing anything else. He worked hard, sacrificed, and saved his money to pay for art classes in Salt Lake City. Eventually, he moved to New York City and even Paris to attend art school. **Mahonri became a well-known American artist.** His artwork can be found in major museums across the United States, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., and here at the Brigham Young University Museum of Art. Even though Mahonri spent the majority of his life on the East Coast and on the European Continent, he always considered himself a **"Utah boy"**. We can see his undying love for the West in the following works of art.

Mahonri loved to capture people at work in their environment.

- **Who do we see in this painting?**
- **What kind of work is being done?**

Mahonri marveled at the indigenous people of the American Southwest. Rather than portray them as dangerous or lazy—common stereotypes of the time—Mahonri depicted them as thoughtful, gentle, industrious, and a capable people whose lives seemed focused on the necessary work of survival.

- **What is your favorite part of this Western landscape?**





In this etching, **Mahonri** shows us a Utah rancher tending to his herd of cattle. Riding horses over the Wasatch Front landscape was a large part of Mahonri's life in Utah, and he often said that if he had not been an artist, he would have been a cowboy.

- If you had the chance to be a cowboy in the Western mountains, would you take it? Why or why not?

In this buffalo study, **Mahonri** included the famous, colorful, and wide-open Western sky. He gave just as much attention to the sky as to the buffalo in this painting. The fluffy clouds almost look as if they are imitating the buffalo's massive fur coat.



- Why do you think Mahonri made a herd of buffalo the subject of this painting?
- What was interesting or unique about the scene?
- Do you think Mahonri wants us to see the scenery—the land and the sky—as an equally important feature of this painting?

Studio Portion:

Now that you have learned about the artist Mahonri Young and his love of the West, you will have the chance to create your own western landscape.

First, use a piece of white paper and create your sky using watercolor paints. Try mixing and blending colors! Here are some questions to think about to get you started.

- What time of day is it?
- Is the sun setting or rising?
- Is it a hot day? Is it a cool day?
- How do the colors you use reflect the time of day and temperature?

Once you are done with the sky, create a landscape.

Get a piece of black paper and draw simple silhouettes of features you will include in your landscape.

This could be a cowboy, a cactus, a large mountain, or even a campsite. Once you have drawn landscape features, go ahead and cut them out



If you need help or inspiration, you may use the templates provided