



## Each Month We Ask Leading Museum Curators About What's Going On In Their World.



### Betse Grassby

Executive Director  
Steamboat Art Museum  
Steamboat Spring, CO  
(970) 870-1755  
[www.steamboatartmuseum.org](http://www.steamboatartmuseum.org)

#### What event (gallery show, museum exhibit, etc.) in the next few months are you looking forward to, and why?

Arizona is calling, including the Western Spirit in Scottsdale, to immerse myself in *Light and Legacy: The Art and Technique of Edward S. Curtis*. Our current SAM exhibition is *Portrayals of the American West: Curtis, Reed, Huffman, and Wallihan*, and it includes Curtis' photogravures and photographs from local museums and private collections. It's a very nice taste for the feast to be experienced in Scottsdale. In addition, I want to visit the Desert Caballeros Western Museum in Wickenburg, Arizona, to experience Bill Anton's retrospective and his vision of the Western experience.

#### What are you reading?

*Short Night of the Shadow Catcher*, the biography of Curtis by Timothy Egan—for the second time. Learning about his fascinating life, his amazing experiences and the forces that inspired and challenged him give me such appreciation for his work. His obsession to rise above these challenges has provided us with a most amazing body of work. And with this knowledge, I look forward to the Western Spirit exhibition.

#### Interesting exhibit, gallery opening or work of art you've seen recently.

In terms of artwork, I'm becoming

familiar with the photography of Roland Reed, another pictorialist working at the same time as Curtis. He was also motivated to record the changing lifestyle of Native Americans and educate the country, however his style was so artistic, producing a very contemporary look even today. His body of work is much smaller, which afforded him the luxury to spend more time photographing his subjects.

#### What are you researching at the moment?

Contemporary-style Western art, from its trailblazers such as Fritz Scholder and Allan Houser, and their legacy influencing the artists today. SAM is known for presenting exceptional exhibitions of living masters, retrospectives and group exhibitions, which have been primarily representational, impressionist and plein air. This contemporary genre is so varied and is a departure from most of our past exhibitions. It is an important visual voice for the Western story of our modern day, providing a wonderful educational opportunity for our members and visitors.

#### What is your dream exhibit to curate? Or see someone else curate?

Our dream exhibition seems to be the next one we are working on. We are a young museum, building a permanent collection, learning and growing from each exhibition, exploring new ways to fulfill our mission to present the visual arts that reflect and enhance our culture and heritage of Northwest Colorado. Our dream is to continue to present each exhibition that inspires our visitors and members, tells important stories, expands their awareness and keeps them returning because they trust they will have another extraordinary art experience.



Roland Reed (1864-1934), *Into the Wilderness*, ca.1912, silver gelatin print, 30 x 37"