

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF WESTERN ART

THE ANSCHUTZ COLLECTION

American Museum of Western Art—The Anschutz Collection **Writing the West: Frontier Myths**

Warm-Up, Slogans:

Take a few minutes to look around the Museum. Choose a painting that catches your eye. Without looking at its title or who painted it or when, write a list of slogans you believe most captures the painting's essence. These can range from deadly serious slogans to more outlandish ones, whatever you feel like the painting is trying to sell (if anything!) to the viewer. If you exhaust your slogan-making on one painting, repeat the process with another.

Landscape as Commodity:

Find another painting whose subject matter, beyond all else, is landscape. Now that your propaganda-writing muscles are all warmed up, again write a slogan for the painting. Then, follow up your slogan by writing a brochure that matches it. What is the mission of this brochure? Just like your slogans from the above exercise, your brochure's mission can be serious, even dire, completely overwrought and satirical, or in another vein altogether.

Cowboys & Indians:

Choose a painting in the museum that features either cowboys or Indians. If you choose cowboys, write from the perspective of one of them. Imagine this cowboy has just heard that the U.S. government has officially closed the frontier. How does this new knowledge affect his thoughts, feelings, and what he's doing? If you choose Indians, imagine that the Indian(s) in the painting are all being paid as models by the artist to enact a scene. Get in the head of one of models and write about his or her thoughts and feelings about what he or she is being paid to do.