

Jay Moore's fascination with nature is rooted in the very core of his being. It comes from a long history spent outdoors – not just viewing it but also experiencing it. Aspects of the outdoors came early to him, and he learned them with relative ease: fishing, hiking, swimming, scuba diving and many others. He found himself naturally adept in the water, which would reflect back into his life in marvelous ways later in his career.

After graduating from the Colorado Institute of Art at the top of his class, Moore took a decade-long trip through illustration, a proving ground for many of the great Western artists. "When I started painting landscapes, I didn't even have a studio because I was painting so much outdoors. I would throw my sleeping bag on the ground and catch my dinner from the stream, cook it by the fire, and I would paint from sunup to sundown. I was more comfortable in the woods than in my own living room," he says. "When you spend a lot of time outdoors you get really sensitive to the subtleties. I could tell what the temperature just by how the air felt on my hands. I could tell what time of day it was by the angle of the sun. Nature was sending me signals and I was listening intently. I was so sensitive to what I was seeing and what I was experiencing, and I wanted to convey all of that in my work."

And that's precisely what Moore did: drawing from his long history of experiences in Colorado's wilderness he began to offer sensitive depictions of the land unlike any other artists working then, or now. His works spoke to collectors, too, and his paintings would soon appear in some of the best galleries in Colorado, Arizona and Wyoming, and in some of the best private collections in the country. Additionally, he would go on to participate in some of the most prestigious shows and sales within Western art: the Coeur d'Alene Art Auction in Reno, Nevada; Masters of the American West in Los Angeles; the Quest for the West in Indianapolis and many others. Awards would follow, including two recent ones at the Quest for the West: the 2015 Victor Higgins Award for his body of presented work, and the 2017 Henry Ferny Award for best painting. And while these milestones – including numerous solo exhibitions, books, magazine articles and magazine covers – would help Moore within the art market, it was nature and his links to it that offered continuous inspiration, motivation and energy to his art and studio.

These days, Moore – now a 25-year veteran within Western and contemporary landscape art – is still repeatedly pushing himself to paint in a way that will rise up to the challenge that nature lays down for him. Not only has nature informed the big-picture aspects of his work, but it has also influenced the details, which gives his paintings a nuance that invokes the subtle moods of nature. While mountains and valleys are his bread-and butter, Moore has distinguished himself as one of the finest painters of water working today, from crystal-clear mountain lakes to snow-banked forest streams. Recently he's added another aspect to his landscape paintings: wildlife, which he paints with the same care and compassion as he does the land. "Many times, animals will literally walk into a scene that I am painting, so I decided to start including them," Moore says.

The goals of an artist can include many different roles – a visual poet, a searcher of truth, an examiner of landmarks, plants and animals – and Moore works within these roles, as well as another: a witness to the history of the land. "I once set up my easel and painted a farmer

bailing his hay with this old bailer. I didn't know it at the time, but that was the last time that hold machine was ever used. The farmer would go out and get a new piece of equipment and the bails would look differently from then on. I'm so glad I was able to capture that moment, because it would never happen again. Other times I've painted valleys or mountains and by the next season they would look entirely different because of an avalanche or a wildfire. In some cases, I'm the last person to ever capture these places, and the chance to paint these paintings will never exist again," Moore says. "Knowing that the land may never look like that again really makes me want to honor each scene I paint. I want to respect the land and show how special it is. I want to give it dignity.