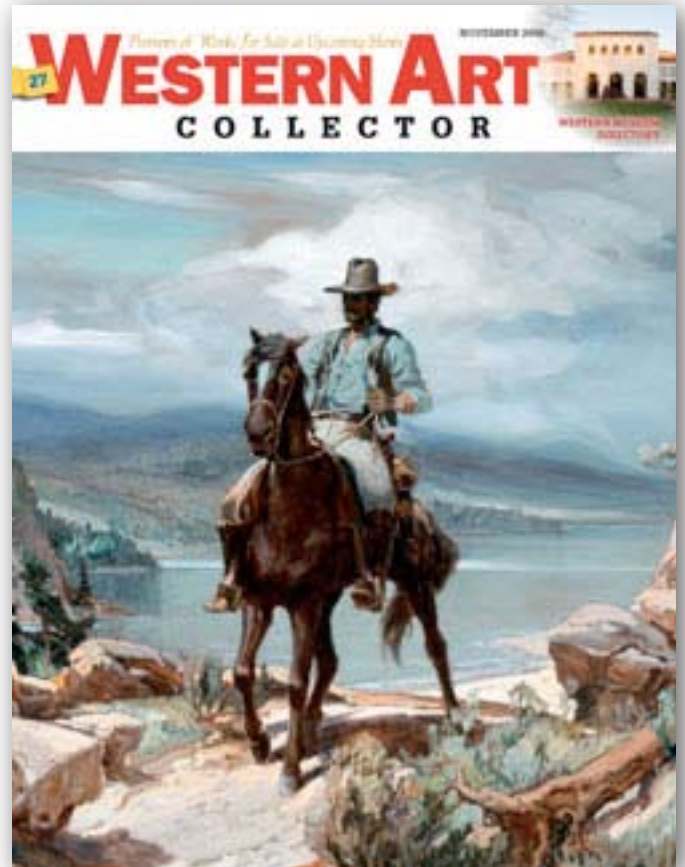


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# Love, loss and anger

Sculptor Craig Bergsgaard memorializes the Sand Creek Massacre that occurred 145 years ago this November.



Bergsgaard opted to depict the massacre from the Native American perspective with a man bearing his wife's lifeless body as he clutches two arrows and a fragment of an American flag.



Bergsgaard works on his latest clay piece, *Memorare, Sand Creek 1864*.

**A** story of political ambition, bigotry and hatred unfolds in the new tabletop sculpture titled *Memorare, Sand Creek 1864* by Craig Bergsgaard. The piece memorializes a little-known tragedy in American history that occurred in southeast Colorado 145 years ago this November.

The Sand Creek Massacre occurred on November 29, 1864, at dawn, when some 700 Colorado Territory militia attacked and killed 400 unarmed Cheyenne and Arapaho men, women and children. Initially the incident was deemed a victory in the Colorado War against hostile Indians, but within months Congressional inquiries revealed the truth and a national scandal erupted. Today only a plaque in the ground acknowledges the site of this stain on American history.

Western and classical bronze sculptor Craig Bergsgaard learned of this horrific incident decades ago and was so incensed that it has stirred in his mind ever since. To coincide with the 145<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre, six months ago, Bergsgaard began

sculpting a piece to memorialize it.

"There are numerous accounts of battles and atrocities, fair or not, of the Western expansion, but this affected me like no other," says Bergsgaard. "I can't change the human condition; all I can do is tell the story. If this piece were to influence a few to better the world, I would be honored."

As a visual storyteller, Bergsgaard brings this atrocity to the forefront in hopes that it won't be forgotten, or repeated. As a veteran himself, he struggled with how to portray the incident accurately without sensationalism. Drawing inspiration from Michelangelo's *Pieta* and Bouguereau's painting *The First Mourning*, Bergsgaard opted to depict the incident from the Native American perspective with a man bearing his wife's lifeless body as he clutches two arrows and a fragment of an American flag.

"I think the very basics of the story are reduced to three emotions: *love*, inevitable *loss* and *anger*...If 'less is more' is ever more appropriate, it is in this story," explains Bergsgaard. "Hopefully *love* being apparent here, represents *love* of family and way of life.

Of course, one of *love's* consequences nearly always evokes profound *loss* and anguish. When loss is the direct result of the dark soul, it fosters *anger*, which in turn, cultivates the dark soul."

One of Bergsgaard's clients saw the clay of *Memorare, Sand Creek 1864* and was so struck by it that he generously offered to fund the casting of the piece so the work could be donated to a worthy museum. The Booth Western Art Museum in Georgia has expressed interest in adding the piece to its permanent collection, and an unveiling is planned for later this year.

"I would like *Memorare* to help heighten awareness of this tragic chapter in American history, and a respected Western art museum like the Booth is the perfect forum for this," says Bergsgaard. 🍷

The Booth Western Art Museum in Cartersville, Georgia, will add the finished bronze of *Memorare, Sand Creek 1864* to its permanent collection and an unveiling is planned for later this year.

*Memorare, Sand Creek 1864* will be cast in bronze late in November

