

Painting the West

Episode Descriptions

Episode 1: *Tetons*



Watch out for the top and keep your canvas edges covered as you move along.

Fred paints the Teton Mountains, one of his favorite subjects, with energy and speed. A lot of cobalt blue, a good deal of white and a touch of alizarin crimson (“to keep the snow warm”) go a long way in this scene which includes a lake and a pitched tent in the foreground.

ALT.: Fred paints his version of the Teton Mountains energetically and with spirit. He includes a small lake in the foothills and a tent pitched at its bank with the fire smokin’.

Episode 2: *Buckin’ Horse*



“It’s a lot easier painting ‘em than riding ‘em,” says Fred of this horse in action, on which he paints a cowboy hanging on. Catching and riding untamed horses was a childhood pastime of Fred’s, and stories of falling in the gravel and ducking at the barn pepper his rendition of the rodeo image. Fred outlines his subject first and “cuts” around it for the background, where dust billows under the horse’s hooves.

ALT.: Fred fell in a lot of gravel as a young boy, riding untamed horses. This painting of a cowboy hanging on highlights the moment you want to prolong. “You want to stay on that horse,” Fred says.

Episode 3: *Autumn Camp*



“Using a pallet knife is a lot of fun,” says Fred. “You don’t lose the color when you’re using the knife.” Lots of color fills this painting of a hunter’s campsite in autumn. To do fall colors, says Fred, you have to set them against cooler ones. And so a blue-green sky and boulders outline the background while a creek streams by the tent. Fred remembers that more cooking would sometimes go on at these campsites than hunting.

ALT: Reds, yellows and blues make up this picture of a hunting campsite near rocky boulders and a creek full of trout.

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Episode 4: *Chief Watson Totus*



Fred grew up on an Indian Reservation in Washington State and remembers playing with a boy who later became a chief. Fred recreates him here, with the feathers the Yakima tribe adopted late in its history from trading with inland, plains nations. “The main thing about a portrait,” says Fred, “is the expression that you’re going to get on the face.”

ALT: Fred paints an imposing portrait of Yakima chief, Watson Totus, whom he knew as a boy.

Episode 5: *Old Trapper*



Fred remembers having to do a good deal of trapping in his younger days. “We had to make a few bucks and that’s the way we did it.” The brush and pallet knife come together for this snowy rendition of a trapper on his horse. When painting people on horseback, warns Fred, make sure the rider is seated right in the saddle. “You’ve got to make him sit down in that saddle,” Fred says, “or it looks kind of awkward if you don’t”. Besides, it’s warmer this way.

ALT: It’s cold out there but a guy’s gotta make a living. Fred finds beauty in shades of gray with this picture of a trapper and his horse in winter.

Episode 6: *Uncle Jake*



Uncle Jake was into every kind of work and lived by himself in a little cabin in the woods. A “good old cowboy,” Fred remembers him even scolding the fire for “lashing” and spitting at him. A little Native-American and a little Dutch, like Fred, Uncle Jake has high cheekbones, long hair and a “handlebar” mustache. Fred warns against too much pink or brown in skin tones here and recommends green for offset. Greens also catch the pink-hue highlights he will apply later.

ALT: Fred paints this portrait of his uncle Jake (d. 1937) while recounting the ways of his western life and manners.

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Episode 7: *Covered Wagon*



“A lot of people won’t believe this, but I’ve traveled a lot of miles in an old covered wagon,” says Fred. He tells stories of those days, when he and his family traveled the northwest ~~this way~~. “Dad, you see them things running up and down the road with the smoke flyin’ out of ‘em?” he had finally said to his father one year, “Them are cars. That’s what people drive on nowadays.” But no Model-T could look this good at the end of its life on the high plains,

could it?

ALT.: While most people enjoyed the luxuries of the Model T in the 1920s, Fred’s family still traveled the northwest in a covered wagon. In this painting, one sits quietly passing its last days by a couple of trees on the prairie.

Episode 8: *Miner’s Cabin*



You’re going to want to walk right into this painting, open the door and sit down by the fireside. The snowy scene of a log cabin in the mountain woods reminds Fred of the days when he worked the mines and made a dollar a day doing it. Using the brush and the pallet knife, he shows us how to create “the impression” of logs, light and reflection, allowing subtlety to rule. As always, we enjoy Fred’s mix of lessons in painting, history and living.

ALT.: It isn’t easy making a living in the winter. Fred paints this cozy, snowcapped miner’s cabin, reminding us of the things we look forward to in coming home.

Episode 9: *Lonesome Cowboy*



He may look satisfied but this cowboy has sagebrush in his coffee and a sore seat to rest on after a long day’s ride. Still, the fire is warm and the sunset shines. In this romantic western painting, Fred demonstrates how, “with a stroke of the brush in his hand,” the artist can bring a cowboy moment to life.

ALT.: If you’d been riding in a saddle all day, you might be happy to relax on a rock with sagebrush at your feet. But despite the beauty of the moment, the cowboy in this painting is one lonesome rider.

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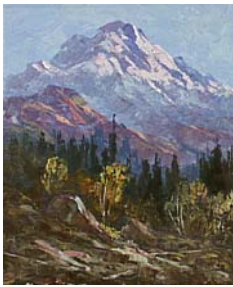
Episode 10: *Logy Creek*



In this pallet-knife-only painting of “an old stomping ground” of Fred’s, he warns against saturating the sky with too much color (you should be able to “see through it”) and reminds us to deepen color as we go down. Always step back, too, to check your work. But mind you don’t go fishing with too many friends in places you shouldn’t and without a permit.

ATL: Fred got into some trouble as a kid but he had fun doing it. Memories of fishing in a favorite creek inspire this painting adventure. Getting there was the trouble.

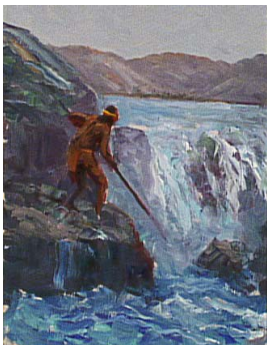
Episode 11: *Mountain Scene*



Fred goes into the details of his color techniques in this episode of *Painting the West*, where a mountain looms in the background while bright foothills and fir trees frame the view. “Always keep a little bit of the blue” in the lower layers of your image when painting scenes like these, Fred says, “because there’s a little bit of the atmosphere all through the countryside.”

ATL: Fir trees in the foothills show off the bright foreground and frame the majesty of the view beyond in Fred’s rendition of this classic landscape.

Episode 12: *Salmon at Celilo*



Not only salmon-fishing but trading, too, took place near this spot on the Columbia River where, according to Fred, Native tribes from as far away as Montana met to trade, hold potlaches and fish. As with most of his paintings, Fred establishes the composition first and then applies detail and color. In the end, some very perilous waters rush under this fisherman’s spear. In later years, Fred remembers, “the government finally made [fishermen] tie ropes around themselves, so they wouldn’t fall in.” If you were to fall in, the odds were heavily against you.

ALT: A traditional Native-American salmon fishing ground is highlighted in Fred’s painting of a tribesman at Celilo Falls on the Columbia River.

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Episode 13: *Prospector*



Fred admits that he'd done some prospecting in his day. "But not a real lot;" it didn't pay very well. A dark, deciduous background highlights the dreamer in this painting who seems worn out despite his "prospects." "There's one thing about gold mining," says Fred, "the same thing as in milking cows: you're not going to have any fingernails left; you'll grind them plum off when you're digging in the ground."

ALT: "It's a tough life, being a prospector," says Fred, but the dreamer in this painting seems intent on finding the gold in "them thar hills."