WESTERN ART Architecture From Cowboy to Contemporary



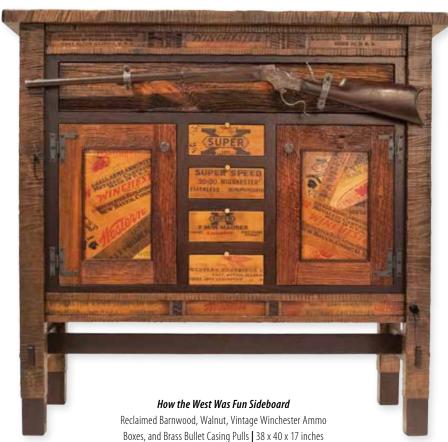


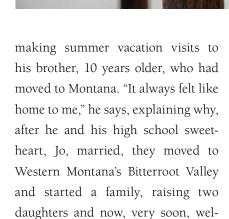
Mike Roths instills every piece of fine furniture he crafts with the spirit of Western history and tradition. Consider his recent Pursuit of the Spirit Buffalo Console Table, which sold this past September at the Buffalo Bill Art Auction in Cody, Wyoming. He made the piece from both exotic and familiar materials: auburn-hued bloodwood framed in dark wenge from Africa and wire-brushed walnut legs, inset at their top corners with buffalo-head nickels minted in 1917, the year Buffalo Bill Cody died. Across its front apron, he inlaid deep-chocolate Central American cocobolo

and a tableau of running buffalo silhouettes, including, fashioned from maple, a rare white "spirit buffalo" in the lead, eluding an arrow.

"I like all those stories of Native Americans and buffalo, cowboys, and gunfighters," says Roths (pronounced "Roats"). "I'm a Western history guy who was born 100 years too late." On the farm where he was born and raised in central Iowa, he always felt the pull of the West, and its allure grew even stronger when he was 15 and began

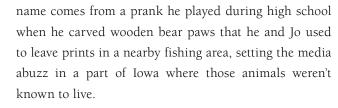






Along the way, he launched Bear Paw Designs, a business that grew out of his longtime love of furnituremaking and Western history. The

coming a sixth grandchild.



In a similarly lighthearted but wholly committed spirit, he came to specialize in imaginative, meticulously detailed, exceptionally well-crafted custom furniture that celebrates the West, gaining early renown for *End of the Line*, a scaled-down rendition of a 1920s caboose on the Great Northern Railway, kitted out as a wet bar complete with icemaker and copper sink. The piece won the Exhibitors' Choice and Best Artist, Historical Craftsmanship awards at the 2005 Western Design Conference in Cody, Wyoming. "That's my all-time favorite," he says.

Yet, he's resisted requests to recreate the piece. "Repetition doesn't interest me," he says. "There's a lot of money to be made in it, but I like to do different things. And every time you do something new, it's back to the drawing board."

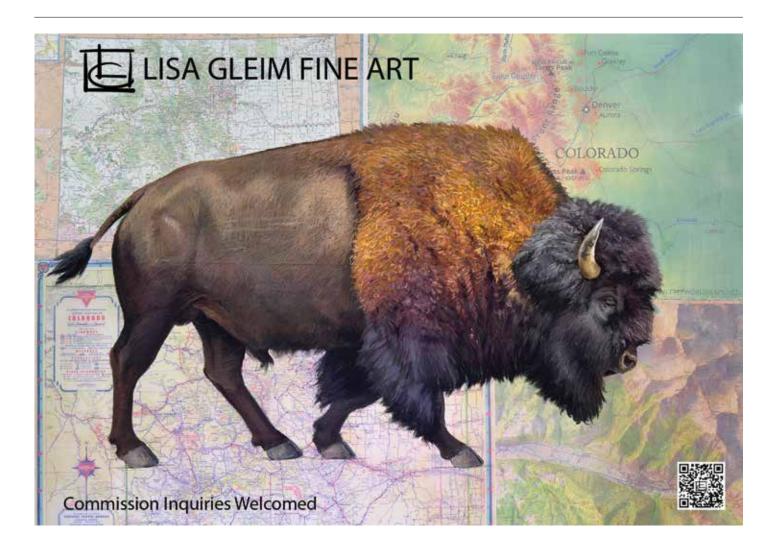


End of the Line Wet BarReclaimed Barnwood, Forged Iron, Cherrywood Wheels, Walnut Rails

Mike Roths' custom furniture is available through Bear Paw Designs in Stevensville, Montana, and By Western Hands in Cody, Wyoming.

53 x 94 x 30 inches

Based in Marin County, California, *Norman Kolpas* is the author of more than 40 books and hundreds of articles. He also teaches nonfiction writing in The Writers' Program at UCLA Extension.



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