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1. Stanley Natchez
Campbell Soup, 2025
oil on canvas
48 x 72 in. / $22,000

2. Jim Jacobs
Mika's Ponytail 2, 2017
willow branch with human hair, graphite
18 x 6 x 4 in. / $1,200

3. Ben Steele
Cowpuncher Pencils, 2026
oil on canvas
50 x 40 in. / $16,000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Modern West announces group exhibition themed with the year of the horse.
June 19, 2026–August 20, 2026

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SALT LAKE CITY--MModern West is pleased to announce *The Year of the Horse*, an exhibition of works inspired by the symbolism of the Chinese New Year Fire Horse. The group show will feature artworks by Shonto Begay, Michael Coles, Phil Epp, Jim Jacobs, Lenka Konopasek, Stanley Natchez, Kevin Red Star, Ben Steele, Billy Schenck, and Mike Whiting, and will be on view at Modern West June 19 through August 20, 2026.

The Year of the Horse highlights artworks that literally and figuratively symbolize the 2026 Chinese New Year. Showcasing direct representations and interpretations of this symbol, the exhibition creates a dynamic portrait of the horse through sculpture, painting, photography, and mixed media artworks in the context of the contemporary American West.

Artists such as Shonto Begay, Phil Epp, and Mike Whiting use horses to personify the magnificence of the Western landscape. In Begay's *Pause In Blue* (2026), a lone cowboy rides through a mysterious scene in the dark of night, taking a moment to light a cigarette underneath a breathtaking Milky Way sky. Epp's *Turbine Field* (2022) shows a small herd of horses trekking through rainswept plains, interrupted by striking and abstracted wind turbine blades. Mike Whiting's new steel horse sculptures bring a larger scale to the exhibition, with each piece translated through the artist's early video gaming and minimalist inspirations.

Other featured artists, including Lenka Konpasek, Stanley Natchez, and Ben Steele, interpret the spirit of fire horse, defined by endurance, momentum, risk-taking, and passion. Konopasek has spent many years painting the rodeo horse as a Western symbol of power, using the colors of inverted film to capture fleeting, undefined moments of struggle. Natchez uses paint, gold leaf, beadwork, and other materials to lean into the ideas of American consumerist culture, often using horse figures at the forefront of his work. Renowned for merging exacting technical precision with humor and wit, Steele applies this approach to his latest work, *Cowpuncher Pencils* (2026), that depicts a cowboy and stallion on a Dixon pencil box against a backdrop of childlike coloring pages.

The opening artist reception for *The Year of the Horse* will take place Friday, June 19 during Salt Lake Gallery Stroll. All are invited and welcome to attend. All questions about the exhibition, artists, and the gallery can be directed to Modern West Director & Curator Shalee Cooper at shalee@modernwestfineart.com.

About Modern West:
Art collector and philanthropist Diane Stewart opened Modern West in 2014 to support established and emerging artists who, in varied and compelling ways, reframe our understanding of the West. The gallery offers strategic artwork placement, art advisory, curatorial services and projects that reach national and global audiences.

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