

WESTERN
ART & Architecture
From Cowboy to Contemporary

Gib Singleton's Real Faith
Native + Pop: When Art Worlds Collide
Three Expressions of Mountain Architecture
Perspective: Gerard Curtis Delano



plus:
Wanderings: Sedona, Arizona
Designing the West with Kyle Bunting
Collector's Notebook: Original Prints



LISTENING TO THE LAND

Channeling the romantic idea of the Old West is one way to design a home; for Ward + Blake Architects, letting the Western landscape dictate architecture is another

WRITTEN BY Dina Mishev





“We start from the land, whether it’s a pristine rural lot or an urban project in town. Wherever it is, the site has something to tell us,” says Mitch Blake, a principal founder at Jackson, Wyoming’s Ward

+ Blake Architects. “And we listen.”

Since its founding with a handshake in 1996 by Blake and Tom Ward, the award-winning firm’s core philosophy has been simple: Start with the land. “We don’t like to work in a particular historical style because that doesn’t pay homage to the site,” Blake says. “You’re going in with a preconceived stylistic notion as opposed to looking at the site first and thinking about how things should be on there.”

It was this shared belief — as well as a respect for each other’s work — that led the two men to found Ward + Blake. They had both been working at another Jackson firm for several years and were ready to try something new, not that they knew they’d be doing it with each other. “We didn’t really know each other all that well when we started the office, but I had a real profound sense of the passion he had,” Ward says. Blake’s take? “I appreciated his design abilities and I knew we shared thoughts on what Western architecture ought to be. When Tom asked about partnering up, I didn’t have to think about it.”

The men named their new firm Ward + Blake “because ‘Blake + Ward’ sounded too much like ‘backward,’” laughs Blake.

The two men share a vision of Western architecture, but came to it from very different backgrounds. Ward, a Wyoming native who grew up taking family road trips and camping around the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem, spent several years in Arizona after graduating with his degree in

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Left: The layout and design of this residence for the EHA Family Trust was driven by the water on the property. Photo: Roger Wade **Top:** Tom Ward and Mitch Blake partnered to found Ward + Blake Architects because each respected the other’s work. Photo David Swift



Clockwise from above: The Trout residence was built with skyline requirements and the owner's interests in the West in mind. | Perched on a hillside overlooking the Snake River, the TK Pad, Tom Ward's own residence, was the first home built using EarthWall construction. | The Nature Conservancy's energy-efficient Red Canyon Ranch outside Lander has won Ward + Blake several AIA Awards. Photos: Douglas Kahn | The front entry to the Teton County Children's Learning Center uses Ward + Blake's patented, seismically stable rammed earth wall construction system, EarthWall. Photo: Roger Wade





John Peterson

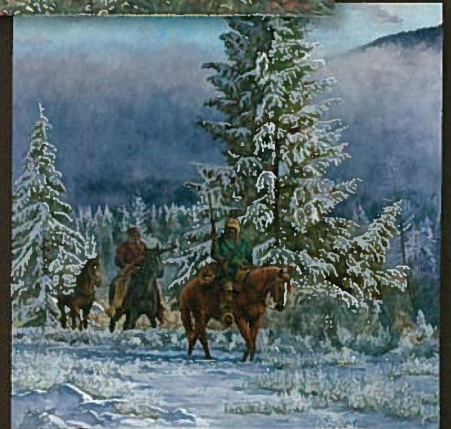
Western & Wildlife Art



Robe Season (detail)



Time To Be Weaned
oil on linen
18 x 24 inches



Robe Season
oil on linen
40 x 40 inches

Visit John at the
Art of the American Cowboy Show

Dec. 6-10, 2011 at the South Point Hotel & Casino,
Las Vegas, NV, during the National Finals Rodeo.

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