

Designed by Erin Hemmings, the Rock Block exemplifies New West's commitment to functional art.



FORGING A NEW VISION OF EVERYDAY ART

STORY JENN REIN
PHOTOS ARTHUR BLUE + COLE BUCKHART + DAN CAMPBELL



Liljeström, Connor.
"The Watchers I," 2020.
Oil and mixed oil media
on linen, 76 x 94 in.

GALLERY
NEW WEST FINE ART GALLERY
NEWWESTFINEART.COM

From their expanded space on Jackson's Town Square, the local artisans of **New West KnifeWorks**, **Mountain Man Toy Shop** and **New West Fine Art** present everyday art for the contemporary Western lifestyle.

Standing in the showroom of finely honed culinary knives makes it easy to get lost in epicurean fantasies, but the manner in which these items are displayed commands attention. Particularly arresting is the Rock Block, a sculpture of raw stone and wood for storing and displaying knives described by *Bon Appetit* as "the perfect balance of power and grace."

Designer Erin Hemmings asserts that the Rock Block was born from necessity, but it also represents New West's commitment to the art of everyday life. "People



ABOVE Hand-forged in Teton Valley, Idaho, New West's custom knives elevate your culinary experience.

TOP RIGHT A Jackson Hole native who pays homage to the lore of the West through his work, artist Connor Liljestrom is featured by New West Fine Art, exclusively.

BOTTOM RIGHT Bladesmith Jack Rellstab showcases his latest Damascus steel creation.



get attached to our knives because they combine form and function so beautifully," he says. "You want to show off those superior tools in an artful way that has them ready at hand."

Mountain Man Toy Shop takes the concept of artful tools to the next level. Bladesmith Jack Rellstab works exclusively in Damascus steel and exotic handle materials. "The patterns are endless," he says. "Each blade is unique in that way. The superior quality comes from a special process of forging." The result? Heirloom tools to be passed down and cherished for generations.

The urge to elevate everyday experience is also the primary aim of New West Fine Art. Connor Liljestrom's paintings communicate a visceral vibration. Liljestrom wants his work to be lived with, because he believes its meaning changes over time. In his most recent endeavor, "The Thousand" series, he works in a smaller size than the large canvases he's used to. For the collector who wishes to curate multiple works from this Wyoming native, this series fits the bill.

"Working with New West gives me room to create and keep an idea like this going," says Liljestrom. "I just said to myself, 'I'm making a thousand of these.' Because, why not? Why not keep going?"

That's the cutting-edge spirit from which New West has forged a national reputation and helped launch a contemporary Western renaissance in Jackson Hole. ▣

