Tales of the West: Michael Cassidy & Jamie Burnes
August 9 – September 28, 2019
Opening Reception: Friday, August 9, 5-7 PM

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Monday–Saturday, 10 AM-5 PM

The story of the American West is a mainstay of popular culture, and
Western art is all about storytelling. Tales of the West explores the West of
the imagination through the work of Michael Cassidy and Jamie Burnes.

Nothing captures the drama of the Old West like Western pulp fiction.
Michael Cassidy's paintings vividly portray fictional, often sensational,
versions of people, places and historic events of the West.

I call these paintings "Western Pulp." I like the look of the old Western
"dime" novels, sometimes called pulp magazines, as well as early Western
movie posters from the 1920s and '30s. These works are my idea of what the
cover of a “dime” novel would look like on the scale of the old Western
movie posters. I've used a few actual headers from those old magazines and
combined them with earlier works of my own, originally produced in smaller
formats. The story titles used in the paintings are real stories from those
magazines, complete with their authors’ names. My works draw on these
rich and varied sources.

Jaime Burnes's wood and metal abstracted animal sculptures
remind us of our once seemingly endless Western frontier. Focusing
on Western wildlife, such as bison, horses and coyotes, he portrays
these enduring symbols of the Old West as unique individuals.
Whether produced at the scale of a public installation or an
intimate gallery, each work has its own personality and
communicates with the viewer through material, form, and scale.

Each work I make has a unique energy. Spending so much time
together in the shop, the animals and figures become characters to
me. Upon first glance a bison appears docile and amicable. A closer
inspection reveals its fierce power and raw dominance. This duality
is repeated in the materials and energy of the proud Boudicca: From
afar she is life-like, while close up she displays a layering of materials, intricate spaces and deep patina. The tension is
repeated through the natural, heartwood grain contrasting with the hand-forged metal. The harmony between these
odd couples becomes a spirited being.

Images from top: Michael Cassidy, Western Story, The Vanished Herds, oil on linen, 69 3/4 x 43 1/2 inches; Jamie Burnes, Boudicca, corten steel and heart of eastern red cedar, 30 x 39 x 14 inches. All images © 2019 Gerald Peters Gallery.