

Theme 6: Art

The landscapes and cultures of the Upper Missouri River region continue to inspire artists and storytellers.

Subthemes:

1. The first people in the Upper Missouri River region left traces in the land and oral histories that document their culture.
2. The Lewis & Clark Corps of Discovery documented the landscape and left the first written description of the Upper Missouri River region as part of their journey through what was the most significant land acquisition in the history of the nation.
3. The Lewis & Clark Journals enticed visitors, artists and developers to the Upper Missouri River region.
4. Artist Karl Bodmer came to the Upper Missouri 1832-34 with his sponsor Prince Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied. Bodmer interpreted and painted the Upper Missouri River landscapes and Native Americans, leaving the earliest and most remarkable visual history of the region.
5. Artists John Mix Stanley and Gustavus Sohon accompanied Washington Territory Governor, Isaac I. Stevens, on the Pacific Railway Survey through the area (1853-55) and painted dozens of watercolor scenes of the spectacular geographic features and Native American lifestyles. Sohon painted the great falls of the Missouri. His painting was made into a lithograph for use in the published Pacific Railway Survey report and is the first known image of the great falls.
6. Charles M. Russell captured the “West that Was” in “word pictures” and a vast collection of more than 4000 art works.
7. The C.M. Russell residence and studio were recognized in 1965 as a National Historic Landmark, important to the history of the United States for the contribution made by the art of Russell.
8. Over thousands of years the stories of peoples’ lives have been intricately tied to the Upper Missouri River and its landscapes. The stories are told in a broad range of cultural resources including pictographs, photographs, tools, music, art, crafts, journals and books.

9. More than a dozen museums and cultural centers in the Upper Missouri River region continue to interpret the land, people and creative work inspired by the region.