

# Free Rein

**Ann Korologos Gallery**, February 3-March 4

THE PEOPLE, PLACES AND culture of today's American Southwest come alive through art in the new exhibition *Free Rein* at Ann Korologos Gallery in Basalt, Colorado. The show, opening February 3, features works from six longtime gallery artists—Heather Foster, Terry Gardner, Donna Howell-Sickles, Amy Lay, Amy Laugesen and Joel Ostlind—along with art from newly added talent, Maura Allen.

For gallery co-owners Claire de L'Arbre and Sue Edmonds, the exhibition title of *Free Rein* “holds a deliberate tension, reflective of the dual reality of ranch life in the American West—freedom and responsibility, hardship and joy. Together, they speak to the ranchers and the livestock bound to and liberated by the land they roam, where freedom of spirit, open range and an enduring way



**Maura Allen, *Let's Have a Chat*, acrylic on panel, 18 x 30.**



**Terry Gardner, *Boss*, oil on canvas, 36 x 36.**



**Joel Ostlind, *The New Reata*, copper plate etching with watercolor, 5 x 4.**



**Amy Laugesen, Blue Mud Herd (set of 7), ceramic and steel, 11.5 x 12 x 3.5.**

of life move forward in modern times.”

Allen is recognized for her mixed media paintings that combine features of the Old West with an aesthetic reminiscent of photography. Her work *LET’S HAVE A CHAT* depicts a cowgirl and her horse taking a moment to reset. Explaining the story behind the work, Allen says, “The adventure started early, as so much does in the West. It was a team effort, with a dedicated ranching family working in sync to drive 70-plus mamas and calves to a cooler, grassier high pasture. Halfway up the rocky mountain climb, a little misbehaving prompted a much-needed break—and a chat.”

There is a sense of mood and mystery in Gardner’s paintings that are derived from his visits to ranches throughout the American West. Take for instance the simplistically designed oil painting *BOSS* that is not only expressive in the artist’s brushstrokes but also expressive in the cow’s personality. “This painting captures the ongoing round-up taking place right next to this steady stare. Painted boldly in oils,

with expressive, abstract shapes, the calm Boss casts a wide-angle gaze that appears to be looking right through you,” Gardner shares. “This painting also has dual intentions, the show *Free Rein* is about freedom, both in expression and independence. As an artist, someone who captures the spirit of the West, in subject, location and execution, *BOSS* is the culmination of painting and ranching. The face of this steer has a look of confidence that is required for both ways of life.”

Ostlind’s experiences herding cattle on ranches is the impetus for his copper plate etchings that he paints with watercolor. His work *THE NEW REATA* was inspired by a lasso he braided years ago. Describing the work, Ostlind says, “With his hat tipped back, I gave my man a Charlie Russell haircut. When I watercolored the print and added a bright red tie, he seemed to jump back in time about 80 years.”

Laugesen’s equine sculptures are a modern exploration of ceramics that combine with materials like metals, porcelain casters, wood or stone. They

can feature bold colors like the hue of a set of seven horses titled *BLUE MUD HERD*. She says the work “conveys a spirit of playfulness, freedom, community, shared journey and collective movement.” She continues, “Abstractly, the grouping of horses also conjures up images of a flowing river or a mountain range. Each horse is sculpted in clay and designed to complement the others while maintaining its own unique gesture and personality within the herd. The design of the bases enables the pieces to be arranged close together and rearranged in diverse formations. One of the glazes I use is a cobalt blue glaze that is formulated to crawl, resembling dried, cracking mud when it is fired on the ceramic horse form.”

*Free Rein* is on view through March 4.  
—Rochelle Belsito

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