

Andrew Smith Gallery, Inc.  
Masterpieces of Photography

*PURE QUILL:*  
*PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARBARA VAN CLEVE*

Dates: Nov. 18, 2016 - Jan. 14, 2017

Artist Reception and Book Signing for  
“Pure Quill: Photographs by Barbara Van Cleve”  
Saturday, December 3, 2016 1-4 p.m.

“I want to capture the beauty of the landscape, the setting or rising of the sun, and the dust swirling as horses or cattle move across the terrain . . . I want people to see ranching as something different from the mythical image of the cowboy riding off into the sunset, brave, strong, and alone . . . There are also women doing half the work or even more.”

Barbara Van Cleve - "Pure Quill: Photographs by Barbara Van Cleve"

Andrew Smith Gallery at 122 Grant Ave., Santa Fe, NM 87501, is pleased to announce the exhibit “Pure Quill: Photographs by Barbara Van Cleve”. Barbara Van Cleve is nationally and internationally recognized for her photographs of ranchers, rodeos, cowboys, cattle women and landscapes depicting traditional ranching life in the American West. Descended from Montana pioneers, she was born and raised on her family's historic ranch founded in 1880 near Big Timber, Montana. By age eleven she was photographing with a Brownie Box camera and she has never stopped working. Van Cleve currently lives in Big Timber, Montana but for twenty years she was a resident of Santa Fe.

The exhibition contains 21 prints never before exhibited at the Andrew Smith Gallery are also featured in her newly published retrospective monograph, *Pure Quill*.

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Ms. Van Cleve will attend the opening reception Saturday December 3, 2016 from 1 to 4 p.m. and will be signing copies of her new book "PURE QUILL: PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARBARA VAN CLEVE," (2016) by Susan Hallsten McGarry. The exhibit continues through January 14, 2017.

In 1985, shortly before Andrew Smith Gallery (founded in 1974) moved to Santa Fe, Barbara Van Cleve introduced herself and her work to gallery owner Andrew Smith, located in Old Town Albuquerque. The meeting set into motion a relationship that has spanned over thirty years. Following her first exhibit at Andrew Smith Gallery in 1985 Van Cleve has had numerous exhibitions. Indeed, her photographs of the American West have always been one of the most popular features of the gallery. As Andrew Smith has written:

"Barbara Van Cleve is the real deal. She has both the swagger and shyness of a true westerner. Her sense of the land and people combined with her sophisticated photographic techniques elevate her work into a special pantheon of legendary western Landscape, ranch, and documentary photographers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, notably L.A. Huffman, Evelyn Cameron, and Erwin Smith. Not only is she a brilliant photographer of the American West; she herself grew up in the saddle so that the authenticity in her work shows clearly from her lifetime of genuine experiences and insights. Unlike many tinhorn eastern photographers, who adopt the cowboy life as a romantic hobby, Van Cleve embraces the grit and substance of real western life. Her subjects are not sentimental objects, but rather friends and colleagues. Her black and white prints show more than any photographer of her generation, including expressing the true grandness and enthralling isolation and toughness of the American west."

In addition to being represented by Andrew Smith Gallery (which in 1985 relocated to an upstairs space on Santa Fe's Plaza), Van Cleve was also a member of the nonprofit Santa Fe Center for Photograph (SFCP) that showcased local and national photographers. During this era, she started a greeting card company called Abertura that featured her photographs as well as artworks by other New Mexico artists and photographers. Van Cleve was also pioneering new techniques for making large-scale photographs.

Van Cleve, who was an English professor for decades, understands how difficult it is for students facing financial and personal challenges to stay in school. To give back something to New Mexico, where for more than twenty winters she honed her artistic skills and made fast friendships, she has bequeathed her archive (including 23,000 negatives) to the University of New Mexico and with it The Barbara Van Cleve Endowment for Women's Photographic Studies.

Photographs on exhibit at Andrew Smith Gallery include the following:

“Cow Country: Wet-Spring Grass” 2011

Amid the breathtaking vista of open range, a long line of black cattle is being herded by four drovers. This powerful horizontal composition describes ranching life at its most idyllic. The cows form a serpentine black column that contrasts with the silvery pastures.



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“Walking Rain: Loping Along” 2007

“Sky is another way of talking about light” says Van Cleve. In this photograph the artist captured a jaw-dropping weather event. Swirling gray rain clouds blur snow-capped peaks in the distance. The base of the photograph is an irregular strip of velvety black that literally and aesthetically “grounds” the composition.



“Fall Gather: Cow Camp” 1996

As dogs are essential for gathering cattle Van Cleve felt lucky to include this dog in the photograph of a man walking his horse next to a log cabin shaded by cottonwoods. The picture was taken near Cow Creek and the Upper Missouri Breaks and according to Van Cleve, “The grazing permit is used by different ranchers, and during October, they all go in and gather, then separate the cattle.”



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“Shepherd: Rim Light” 2000

Van Cleve has long been enchanted by late-afternoon rim light, an effect that happens when the low sun outlines shapes with bright light. This photograph of a small herd of sheep being watched over by a man on horseback was taken on the plains west of Magdalena, New Mexico.



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“Quiet Morning: Still Water, Yellowstone” 1988

The Van Cleve family ranch is not too far south of Yellowstone country where on a misty morning the artist photographed a tranquil lake speckled with a line of ducks.



“Bullfight: Flamenco Heel to Horn” 1984

This “dance duet” is a striking example of Van Cleve’s “look at that!” rodeo photographs. Having ousted his rider, a massive bull plows up the sawdust as a clown with painted face and flamboyant clothes pushes down on the bull’s horn. Van Cleve participated in rodeos from age eight. Her father and grandfather were among the founders of the amateur Melville rodeo from 1930 to 1950 and provided all the livestock. “How I lived and died for those events,” reminisces Van Cleve, who in her youth won numerous competitions roping calves, barrel racing and being a racing jockey.





“Hung Up: Tango #1” 1975

A bronco rider knocked off his horse is in danger of going under its hooves. The photo was taken at the Big Timber Rodeo where Van Cleve says, “I was struck by the interrelationships of the rider and the horse. Their complex positions frozen by the camera were gracefully executed, sort of like dance steps. That set me on a path of looking for those interrelationships in the arena.”



“Chute Ballet: Pas de Deux” 1984

We can't see exactly what this rodeo couple is doing, but Van Cleve's camera captured the man and woman as if engaged in a complicated ballet move.



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“Composition: Coda” 1991

Looking almost like a paper cut-out, an airborne bronco rider with his hat intact is headed for a hard fall.



“Rain Broom: Over Santa Fe” 1987

This powerful landscape recalls Laura Gilpin’s famous “Storm Over La Bajada” which was also taken near Santa Fe decades earlier. A colossal thunderhead pouring rain below and struck by sunlight from above passes over mountains and mesas. The spectacular photograph is a patchwork of light and dark values ranging from inky black to luminous white.



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“Friends at Night: Cloud Glow” 2011

On occasion Van Cleve has used the moon as a light source. This photograph recalls one of her classic works called "Moon Over Cook Tent" where she set up a tripod and took a seven-minute exposure to capture star tracks and moonlight above a tent illuminated from within by a lantern.



“Glorious Commotion: Lots of Dust” 2008

A large herd of horses thunders up a draw following a couple of riders creating a massive cloud of dust that obscures the arid landscape. As Van Cleve says: “Add some dust to the situation, and you can literally see the air.” In this photograph the people are simply an extension of the animals they are working, in fact, almost indistinguishable from them.



“A Natural Design: Symmetry,” 2011

Van Cleve almost always works with available or natural light, searching for exceptional atmospheric displays in the early morning, late afternoon or even by moonlight. She took this photograph as late afternoon sunlight glowed upon a seven horses and colts grazing peacefully in a sweeping landscape.



“Horse Whispering: Carol A Woman’s Touch,” 1996

In the mid-1980s Van Cleve was working on a photo series about a three-time champion women’s bull rider. She hoped to interest People Magazine in the story and when that did not play out her mother gave her an even better idea. “Why don’t you photograph ranch women across the West?” she asked. Van Cleve grabbed on to the idea and a decade later the project became the book titled “Hard Twist: Western Ranch Women.” A 1996 exhibition of 120 photographs was organized by the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.





“Pals: We Hopped In, Molly Flagg Knudtsen,” 1986

A woman secures her horse in the back of a truck while her dog in the front seat appears to know just where they are headed. One of Van Cleve’s missions throughout her career has been to set the record straight about the integral role ranch women play. “I want people to see ranching as something different from the mythical image of the cowboy riding off into the sunset, brave, strong, and alone . . . There are also women doing half the work or even more.”



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“Sorting Cattle: In a Crowd, Ann Holland Daugherty,” 1988

This close-up portrait shows a strong young woman wearing a white hat who seems every bit a match for the mass of long-horn bulls only inches away.



“Holy Dally: Hedging a Bet, Polly Dickinson,” 1987

A rider’s gloved hands rest as if in prayer just above a small rosary wrapped around the saddle horn. The wry title of the photograph is a reminder that Van Cleve herself was raised Catholic. In the 1960s she taught and was dean of woman at DePaul University, was an English instructor at Loyola University, and a tenured professor at Mundelein College, the last private, independent Roman catholic women’s college in Illinois. “At one time in my life,” she said, “I thought I might become a nun (which quickly passed) . . . who needs religion when you have the outdoors!”



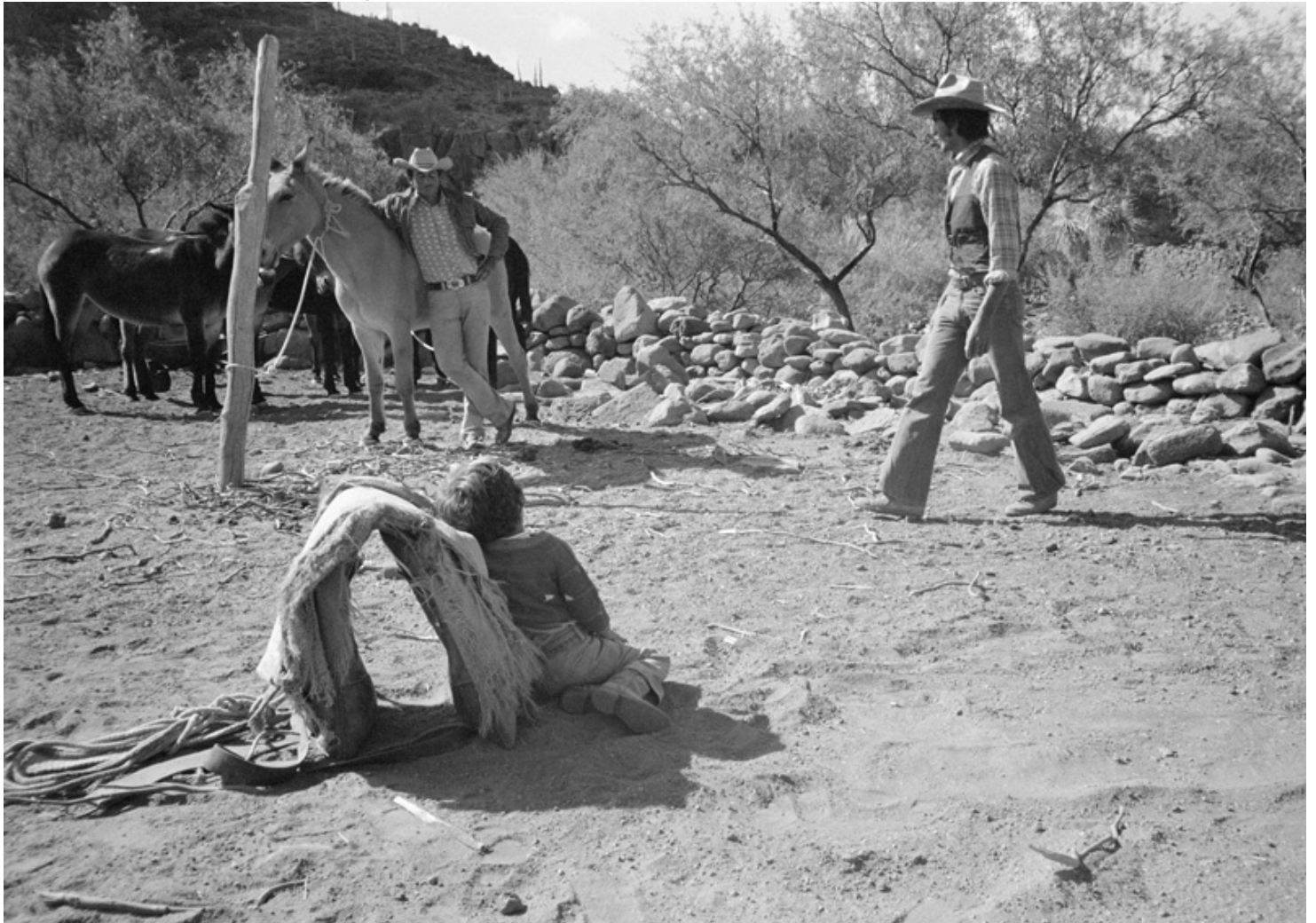
“Zopilotes on Cardons: Vultures,” 1979

In 1979 Van Cleve made a mule trip through Baja, Mexico to document Baja’s Spanish Missionary Trail. She returned five more times in 1987, 1990, 1991, 2000 and 2003 with each trip lasting about two to three weeks. She covered roughly 100 miles of the trail from Bahia de Los Angeles in the north to Comondu, near Loreto in the south. They followed a remote pathway that had been engineered by Spanish soldiers that connected religious outposts established by the Jesuits, which was then followed by the Franciscans and Dominicans between 1683 and 1834. She made around eight thousand negatives of missions, the landscape, animals, people and even the cave paintings in the Sierra de San Francisco believed to be nearly seven thousand years old. “I wanted to capture the physical reality of people and places, as well as the felt presence of history long passed,” she said.



“San Pedro Ranch: Little Boy Watching His Father” 1979

Over the course of her many visits to Mexico Van Cleve saw changes happening as propane gave way to solar units and prehistoric sites that had been open to the public were fenced off by the government. “I also watched how our guide gradually transitioned from traditional Baja attire and gear to American chaps, ropes, clothing and saddles,” she said. This photograph of a child and his father dates from her first trip into Mexico.



“Bathers: Like Minded” 2011

In this photograph a woman with her arms wrapped around a horse is being pulled by the animal through sparkling water. The bond between them is palpable and in the water they appear almost like one magical creature. The visual similarities between human flesh and horsehide appeal to Van Cleve and inspired her “Lady Godiva” series made in 2000 when she was invited to be part of an exhibit benefiting the therapeutic riding program Challenge New Mexico and found herself in Abiquiu photographing a nude model astride a horse.



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“Van Cleve running horses on the Bar B” c. 2000 (Photo by Shannon Kirby)  
Van Cleve’s father Spike had his first-born on a horse and riding by herself by the age of three. “On a ranch you don’t have a lot of neighbor kids, so horses were my best friends,” she said. “I played with them and trained them and learned about companionship and loyalty from them.” This photograph of the artist galloping after a herd of horses through sublimely lovely country sums up the extraordinary life that has fueled Van Cleve’s artistry. As she puts it, “There is something magical about riding a horse and having the wind in your hair and face. It’s a sense of being free.”



Barbara Van Cleve was inducted into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame in 1995 in recognition for her great achievements in photography. In 2000 she received the Distinguished Artist Award from the Santa Fe Rotary Foundation. Her books include "Roughstock Sonnets" (1989), "Hard Twist" (1995), "Holding the Reins:

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A Ride Through Cowgirl Life" (2003) and "Pure Quill: Photographs by Barbara Van Cleve" (2016). She received the 2001 Mary Belle Grant Award from the Coors Western Art Foundation for "honoring an individual who embodies the spirit of the western way of life and symbolizes a passion for the West through art." In 2005, as the featured artist at the Coors Western Art Exhibit and Sale, she became the first woman and the first photographer to be thus honored. She became the Treasured Montana Artist in 2009.

Gallery hours are Monday through Saturday 11 to 4. For more information, call Andrew Smith Gallery at 505-984-1234. Visit us online at [www.andrewsmithgallery.com](http://www.andrewsmithgallery.com)