

A Mark Klett photo shows a comparison of the work of Thomas Moran with the real thing at Artist's Point in Yellowstone National Park.

Keeping track of TIME

Mark Klett captures the passing years in his rephotographic surveys of famous landscapes

BY AMY ABRAMS | SUNDAY ARTS

Throughout 25 years of photographing the American West, Mark Klett has documented the complex results of human interaction with the landscape — from the era when the West promised new beginnings to the outcome of more than a century's worth of development.

His photographs do not glorify early explorers or condemn subsequent exploiters. Instead, Klett represents the West as one continuous story connecting all of us with the land we share.

With works in the world's top museums, such as New York's Museum of Modern Art and Whitney Museum, Klett's prominence as a photographer began in the 1970s when he spearheaded a project to rephotograph the grand landscapes of the West that were originally recorded by the early giants of photography, such as William Henry Jackson and Timothy O'Sullivan, in the 1860s and '70s.

A hundred years later, Klett's three-year mission replicated photos of 120 sites in seven states, revealing remarkable changes and comparisons.

"I have this feeling sometimes, when I'm out there rephotographing, that I'm in the exact same place that O'Sullivan stood. You can almost envision yourself bumping into See **KLETT** on next page

VISUAL ART



RALPH FRESO / SUNDAY ARTS

Photographer Mark Klett frames a saguaro cactus in his old wooden field camera. He's noted for his Third View projects, a series of photographs documenting the effects of time on landscapes.

VALLEY STAGES by Max McQueen

Bedroom Farce (Tempe Performing Arts Center, 132 E. Sixth St., Tempe, [480] 350-8388). No playwright skewers pretentious marriages better than Alan Ayckbourn, England's most prolific playwright (59 plays at last count). This time out, Ayckbourn presents three couples, close friends all. That is until one twosome unloads their wedded bliss on the others, leaving one and all fit to be tied — or untied. Tom

Leveen, of *It Is What It Is* Theater fame, directs for Tempe Little Theatre. 2 p.m. today and 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$10-\$12.

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change! (Main Stage, Phoenix Theatre, 100 E. McDowell Road, Phoenix, [602] 254-2151). Phoenix Theatre has a runaway hit in Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Roberts' revue about modern relationships. Chandler's own Broadway veteran Stephanie Likes is featured along with Scottsdale's Rusty Ferracane, Mesa's Kristen Drathman and Ben Brittain

of Phoenix. All four work like clockwork on 17 telling songs, ranging from "Single Man Drought" to "Always a Bridesmaid." Randy Wojcik's direction and Jerry Wayne Harkey's musical direction snap, crackle and pop through two hours of nonstop musical fun. Now extended through June 10. Performances are 2 p.m. today and June 10, 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. \$26-\$28.

Jesus Christ Superstar (Desert Stages Theatre, 8473 E. McDonald Drive,

Scottsdale, [480] 483-1664). Desert Stages has the summer season's second hit: Andrew Lloyd Weber and Tim Rice's song-and-dance re-creation of Jesus's last week on earth. Josh Feshmire, Ben Mahanon and Max Miller alternate in the title role of a messiah under assault from all sides, including his friends. Ian Cullity is Judas, the disciple who betrays Jesus. Desert Stages founders Gerry and Laurie Cullity co-direct this perennial favorite. 6 p.m. today and June 10, 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$10-\$12.

KLETT

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him 120 years ago," says Klett, sitting in his studio at Arizona State University, where he is a professor of photography.

Aiming to sharpen our collective awareness, Klett's photographs encourage us to consider an "accountable" culture — one that enables us to live happily on the planet while protecting the environment for future generations. Whether it's Klett's hat, shadow or hand, he includes an image that humanizes the landscape.

"It's a temporary gesture and that's the point," he says. "What we all do is temporary. Even if I live to be 100 years old, I'm here for a really short period of time."

Through his art, Klett grapples with the enigmatic concepts of time and space, finally proposing that it is time, not space, that provides stability for humankind.

"The only thing that really is constant is time," he says. "I think I own my property, but I don't. The only thing I really own is my time with my property."

Klett first immersed himself in the concept of time by earning a geology degree. While working as a field assistant for the United States Geological Survey, he abruptly changed course and enrolled in a photography graduate program.

"When I quit geology, I thought I was making a clean break," he says. "I had no idea what kind of pictures I would make."

With a thorough understanding of the formation of the earth, Klett relied on nature to teach him about time.

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Mark Klett

He sees life through a metaphorical wide-angle lens.

"Mark's work asks questions about human experience," says Marilyn Zeitlin, director of the ASU Art Museum. "This is what any good artist should be doing. A lot of them aren't. While his work is about the West, it's about much more than that. His work is much more intellectual and philosophical. It asks: What is reality? What is stable? What is in flux? How do you bridge between past, present and future?"

"In the rephotographic work, we see that the trees are getting larger or the houses are being replaced by new

ones. Yet how much we've changed is the unspoken text. We're on the other side of the camera — being born, aging and dying in these gaps between the photographs."

Lisa Sette, owner of Scottsdale's Lisa Sette Gallery, which has represented Mark Klett for 15 years, says, "Mark takes everything seriously. He's committed to everything in his life — especially his family."

Married with two daughters, Klett has a home in Tempe near the university. Candidly reflecting on his lifestyle and priorities, he says: "I admire certain photographers — and someone might be a really great artist — but how did they get there? Did they ignore their kids, get divorced three times and become a hard human being just for the work? I look toward someone who is successful and a decent human being."

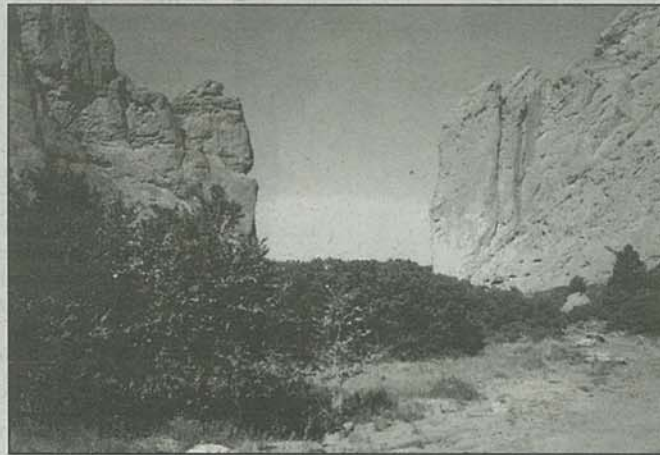
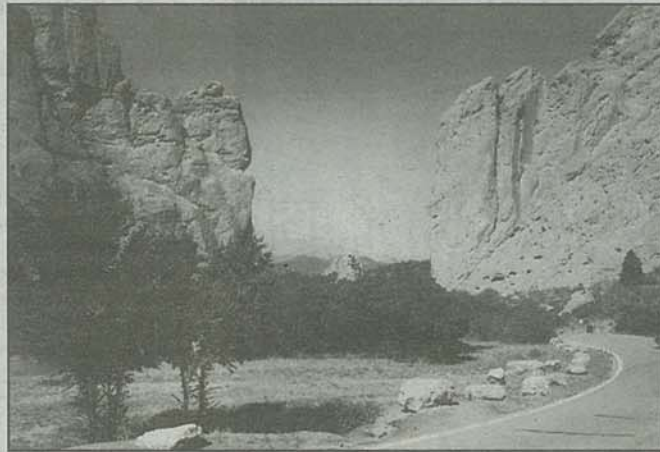
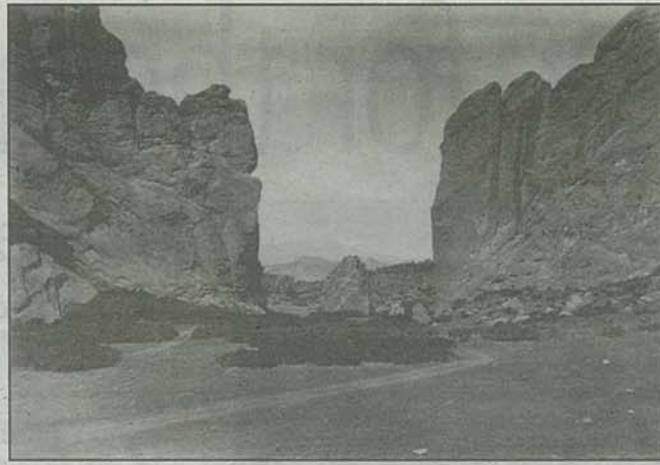
Klett's values embody a new set of goals for the 21st century. He is part of an increasingly vocal group of citizens who call for a new agenda supporting a commitment to an ethical way of life versus an emphasis on "making it."

Klett asserts that photography has played, and should continue to play a critical role in defining and redefining how we live.

"From the photographs of Ansel Adams to landscapes for the Sierra Club, photography has influenced people to join together to protect wilderness areas. I believe that photography can help shape people's opinions and give them a sense of what's important."

Klett concludes, "In the end, photography becomes a political act. It doesn't have to be with a capital 'p,' like politics. It's about your position in the world. I tell my students: 'Photography is not a neutral act.'"

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COURTESY OF MARK KLETT

An example of Mark Klett's Third View rephotographic survey project. The top photo is the "First View": an 1873 photo by William Henry Jackson of the Gateway of the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, Colo. The middle photo is the "Second View": a photo of the same location by Mark Klett and JoAnn Verburg in 1977 for the Rephotographic Survey Project. In the bottom "Third View," the same view is again featured, this time in 1997, in a photo by Klett and Toshi and Ueshina for the Third View Projects.

SEE MARK KLETT'S PHOTOGRAPHS

■ **In person:** Lisa Sette Gallery, 4142 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale, (480) 990-7342. Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tues.-Wed., 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Thurs., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Fri., noon-5 p.m. Sat.

■ **In print:** "View Finder: Mark Klett, Photography, and the Reinvention of the Landscape," by William L. Fox

"Desert Legends," stories by Gary Nabhan and photographs by Mark Klett

■ **On the Web:** thirdview.asu.edu

EAST VALLEY GALLERIES

ASU Harry Wood Gallery (Art Building, 900 S. Forest Mall, Tempe, [480] 965-3468). "Annual MFA Summer Exhibition," highlighting artwork in a variety of media by MFA candidates at ASU, through August 31. Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon.-Thu., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fri.

Cervini Haas Gallery (4200 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale, [480] 429-6116). "Mixed Media," exhibition of three artists working in three diverse media: Tremain Smith, encaustics; Santiago Gervasi, oils; and Dianne Lancia, acrylic and steel, through June 16.

Danela Gallery (6166 N. Scottsdale Road, [480] 922-1801). "The Bold & the Beautiful," a gallery group show featuring several artists including Richard Boyer, Lisa Danielle, Carol Hamilton and Elie Hazak, through June 17.

Gallery Materia (4222 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale, [480] 949-1262). "Fiber and Baskets," featuring fiber artists James Koehler, Ritz Jacobi, Carol Shinn and basket makers Mary Merkel-Hess and Keitaro Fujii, through June 30.

Hot Heads Studio (425 S. Mill Ave., Tempe, [480] 784-6346). Hot Art grand opening featuring 2-D and 3-D art and jewelry by Paige Price, Michael Ramos and Yuko Yabuki and several local emerging artists, through June 19.

Leona King Gallery (7171 Main St., Scottsdale, [480] 945-1209). "Miracles of Mata Ortiz," featuring Mexico's Damian and Elvira Quezada, through June 30.

Lisa Sette Gallery (4142 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale, [480] 990-7342). Featuring two new exhibitions, featuring "Collages," by Andrew Young and new paintings by Rosalyn Schwartz, through June 30.

Meyer Gallery (7173 E. Main St., Scottsdale, [480] 947-6372). "Caught in Time," features the works of some of the most respected contemporary still life and floral artists, including Malcolm Bryan, Nancy Chaboun, Cary Ennis and Travis Erion, through June 12.

Pinnacle Gallery (23417 N. Pima Road, Scottsdale, [480] 563-9800). "Fine Crafts ... Fine Gifts," featuring handmade crafts for sale, through June 15.

Rezurrection Gallery (601 W. University Drive, Tempe, [480] 377-9080). An exhibition of the works of local painter Karl Gustav Kroeppler, through July 1.

Vision Gallery (80 South San Marcos Place, Chandler, [480] 917-6859). Kidz Art Workshop Series, held on Saturday mornings from Saturday through November 10.

