

**Claire P.**

Concord, Massachusetts

*Spaghetti Western*

Copper etching using hard ground, soft ground, waterbite aquatint and soap ground aquatint

The classic Western mythology tells a story of two outlaws or two sheriffs who operate as superheroes and sidekicks. This opens up the opportunity to portray these characters in an updated way or with a twist. One of the Westerns I watched, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, is about two outlaws who share a deep bond with one another. In the initial sketch I drew this outlaw pair as women. It's clear from my research that there were also female outlaws, but they weren't in the spotlight. Taking inspiration from *Outlawed* I decided I might want to tell a new story. I chose to do a copper etching, as it is a medium that I had never worked with prior to coming to Oxbow and there were so many techniques I wanted to try.

# Spaghetti Western



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The Oxbow School

OS46

Not the Clint Eastwood character you are used to hearing about-  
robbing banks and trains, evading the law, and shooting their enemies-  
no

In the crossroads of the history we know, and the culture that lives us

Whispers the story of

the women who rode west, newly free

Riding west in hopes of fulfilling the promise of the land

Forgotten Pioneers of the frontier,

There is nothing left in the east for me here

They declared.

It could be a lonely life but it was safer

Building churches, homes,

To marry in and raise families,

Fighting for their right to vote,

To have an education

Establishing businesses, literary societies

And a legacy of cowboys and cowgirls

I set out to understand a part of the world I knew once very briefly, and have come to know again. But first I had to understand the part of myself that knew this world. The childhood of endless sky and prairie land, of sunburned faces, and things I took for granted.

The years before it all, the years we were merely kids, I do not idealize my youth as many of my peers do, but those years were special. Me and Will and Tess are the same as we always were, same as we will always be.

Will, always choosing the most ill mannered horse, taking every opportunity to gallop, allowing the reins to fall so the old beast could munch on some wild grass.

Tessa, clumsy and full of character, swimming like a little fish, playing with the other kids, drinking only lemonade and smiling big with her buck teeth.

And me, braiding my horse's hair and painting her with non toxic paint for the 'rodeo games' where the only event I was sure to win was the donut eating competition.

Mornings came early, a cold blink of misty air reflected on the grass outside the cabin

mounting horses with a ladder

Riding through the blissful hills, kicking up dust, and making up little games

the abandoned quartz mine, stuffing our pockets with chunks of crystals and marveling at all of the bats

Another day we dressed in overalls and galoshes and waded through a creek. The water came up to my waist

Will almost fell in but caught two fish, both rainbow trout

Speckled with green and red stripes

We raced tiny rafts of reeds and twigs, bark and puzzlegrass

Floating down the river

You called out to the birds, mimicking their song

You knew them all by name and introduced us

as we floated along

Drip coffee and the bird sounds

Porridge pancakes

The clink and scrape of speckled tin dishes

Some people gather around a fire and strum a guitar

Crickets in the dusk grass, games of tag, and scrambling up dirt cliffs

And the kid who threw a rock at my brothers head

Weekend Rodeo, we all wore cowboy hats and boots,

Star spangled banner, unfurling and circling around an arena, a woman standing on a horse and waving.

Tess and I thought she was a princess.

When it was time for the calf scramble, all the kids in the bleachers hopped over the fence and poured out into the field. The three of us were slow and awkward in the high heeled boots but we always ran as fast as we could, screaming over the music like the local kids.