

UNSETTLED (main text panel, 302 words)

The Greater West was the last part of the planet to be explored and settled by *Homo sapiens*. It spans the entire west coast of the Americas, from Alaska to Patagonia, and across the Pacific Basin to Australia and New Zealand. It is a geography of frontiers characterized by vast expanses of open land, rich natural resources, diverse indigenous peoples, colonialism, and the ongoing conflicts that inevitably arise when these factors coexist.

The *Unsettled* exhibition begins a dialogue across time and space, telling the stories of the Greater West through a broad selection of art and artifacts. The artists in this exhibition envision the future while looking to the past to honor indigenous ancestors who created cultures and transformed unoccupied spaces into inhabited places millennia before this region was declared “unsettled.” The works presented reverberate with one or more meanings of the adjective “unsettled,” including lacking stability; worried and uneasy; liable to change; unpredictable; not yet resolved; not yet paid; and having no settlers or inhabitants. The title of this exhibition is intentionally ambiguous.

The exhibition is loosely divided into five thematic areas. “Shifting Ground” considers geology as an agent for creation and destruction. “Colliding Cultures” examines the impact of successive waves of peoples settling and resettling territories. “Colonizing Resources” focuses on natural resources as necessities or property. “The Sublime Open” explores the awe-inspiring landscapes of the Greater West, capable of elevating curiosity to profound enchantment and terror. Finally, “Experimental Diversity” addresses the disparate peoples of the Greater West whose artistic practices—traditional, technological, and visionary—converge and converse over time. As a touchstone, each thematic grouping includes work by the iconic Los Angeles-based artist Ed Ruscha, whose perspective on the world and experiences in the ever-changing West have informed the content of this exhibition and shaped the selection of artworks.

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