

# AMERICAN MUSEUM OF WESTERN ART

THE ANSCHUTZ COLLECTION

## American Museum of Western Art—The Anschutz Collection **Writing the West: Parlors and Tunnels**

### **Warm-Up: *Parlor***

Visit one of the Museum's three Victorian parlors and observe its contents. Traditionally, the Victorian parlor was a space dedicated to a property owner's worldliness. It was filled with curiosities, international oddities, exotic book collections, and more. Write a scene describing a character's parlor. What's in it? Books and bird skulls, astrolabes and fine furniture? What's its mood? Brooding, erudite, celebratory? What do we learn about this character through the story of his or her parlor?



### ***The "Conversational":***

Visit the Museum's third floor parlor, or take a look at the photo here. Featured in this parlor is a piece of furniture called a "conversational". Its circular shape invites multiple people at once into a dialogue. Art, too, can be thought of as a conversation. Writers and artists are constantly travelling back and forth through time, talking to one another, either by paying homage to past works or envisioning future readerships and audiences. Let's look at conversations taking place in another gallery or parlor. Select two paintings by the same artist or choose two paintings with similar subject matter. What type of conversation is taking place here? Admiring, judgmental, opportunistic? Are these two paintings adding to the conversation of Western art? If so, how? If not, why not? Write a mini-essay or poem describing your thoughts and feelings about the two paintings.



***The Tunnel:***

Tunnels are perfect for the perpetuation of urban legend. Take a trip down to the Navarre Building's first floor to peek at the old tunnel, for example. We know this tunnel connected the Navarre to The Brown Palace Hotel for the purpose of coal transportation between the two buildings. However, urban legend states that men would also use the tunnel to transport themselves from the Brown to the Navarre when the latter was used as a bordello. Write a two-part scene that features a tunnel. In part one, describe the tunnel's "true" function. In part two, describe its urban legend.