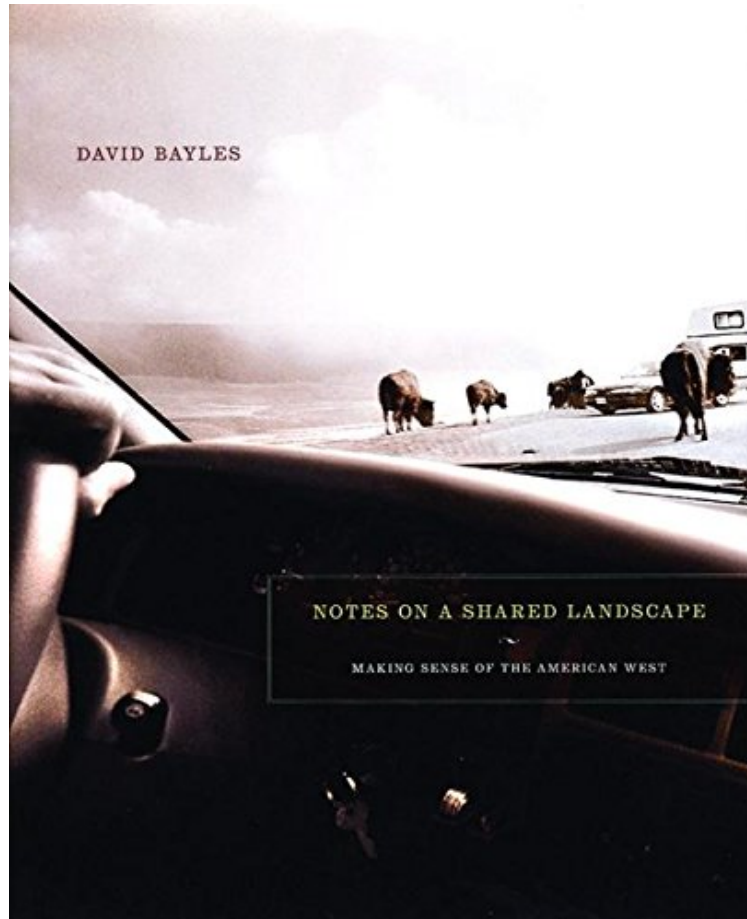


## Notes on a Shared Landscape: Making Sense of the American West

David Bayles

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**David Bayles : Notes on a Shared Landscape: Making Sense of the American West** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Notes on a Shared Landscape: Making Sense of the American West:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Worth buying used...By Robert LanghamHard-fought set of essays about the American West. Worth working your way through Bayles double or triple negatives and complex sentence structure. Can be frustrating to the point of quitting in the first 1/3rd for me, but kept the faith. Glad to see it in print and hope more to come from this experienced environmentalist.5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Very good as far as it goes, but would have loved something with more depthBy S. J. SnyderThis is a book of short personal essays on the American West by David Bayles.Many of them start in the form of a Socratic question, such as "what is the West," "where would you find the heart of the West," and so forth.In these particular essays, Bayles continues the Socratic theme by demolishing, overturning or in some way reframing the motive idea that lay behind the original question.In other essays, he slaughters sacred cows, or points out to the reader that many people in the West have not

yet become that discerning about the West. Again, as noted, the essays are very good as far as they go. But they don't always wrestle with their issues deeply enough. It also seems that the essays, as nebulous as they are, could still be organized and grouped in some way, with "meta-essays" for each section. 10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Check This Out! By M. Casanave Notes on a Shared Landscape is a singular and important book, unlike anything I have experienced before. It's a seamless blend of personal and global, with an almost conversational, yet sophisticated writing style. It's about the Western United States only in the sense that the West was recently settled by Euro-Americans, and because the Author grew up there. But it's really about the interaction of humans and land everywhere, and is pertinent to everyone.

In his best-selling *Art and Fear*, David Bayles (with Ted Orland) closely examined personal and autobiographical episodes in search of general truths about artmaking. Bayles now turns that same attention to his native West. When European Americans discovered the American West, they fell in love with the resplendent landscape. The love affair and its congenital flaws persists to this day. Bayles writes: . . . the question is why my people bungled our occupation of the West so badly when no one really wanted to, when there was every chance to get it right, when voices of caution were constantly raised, when what needed to be done was frequently obvious, and when, occasionally, we did get it right (think: National Parks). *Notes on a Shared Landscape* engages the issues that make the West the West widely ranging over the autobiographical and the cultural, the ecological and the epistemological, the cow and the potato. This is an intensely personal book, and though the Western library is huge, there is not another book like it. Much of the text unfolds in Yellowstone, where Bayles writes: In the Lamar valley of the Yellowstone, beaver gnaw the trunks of cottonwoods, elk browse their leaves. The shadows are long, even in summer. Even so, it is just another place. In it, just as elsewhere, we see the marks of our own hands faintly because we don't have to know very much about the land we live in, because we are equally a part of and apart from nature, and because there is hardly any moment when humans are more delusional than when self recognition is required.

About the Author Bestselling author of "Art Fear."