

Santa Fe Indian School Exhibit Opens at the Millicent Rogers Museum as Part of the Ongoing 60th Anniversary Celebration

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For Immediate Release

In correlation with the Millicent Rogers Museum's ongoing 60th anniversary celebration, the museum will be featuring thirty paintings by Native American artists in a new exhibit, *Santa Fe Indian School Style: Works on Paper*, opening April 30th. All but three of the works are from the museum's permanent collection, and the majority of the pieces included in the show have never been exhibited. Several of the paintings were also purchased by Millicent Rogers and Paul Peralta-Ramos, her youngest son and founder of the museum, which ties into the Executive Director, Caroline Jean Fernald's, goal of exhibiting more works from the museum's original collection as part of the 60th anniversary commemoration.

Santa Fe Indian School Style: Works on Paper—The exhibition focuses on the history of Native American painting, the development of a distinct style associated with Native American artists in the early 1900s, the institutionalization of this style at the Santa Fe Indian School, departures from the school's stylistic conventions by famous alumni, and its continuing legacy with current students at the Santa Fe Indian School. Although Native American artists have been painting on a variety of surfaces for centuries, the exhibition is limited to works on paper and begins with examples of Plains-style ledger drawings from the late nineteenth century. These drawings are typically documentary and autobiographical in nature and include detailed renderings of each individual's attire as a form of tribal identification. Similar depictions were customarily produced on buffalo robes and other hide surfaces. Ledger drawings often have a narrative quality with the subjects portrayed with little to no modeling of the figures, flat fields of color, heavy outlines, and an absence of a background or identifiable setting. Elements of this style were adopted by Native American artists teaching and studying at Bacone College and the University of Oklahoma in the 1920s and 30s, several of whom were direct descendants of renowned ledger drawing artists.

In the Southwest, a group of self-taught artists, such as Awa Tsireh, Julian Martinez, Tonita Peña, and Fred Kabotie, produced paintings in a similar fashion and gained national recognition

for their work. This style became synonymous with Native American artists and was identifiable as a new artistic tradition called simply “Indian painting.” Beginning in the fall of 1932, Dorothy Dunn, an art teacher from the Midwest, opened “the Studio” at the Santa Fe Indian School, and taught an entire generation of students at the government boarding school how to paint in this style. Students were encouraged to only paint subjects from their own cultural traditions, and many of the works produced under Dunn’s tutelage depict ceremonial dances, scenes of daily activities, and religious symbols. In 1937, Dunn’s tenure as the school’s art instructor came to an end and Geronima Cruz Montoya, one of Dunn’s early students from Ohkay Owingeh, took over as instructor. Cruz Montoya continued to teach in a similar manner as her predecessor until 1962 when “the Studio” closed due to the opening of the Institute of American Indian Arts. Many of Dunn and Cruz Montoya’s students painted in the Santa Fe Indian School style after leaving the institution and their experiences at the school provided practical training for their artistic careers. However, several artists later departed from the limitations of the school’s style, namely Joe Hilario Herrera, Allan Houser, and Helen Hardin. Today, the Santa Fe Indian School continues to provide art instruction and practical training for its students, and is now completely owned and operated by the nineteen Pueblos of New Mexico.

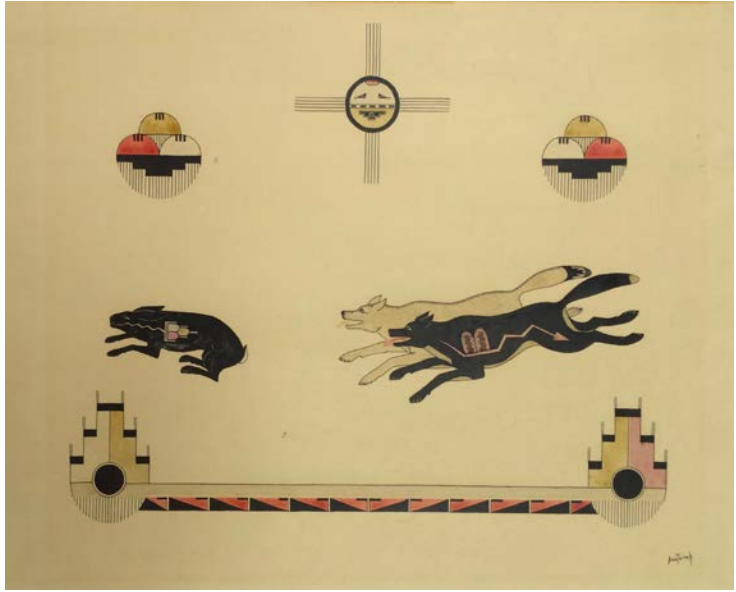
The growing popularity and recognition of “Indian painting” during the early development of this style resulted in international exhibitions of paintings by many of the same artists included in the Millicent Rogers Museum’s exhibition, which features work by Julian Martinez, Awa Tsireh, Tonita Peña, Acee Blue Eagle, Lois Smoky of the Kiowa Six, Fred Kabotie, Pop Chalee, Allan Houser, Eva Mirabal, Geronima Cruz Montoya, Quincy Tahoma, Joe Hilario Herrera, Harrison Begay, Andy Tsinahjinnie, Pablita Velarde, and Helen Hardin.

As part of the museum’s mission of sharing and celebrating the arts and cultures of the Southwest, this exhibition makes an expansive collection of paintings from the museum’s archive available to the public for the first time. The museum also strives to continue the legacies of its namesake and founder by supporting the local communities and artistic traditions represented in the permanent collection. As a result, the Millicent Rogers Museum is collaborating with Art Palacios, the current Visual Arts Director at the Santa Fe Indian School. Throughout the duration of the show, the exhibition will highlight a new work each month by current students of the Santa Fe Indian School. According to Palacios, the students are thrilled to have their work exhibited next to famous artists. Caroline Jean Fernald, the Millicent Rogers Museum’s Executive Director, is equally excited to feature the work of talented artists, both past and present, from the Santa Fe Indian School. Carmela Quinto, the museum’s Curator of Collections, states “At the Millicent Rogers Museum, we actively collect and exhibit works by living cultures and have always emphasized cross-cultural interconnectivity and the continuity and change in artistic traditions from the Southwest in all our exhibits.”

The Millicent Rogers Museum is open daily from 10-5 (MST). In line with the museum’s mission to support the local community, admission is always complimentary to Taos County residents. Visit www.millicentrogers.org or call (575) 758-2462 for more information about the museum, admission prices, special events, holiday closures, and the exhibits.



Untitled Ledger Drawing, Unknown Arapaho Artist, c. 1890



Untitled, Awa Tsireh, c. 1920



Antelope Dancer, Julian Martinez, 1920