

Plains Indian sculpture - a traditional art from Americas heartland

Smithsonian Institution Press - North America Collections



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Traditional Arts, American Indian

Founded in 1873, the , whose collection contains over 500,000 objects from pre-industrial societies the world over, is among the largest of its kind. When the rattles were shaken at night during ceremonies, the friction and mechanical stress of the quartz crystals impacting together produced flashes of light which partly shone through the translucent buffalo hide. Photo credits: All photographs presented in the published and online versions of The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture are the property of the Oklahoma Historical Society unless otherwise stated.

Native American Modernism: Art and Artifact

The earliest art, whether rock art or items collected by visitors to the tribes, contains the basic elements of Plains Indian art and shows that the attitudes and aesthetics were very different from European art.

John C. Ewers

The Northern Utes, consisting of the Whiteriver, Uintah, and Uncompahgre bands, are exceptional artists and produced extraordinary examples of religious and ceremonial beadwork, unusual art forms, and designed and decorated weapons of war in their traditional culture. In some cultures shirts were optional for women, while in others, tunics, mantles, or full length dresses were the norm. These circumstances and conditions also created an artistic environment of unique importance and significance.

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Both of these women are now gone and we do not know how many Iowa Indians remain on the tribal roles. Dakota completed her master's in art history, focusing on Native American art history at the University of St. Manuscript National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

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