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Art of the Northwest Coast Brings a New Story to The Cowboy

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum continues to tell the diverse stories of the American West

OKLAHOMA CITY – From painted totem poles to serigraphs to bentwood boxes, the Indigenous art of the American northwest coast is known around the world for its unique style and beautiful colors. Opening August 27, 2022, at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, *Art of the Northwest Coast* explores the rich artistic history of the continent’s most western Indigenous peoples through prints, glass, wooden and stones sculptures and basketry.

“The Indigenous art of the Northwest coast is not only beautiful, but it also communicates stories that we are so excited to tell here at The Cowboy,” said Natalie Shirley, Museum President & CEO. “Our mission is to explore the evolving history of the American West and this exhibition speaks to the core of that idea.”

The exhibition will pull together a collection of prints from the Museum’s permanent collection, photographs from the Dickenson Research Center and objects from a newly acquired private collection out of Pennsylvania. The 147-piece collection, amassed by Richard Walker over a nearly 30-year period, includes artistic representations created by Indigenous artists that showcase the art, culture and important objects of the American northwest coast. The collection includes wooden bowls, horn spoons, baskets, sculptures, pipes and other northwest coast art.

“This actually filled a very significant gap in our northwest coast collection here at the Museum,” said Dr. Eric Singleton, Curator of Ethnology at The Cowboy of the generous donation made by the Walker family. “Although it occupies a large portion of the Western landscape, northwest coast artwork is often pushed aside in favor of narratives driven by Great Plains cultures,” Singleton said. “This exhibition help will contextualize and frame northwest coast artwork within the larger Western heritage umbrella, which may push the boundaries of what people think fits into the American West narrative.”

For more information on the exhibition and related programing, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org.

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About the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City is America's premier institution of Western history, art and culture. Founded in 1955, the Museum collects, preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of Western art and artifacts while sponsoring dynamic educational programs to stimulate interest in the enduring legacy of the American West. The Museum is located only six miles northeast of downtown Oklahoma City at 1700 Northeast 63rd Street. For more information, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org.