



Southern Plains Material Culture

featuring
Eric Smith



April 29 – July 8, 2016



Eric Smith, an enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, is an expert craftsman of traditional Southern Plains material culture. In addition to his career as an artist, he also works at Riverside Indian School in Anadarko, Oklahoma.

During his early childhood, Eric began learning various arts and crafts techniques from his Chickasaw family. As his interest grew, he drew inspiration from historical artifacts and began to develop his own traditional style.

He now specializes in making historically accurate cultural items of the Plains Tribes, reflecting the time period of 1850 – 1875. These pieces include: bows, arrows, quivers, knife sheaths, pouch bags, pipe bags, quirts, and many other utilitarian items used by the Plains Tribes.

Eric is widely recognized as an expert bow and arrow designer. His artistic process begins by gathering the various woods used for constructing the bows and arrows. Then, he sources brain tanned hides for bow covers and quivers and acquires beads that would have been used in the late nineteenth century to decorate them. All of Eric's creations are completely handmade, no modern tools or machines are used in the process. The paints he uses to decorate the pieces are based on natural materials that Eric processes using traditional methods. Traditional manufacturing techniques are important to Eric, because they honor his ancestors and educate the public on the material culture of the Plains Indian.

Eric's archery pieces appeared in the Oscar-winning film *The Revenant* and the HBO mini-series *Lewis and Clark*. His craftwork can also be found in over 1,000 private collections in 26 countries. Eric feels his culture has made him who he is and therefore he strives to share his knowledge with the younger generation whenever possible.

The objects featured in the exhibition may be purchased by contacting Eric Smith directly at plainsindianbows@yahoo.com or www.plainsindianbows.com.

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Men's Southern Plains Moccasins

Brain tanned buckskin, seed beads, wool, natural pigment, and leather sole.

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Plains Style Pipe Bag and Pipe Tamper
Brain tanned leather, seed beads, natural pigments, wool, turkey fluffs, tin cones, and osage orange wood. © 2016 Eric Smith



Plains Style Knife Sheath
Canvas, brain tanned buckskin, and hand made tin cones. © 2016 Eric Smith



Plains Style Knife Sheath
Rawhide, seed beads, natural pigments, and brain tanned buckskin. © 2016 Eric Smith



Plains Style Dispatch Bag
Brain tanned buckskin, seed beads, and brass button. © 2016 Eric Smith