

Indian pencil drawings on display at museum

By Karen Engels
Emerald Reporter

Paper, paints and pencil replace traditional buffalo hides and dyes in a unique display of Arapaho Indian art at the University Museum of Natural History.

"Arapaho Warrior Ledger Drawings: 19th Century Native American Art," a traveling exhibit of 33 Native American drawings, opened Monday at the Museum.

The drawings, done before 1870, depict Arapaho warriors with names such as Heap of Bears and Two Arrows in acts of bravery and combat with white soldiers or Pawnees, natural enemies of the Arapahos. The Arapahos, a Plains Indian tribe, roamed in Colorado, Wyoming and present-day Oklahoma.

The art is in traditional Indian pictograph tradition, but materials were provided by white men during the early reservation period when the Indians were prisoners of war, so to speak, said Allison Davis White Eyes (Cheyenne/Creek), a consultant for the exhibit. White Eyes, of the University Office of Multicultural Affairs, said the Arapahos were literally told by their white captors to draw, but not given any guidelines.

The results, active drawings with intricate detail, were used to maintain tribal communications and cultural identity by

Plains Indians on reservations and boarding schools beginning in the 1850s.

Each of the brightly colored drawings measures about 7 by 12 inches and uses colored pencil and graphite on lined ledger paper. The drawings, when acquired for exhibition, were still in original book form. They were preserved and framed for protection from ultraviolet light.

Full descriptions, written by recognized authorities on Plains Indian pictography and anthropology, accompany each drawing.

The collection, "The Edwards Ledger Drawings," was named for the original owner, Peter W. Edwards, a gold-seeker and traveler, who may have encountered Arapahos in either Colorado or present-day Oklahoma. The drawings were passed down as heirlooms to his descendants before being surrendered for exhibit.

The museum will extend operating hours for the six-week visit of the exhibit. Museum hours are noon to 5 p.m., seven days a week until the exhibition ends Feb. 16. Admission is free, but donations are encouraged. The Friends of the Museum of Natural History is sponsoring the exhibition.

A series of exhibits and special programs is scheduled in conjunction with the drawing exhibition.

ARTIST

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color to it in a way that enhances its dramatic appeal," said Kramer, whose efforts will be featured in a national art magazine, *Inform Art*, this spring.

According to the artist, "What is left undefined in shadow and negative space is just as important as the primary subject, and lends drama to set apart an ordinary image and make it extraordinary."

An exhibition of Kramer's works, showcasing 39 of his paintings, is on display at the Hult Center's Jacobs Gallery from Jan. 6 to Feb. 3.

The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and during all Hult Center performances. The public is also invited to a meet-the-artist reception on Friday, Jan. 10, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Jacobs Gallery.

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