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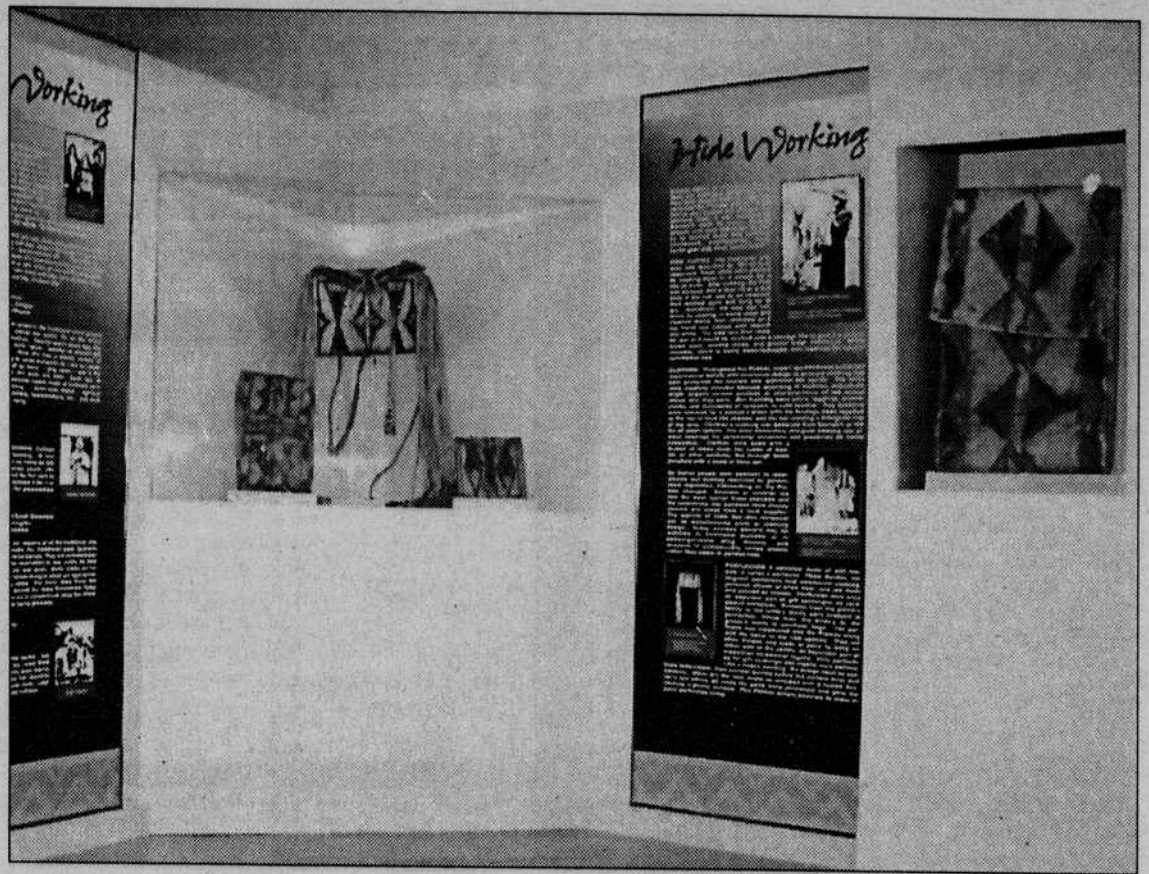
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"Song to the Creator," an exhibit featuring weaving, beadwork and leatherwork of Native American Women of the plateau, recently opened at the University of Oregon Museum of Natural History. Ryan Starkweather Emerald

Artifacts show Plateau culture at UO Natural History Museum

■ A lecture and workshop will showcase Native American artwork

By Serena Markstrom
 Oregon Daily Emerald

In Plateau Indian culture, the women are the keepers of traditions. Since 10,000 B.C. they have been keeping those traditions, and until Sept. 10, the pub-

lic has the opportunity to see their artwork at "Song to the Creator," a University Natural History Museum exhibit.

On display now are contemporary and classical examples of weaving, beadwork and leatherware, as well as a general history of the Plateau Indians. Pat Courtney Gold, whose contemporary weaving is on display, said in Plateau culture, art and life cannot be separated.

"To understand the baskets, you have to understand the culture," Gold said.

Gold, who belongs to the Wasco tribe, will deliver a public lecture called "Who are the Indigenous Plateau Tribes?" at 7 p.m. April 28, in Room 110 of the William Knight Law Center.

Gold said she thinks it is important for people to understand the history of the first people to inhabit this land — a people who were recognized by the federal government as nations before Oregon and Washington officially became states.

The lecture will also have a slide show, and Gold will discuss how the history of the Plateau Indians affected the art.

Gold said her art reflects traditional techniques and incorporates important contemporary issues. The basket on display contains a malformed sturgeon she calls the "Hanford sturgeon" to draw attention to the pollution that the Hanford nuclear power facility has caused in the Columbia River.

The items on display belong to the University Museum of Natural History, but the concept of "Song to the Creator" first debuted in 1997 at Washington State University.

The exhibit consists of information panels that travel to museums all over the Northwest leaving the museums to match

their own artifacts with the background information on the panels.

Tessa Winiarski, a museum volunteer, said she appreciates the exhibit because the artifacts help her understand the written history.

"I think anyone can connect with history," she said.

Leilani Golden-Guthrie, a junior education major, said she was impressed by the beadwork.

"It is so amazing to see the beaded purses with so many details," she said. "Most of what we see is so fake and plastic. This is genuine beauty."

The beaded bags are labeled with dates that refer to when different themes in beading came into the artform. For example, by the 1880s, floral patterns became more realistic.

In addition to the artwork and the panels of history, there is an audio-tape of a Nez Percé Indian woman telling stories. Elizabeth Wilson, 91, recorded the memories in 1972.

In association with the exhibit, the museum will host a basket weaving demonstration at noon on April 29. Gold will join Bud Lane, Esther Stuzman and Karen Howlingwolf to demonstrate techniques from different tribes.

Stuzman is involved in a research and weaving project to recreate a traditional Kalapuya dance hat, a feat that has not been done since 1855, before the government relocated Native Americans to reservations.

In addition to showing traditional Kalapuya weaving techniques, using spruce root, Stuzman will show the part of the hat she has completed.

A basket sale will follow the demonstration, and the price of admission is \$2 per person or \$5 per family.



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