Generations
Indigenous Art from the Permanent Collection

The concept of generations unites the diversity of work presented in this gallery. Generations refers to those born in the same era as one another as well as to ancestors, future descendants, and the very process of creating and producing. Generations implies inheritance received and legacy bestowed.

The Hallie Ford Museum of Art's permanent collection of Indigenous art reflects changing generations of Indigenous artists. The historic collection originates in Willamette University's mission beginnings in the 1840s and includes a large number of regional baskets amassed by Salem business owner Edwin C. Cross around the turn of the twentieth century that were later donated by his daughter, Veda Cross Byrd.

After the opening of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art in 1998, the institution's emphasis turned toward collecting and commissioning contemporary Native American art in both traditional and fine art media as well as expanding our collection of historical works. George (WU '58) and Colleen Hoyt were key in this process, providing funding to acquire Native American weaving arts as well as donating their large collection of Northwest Coast carvings and prints. Bill Rhoades further contributed to the collection's growth by donating exceptional historical weavings and beadwork from the Columbia River Plateau and beyond. Movingly, many Native American artists have generously given works from their private collections to the museum.

A collaborative relationship between the Hallie Ford Museum of Art and the Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts, a print and traditional arts studio on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, has further shaped the museum and its exhibition practices. The Hallie Ford serves as the archival repository for prints from Crow's Shadow and incorporates these works into this gallery as well as temporary exhibitions.

As you experience the gallery, look for themes of continuity and innovation, connections and divergence, and dialogue across generations.

Rebecca Dobkins, Guest curator, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology
Elizabeth Garrison, Guest curator

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Plateau Art

The term Plateau refers to the Columbia River watershed, a vast intermontane region from the Cascade Mountains to the Rockies, extending through what is now Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and inland British Columbia. Until dams obstructed their passage, salmon migrated up the Columbia River and its tributaries, providing sustenance and wealth for all the region's peoples. Plateau peoples include those associated with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla, as well as Nez Perce) and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

Plateau arts reflect deep knowledge of the land and all its beings, expressed through use of materials as well as in abstract geometric designs, floral patterns, and figurative elements. Twined flat and cylindrical root bags, twined hats, coiled cedar root baskets, and beaded buckskin bags and garments are all iconic examples of Plateau art traditions.

Flat twined bags were originally used as containers for dried roots and other foods, clothing, and personal objects; they continue to be prized possessions in contemporary Plateau families. Prior to the availability of European goods, the bags were made of dogbane or Indian hemp and dyed with native plants. Dogbane was eventually replaced by cotton twine, corn husks, and aniline-dyed woolen and cotton yarns introduced by outsiders beginning in the early 1800s. Weavers took advantage of having two "canvases" for designs; nearly all flat twined bags have a distinct design on each side, one usually more complex than the other. Designs may be geometric or pictorial.

Plateau beadwork is renowned for its brilliant craftsmanship and distinctive color palette often featuring rose pink and shades of blue. While Plateau buckskin garments had long incorporated shells and other found objects as decorative features, the introduction of glass seed beads in a wide range of colors in the mid-1800s facilitated an explosion of creativity.

Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts

Located in the historic St. Andrew's Mission schoolhouse on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts (CSIA) was founded in 1992 by Walla Walla artist James Lavadour, one of the Northwest's most critically acclaimed painters. The institute's mission is the creation of educational and professional opportunities for Native Americans through artistic development. Crow's Shadow sponsors instruction in both contemporary and traditional art forms and serves Native American emerging and established artists. The institute provides a way for Indigenous artists to connect with the mainstream art world, and offers non-native program participants an avenue for cross-cultural understanding.

Crow's Shadow houses a state-of-the-art printmaking facility where resident printmakers collaborate with visiting artists. Every year, Indigenous artists from within and beyond the Northwest participate in residencies at CSIA. Editions of all the prints produced at CSIA since its founding are archived here at the Hallie Ford Museum of Art. Selections from the CSIA collection are regularly rotated in this space.

The Art of Ceremony

The art of ceremony refers to artwork and tools used in ceremony as well as to ceremonial practices themselves. In Indigenous Oregon, ceremony is about renewing and nurturing the relationships between people, the Creator, and creation—the land and its beings. Ceremony may involve spectacular regalia, such as a beaded cap donned for Columbia River Plateau longhouse feasts or a dance skirt worn in the Siletz Nee Dosh (Feather Dance) of western Oregon, or specially designed equipment, such as a beautifully carved paddle for contemporary Canoe Journeys.

In 2008, the Hallie Ford Museum of Art organized a National Endowment for the Arts–funded exhibition called *The Art of Ceremony: Regalia of Native Oregon*. Representatives of each of the nine federally recognized tribes were invited to showcase a ceremony and its associated regalia. The collaborative experience reflected and has since shaped the museum's approach to collecting and exhibiting Native American customary art; several works here are made by artists centrally involved in that signature project. Learning to make and use these objects plays a vital role in the continuity and renewal of culture for every new generation.

Tending and Gathering

Indigenous peoples in Oregon and around the world tend, gather, and process resources from their environments to sustain culture, including their economies, arts, and ceremonies. The practice has been referred to as "tending the wild"—an active intervention in the life histories of culturally useful plants and animals, or nonhuman kin. Tending is a term applied to both human and nonhuman relationships and conveys the intentional care of other beings. Gathering implies coming together to harvest and celebrate that which has been carefully tended. The cycle continues with processing the plant and animal offerings, making sustenance and beautiful things from them, and passing on generational knowledge and traditions.

Look for:

Baskets with forms and features created to enhance an object's function, such as the Paiute *piagui* and basketry bottle and the Klickitat-style gathering basket.

Designs inspired by nature, including stylized human and animal figures, and abstract depictions of natural forms like the banded zigzag (which represent features like flowing rivers or rugged trails); and the classic mountain peak design found on the Klickitat-style gathering basket. Note the way the grid-like structure of the warp (up and down) and weft (left to right) strands influences the design.

Intersection

Multiple elements meet, cross, or overlap at an intersection. We come together and move forward, converging and diverging. Artists featured in this section touch upon shared yet diverse Indigenous experiences and chart paths toward thriving Indigenous futures.

Connections are made across time: Exceptionally talented artists renew customary art forms, such as weaving, and embolden subsequent generations. This inspiration may yield continuation as well as innovation in materials and forms. Some artists follow directly in the footsteps of earlier generations with the use of traditional resources and techniques, while others repurpose new materials to create work influenced by, though divergent from, customary forms.

Indigenous artists come from specific, distinctive backgrounds, though they share values grounded in ancestral legacies and right relationships with Earth and its life forms. Common to all is the experience of having had these values assaulted over the centuries by colonizing forces and policies. These attacks have taken various forms: suppression of culture, displacement from ancestral homelands, imposition of residential schools, relocation to urban areas, continued destruction of lands and waterways. Artists address these ruptures through the message as well as the media of their works, incorporating repurposed materials such as blankets, pressed penny souvenirs, soil harvested from ceded lands, or official documents, often using traditional forms and designs. In these ways, the possibility of restoration and healing is affirmed by powerful art created from broken, discarded, or even once harmful things.

This work intersects with wider global arts movements, from arts and crafts to modernism, minimalism to conceptual art, reflecting the expanding reach of contemporary Indigenous artists. Many of these artists have been trained in both community and tribal contexts as well as prestigious university fine arts programs. Their work speaks to world concerns, crises, hopes, and joys, emphasizing beauty in the wake of all that has come before.

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Federally Recognized Tribes in Oregon

Red arrows represent the Tribal Headquarters locations only and not all of the tribes' aboriginal/ceded lands.

Adapted from map created by Shoreline Consulting and Oregon Department of Education

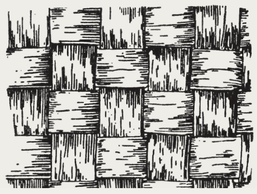
Indigenous Oregon

Indigenous peoples have lived in what is now called Oregon since time immemorial, a profound phrase that reflects the depth of contemporary tribes' chronological and spiritual relationships with the land. Today there are nine federally recognized tribes and confederations of tribes in Oregon. The Tribal History/Shared History initiative, passed into law in 2017, integrates tribal perspectives and histories into K–12 curricula in all state schools. This section of the gallery reinforces the essential understandings that form the core of that curriculum.

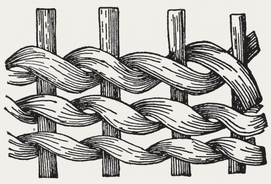
At that core is the understanding that each tribal nation possesses inherent sovereignty or the right of self-governance, a right that preceded European colonization. One way sovereignty is exercised is through the continuing practice of lifeways and language, including the art of ceremony. Another vital way is by tending and harvesting cultural plant and animal resources on ancestral lands in order to create weavings, carvings, and regalia. These tribal perspectives have shaped the philosophy of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art since its opening in 1998, through dialogue with artists and cultural leaders, resulting in commissions of new artwork and influencing exhibition content and design.

Basketweaving Techniques

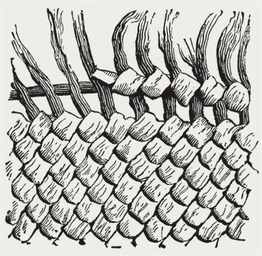
Four basic basketweaving techniques are represented in this gallery: plaiting, twining, wrapped twining, and coiling. Generally, the warp is the strand that runs vertically and is more rigid, while the weft runs at right angles (often horizontally) to the structural warp elements.



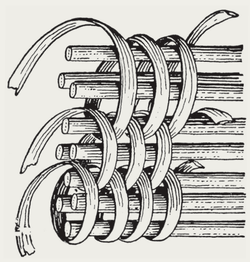
Plaiting involves interweaving warp and weft elements in an over/under pattern, usually at right angles to one another. Often the warp and weft materials are indistinguishable from one another.



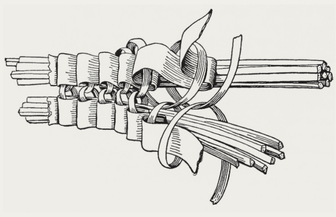
Twining involves interweaving two or more flexible weft elements between vertical warp elements. There are many different twining techniques, capable of producing either flexible or rigid baskets in a wide variety of forms.



Wrapped twining utilizes three structural elements: one rigid warp element, one rigid weft element, and one flexible weft strand. The rigid warp and weft elements are crossed at right angles, then bound with the flexible weft element.



Coiling is a basketry technique in which a continuous warp foundation is “coiled” in a spiral pattern and the weft is sewn over the foundation to link or bind together each row. There are many variations in the types of foundations and stitches used in coiled basketry, which is generally found in circular or oval shapes.



Unique to the Cascades-Plateau region is the method of **imbricating** coiled baskets, a technique found nowhere else in North America. This method involves folding colored bark or grass back and forth along the outer surface of the foundation, binding the decorative strand while concealing the sewing itself. The name imbrication comes from the method’s resemblance to the pattern made by overlapping roof tiles.