

Exhibit Touring Schedule

South Dakota Art Museum, Brookings
September 25 through December 2, 2007

Adams Museum, Deadwood
January 10 through February 29, 2008

Dacotah Prairie Museum, Aberdeen
March 21 through May 9, 2008

"Tree of Life"

is a project of the

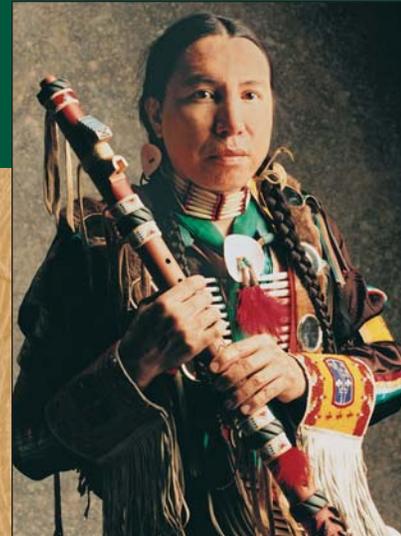
South Dakota Arts Council/South Dakota Department of Tourism
and State Development and the South Dakota Art Museum,
in cooperation with South Dakotans for the Arts.
This project is supported in part by a grant from the
National Endowment for the Arts.

THE SOUTH DAKOTA *Art* MUSEUM



Tree of Life

South Dakota Woodworking Traditions



Bryan Akipa from Sisseton is dedicated to the art of making and playing Dakota wooden flutes.



Above, Arne Bortnem carves a clock using traditional Norwegian acanthus leaf designs.



Kim Graber, left, is carrying on the willow basketry tradition of his German-Russian family, learned from his father LeRoy Graber, right.

Tree of Life

South Dakota Woodworking Traditions

Wood is an amazingly versatile material—readily available, easily workable with simple tools, and able to take many forms. From tools to toys, furniture to flutes, objects made of wood have been created by the people of the plains for generations. Despite its relative lack of trees, South Dakota is rich in traditional crafts and arts made from wood. Lakota flutes and horse dance sticks, Norwegian carving, Swedish bent-wood boxes, German-Russian willow baskets, diamond willow canes, miniature farm equipment models, wildlife carvings, and oak furniture are just some of the wood crafts featured in this exhibit.

Top left, Dick Peterson of Sioux Falls uses hand tools to start carving on the roughed-out figure of a bear.

Top right, Ken Marso of Spearfish uses antlers to make handles for his diamond willow canes.



Whittling, carving and other woodworking techniques often grow out of rural communities and ways of life that are close to nature and physically active. Wood crafts are almost exclusively the domain of boys and men who, at least in earlier times, always carried pocketknives that could be used to whittle a stray stick to pass the time, and who sometimes discovered a talent for creating beauty out of this humble material. As trees are rooted in the earth, so are these traditions rooted in the tribes, ethnic groups, families and communities of South Dakota. They live on because of the efforts of the dedicated artists and craftspeople who preserve them in the work of their hands.



Above, Greg Hesla learned the art of making Scandinavian bentwood boxes from his father.

At left, Sisseton-Wahpeton tribal member Francis Country creates horse dance sticks, traditionally used to honor a favorite horse.

Participating Artists

- Bryan Akipa, Dakota flutes (Sisseton)
- Arne Bortnem, Norwegian carving (Sioux Falls)
- Francis Country, Dakota horse dance sticks (Sisseton)
- Mel Eisanbraun, miniatures, diamond willow (Sturgis)
- Kim Graber, German-Russian willow baskets (Freeman)
- LeRoy Graber, German-Russian willow baskets (Freeman)
- Don Green, diamond willow canes (Rapid City)
- Michael He Crow, Lakota flutes (Rapid City)
- Greg Hesla, Norwegian and Swedish bentwood boxes (Wakonda)
- Ted Hofer, furniture (Bridgewater)
- Art Jansen, chains, spoons, canes (Rapid City)
- Ken Marso, diamond willow (Spearfish)
- Richard Peterson, wildlife carvings (Sioux Falls)