

TRAUB DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Complete Museum Exhibit Design Services

"FROM BEADS TO BRUSH: PLAINS INDIAN ART."

Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum; National Archives and Records Administration; Abilene, Kansas
(Completed while Don Traub was an Exhibit Designer at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum.)

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Dwight D. Eisenhower had a deep affection for the American West and was an avid reader of Western novels. Over the years he accumulated a collection of Western Art that included several pieces of Native American Art. In 1975 the Eisenhower Library had the opportunity to borrow a private collection of Plains Indian ethnographic materials. Don was selected as the exhibit designer and project manager because of his academic training as an anthropologist/ archeologist and his personal background as a long time collector of Native American Art.



After researching both the loaned collection and Plains Indian society, Don developed the exhibit based on the premise that a continuous cultural tradition extends from the historical Plains tribes to present Plains Indians. Historically this tradition was maintained and expressed artistically through the designs and colors used to decorate clothing and utilitarian objects. That tradition can be seen today in their ceremonial clothing and artwork. The ethnographic collection provided the historical support for the thesis and, when combined with contemporary ceremonial artifacts and the artwork of Plains Indian artists, the thesis proved to be well grounded.

Fortunately, Kiowa artist, Black Bear Bosin, lived in Wichita, KS, and Don was able to establish a strong working relationship with him. Bosin kept alive the Plains cultural traditions through his artwork that depicted traditional Plains Indian lifestyle and decorative motifs. He agreed to work with Don to secure the loan of 12 of his paintings that were in private collections. Bosin also agreed to supply personal information about each of his paintings that reinforced the exhibit theme and that information was conveyed through the exhibit labels.

As the ethnographic research and work with Bosin progressed, Don incorporated a variety of Plains Indian decorative motifs and color schemes into the overall design of the exhibit. The objects were presented in an artistic style organized by function, gender and tribal affiliations from the Southern to Northern Plains. The conservation needs of the artifacts were a major concern and all precautions were taken to minimize the effects of temperature, humidity and UV light.



PROJECT DATE: 1976

EXHIBITION SIZE: 2,500 sq. ft.

DELIVERABLES:

- Planning Documents
- Exhibit Production Schedule
- Exhibit Budget
- Preliminary & Final Design Drawings

SERVICES RENDERED:

- Planning
- Collection and Archival Research
- Label Writing
- Exhibit Design and Graphic Design
- Fabrication & Installation
- Project Management

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