

Never missed a market: Returning artists known for beautiful works

Indian Market and Festival has come a long way from its first year when it hosted fewer than 60 artists. Now it's one of the top art shows for up-and-coming and established Native American artists. As the market has grown, evolved and inspired new memories, the Eiteljorg has been lucky to have the presence of two constants: **Nelson Garcia** and **Shirley Brauker**, talented artists who have been to every Indian Market and are returning for the 25th annual celebration. Market-goers each June look forward with anticipation to seeing them and the beautiful new pieces they create.



Shirley Brauker
(Little River Band of Odawa)

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The intricate hand-carved designs of Shirley Brauker's pottery depict vivid scenes of animals, trees and nature and often tell traditional stories. "A lot of them are so detailed that I actually type up the story and stick it in the pot so (the collector) can retell it," she said. Her Woodland and Great Lakes style pottery is highly regarded. Two of her pieces are in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. A large wall mosaic and several pottery pieces she created are seen at Disney Corp. in Orlando, Fla. Four of her pieces are in the Eiteljorg collection.

Through showing her pottery and art at Indian Market each year, Brauker has befriended collectors in the Indianapolis

area. She recalled meeting her first Eiteljorg collectors while attending the first Indian Market Preview Party. One of her most loyal patrons was the late Mrs. Robert S. (Margot) Eccles, an Indianapolis philanthropist who served for years as an Eiteljorg board member and Indian Market chairperson. Eccles had collected several of Brauker's pieces over the years, including the last one in 2012 shortly before her death; and Eccles sent her assistant to pick it up so it could be with her in her final days. "It's so great to have this deep connection," Brauker said of friendships with collectors.

Based in Coldwater, Michigan, Brauker has a strong focus on arts education. She received her fine arts degrees, both bachelor's and master's, at Central Michigan University, and attended the Institute of American Indian Arts in

Santa Fe, N.M. In 2015 she received an honorary doctoral degree from her alma mater CMU and gave the university's commencement address. She taught language and art for years at youth camps for Native children in Michigan and has conducted art workshops as far away as Alaska. In 2014, Brauker was one of the Eiteljorg's Artists in Residence. "Education and teachings are really important to me and I try to pass that on to other Natives for inspiration and hope so they can learn," she said.

Brauker also draws ledger art, and all of her works include a tiny sketch of a moon and bear, a motif that comes from her Native name, "Bear of the Nighttime Sun." It also inspired the name of her art business, Moon Bear Pottery and Indian Arts.

Nelson Garcia (Santo Domingo Pueblo)

From his studio in Phoenix, Nelson Garcia creates jewelry known for its clean pristine design and quality of stones. Turquoise, lapis, coral and other gemstones are in his repertoire of silver and gold bracelets, rings, earrings and other jewelry he designs — mostly contemporary, and some traditional.

Growing up in the Kewa Pueblo village near Santa Fe, N.M., Garcia learned the silversmithing art from his father, Joe Jay Garcia. "My father was a great teacher, and he taught me a lot," he said. "While I was learning jewelry, he always said, 'Make sure it's done — there's a word in our language for *perfect* — before you put it out there on the table, or out there in the market.'"

After working for several jewelry shops, Nelson Garcia

founded his own jewelry business in Phoenix in 1982. He's sold his jewelry at many art shows, and his pieces have earned numerous awards. Through art shows, he's met many customers who commissioned him to create jewelry for special occasions.

"It's always great to come back each year," he said of the Eiteljorg Indian Market. He enjoys talking with customers who visit his table and he shares with them details about his art. "I just explain to them about my jewelry and a little bit about where I came from and what I have seen there in the village growing up," he said. "That's what makes the show really great: If you take care of your customers, they take care of you."

Garcia said he tries to create something special to show at Indian Market and enter into the juried art competition. "It's nice to see all the other artists there — we talk just as friends," he said of fellow Indian Market artists. "Every artist that comes to the Eiteljorg, they're all good artists — every one of them."



Nelson Garcia (Santo Domingo Pueblo)

Images on this page courtesy of the artists.