



# SNOW SHOW

Museum finds playfulness with 'Snow Days'

By RYAN TRARES | DAILY JOURNAL  
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**F**rom beautiful to haunting to menacing, a snowy day has much to say.

The crystalline snow-covered landscape looks different from the warmth of indoors compared to the fury of a mountain pass blizzard. Fat falling flakes bring different feelings than whiteout conditions.

As central Indiana enters the teeth of the coldest time of year, the Eiteljorg Museum hopes visitors take a closer look at the white stuff.

"We hope that it encourages people to think about their own family traditions and hobbies and activities they do throughout the winter season," said Elisa Phelps, vice president and chief curatorial officer for the Eiteljorg. "Maybe it brings back a warm memory or sparks a new memory that's specific to their winter experience."

"Snow Days" is now showing

at the Eiteljorg, the Indianapolis museum devoted to Western and Native American art. The exhibition spotlights works from the museum's permanent collection, with a focus on winter, cold and snowy landscapes.

Visitors have a chance to examine wooden carvings, clay pots and elaborately beaded mittens created to be both showy and functional in the cold. Snowy Western landscapes take people to the mountainous wilds of the North American continent, while modern Native artists use the snow in important works telling cultural stories.

"The works ranges from very small, wonderful walrus ivory carvings of sled dogs to monumental paintings of winter mountain scenes," Phelps said. "There are some elements that are quite playful, and there are some things that depict people in winter scenes."

The genesis of "Snow Days" started as Eiteljorg officials

looked at the exhibition schedule. The museum did not have an outside show scheduled for this part of the year, and they discussed ways to display their own collection in a unique way.

With an opening in November, running until February, it made sense to focus on snow.

"It's timely, and it's an opportunity to share many things in the collection that people have not gotten to see, or it's been a long time since they've been out," Phelps said. "It was just such a fun idea that we ran with it."

Members of the Eiteljorg curatorial staff worked together in both the Western collection and Native American art to pick the items that fit best into the theme.

The exhibit is broken into four distinct themes — storytelling, gathering, innovation and play.

Though the works all deal with snow and winter in some way, each one's approach is vastly different.

(SEE SNOW PAGE B4)

## IF YOU GO "Snow Days"

**What:** A new exhibition featuring Western and Native American artwork of all kinds, united around a theme of winter and snow

**Where:** Eiteljorg Museum, 500 W. Washington St., Indianapolis

**When:** Through Feb. 5

**Hours:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Exhibit is included with admission.

**Cost:** \$15 adults, \$12 seniors, \$8 university students with ID and youth ages 5 to 17, free for children 4 and under.

**Information and tickets:** eiteljorg.org

Pictured clockwise from top: "Wintertime" by Pahponee is one of the works featured in "Snow Days," an exhibition now showing at the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis. The exhibition includes work from the museum's Western and Native American collections that focus on snow and winter. // "Night of the Dance" by Oscar Edmund Berninghaus is one of the works featured. // "Mount Wilson Winter" by Arturo Antonio Chavez is one of the works featured. SUBMITTED PHOTOS | THE EITELJORG MUSEUM





Clockwise from top left: "Anima" by Meryl McMaster is one of the works featured in "Snow Days," an exhibition now showing at the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis. // "Horses in Snow" by Nicolai Ivanovich Fechin. // "Winter Solstice" by Harry Fonseca. // "Line Riding in Winter" by Frederic Remington. // "Wind Play" by Meryl McMaster. // "Winged Calling" by Meryl McMaster. // "Anima" by Meryl McMaster. SUBMITTED PHOTOS | THE EITELJORG MUSEUM

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## SNOW

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Frederic Remington's "Line Riding in Winter" is

a black-and-white feature showing a bundled-up rider crossing a blowing expanse. "Night of the Dance" by Oscar Edmund Berninghaus gives viewers

a nighttime view of horses tied up outside an adobe building with glowing, warm windows — a blanket of snow forming on their haunches.

"Mount Wilson Winter" is a prototypical Western landscape, with snow dappling the rock-rocked peaks and pine forests.

Other works are less straight forward. Meryl McMaster, a Plains Cree/Blackfoot artist, returned to her culture's symbolic motifs of birds and butterflies in her digital chromogenic prints "Winged Calling" and "Anima."

"She was one of our contemporary art fellows in 2013, and as part of the fellowship, we were able to acquire several of her works, which are shot in winter. They're very dramatic and beautiful," Phelps said.

Another Native American artist, Les Namingha, showcases images from his Hopi-Tewa/Zuni heritage in

the clay creation "Winter Spirits."

Much of the exhibit features items of clothing.

"There's a wonderful collection of clothing, primarily Inuit clothing, including a waterproof parka made from seal intestines stitched together. There are fur-lined garments and shoes and gloves lined with seal fur or caribou fur or made with moose hide. All of these things are beautifully decorated with bead work," Phelps said. "You get a sense that it wasn't enough to create a warm garment; it had to be beautiful."

While the artwork may remind visitors of being out in the blustery cold, the Eiteljorg has added warming touches allowing them to metaphorically come out of the cold.

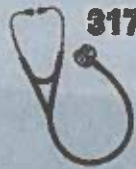
"There are signs at the outside of the exhibit reminding folks they can get hot chocolate and a cookie in our cafe," Phelps said.

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