

COWBOY COUTURE

THE FASHION OF JERRY LEE ATWOOD

MARCH 28-AUG 2, 2026

P2



ARTIST IN RESIDENCE:
JJ OTERO'S JOURNEY IN CREATIVITY
P6

FUTURE EXHIBITION CELEBRATES
GENERATIONS OF PRINTMAKERS
P7

A LOOK BACK AND A LOOK AHEAD
P14, 15



A new class of volunteer Guides trained from October to February at the Eiteljorg. On Dec. 15, Laura F. Fry, vice president of curatorial and collections, led the Guides class on a tour of the museum's Art of the American West galleries.

Call-out for new volunteers in 2026

Do you enjoy learning about arts and cultures? Do you like to explore the artworks at the Eiteljorg? Do you want to get involved in the community and share your unique skills? Do you enjoy meeting new people and working with a team on a rewarding mission? If that describes you, consider volunteering at the Eiteljorg.

Volunteers are essential to the life of our museum, and we value their donations of time and talent. Through their efforts, volunteers make possible some of our best-loved annual events. During the Eiteljorg's recent holiday model train display, the Fifth Third Bank *Jingle Rails: The Great Western Adventure*, dozens of volunteers welcomed guests and assisted them in wayfinding. A group of seven model-train hobbyists served as "train leads," maintaining the electric trains and interpreting the model railroad for visitors of all ages.

Looking ahead, the Eiteljorg needs people to serve at the 34th annual Indian Market & Festival on June 27-28. Volunteers will interact with artists, greet visitors, help staff with logistics and participate in a meaningful weekend effort.

The Eiteljorg also seeks volunteers throughout the year for other roles, including working retail in the Museum Store, gardening on the museum grounds, checking in guests at the front desk while the museum is open and during special evening programs, staffing outreach tables at community events, and assisting other museum departments. A new class of volunteer Guides will complete their training in February and will lead groups on gallery tours and engage with visitors about interesting objects at the museum's educational carts.

Can you bring your motivation and enthusiasm to the Eiteljorg's team? Contact Rebecca Robinson, community impact coordinator, at rrobinson@eiteljorg.com, or apply online at [Eiteljorg.org/give-and-join/volunteer](https://eiteljorg.org/give-and-join/volunteer).



We'd like to thank all of our current Eiteljorg volunteers for their remarkable efforts in 2025. They should save the date for a volunteer appreciation event on Wednesday, April 15 at the Eiteljorg; [details are coming soon](#).

Scan this QR code to volunteer at the Eiteljorg.

Eiteljorg Museum Café

Make a full day of your Eiteljorg visit by taking a lunch break at the Museum Café, where you can enjoy delicious Southwest and Native American-inspired cuisine. Quesadillas, soups, salads, sandwiches and our famous buffalo chili are all made fresh daily by chefs from Kahn's Catering. For the seasonal café menu, visit [Eiteljorg.org/cafe](https://eiteljorg.org/cafe).

Museum admission isn't necessary to visit the café. Validated parking is available.

Café Hours

Monday-Saturday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Full menu available from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Sunday: Noon-3 p.m.
Full menu available noon-2:30 p.m.

A limited menu is available at all times. Last call for alcohol is 30 minutes before closing time.



Eiteljorg

Storyteller

Eiteljorg Museum Magazine

Winner of the **Pinnacle Award** for Best Magazine/Periodical from the Public Relations Society of America – Hoosier Chapter in 2021, 2022, 2024 and 2025, and winner of the PRSA's **Best of Show Award** for all public relations projects in 2023.

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President and CEO

Kathryn Haigh

Director of Communications and Marketing

Katie Warthan

Editor and Writer

Bryan Corbin

Design

Honeymoon Image & Design

Contributing Writers

Laura F. Fry
Anna Grace Hargett
Madison Hincks
Kay Hinds
Alisa Nordholt-Dean
Leah Ollie

Contributing Photographers

Eiteljorg Museum staff, archives and interns
Michael Durr
Brittany Erwin
Tabby Fitzgerald
Jeremy Lawson
Amy Payne
Robert Zyromski

Printing

Fineline Printing Group

Editor's Note

Every effort is made to ensure that exhibition images published in *Storyteller* magazine accurately reflect the artworks on exhibit at the Eiteljorg Museum during the dates listed. Details of announced events, exhibitions and prices might change too late for the *Storyteller's* publication deadlines. For comments or questions, call 317.275.1315 or email bcorbin@eiteljorg.com.

On the front cover

Images of Jerry Lee Atwood and his suits in his studio are by Michael Durr.

Membership information

Contact Kevin Andrews at kandrews@eiteljorg.com or 317.275.1360.

Museum information

Eiteljorg Museum
500 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204
www.eiteljorg.org
317.636.9378



Building the future together to shape a welcoming destination for all

Dear Readers:

As we prepare for our 2026 programming, I'm thrilled to share that the Eiteljorg proactively has exhibitions booked more than three years out — through 2029! This long-range planning milestone reflects our commitment to bringing new ideas, voices and experiences to you, our members and supporters, and to the broader community.

The upcoming years will showcase themes that both honor our mission and push boundaries. One of the highlights will be *Cowboy Couture: The Fashion of Jerry Lee Atwood*. This Western-wear fashion exhibition features dazzling suits of Indianapolis-based designer Jerry Lee Atwood and highlights his chain-stitch embroidery. This exhibition captures today's global fascination with Western aesthetics and celebrates how fashion continues to shape identity and cultural expression.

In fall 2026, we'll take a groundbreaking look at Indigenous tattoo practices across North America. This exhibition will explore tattoos as expressions of identity, spirituality and rites of passage, tracing how these traditions have been recorded and represented in art objects, paintings, prints and drawings.

At the same time, we're reimagining our Art of the American West galleries to tell stories that haven't been told before. Our curatorial team has been traveling, researching how museums nationwide are reframing the narrative of the West. They'll soon begin a collaborative process with you, our members and other stakeholders to ensure the re-installation reflects a diversity of perspectives and resonates deeply with our audiences.



At the Nov. 7 opening of *Emerging Current: The Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship 2025*, the Eiteljorg Fellows were guests of honor. Left to right: Fellows Maria Hupfield (Wasauksing First Nation), Cannupa Hanska Luger (Mandan / Hidatsa / Arikara / Lakota) and John Feodorov (Navajo [Diné]), Eiteljorg President and CEO Kathryn Haigh, Curator of Native American Art Dorene Red Cloud (Oglala Lakota), Invited Fellow Jean LaMarr (Northern Paiute / Achomawi [Pit River]), and Fellow Erin Ggaadimits Ivalu Gingrich (Koyukon Dené / Iñupiaq). The *Emerging Current* exhibition is open through Feb. 22.

Image courtesy of Jeremy Lawson

I'm also proud to announce that the Eiteljorg has received support from Lilly Endowment Inc. to conduct three strategic studies that will help us launch our next chapter. First, we'll create a facilities master plan to guide how we use our building and 7-acre property most effectively. This process will include our stakeholders in White River State Park and downtown Indianapolis. In tandem, a comprehensive audience segmentation study will help us better understand who is visiting, who is not and why.

Together, these efforts will inform a campaign feasibility study to shape the museum's future investments and priorities. And as we continue implementing our strategic plan, we are committing to greater transparency and accountability. This means creating new opportunities for dialogue with members and community partners, through focus groups, listening sessions, and a new annual meeting each fall.

You may also notice some staff changes. Our chief financial officer, Sunny Reed, recently left to take on an expanded role at the United Way of Southeastern Michigan. She stayed on fractionally with the Eiteljorg to ensure a smooth transition. This allowed us to elevate our director of human resources, [Inga Harrington](#), to a new role as vice president for people and culture. We welcome our new CFO, [Davenport Burroughs](#), who has long experience in nonprofit finance and accounting. We also said a bittersweet goodbye to Jamie Simek, former vice president for advancement, who recently left for a new opportunity. And we are excited to welcome

[Ali Badgero](#), our new vice president for advancement, who previously served as vice president of development at the Indy Art Center. Each leadership transition presents an opportunity to strengthen our team and advance our mission in new ways.

There is so much momentum at the Eiteljorg right now, and I'm deeply grateful for your support and engagement. Together, we are shaping a future where the museum is not just a hidden gem of Indianapolis, but a vibrant, welcoming destination for all.

Kathryn Haigh
President and CEO



Image courtesy of Jessica Strickland Photography

CUSTOM MADE AND HOME GROWN

EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHTS LOCAL ROOTS AND INTERNATIONAL REACH OF WESTERN WEAR DESIGNER JERRY LEE ATWOOD

By Bryan Corbin,
Storyteller magazine editor

**COWBOY COUTURE:
THE FASHION OF
JERRY LEE ATWOOD**
MARCH 28-AUG 2



Jerry Lee Atwood
Bigfoot and Armadillo Suit
Loan Courtesy of Chris Purcell

An upcoming exhibition merges the history of Western wear, the influence of country music on popular culture and the artistry of an Indianapolis fashion designer into an unforgettable experience.

Cowboy Couture: The Fashion of Jerry Lee Atwood opens March 28 at the Eiteljorg Museum. Visitors will get an up-close look at a number of Atwood's custom-made Western suits, many of them rhinestone-studded and blossoming with chain-stitch embroidery. Chart-topping musicians and entertainers, such as Lil Nas X and Post Malone, have sought out Atwood's dazzling designs, wearing them on red carpets and in music videos. Perhaps the best-known Atwood creation is the embroidered rodeo-themed outfit with rhinestones and fringe that Lil Nas X rocked while line-dancing through the 2019 "Old Town Road" video. It racked up more than 1.4 billion views on YouTube, a fact that still amazes Atwood.

"People are always kind of surprised when they learn who I've made stuff for," Atwood said with a modest shrug in his

Indianapolis studio. "I don't think a lot of people associate Indianapolis or the Midwest with fashion. I think it's really cool that the museum can show people that you can live in a place like Indianapolis and make stuff that's on a national and international stage. I'm thrilled to see it come together."

The first museum exhibition to focus primarily on Atwood's work, *Cowboy Couture* spotlights examples of his designs, weaving together the artist's Indiana background, his fashion inspirations and his place within the long lineage of Western wear makers. Atwood takes a page from mid-20th century designers such as Nudie Cohn, Manuel Cuevas and others who gained fame for creating fancy, rhinestone-encrusted costumes for country music entertainers performing onstage at the Grand Old Opry, on TV shows or on music tours.

The first famous Western-wear designer, Rodeo Ben, created denim jeans outfits specifically for rodeo performers. The suits harken back to elaborate cowboy costumes worn by 19th-century performers in Wild West shows. This "Western" style was inspired by a combination of Mexican vaquero attire, adornments in Native American regalia, and practical clothing for grueling outdoor work.

Continued on page 4



Jerry Lee Atwood in his studio
Image by Michael Durr



Images of Jerry Lee Atwood and his studio by Michael Durr

Threads of Inspiration

Growing up in Lafayette, Indiana in the 1970s and '80s, Jerry Atwood was introduced to Country & Western music thanks to his father's extensive record collection. On those album covers, and on TV shows he watched such as "Hee Haw" and "The Porter Wagoner Show," country stars such as Wagoner and Webb Pierce amped up their showmanship by wearing wild, colorful embroidered outfits.

Years later, as a young struggling artist working as a barista in a coffee shop while hoping to pursue a design career, Jerry enjoyed hand-sewing embroidery projects when business was slow. One day a customer saw what he was working on, and gave him a book about the history of Western wear.

"I started flipping through it, and it brought back all these memories of going to (the Grand Ole Opry in) Nashville as a kid and seeing these musicians on my dad's albums. And I just thought, 'It'd be really cool to make one of these suits, or a fancy Western shirt,'" he said.

Atwood honed his sewing skills working in the costume shop of the Indiana Repertory Theatre as he experimented in creating Western wear. What started as a hobby evolved into a career designing and selling his custom-made Western suits for special occasions, such as weddings. Joe David Walters, a collector of vintage Western wear in London, England, saw Atwood's designs and ordered a Texas-themed suit. Walters liked it so much that he became Atwood's business partner, and they founded Union Western Clothing in 2013 in Indianapolis.

In 2017, a Los Angeles stylist, Catherine Hahn, saw Atwood's work on Instagram and commissioned him to create a light blue suit with embroidered snakes and barbed wire for singer Post Malone. Atwood's first celebrity client, Malone wore it at the American Music Awards in 2018. That led to design requests from other entertainers, including the last-minute order for

the "Old Town Road" suit, which Atwood had only three days to create out of materials he had on hand. Other entertainers who have worn Union Western suits include Orville Peck, Diplo, Charley Crockett, Nikki Lane and actor David Harbour from the Netflix hit series *Stranger Things*. Since many of his clients are based in L.A., New York or Austin, Texas, Atwood works more closely with celebrity stylists than the stars themselves; he designs and sews suits in his Indianapolis studio, then ships them.

All those efforts led to his achieving a personal bucket-list item in 2021: Atwood and Union Western were featured in a *Vogue* magazine spread, which he considers one of the highlights of his career.

Letting the colors speak

The Eiteljorg's *Cowboy Couture* exhibit follows the workflow of Atwood's design process. First he asks for reference material about the client's life story to sketch an initial design. Fabric selection varies based on the client's budget. With a projector he mocks up the design sketch onto a dress form. The client's stylist usually provides the measurements. "Once it gets to the embroidery machine, it's just whatever colors speak to me," Atwood said. Since he is colorblind, "a lot of people say that I use color in an interesting way in my work. I never know if that's a good thing or a bad thing, it's something I've adapted to; I've never seen it as a handicap."

In his studio surrounded by scores of spools of thread, bolts of fabric, mid-20th-century Americana, and antique sewing machines — the oldest from 1932 — Atwood said that each Union Western suit takes approximately 120 hours to design and sew. Depending on the fabrics and density of embroidery, a suit can cost \$2,500 to \$8,000.



Jerry Lee Atwood's *Indiana Suit* in his studio.
Image by Michael Durr

Uniting a suite of suits

Since Atwood has designed customers' suits over a period of years, the *Cowboy Couture* exhibition will be a remarkable opportunity for Eiteljorg visitors — and for Atwood himself — to see some of his older and recent designs gathered into one place. They will be accompanied by vintage Western outfits by Nudie Cohn and Manuel Cuevas, plus historic forerunners to those garments, as well as items from Atwood's studio, such as his sketches, that reflect the designer at work.

"Jerry Lee Atwood stands at the crossroads of Western-wear fashion history and contemporary pop culture. While Western wear has long been considered a niche interest, Atwood's designs have reached mainstream audiences. His presence in Indianapolis underscores a powerful message: Creativity and success aren't confined to fashion capitals, and there are viable alternatives to fast fashion," said Bryn Foreman, associate curator of Western American art at the Eiteljorg.

"Atwood blurs the line between costume and clothing, expanding the cowboy myth to embrace a broader, more inclusive vision of Americana. His work brings together past and present, inviting us to imagine a future where fashion is personal, expressive and sustainable," Foreman added.

For the Eiteljorg Museum, the *Cowboy Couture* exhibition is an important milestone, celebrating local design that has an international reach.

"I hope that people walking into (the exhibit) will appreciate the historical context of it, but also the lasting power of this style of suit — and see up close all the work that goes into it," Atwood said. "In a photo, you don't see the dimensionality of



Dr. Richard S. Bedlack Jr., M.D., Ph.D., is a Duke University neuroscientist researching treatments for ALS. A Western-wear enthusiast, Dr. Bedlack was a customer of Jerry Lee Atwood and ordered this suit for a "Fashionably Fighting ALS" charity event
Image courtesy Tamarah Ellen

the embroidery, how the light refracts off the rhinestones ... the little handwork that goes into the tailoring."

He added, "That's the takeaway, too, that fashion at its core is art. Actual tailored suits and clothing are as much art as is a painting — especially since everything I make literally starts with a drawing. I really want people to see that whole process."

Cowboy Couture: The Fashion of Jerry Lee Atwood, runs March 28-Aug. 2 at the Eiteljorg, and is sponsored by Avis Foundation, Inc., Capital Group and the Braitman family, with additional support from the Frenzel Family Foundation, Virginia Merkel, the Ann W. King Fund (a fund of the Indianapolis Foundation), and Richard Hailey and Mary Beth Ramey. It's included with regular museum admission. See page 11 for related public programming events.

COWBOY COUTURE: THE FASHION OF JERRY LEE ATWOOD MARCH 28-AUG 2

Special Exhibitions Gallery

SPONSORED BY:



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Frenzel Family Foundation

Virginia Merkel

Richard Hailey and Mary Beth Ramey

Ann W. King Fund, a fund
of the Indianapolis Foundation





Artist in Residence JJ Otero forges a wide range of talents into an eclectic career

By Madison Hincks, public programs manager

The Eiteljorg's spring artist in residence, JJ Otero (Navajo/Hopi), is a creative force with an impressive array of talents. JJ is an award-winning metalsmith, woodworker, painter, musician and artist from New Mexico who approaches his work with one philosophy: "This moment is perfect and there's nothing lacking." You can meet him and learn more about this philosophy during his artist residency at the museum, March 17-28.

Art and music have always been part of JJ's life, but he previously worked as an information technology professional for 25 years before starting his full-time art career. In 2016, JJ moved back home and discovered his love for woodworking by creating a workbench for his father and a cradleboard for his sister's upcoming grandchild. After being encouraged by friends to enter art markets, Otero was accepted into the Heard



JJ Otero (Navajo / Hopi)
Sardinian Coral Gold Ring, 2022
Image courtesy of the artist

Museum Indian Fair & Market in Phoenix, the Indigenous-led online SEEDS Art Market, and the Eiteljorg Indian Market & Festival in 2018, cementing his transition into a full-time artist. He has experimented with acrylic painting and woodworking, but in recent years has shifted his focus to jewelry making.

"The Eiteljorg Museum is one of the very first museums that embraced me as a cradleboard and jewelry artist eight years ago," Otero stated, "from the summer art

markets to holiday pop-ups to leading workshops, and now to my current engagement, artist in residence. The staff has always held a soft spot in my heart because of their kindness, and I've grown to know various Indianapolis community folks as personal friends. I always look forward to rolling into town annually and checking in with the Eiteljorg — and then as soon as humanly possible, getting my pastrami at Shapiro's."

Musical roots

Music is another of JJ's talents. He was nicknamed "Radio Station" as a child by his uncle because of his deep love for AM Rez Radio. He began playing guitar at the age of 17 and has since cultivated a unique sound that he calls "Native Soul Rock." His musical group, now known as Son of Hwéeldi, won best Rock Song at the Native American Music Awards in 2013 for their song "Protected (Beauty All

Around)", sung entirely in Navajo. They also received three New Mexico Music Awards in 2017 for Best Rock CD, Best World Beat Song, and Best Native Song. Son of Hwéeldi, with JJ as front man on electric guitar, performed at the Eiteljorg Indian Market & Festival in 2018. JJ has won ribbons at the annual festival, and sold his one-of-a-kind jewelry at his artist booth to enthusiastic market-goers.

The Eiteljorg is thrilled to expand the Artist in Residence program into the springtime with JJ Otero's March residency. Stop by the museum for his spring break drop-in art activities, from March 18-19. Say hello and watch him work on his art in person during one of his open studios from 1-4 p.m. on March 20 and March 26-28. You can also sign up for his bracelet stamping workshop on March 21 from 10 a.m.-noon. Kids will also have a chance to make their own stamped copper bracelet with JJ on March 28 from 10-11:30 a.m. See page 10 for details. Don't miss your chance to meet such a highly skilled and accomplished artist.



JJ Otero (Navajo / Hopi)
Sardinian Coral Gold Ring, 2022
Image courtesy of the artist

The Artist in Residence program at the Eiteljorg is made possible by the Dr. Susan and Robert Stephens Artist in Residence Fund, The Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission, and Barbara and Ron Masters.

COMPELLING CONNECTIONS ACROSS GENERATIONS THROUGH THE ART OF PRINTMAKING

Consejo Grafico Nacional

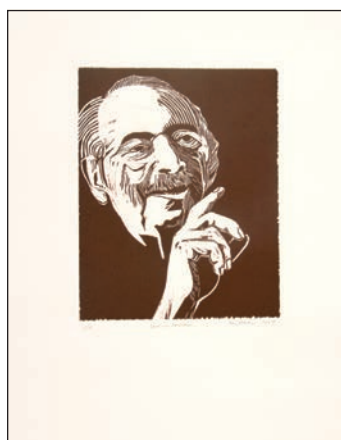
By Laura F. Fry, vice president of curatorial, collections and exhibitions

The Eiteljorg includes “Western Art” in its very title — but how does the museum define the boundaries of the American West? The West itself is a fluid, malleable space — constantly shifting like the shimmering, ethereal mirage where the desert sky meets the sunbaked horizon. Over time, the stories that define the American West have not stopped at the Rio Grande. Throughout history, migrations and cultural exchanges between Latin America and the present-day United States helped shape a distinct sense of place in the West. As we continue to expand perceptions of art of the American West, we at the Eiteljorg are seeking new opportunities to explore connections with Latin American artists.



Kiara Aileen Machado
More Than (Mas que)
2022
Self Help Graphics & Arts
Screenprint
22 x 15 inches

print portfolios to foster opportunities for Latino youth to engage in printmaking, and to share their cultural printmaking traditions with the larger community. At the Eiteljorg, we will feature two distinct Consejo Grafico portfolios created collaboratively with printmakers at *talleres* in



Kay Brown
Antonio Frasconi, 2017
Mono Grafico Colectivo
Woodcut, 22 x 15 inches
Los de Abajo Printmaking Collective,
Los Angeles, CA

In May 2026, the Eiteljorg will present the exhibition **Consejo Grafico Nacional: Latino Printmakers in the United States**. Starting in 2000, a group of independent printmaking workshops, called *talleres*, began to form a coalition, the Consejo Grafico Nacional, with the mission to “advance the capacity and legacy of Latino printmakers (inclusive of all Americas) in the United States.” Through a combination of collaborative projects, exhibitions and educational outreach, the Consejo promotes critical and cultural activism in contemporary art.

Two portfolios in one exhibit

Since its foundation, the Consejo Grafico *talleres* have produced a series of

Chicago, Texas, California, New Jersey, New York and Puerto Rico. Each portfolio includes a wide range of printmaking techniques and styles, with each artist bringing their own perspective to the central idea.

The portfolio **La Huella Magistral: Homage to Master Printmakers** was created in 2017 to recognize the artists’ teachers: master printmakers who taught, mentored or inspired them. For centuries — since the advent of the printing press — inexpensively produced, widely disseminated broadsides spread urgent communication through the rapid distribution of multiple printed sheets, mostly in urban settings. This portfolio celebrates the printmaking masters who embodied the tradition of social advocacy



Marianne Sadowski
Tree of Life, 2022
Blue Press Studio
3-color reductive linocut
22 x 15 inches

through printmaking. The portfolio **Los Americans: Same = Different** was created in 2022, exploring tensions of how American identity is defined across borders. As the Chicago-based artist Atlan Arceo-Witzl writes, “I am always thinking from a Chicana mixed-race perspective — straddling a duality of existence and identity. The histories of the USA and Mexico run in tandem.”

Through these two portfolios, viewers can explore how Latin American printmakers in the United States are exploring concepts of education, identity, and the power of working together in community — like the collaborative process of printmaking itself.

CONSEJO GRAFICO NACIONAL: LATINO PRINTMAKERS IN THE UNITED STATES
MAY 30, 2026–SPRING 2027

See programs on page 12.

HIGHLIGHTS AND MEMORIES

Between October 2025 and January 2026, the Eiteljorg hosted dynamic programs and exhibitions that connected with the community, as seen in this photo gallery.



The traveling exhibition **Gaawii Eta-Go Aawizinoo Gaawiye Mkakoons: It's Not Just A Quillbox** continues at the Eiteljorg through March 29. Guests enjoy 90 works of porcupine quill art by Anishinaabe artists of the Great Lakes region.



Monica Jo Raphael (Anishinaabe / Sičáŋǵu Lakota), who is Hoback curator of Great Lakes Native art, cultures and community engagement at the Eiteljorg, helped bring the quill art exhibition to Indianapolis. Monica, who is a quillwork artist, was interviewed Dec. 12, 2025, by WXIN-FOX59 about the exhibition.



At an author talk Oct. 28, 2025, retired FBI agent **Tim Carpenter**, right, discussed his new book, *The Grave Robber*, about his investigation of the largest art crimes case in FBI history. Alisa Nordholt Dean, vice president for public programs and Beeler family director of education, left, moderated the discussion.

More than 3,000 guests attended the free **Día de Muertos Community Celebration** on Oct. 25, 2025. Visitors were dazzled by the elaborate costumes of the Catrina Parade participants. The event is co-presented with Arte Mexicano en Indiana.





Image by Michael Durr

Hundreds of guests attended the free **Indigenous Peoples Day Community Celebration** on Oct. 13, 2025. Native Pride Productions, led by Larry Yazzie (Meskwaki), performed at the Eiteljorg for an enthusiastic audience.



Image by Jeremy Lawson

During the Nov. 14, 2025 opening of **Emerging Current: The Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship 2025**, visitors were enthralled by the works of five contemporary artists who are the 2025 Eiteljorg Fellows. The exhibition continues through Feb. 22.



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Contemporaryartfellowship.eiteljorg.org



During the 16th annual running of the Eiteljorg's holiday model train display, the **Fifth Third Bank Jingle Rails: The Great Western Adventure**, visitors enjoyed model railroad backdrops made of all-natural materials. The Route 66 scene returned for the first time since 2018 and permanently rejoined the display. *Jingle Rails* concluded for the season Jan. 19, and will return to the Eiteljorg in November 2026.



Image courtesy of Amy Payne

Calendar

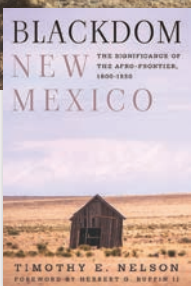
Calendar of Events compiled by Anna Grace Hargett

NOTE TO VISITORS: The events, dates, times and prices listed here were in effect at the time of publication. At different times, an individual gallery may be temporarily closed for updates. Please check Eiteljorg.org before your visit for the most up-to-date information on exhibits and activities at the museum on the day of your visit and to register for programs.

Timothy E. Nelson, Ph.D. Image by Zay Gonzales



Courtesy Texas Tech University Press



Saturday

FEB 21

1-2:30 p.m.

Leon Jett Memorial Lecture: Dr. Timothy E. Nelson

Historian and author Timothy E. Nelson, Ph.D., will discuss his research into a Black community in New Mexico during an oil boom in the early 20th century, and its lasting cultural legacy.

Dr. Nelson will sign copies of his book, *On Blackdom, New Mexico: The Significance of the Afro-Frontier, 1900-1930*. The talk is included with regular museum admission. [The lecture series](#) is named for the late Leon Jett, an Eiteljorg programs manager who prioritized offering a wide range of multicultural events at the museum. Included with admission; members get in free.

COMING SOON

Quillwork artist

Melissa Peter-Paul (Mi'kmaw)

Later this year, renowned quillwork artist Melissa Peter-Paul will lead events at the Eiteljorg and share her quill art-making process. These events are in connection with the traveling exhibition *Gaawii Eta-Go Aawizinoo Gaawiye Mkakoons: It's Not Just A Quillbox*.

Events with this artist have been postponed from Feb. 26, 27 and 28 and instead will be held at later dates. Please check Eiteljorg.org/events for the new dates, times and registration details.



Melissa Peter-Paul (Mi'kmaw)
Image by Brady McCloskey

MAR 1-APR 5

Indy Latina Artists: Connected by Heritage Exhibit

This inspiring art exhibition celebrates the significant contributions of Latina artists in Indianapolis and surrounding areas. Through this exhibition in the Lilly Community Gallery, we showcase the unique viewpoints and experiences of working Latina artists.

MAR 16-20 & MAR 23-27

1-3 p.m.

Spring Break Drop-In Activities

Explore creative materials, try new techniques and make something to take home. All ages welcome. No registration required. The featured activities March 18-19 include the artist in residence.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

MAR 17-28

Artist in Residence: JJ Otero (Navajo / Hopi)

Now working in metalsmithing, JJ Otero expresses his art through his award-winning music career, acrylic painting, intricately crafted cradleboards, and jewelry making. Come and meet this versatile artist whose eclectic background is reflected in his work. See story, page 6.



JJ Otero at his artist booth at Indian Market & Festival

SPONSORED BY: Drs. Susan and Robert Stephens Artist in Residence Fund
Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission
Barbara and Ron Masters

Tuesday

MAR 17

10-11 a.m.

Members-Only Coffee & Conversation

Register to meet the artist at Eiteljorg.org/events.

Saturday

MAR 21

10 a.m.-Noon

Bracelet Stamping Workshop

Learn how to stamp and emboss your own bracelet. Registration required at Eiteljorg.org/events.

MAR 18-19

1-3 p.m.

Spring Break Drop-In Activities with JJ Otero

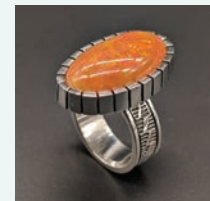
Meet the artist in residence and participate in a make-and-take art project. Open to all ages. Included with admission.

MAR 20 & MAR 26-28

1-4 p.m.

Open Studio Hours with JJ Otero

Meet JJ Otero in the museum's studio and learn about his silversmithing and jewelry-making techniques.



JJ Otero (Navajo / Hopi)
Ethiopian Opal in Castellated Bezel, 2023

Saturday

MAR 28

10-11:30 a.m.

Eiteljorg Kids Copper Bracelet Workshop

A wonderful opportunity to learn from the artist in residence, the event is open to children; visit Eiteljorg.org/events. Eiteljorg Kids program members receive a discount.

We're adding new programs and events all the time. Visit Eiteljorg.org and sign up for our e-newsletter to stay up to date on museum happenings. To purchase online tickets, visit Eiteljorg.org. Call 317.636.9378 for more information. All events are included with general admission unless otherwise noted. General admission is \$20 for adults, \$16 for seniors 65 and over, and \$12 for youth ages 5 to 17. Students from Indiana colleges and universities have free admission if they present student ID. Children ages 4 and under are free. Museum members enjoy free admission, unless otherwise noted. Native American and First Nations visitors with tribal ID or proof of enrollment have free admission.



EXHIBITION OPENING

**MAR 28–AUG 2
COWBOY COUTURE:
THE FASHION OF
JERRY LEE ATWOOD**

Indianapolis designer Jerry Lee Atwood is acclaimed for his creations seen on fashion runways: custom-made Western-style outfits with rhinestones and chain-stitch embroidery that are worn by famous entertainers. The Eiteljorg's exhibition of Atwood's designs connects his work to classic country music looks and popular ideas of "the West." See story, page 2.



Jerry Lee Atwood
Scott Hinds Magnolia Suit

SPONSORED BY:  **AVIS FOUNDATION**
 **CAPITAL GROUP** The Braitman Family
WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM:
Frenzel Family Foundation, Virginia Merkel, the Ann W. King Fund (a fund of the Indianapolis Foundation), Richard Hailey and Mary Beth Ramey

MAR 27 Friday, 6-8:30 p.m.

Cowboy Couture: VIP Night

Join us for an exclusive look at the new exhibition of Jerry Lee Atwood's fashions, and meet the designer. Visit Eiteljorg.org/events for details.

MAR 28 Saturday, 10 a.m.

**Cowboy Couture
Opening Day Programming**

During a public gallery tour, learn about the dazzling embroidered Western suits on view from the designer who created them, Jerry Lee Atwood, and the curators who organized the exhibition. Included with admission.

APR 18 Saturday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Cowboy Couture Bolo Tie Workshop

At a workshop led by designer Amber Gyselinc, learn how to create your own bolo, the iconic neckwear of the American West. Registration required at Eiteljorg.org/events.

JULY 3 Friday, 5-7 p.m.

Saloon Night

Save the date for a free Western-themed concert featuring the Indy Annies and line dancing. Eiteljorg.org/events.



Images of Jerry Lee Atwood and his studio by Michael Durr

Saturday
APR 11
11 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Ahora! Art & Design
Pop Up**

Join us for a [special program celebrating art and design](#). Discover and support local artists and designers who are Mexican and Latina/o/é/x, and enjoy an engaging artist talk. It's organized in partnership with Arte Mexicano en Indiana.

Saturday
APR 11
Noon-3 p.m.

Slow Art Day

Meander through the museum's galleries and stop at various slow art stations. [Spend some time with each artwork](#) before joining a facilitated discussion with an Eiteljorg Guide.



Volunteer Guides, including Don Bievenour, left, and Annette Biesecker, right, help interpret the museum's artwork for visitors.

Wednesday
APR 15
5-6:30 p.m.

**Volunteer Appreciation
Event**

At this invitation-only gathering, the Eiteljorg will [recognize the volunteers](#) who made our events and programs possible. See the inside front cover.

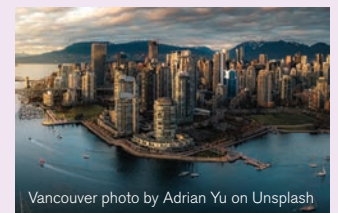
**MEMBERS-ONLY
EVENTS**

COMING SOON
**Soar with the Eagles
during an Evening at the
Eiteljorg**

Are you interested in upgrading your membership and joining the Eagle Society? Meet current members at this special evening program. Are you an active or past Eagle Society member? Reconnect with old friends. Attendees can enjoy special behind-the-scenes access to the Eiteljorg, see artworks from the museum vault, take a curator-led guided tour, meet artists and more. Postponed from April 24; for details check Eiteljorg.org/events.

APR 28–MAY 5
**Art and Culture Spring
Tour to the Pacific
Northwest**

The Eiteljorg's most loyal supporters will travel on an extraordinary journey: from Vancouver's contemporary Indigenous art studios to Seattle's glowing glass workshops. This eight-day tour connects supporters with the artists, stories and traditions that make the region unforgettable. If you are interested in future trips such as this, learn about the benefits of being a high-level museum member at Eiteljorg.org/membership.



Vancouver photo by Adrian Yu on Unsplash

Museum Hours: Monday through Saturday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday: noon to 5 p.m. Open daily, the Eiteljorg is open later for extended hours, until 7 p.m., on Friday evenings between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Between those holidays, the museum will have free admission hours from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the first Friday of the month only: **June 5, July 3, Aug. 7** and **Sept. 4**. *Note:* The museum will be closed on Friday, June 26. Check Eiteljorg.org for details.

Continued from page 11



Tuesday

MAY 5

11 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

RED DRESS DAY: Remembering Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Peoples

On May 5, the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Peoples (MMIWP), you can join other Eiteljorg visitors, staff, volunteers and community members in raising awareness about Indigenous people who have been murdered or have disappeared. On this date, the public is encouraged to wear red in memory of the victims of crimes against Native peoples that often have gone unsolved or were not investigated by authorities. The museum's front lawn will include a free outdoor activation on the sidewalk where, in solidarity, visitors can make handprints in red paint, as an emblem of the stolen relatives. Inside the museum, with regular admission, visitors of all ages can participate in learning activities that will raise awareness of the MMIWP issue. Eiteljorg.org/events.

EXHIBITION OPENING

CONSEJO GRAFICO NACIONAL: LATINO PRINTMAKERS IN THE UNITED STATES

MAY 30–SPRING 2027

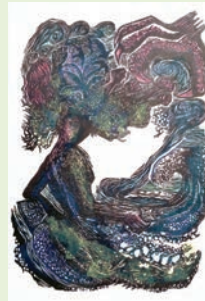
Experience compelling prints from two different portfolios, created by young artists who carry on historic printmaking traditions. See story, page 7.

Saturday

MAY 30

Opening Day

Enjoy a gallery tour and talk. Learn about the two portfolios in this exhibition, *La Huella Magistral: Homage to Master Printmakers* and *Los Americans: Same = Different*.



Poli Marichal
I am Boricua (Boricua soy), 2022
Woodblock and collograph
22 x 15 inches
Marichal Studio



Ricardo Xavier Serment
Generational Education, 2017
Linocut, 22 x 15 inches
Arceo Press & Studio, Chicago, IL

EXHIBITION OPENING



2023 Eiteljorg Fellow
Raven Halfmoon (Caddo Nation/Choctaw/Delaware, b. 1991)
Four Doors of Prayer, 2022
Clay
Museum Purchase from the Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship. 2023.9.1

THEN AND NOW: ART FROM THE EITELJORG CONTEMPORARY ART FELLOWSHIP

COMING IN SUMMER 2026

Every other year since 1999, the biennial Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship (ECAF) presents a four-month exhibition of works by five remarkable contemporary Native artists from the U.S. and Canada — a different group each round. Extending the opportunity to view their works for a lengthier stretch, a new long-term retrospective exhibition, *Then and Now*, celebrates more than a quarter century of the Eiteljorg Fellowship, and features some of the most dazzling works by Fellows from past rounds. Appreciate stunning, dynamic sculptures and paintings from the Eiteljorg's vault, some of which have not been on public view before.

Friday

MAY 15

1 p.m.

Virtual Talk with Dr. Aura Sunada Newlin

Learn more about the history behind a piece in our Western art collection, Jishiro Miyauchi's painting *Heart Mountain, Wyoming*, during a virtual talk. As executive director of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, Dr. Aura Sunada Newlin will discuss the injustices that occurred at Heart Mountain, one of the internment camps in the American West where the U.S. government incarcerated innocent Japanese Americans during World War II. Learn more about this important chapter in history. Register at Eiteljorg.org/events.



Friday

JUNE 5

5-7 p.m.

Free First Friday BLOCK PARTY

Save the date for an all-ages Eiteljorg block party where we welcome our local community and the museum's partners to the Eiteljorg. You can enjoy music, art and food. Come and celebrate; the museum will be open late, until 7 p.m., and admission will be free from 5-7 p.m. Details at Eiteljorg.org/events.

Friday

JUNE 5

5:30 p.m.

Film Screening

Watch a screening of the short stop-motion animated film *Things You Know But Cannot Explain*, about Rick Bartow (Mad River Wiyot), contemporary artist and 2001 Eiteljorg Fellow. It's produced and co-directed by Michelle Hernandez, Bartow's niece.



Rick Bartow
(Mad River Wiyot, 1946-2016)
2001 Eiteljorg Fellow

Parking: The museum can validate parking in the White River State Park underground garage, while spaces are available, for visitors to the museum, café or museum store.

CONTINUING EXHIBITIONS

THROUGH FEB 22, 2026

Emerging Current: The Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship 2025

Be sure to see the 2025 round of the Eiteljorg Fellowship before it concludes. Prints, mixed media, carvings, paintings and installations by five of today's top contemporary Native artists await you. Purchase a copy of the *Emerging Current* art catalog in the Museum Store.

Contemporaryartfellowship.eiteljorg.org



THROUGH MAR 29, 2026

Gaawii Eta-Go Aawizinoo Gaawiye Mkakoons: It's Not Just A Quillbox

A traveling exhibition of the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinaabe Culture & Lifeways features more than 90 beautiful works of quill art from the Great Lakes region. The exhibition focuses on how quillboxes are made and their importance to the Anishinaabe peoples. More details at Eiteljorg.org/lts-not-just-a-quillbox.



THROUGH JULY 5, 2026

Voices from the Arctic: Contemporary Inuit Art

Journey to the top of the world and explore Inuit art history through sculptures, drawings and prints. Inuit artists' creativity, experiences, and voices will provide guests with insights into their environment, culture and worldview. More details at Eiteljorg.org/voices-from-the-arctic-contemporary-inuit-art



Image by Michael Durr

ONGOING EXHIBITIONS

DAILY

Expressions of Life: Native Art in North America

The museum's Native American galleries highlight Native stories and are organized around themes of Relation, Continuation, and Innovation, and feature works recently rotated into the exhibition.



Image by Amy Payne

DAILY

R.B. Annis Western Family Experience

Located in the Nina Mason Pulliam Education Center
Children lead their grown-ups in learning inside this immersive space with hands-on exhibits about five real families of the contemporary American West. Visitors of all ages enjoy the interactive spaces.



Image by Amy Payne

DAILY

Attitudes: The West in American Art

The museum's Western art galleries feature artists inspired by the vast, diverse American West. Explore how artists past and present merge myth and reality to shape perceptions of the West.



Image by Amy Payne

SAVE THE DATES

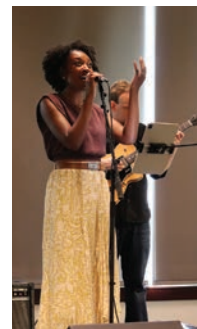
Friday

JUNE 19

10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Juneteenth Community Celebration

In honor of Juneteenth, we invite you to engage with the stories of liberation and resilience of Black and African Americans. Enjoy FREE museum admission to our galleries and live performances, offering an opportunity to learn, reflect and recognize the ongoing pursuit of equity and justice. Details at Eiteljorg.org/Juneteenth.



Saturday and Sunday

JUNE 27-28

34th annual Indian Market & Festival

Purchase handmade jewelry and art directly from more than 100 Native artists; enjoy authentic food and music and dance performances. See back cover.

JULY 13-17

Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Eiteljorg Explorers Summer Day Camp

Bring your young explorers to learn about Native and Western arts and cultures through engaging experiences. Campers ages 9-11 will immerse themselves in the museum's galleries, and create art alongside staff and artists through indoor and outdoor activities.

Spots are limited, so [register today](#) or join the waitlist at this QR code.



**Membership information:**

Contact membership@eiteljorg.com
or scan this QR code.

Thank you to the following donors for memberships and gifts received August 1–October 31, 2025.

Due to space limitations, only contributions of \$150 or more are listed, with the exception of gifts in honor or memory. If your name is not listed as you would like it, please accept our apology and call 317.275.1360.

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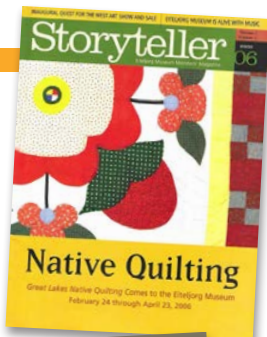
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The inaugural issue of *Storyteller* from early 2006, top; the award-winning Spring 2023 issue.

Storyteller magazine reaches 20-year milestone

By Bryan Corbin, *Storyteller* magazine editor

With this issue you are now reading, *Storyteller* marks 20 years of continuous publication as the Eiteljorg Museum's magazine.

Our glossy magazine launched in 2006, replacing an earlier newsletter product. Now published three times a year, *Storyteller* brings you news and features about the Eiteljorg's programs and exhibits so you can plan your visit and maximize your enjoyment of this museum.

We are thrilled that *Storyteller* has been recognized as best periodical/magazine in Indiana five years in a row by the Public Relations Society of America-Hoosier Chapter in its annual Pinnacle Awards contest. In 2023, *Storyteller* won the Best of Show award from the PRSA.

We are grateful for the hardworking museum staff whose dynamic efforts are reflected in *Storyteller*, and to our graphic designer, Mike Fasig of HoneyMoon Image & Design, who creates the compelling magazine layout.

We are especially thankful to you longtime friends for your support of the Eiteljorg Museum during all or part of its nearly 37 years in business, and of *Storyteller* for the past 20. Your comments and questions about the magazine are always welcome. We love it whenever a reader enjoys the magazine and then passes it along to a family member, friend or coworker so they can become Eiteljorg fans, too.

As *Storyteller* begins its 21st year, we hope you will take a few minutes to complete a short online survey at the QR code, provided to the right, about how you use the magazine. Your responses will help us improve it. By taking the survey, your name will be entered into a drawing to win a \$25 gift card from the Eiteljorg Museum Store.

Thank you for reading *Storyteller* and supporting the Eiteljorg!



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 Impact Fund

Continued on page 16



Leah Ollie, grants coordinator
 Image by Tabby Fitzgerald

IN MUSEUM’S DEVELOPMENT TEAM, THE POWER OF ART IS SHARED

By Leah Ollie, grants coordinator

As a visitor and admirer of the Eiteljorg for years, I knew the museum’s tagline of “Telling Amazing Stories” was true; the evidence stretched through the halls of the galleries, and shone through the innovative art on display. However, I couldn’t see the behind-the-scenes efforts that made each exhibition and public program possible. As my interest in arts administration grew, I followed my passion for storytelling to organizations in cities including Washington D.C., Chicago, and Santa Fe, all the while fascinated with the unique role the Eiteljorg played in the arts ecosystem of Indianapolis.

By showcasing Native artistry and redefining narratives of the American West, the Eiteljorg serves as a hub for creativity, education, and connection in the Great Lakes region. Now that I am part of the team of staff and volunteers who work to share that storytelling with our audience, I have the opportunity to power the museum’s impact through cultivating grant support from foundations, private individuals and public entities.

When I stepped into the role of grants coordinator in July 2025, I had one goal in mind: using my skill for storytelling to support the mission of the Eiteljorg Museum. I had developed experience in communications and grant writing through internships with arts and culture organizations in Indianapolis and beyond, and took this next step in my career as an opportunity to dive into development. With the support of the museum’s Advancement department and Development team, I quickly learned that the museum’s deeply rooted community partnerships were integral to supporting the work we do, and essential to our grant operations.

A place for all

Each day in my role, I get to show up to work and collaborate across different teams at the museum to inform our grants strategy. For each illuminating artist panel, awe-inspiring exhibition and seamless guest experience on museum grounds for our valued visitors and members, I join my colleagues in securing the necessary financial support to share the transformational power of art. We are incredibly grateful for the integral support of each of our grant funders, whether they partner with the Eiteljorg to give operational support, funding for exhibitions or public programs, or meeting additional needs as the museum evolves to serve you best.

At the Eiteljorg, everyone has a role to play in telling amazing stories. If you are a supporter of our mission to share the diverse stories of the American West and the Indigenous Peoples of North America, I invite you to explore what that role looks like for you. Whether you’re passionate about giving time and talents through volunteering, exploring membership benefits for yourself and your loved ones, or taking the chance to learn something new at one of our programs and events, there is a place for you at the Eiteljorg Museum.

To support the Eiteljorg through planned giving, donations or memberships, visit Eiteljorg.org/give-and-join/donate, or contact the museum’s Development team at 317.275.1360.

The Eiteljorg’s exhibits recently received some exceptional news media coverage. Scan these QR codes to see two interesting stories.



MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

Continued from page 14

Gifts in Honor and Memory

In honor of Kurt Ehrhardt
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Project 2021 Capital Campaign

Catherine Turner



“They chose the perfect site!” your guests will say as they savor the Eiteljorg Museum’s artful surroundings and stunning architecture. Whether you are organizing a corporate meeting or searching for a beautiful wedding venue, the Eiteljorg has event spaces to fit your needs and budget. Our event rentals team will work with you to arrange all the facility details. Our exclusive caterer, Kahn’s Catering, will assist you in designing the perfect menu selection for your occasion. Contact us today to secure your event!

Scan QR code
to book a tour:



Eiteljorg Museum

Contact our Rentals and Events team, Holly Hill-Brooks, director of rentals and events and Isabelle Davis, rentals and events coordinator, to secure your event.

spacerental@eiteljorg.com

317.636.9378

Eiteljorg.org/event-spaces

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**SHOP WITH PURPOSE.
STAY COZY TOGETHER.**



This winter, discover thoughtfully curated comforts and irresistible accessories at the Museum Store — from iconic Pendleton blankets and artisan jewelry to **Pendleton Pets**, cozy essentials designed for your four-legged companions.

Every purchase supports the museum and its mission, making each gift meaningful — for you, your home, and your pets.

Warm layers. Meaningful gifts. Comfort for every member of the family.

Shop the Museum Store, in person or online, and support art, culture, and community with every purchase. Explore our collection of museum art catalogs and books related to Black History Month and Women's History Month.

Online Museum Store: Eiteljorg.org/visit/shop.
Museum members receive **15 percent** off all purchases.



Read a recent article in *Indianapolis Monthly* magazine listing the Eiteljorg Museum Store as one of the best shops and markets in Indianapolis:



Eiteljorg
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Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art

White River State Park • 500 W. Washington St.
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Eiteljorg.org

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE JUNE 2026 ISSUE OF STORYTELLER

34th ANNUAL INDIAN MARKET & FESTIVAL JUNE 27 & 28

Visit one of the nation's premier Native art markets and connect with more than 100 Native artists from across the United States and Canada. Discover exceptional works including jewelry, pottery, basketry, sculpture, weavings and paintings, all available for purchase directly from the artists. While you shop, enjoy live music and dance performances, along with a variety of popular food options. The 34th annual Indian Market and Festival takes place both inside the museum and on museum grounds. Learn more at Eiteljorg.org/IndianMarketandFestival.



21st ANNUAL QUEST FOR THE WEST® ART SHOW AND SALE OPENING WEEKEND SEPT 11 & 12 EXHIBIT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC SEPT 13-OCT 11 ARTIST OF DISTINCTION EXHIBIT OPEN SEPT 5-OCT 1

Join us for *Quest for the West*®, an exceptional art show and sale of art inspired by the American West. Preregister for opening weekend activities: Meet the artists, purchase world-class sculptures and paintings and shop for smaller pieces during the miniature sale. Enjoy a fascinating exhibition of the contemporary sculpture of *Quest* Artist of Distinction Tim Cherry. To learn about opening weekend events, visit quest.eiteljorg.org or contact Kay Hinds at khinds@eiteljorg.com or 317.275.1341.



Artist Tim Cherry, left, and Linda Cherry
Image by Brittany Erwin

PRESENTED BY:

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Your support as a member, donor or corporate sponsor is instrumental to the Eiteljorg presenting impressive exhibitions and programs. To learn about the benefits of supporting these efforts, contact Kevin Andrews at kandrews@eiteljorg.com or 317.275.1360 or Melanie Lachowicz at mlachowicz@eiteljorg.com or 317.275.1333.



Stay connected with the Eiteljorg on social media and at Eiteljorg.org, where you can also sign up for our biweekly e-newsletter. For general information about the Eiteljorg Museum, call **317.636.9378**.

