

*Grand Procession: Contemporary Plains
Indian Dolls from the Charles and
Valerie Diker Collection*

Exhibition Labels:

The dolls in Grand Procession were collected by Charles and Valerie Diker, who have collected Native American art for more than 40 years. The couple first took note of the dolls in the 1990s and began amassing a collection that has grown to include 23 works, some of which consist of groups or pairs of dolls. The Heard Museum is grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Diker for allowing us to share these incredible works with our visitors.

The exhibition Grand Procession was originally organized by Nancy Blomberg, chief curator of the Denver Art Museum. It was accompanied by a book written by Lois Sherr Dubin and published by Denver Art Museum in 2010. We are grateful to the staff of the Denver Art Museum and to Ms. Dubin for giving us permission to reprint sections from the book.

The Heard Museum's presentation of Grand Procession is supported by the Arizona Commission on the Arts and the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture.

Grand Procession celebrates a wonderful collection of dolls, also known as soft sculptures, created by Jamie Okuma (Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock), Rhonda Holy Bear (Cheyenne River Sioux/Lakota) and three generations of Growing Thunder family members: Joyce Growing Thunder, Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty and Jessa Rae Growing Thunder (Assiniboine/Sioux). The dolls are figurative references to Indigenous peoples who lived in the Great Plains and Great Basin regions during the late 19th century.

Historically, dolls of soft leather outfitted to look like their maker or others in the community were made for children. Holy Bear, Okuma and the three Growing Thunder family members have transformed that concept and today are making exquisite soft sculptures that are appreciated for their beauty and craftsmanship. Each doll is embellished in intricate detail with flawless beadwork,

and some are further decorated in quillwork.

Collectively, the dolls look like they have gathered for the processional entry that occurs at powwows, where participants dressed in grand regalia enter the arena. It is not surprising that the dolls are made with such accuracy, as all five of the women who make the dolls participate in contemporary powwows and create traditional garments for themselves.

Jamie Okuma

First and foremost, I create what I'm loving at the moment. I always use tradition as a base, whether it be with imagery or materials, because I feel it's important to have that connection with my work, for myself as well as for the viewer.

—Jamie Okuma, 2019

Jamie Okuma (b. 1977) is of Luiseño and Shoshone-Bannock heritage on her mother's side and her father is Okinawan-Hawaiian. Okuma grew up on the La Jolla Reservation in San Diego County, California. As a child, she attended powwows at the Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho. The clothing she saw there was

inspirational, and she began doing beadwork when she was only five years old. When she was a teenager, she made some of her own clothing and she also made a jingle dress for a doll.

In 2000, Okuma moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, to attend the Institute of American Indian Arts. While a student at the Institute, she won the Best of Show Award at the Southwestern Association of Indian Arts (SWAIA) Market in Santa Fe for *Oren, Crow Warrior*, a piece on display in this exhibition. She has continued to receive recognition for her beaded dolls, fashion and accessories, including Best of Show at the 2000 and 2002 SWAIA Market. She also won Best of Show at the Heard Museum Guild Indian Fair & Market in 2004 and 2006, and, most recently, in 2018 for a beaded soft-sculpture titled *Protect, Honor, Cherish*, now in the permanent collection of the Heard Museum.

Rhonda Holy Bear

My figures represent courageous people from the past—chiefs, warriors, women and my Lakota relatives. Without them, I could not be who I am today.

—Rhonda Holy Bear, 2010

From *Grand Procession: Contemporary Artistic Visions of American Indians* by Lois Sherr Dubin for the Denver Art Museum

Rhonda Holy Bear (b. 1959) was born and raised on the Cheyenne Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. She made her first doll out of scraps of cloth at the age of four.

Holy Bear was placed in a government-run boarding school when she was seven years old. At age 14, she moved to Chicago to live with a relative. Chicago offered great options to view and appreciate art, particularly at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Field Museum. Holy Bear spent hours at the museums and became fascinated with Plains beadwork and quillwork.

Holy Bear's early dolls had simplified facial features. As she continued to research and develop her work, she began to carve detailed facial features out of wood. Holy Bear pays close attention to every detail. She has received significant recognition for her dolls, including First Place awards at Southwestern Association of Indian Arts (SWAIA) Market in Santa

Fe and the Heard Museum Guild Indian Fair & Market, as well as the 2019 Best of Classification award at the Heard.

Joyce Growing Thunder, Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty and Jessa Rae Growing Thunder

It's like you created a little person. You feel an attachment to them.

—Joyce Growing Thunder

From *Grand Procession: Contemporary Artistic Visions of American Indians* by Lois Sherr Dubin for the Denver Art Museum

These remarkable women, spanning three generations of the same family, continue a great tradition of Plains beadwork. Joyce Growing Thunder (b. 1950) was born and raised on the Fort Peck Assiniboine/Sioux Reservation in Montana. She and her family members were involved in powwows, where Joyce had an opportunity to see elaborate beaded garments. When she was 10 years old, she began doing beadwork that led to a lifelong career. She has received the Best of Show award at the Southwestern Association of Indian Arts (SWAIA) Market in Santa Fe three

different times: 1985, 1988 and 1992. Joyce has been participating in the Market for more than 30 years, continuing her legacy with multiple awards, including the SWAIA Lifetime Achievement Award for her contribution to American Indian art. Joyce spends every day working on her art as she encapsulates tribal identity and culture into every piece she creates. She has passed on her talents to her daughter Juanita Growing Thunder and several of her grandchildren, including Jessa Rae Growing Thunder.

Like her mother Joyce, Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty (b. 1969) is equally accomplished in quillwork and beadwork. She strives to honor the tradition of beadwork and quillwork in hopes that her work will help future generations of traditional artists. Juanita has shared her knowledge with others by teaching beadwork classes as well as mentoring many individuals throughout the years. She has won numerous awards during her 30 years of participating at the SWAIA Market. Juanita resides in Northern California with her daughters Jessa Rae and Camryn, with whom she

works every day to encourage them to pass along the family knowledge of these traditional arts.

Jessa Rae Growing Thunder (b. 1989) is the third generation of this talented family. She has had the good fortune to learn from both her grandmother and mother. Jessa Rae first entered her beadwork items in SWAIA's Market when she was only 10 years old, and since then she has gone on to win numerous prestigious ribbons for her work. Like her mother, she has shared her knowledge by teaching beadwork, including through her position as a visiting instructor at the Oscar Howe Summer Art Institute at the University of South Dakota. Jessa Rae is a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Davis, and her research looks at Dakota/Nakoda women's creative traditions as historical authority; specifically, Jessa Rae examines the traditions of beadwork and quillwork as modes of intergenerational knowledge.

Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty and Jessa Rae Growing Thunder
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1969 and
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1989

Teton Sioux Chief, 2001

Hide, cloth, glass beads, pigment, hair, fur, feathers, shells, sequins, talons, thread, silk ribbon, yarn, brass thimbles, metal, porcupine quills, wood

Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty describes the beadwork on the flaps of the leggings as: *medicine wheels with eagle feathers and dragonflies. The solidly beaded strips represent stars with mountains.*

She interprets the designs on the sleeves: *Held sideways, the design represents the meeting of sky world and earth world. The yellow is the top of the mountain with the star in the center. It is the intermixing of the two worlds—the spiritual and the daily—a reminder that you are supposed to live within both.* Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty and Jessa Rae Growing Thunder
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1969 and
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1989

Buffalo Chaser, 2008

Hide, cloth, glass beads, pigment, yarn, hair, fur, talons, feathers, porcupine quills, shells, metal, silk ribbon, sweetgrass, wood

The artist states:

This particular shirt was intended to be the sun or heart of the warrior with the thunderbird wings. The thunder on the high plains is a very frightening and powerful sound. Just imagine living in a tipi and hearing it, like the sound of another world. When these types of warriors went into battle they would wear their finest clothing, so that they could be dressed in the best way possible for the spirit world if it came to that. His powerful face paint was the final thing added. It is like a real person who puts their makeup on last.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty and Joyce Growing Thunder
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1969 and
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1950

Horse and Rider, 2003

Hide, cloth, glass beads, pigment, yarn, feathers, talons, hair, porcupine quills, thread, sequins, silk ribbon, shells, metal, wood

Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty collaborated with her mother, Joyce Growing Thunder, over many months to create this masterpiece. Juanita commented on this process:

There is nothing fast about what we do. Everything is tedious. From sorting quills to the tiny fine beadwork. You can't do it if you are upset. You make mistakes and have to backtrack. Mom always told me you have to work on things in a good way ... because you are putting yourself—your prayers and your thoughts—into your work.

The painted zigzags on the front of the horse's legs empower this horse with the force of lightning when he is running. At the horse's rear is an elaborate star with buffalo heads on the ends.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

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Joyce Growing Thunder
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1950

Sioux Woman with a Baby Carrier, 1995

Hide, cloth, glass beads, porcupine quills, pigment, hair, silk ribbon, shells, metal, wood

Joyce Growing Thunder describes the intricate designs on this female doll with a cradleboard as having:

a fully beaded blue top that symbolizes a lake and the images reflected in the lake; several variations of star designs, dragonflies around the outside border and a turtle back in the yoke's center representing a version of the Sioux creation story. She wears a porcupine quilled breast plate; the designs are variations on stars and mountains.

On her back she carries a fully beaded cradleboard with a baby. This style of cradleboard, with pointed wood supports, was outlawed on the Fort Peck Reservation for fear that it could be used as a weapon. The grass she carries in her hand is sweetgrass, meant to bring good medicine.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Joyce Growing Thunder
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1950
Assiniboine Chief, 1998

Hide, cloth, glass beads, porcupine quills, hair, feathers, fur, shells, metal, wood

The artist states:

The beaded leggings include designs symbolizing stars and horse tracks. The chief carries a tomahawk with a beaded drop incorporating eagle feather designs and a quilled fringe.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Joyce Growing Thunder
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1950
Northern Cheyenne Women, 2001

Hide, cloth, glass beads, pigment, hair, feathers, silk ribbon, cowrie shells, metal, wood

The artist states:

One summer we lived on the Northern Cheyenne reservation in Montana, where we have adopted relatives, so I was very familiar with the designs. I enjoyed making these dolls and was very pleased with how they turned out.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Joyce Growing Thunder
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1950

Netakoda, 2000

Hide, cloth, glass beads, pigment, porcupine quills, shells, hair, silk ribbon, metal, wood

This ensemble is a classic 19th-century Plains warrior style of dress. The beautifully painted shield on the warrior's back displays a buffalo head with emanating power lines, buffalo hooves and a crescent moon. Shield imagery was supernatural power received by a warrior in a dream or vision quest. Although a thick hide shield might deflect arrows in battle, its greater value was the spiritual protection given to the individual through the designs. Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Joyce Growing Thunder
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1950

Josephine Gray Hawk, about 2001; Ben Gray Hawk, about 2001

Hide, cloth, glass beads, porcupine quills, pigment, hair, ermine fur, metal, shells, wood

Joyce Growing Thunder made this pair of dolls to honor her grandparents, Ben Gray Hawk and Josephine Gray Hawk, who raised and taught her many of the traditional ways. The beaded images decorating Ben Gray Hawk's frock coat—itsself a symbol of stature—illustrate many of the beings important within the Plains worldview. The

horse with the war bonnet is biographical. Growing Thunder's grandparents held a celebration in which they gave away horses with attached eagle-feather war bonnets in honor of their grandchildren. Other designs include an eagle-feather staff, thunderbirds, buffalo, morning star, horse tracks and a lodge with buffalo head.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1969

Sioux Woman, 2001

Hide, cloth, glass beads, porcupine quills, pigment, hair, feathers, silk ribbon, dentalium shells, metal, brass thimbles, sweetgrass, wood

The beaded horse imagery on the yoke honors the importance of horses to the Plains people. A charming addition is the use of brass sewing thimbles for bracelets. Underneath the hide dress is another one of calico, a typical clothing style of the late 1800s to the early 1900s. On her back is a fully beaded cradleboard.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1969

Dakota Warrior, First Chief, 1995

Hide, cloth, glass beads, porcupine quills, pigment, hair, feathers, embroidery thread, shells, metal, sweetgrass, wood

The artist states:

This is the first male doll that I ever made. I knew that I wanted to do a quilled shirt. And I remember that I took great care in making him. He took a good long time, as I was learning. But I think that he turned out pretty well.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1969

Chief with Horned Headdress, 1999

Hide, cloth, glass beads, porcupine quills, pigment, hair, feathers, silk ribbon, embroidery thread, dentalium shells, metal, wood

In addition to his quilled, painted and perforated shirt, the chief wears a horned headdress with cut featherwork—typical of an Assiniboine warrior. He also holds beaded saddle and tobacco bags, as well as a pipe and tomahawk.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty
Assiniboine/Sioux, b. 1969

Northern Plains Chief, 2005

Hide, cloth, glass beads, pigment, porcupine quills, sequins, silk ribbon, hair, feathers, fur, talons, metal, wood

The artist states:

The chief has bear medicine. I was not honoring anyone specific; it was just a concept in my mind. The hair is human hair bought from a wig store. When mom first started making the figures she used our hair, but that was not going to work for very long.

The richly painted and beaded imagery includes bear paws, animal tracks, morning star, horses and the concept of mirroring—what is above is below—symbolized by the double cones on the beaded bag.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Rhonda Holy Bear
Cheyenne River Sioux/Lakota, b. 1959

Interview with a Warrior, 2008

Hide, cloth, thread, glass beads, pigment, hair, turkey feathers, ermine fur, shells, metal, wood

The artist states:

Two Leggings was orphaned as a little boy, but he had big dreams: he wanted to be somebody. I have read his biography, Two Leggings: The Making of a Crow Warrior, at least five times. The strongest message in the book is to listen to wisdom. And to follow—to chase—your dream. I was inspired to capture the spirit of Chief Two Leggings clothed in his regalia while seated in his chair for his interview.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

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Rhonda Holy Bear

Cheyenne River Sioux/Lakota, b. 1959

Ghost Dancer, 1996

Hide, cloth, glass beads, pigment, hair, shells, metal, wood

The artist states:

I developed the elongated bodies and the simplified faces for the Ghost Dance figures. I was trying to portray them in a trance. That's why the eyes are closed and they have a serenity of looking within oneself and reaching for the spirit world. We were a people in touch with the spirit world and our clothing reflected how we saw the world. We adorned ourselves with our beliefs.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Rhonda Holy Bear

Cheyenne River Sioux/Lakota, b. 1959

Ghost Dancer, 2008

Hide, glass beads, pigment, hair, feathers, dentalium shells, metal, wood

In response to the devastation of former lifeways, a Native revitalization movement—the Ghost Dance—spread throughout the Northern and Southern Plains during the late 1800s. Enacting the Ghost Dance promised the disappearance of white people and the return of the buffalo and the past good life. Bringing back the old ways, which required discarding non-Native dress, stimulated an abundance of vision-inspired clothing. Although most Ghost Dance imagery signaled protections, the clothing was used for dancing, not combat.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Jamie Okuma

Luiŝeño/Shoshone-Bannock/Okinawan-Hawaiian, b. 1977

Preston and Skylar, 2001

Hide, cloth, glass beads, porcupine quills, talons, pigment, hair, silk ribbon, feathers, ermine fur, shells, metal, clay, wood

The artist states:

Each and every piece has a little bit of my soul in [it]. They have lived through whatever life has thrown at me during their time of creation. I have to create to survive. I know no other way. If I can't create, I feel lost; it's what I was here to do. I feel blessed and honored for the gift of art.

Preston and Skylar, a Cayuse warrior and horse from the Plateau region, are both exquisitely attired. Okuma worked on this equestrian group for more than four years. Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

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Jamie Okuma

Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock/Okinawan-Hawaiian, b. 1977

Blackfeet Family Group, 1999

Hide, cloth, silk ribbon, glass beads, pigment, hair, metal, porcupine quills, shells, clay, wood

The artist states:

The Blackfeet family was my most important piece of work. There is no need for actual facial features, as this would distract their essence from transcending through the viewer. They are created with such strong spirits within them.

This won a Second Place award at SWAIA's annual Indian Market in Santa Fe the summer before Okuma attended the Institute of American Indian Arts, also in Santa Fe. Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Jamie Okuma

Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock/Okinawan-Hawaiian, b. 1977

Enzo, Blackfeet Man, 2006

Hide, cloth, glass beads, pigment, thread, ermine fur, talons, feathers, silk ribbon, metal, shells, wood

The artist states:

In the summer when I am working on my figures, I get on a movie or television series kick. When I made Enzo, I was watching The Godfather and gangster movies. So a whole lot of the pieces from that year have Italian names!

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Rhonda Holy Bear

Cheyenne River Sioux/Lakota, b. 1959

Maternal Journey, 2010

Wood, gesso, paint, hide, cloth, yarn, fur, glass beads, hair, shells, feathers, metal

Maternal Journey *celebrates the cycle of life.*

The artist states:

It is an homage to the strength and dignity of the Plains mother. I depict the maternal theme on multiple levels. The mother and the mare are guiding their young into the future. The twins face backward, as they are pulled ahead on the road. They are looking to the past for guidance, as they move toward their destiny.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

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Jamie Okuma

Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock/Okinawan-Hawaiian, b. 1977

Oren, Crow Warrior, 2000

Hide, cloth, glass beads, pigment, thread, hair, silk ribbon, ermine and otter fur, shells, metal, feathers, wood

Oren represents a proud Crow warrior in his glorious assemblage. On his back he wears an otter-skin arrow quiver case while holding a mirror bag and traditional lance. His headdress, long hair and hairstyle clearly identify Oren as Crow. For this piece Okuma was awarded the prestigious Best of Show ribbon in 2000 at SWAIA's Indian Market in Santa Fe.

Collection of Charles and Valerie Diker

Jamie Okuma

Luiŝeño/Shoshone-Bannock/Okinawan-
Hawaiian, b. 1977

Lady in Red, Lakota Woman, 2003

Hide, cloth, glass beads, hair, dentalium and
abalone shells, metal, sequins, wood

This fully beaded dress with complex
geometric designs is complemented by shell
earrings, a choker, a concho disk belt, a
beaded handbag and beaded moccasins. A
calico dress is worn underneath. The entire
outfit represents Northern Plains women's
ceremonial clothing of the late 19th century.

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