

Along The Robeson Trail

By Dr. Stan Kales, Director PSU Native American Resource Center

Where does Art come from? We imagine the artist, solitary, alone in a garret, or on an island, searching the soul for whatever feelings or dreams or memories may be hidden there -- which may be pulled out through creative abandon, out by hard work and blistered hands, or stained hands, or crippled hands -- pulled out of stone, of paint, of beads, of clay -- pulled out, given life, set free into the collective consciousness -- set free from loneliness to a plane where everyone can see. Art can be a very private and personal thing.

But Art also expresses more than any single artist. It expresses a culture, an idea, a universe of symbols and shared meanings; a certain time, a particular place, a specific history. In a sense everyone in that culture, in that time and place and history, is responsible for creating that Art -- everyone responsible for lending it whatever meaning or value or purpose it may have. If no one sees it as Art, what is it then?

And what is Indian Art? Is it shell beads and bone and feather? Is it clay brought up from underground by loving, straining hands? Is it carved on the face of a rock, on a cliff, in a cave? Is it locked in time, only to live in the past when cowboys and Indians rode the Plains? That is Indian Art, but is that all?

When the modern Indian takes up an airbrush, or computer graphics, raku or batik or silkscreen print, and tries to find in it some piece of himself, or some peace for herself -- some expression of her spirit, some venting of his soul -- is that not Indian Art too? I say it is.

For if we would bind art into a narrow box where only certain things

would fit, where only certain definitions would apply, who then would get to say which things were Art and which were not? Not I. Not you. Who then?

Art must be like Freedom, either free or chained -- either Art or nothing. Does it express? Does it refine? Does it uplift? Does it make beautiful? Does it capture? *Did an Indian make it?* Then it is Indian Art!

And what is the difference between Art and Craft? Craft is what we use -- Art, what we enjoy. It seems so simple, but is that all? How if we enjoy what we use, or use what we enjoy? How if we make a basket beautiful, or make a painting instructive? How if the beaded moccasins have such a glow they almost dance without their feet? Are they not Art? And if not Art, what then is Art that we should want to see it?

Webster tells us Art is "creative work, making or doing things that display form, beauty and unusual perception," and that Craft is distinguished from Art "in its application to a lesser skill involving little or no creative thought." There, that's clear enough.

But be careful what you call "a lesser skill" or "creative thought" lest you find yourself back in that narrow box where Art and Freedom cannot live.

The ancient Aztec tell us: "The artist -- disciple, abundant, multiple, restless, capable, practicing, skillful; maintains dialogue with his heart; meets things with his mind; draws out all from his heart; works with delight; makes things with calm, with sagacity; works like a true Toltec; composes his objects; works dexterously; invents; arranges

materials, adorns them, makes them adjust."

So what is Art? The Art of any culture tells us stories of the people. It tells about their past, what kind of world they come from, and how what happened in that past has shaped the present. It tells what is important -- what symbols they uphold, what they cherish, what means something to them. It shows how they feel.

Indian Art is a vast and mysterious mosaic. In it we see patterns of what is and what is yet to be. It is a vision of a culture, or at least a glimpse of their collective vision of the world within and around them. It is a vision as old as the land itself.

Art is a window into the room of culture. It is a window with many panels, representing the many media and styles used by the artists. The vision gained into that room of culture is a vision of many angles, of different points of view. These many perspectives must be seen as a whole in order to illuminate much of that inner, cultural, room. No one person, no single point of view, can adequately describe everything within that room.

Each of us is left to make his or her own final interpretation. Art holds a light beside the window, and calls people of vision to look inside.

Where does Art come from? The Spirit. What is Indian Art? The

Spirit. What difference between Art and Craft? The Spirit. What do we see in Art? The Spirit.

For more information, visit the Native American Resource Center in Old Main Building, on the campus of Pembroke State University.

Pediatric Pointers

by Dr. Joey T. Bell



I hope everyone that had a chance to go enjoyed the Indian Unity Conference in Fayetteville two weeks ago. I appreciate the folks that turned for my workshop on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome; let's use that information to help prevent FAS in our Indian communities.

I thought I'd open this article of infant constipation by telling one of my "grandma stories". I had a grandma bring a 6 month old in to see me in clinic for constipation. She said she had been giving the baby mineral oil for quite a while, but it didn't seem to be helping. While I was examining the baby I happened to ask the grandma how much mineral oil she had been giving. Imagine my surprise when she replied, "Oh, about one teaspoon four times a day...into the belly button!" Now I

don't knock home remedies, but this one caught me off guard!

Remember that true constipation occurs when an infant has hard bowel movements with very little moisture in them. Keep in mind that the frequency of bowel movements may have nothing to do with constipation. Anywhere from 3 stools per day to 1 stool every 3 days may still be normal for any given child.

And remember that baby's in the first few months of life have immature bowels that may effect the way they pass stools. I remember with my daughter that she would grunt, strain, turn red in the face and scream bloody murder but then she would pass a perfectly normal soft stool.

This is not true constipation, and an infant will outgrow this behavior in time. Most cases of true constipation can be relieved by just giving the infant a little extra water or juice to loosen up the bowel movements. Some parents will put a teaspoon of Karo Syrup in the baby's formula to help soften the stools. An occasional glycerin suppository is also OK, but

don't use them too frequently, the baby's bowels can become dependent on them.

Sometimes the simple procedure of using a rectal thermometer will stimulate the bowels to move. Be careful about switching formulas. It is usually diarrhea, not constipation, that is a sign of the formula disagreeing with the baby, so don't be too quick to make a change. (We'll talk about formula problems in a future issue). It may be wise with young infants to be cautious about using baby laxatives. You may want to consult a pharmacist before using these medications; they may be too strong depending on the age of the infant.

Very rarely does true constipation turn out to be a serious matter that needs medical attention. If you try the routine remedies for constipation for an adequate amount of time without relief, you may want to check with a doctor. The bottom line is that an infant's bowel movements may change in texture and frequency many times and all of it may be perfectly normal for that child. Use the simple remedies first to help correct true constipation, and check with your doctor only if the problem persists.

Thanks for tuning in, and we'll talk again next week.

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