beauty surrounds us

Beauty Surrounds Us celebrates the harmonious and graceful aesthetics present in all of these objects—from everyday tools and games to ceremonial regalia. When I look through these stunning masterworks—from the delicate ornaments made with beetle wings to the elk tooth dress made for an undoubtedly special little girl—it is sometimes difficult to remember that they were never meant to be in a museum. They were used and worn by real people—not unlike the visitors, students, and travelers we welcome everyday here at the George Gustav Heye Center.

The ideas that shaped *Beauty Surrounds Us* are also echoed in this glorious new space, the new Diker Pavilion for Native Arts and Cultures. Inspired by Native works, the Pavilion serves as a center for Native art and performance, an education facility for schoolchildren, and a gathering place for all the communities we are privileged to serve.

I am so pleased that this breathtaking presentation of Native American art, culled from the museum's renowned collection, is the inaugural exhibition of the Diker Pavilion for Native Arts and Cultures.

John Haworth (**Cherokee**)
Director, George Gustav Heye Center
National Museum of the American Indian

Huastec conch shell trumpet,
AD 900–1500. Panuco, Veracruz, Mexico.
Conch shell. 24/3562

In many indigenous cultures, conch shells provide a source of food as well as the raw material for making musical instruments. To make this conch shell trumpet, a Huastec artist cut or filed the top of the shell to create a mouthpiece. A musician controlled the trumpet's tone by positioning his hands inside the opening of the shell.

beauty surrounds us

This exhibition presents an array of breathtaking and culturally significant objects made by Native peoples throughout the Western Hemisphere. Each piece reveals the individual artistic expression of its maker. Each affirms the deeply rooted connection to the culture from which it hails. Together, these creations illustrate the richness and vitality of indigenous life, past and present, and demonstrate that Native peoples have always surrounded themselves with things of beauty.

Most indigenous peoples made everyday objects—clothing, tools, musical instruments, and accessories—that were functional and pleasing to the eye. Individuals drew on time-honored cultural and spiritual beliefs to shape and decorate their creations. Today indigenous artists continue to create breathtaking works that maintain the connection between the past and present. Their skilled hands ensure that beauty surrounds us.

Johanna Gorelick, NMAI, 2006

Nurturing Identity

Clothing nurtures and reflects identity. By wearing specific clothing styles or designs, Native men, women, and children communicate who they are and where they are from. The outfits children wear look the same as adults' clothing, affirming their importance in Native society.

This case displays clothing made for and worn by Native children from Alaska, the Great Plains, the Southwest, and Peru. Sewn from hides and fur or woven from wool, these pieces testify to the investment adults have made to nurture their children's cultural identity and participation in community life.

Taos Pueblo girl s moccasin boots, ca. 1930. Taos Pueblo, New Mexico. Hide. 24/6645

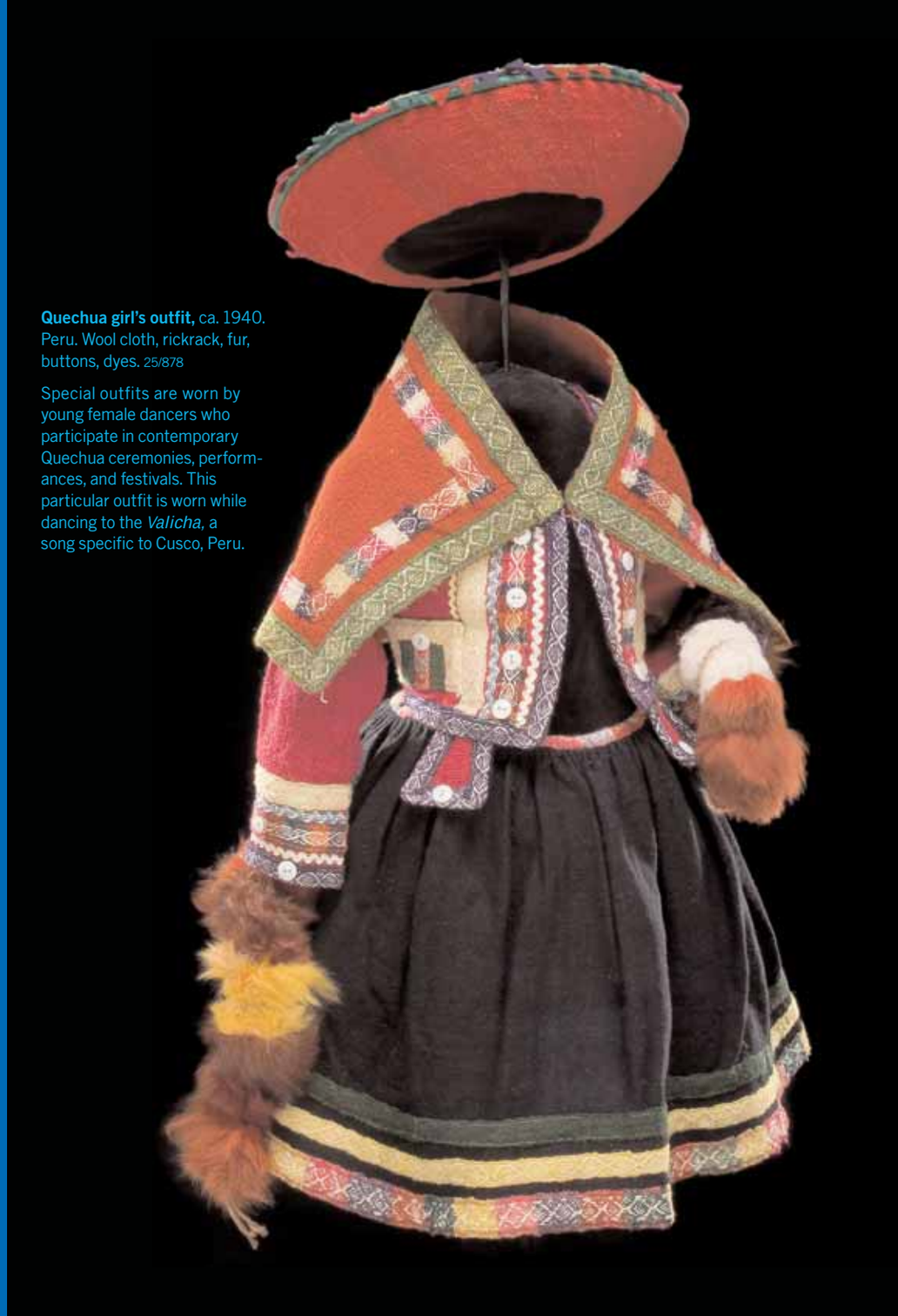
At Taos Pueblo, young women who have gone through a coming of-age ceremony wear moccasin boots for special social and ceremonial occasions. The boots sometimes include three or four folds, which can be straightened and raised to the thigh.

Yup ik boy s parka, ca. 1915. Akiak, Kuskokwim River, Alaska. Arctic squirrel skins, caribou hide, wolf skin, wool yarn. 11/6723

Yup ik women made parkas from hides or sealskins to protect their children from frigid temperatures. Sinew thread and bone needles were used for stitching. Parkas would be paired with pants and mukluks (fur boots), also made from animal skins.

Quechua girl's outfit, ca. 1940. Peru. Wool cloth, rickrack, fur, buttons, dyes. 25/878

Special outfits are worn by young female dancers who participate in contemporary Quechua ceremonies, performances, and festivals. This particular outfit is worn while dancing to the *Valicha,* a song specific to Cusco, Peru.



Recreation and Pastimes

Native people play games at every stage of life and at many social occasions, including ceremonial gatherings and festivals. Games, such as lacrosse, are of Native origin. Other pastimes, such as cards and cribbage, were brought to the Americas, where Native peoples adopted them and made them their own.

LEFT:
Inupiaq high-kick ball, ca. 1910. Point Barrow, Arctic Slope, Alaska. Sealskin, moss, sinew. 5/3586

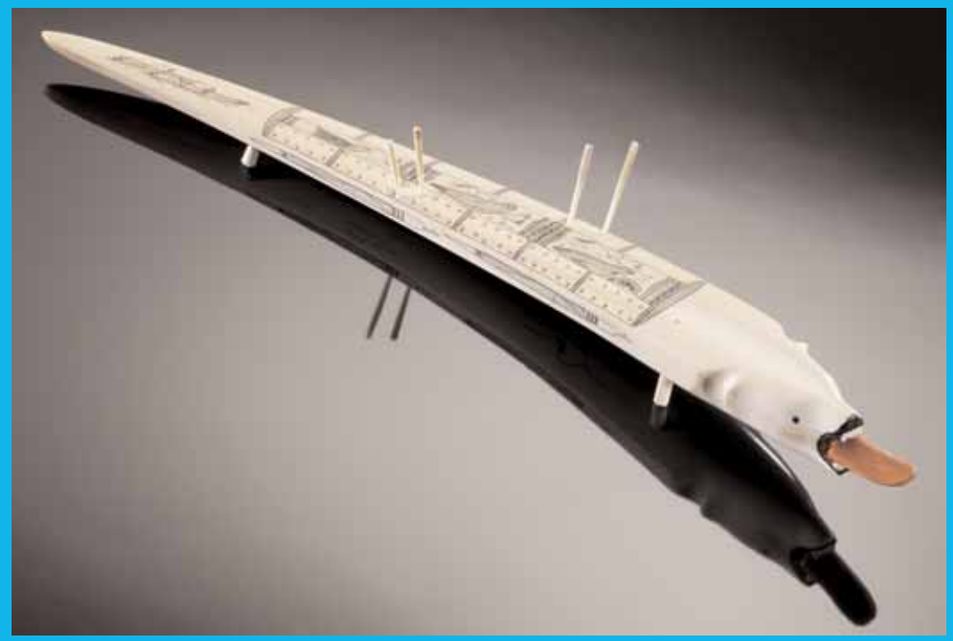
Inupiaq games such as high-kick ball were traditionally played when families or villages gathered together. This ball was made in Point Barrow, Alaska, the northernmost city in the U.S.

FAR LEFT:
Western Apache or **Chiricahua Apache playing cards,** ca. 1880. Arizona. Hide, paint. 6/4597

By the mid- to late 1800s, American Indians began making their own playing cards. Apaches hand-painted rectangles cut from rawhide to create decks containing forty cards of four suits.

BELOW:
Inupiaq cribbage board, ca. 1980. Aloysius Pikonganna (1909–1986). Sinrock, Alaska. Walrus ivory, pigment or paint. 25/6729

Cribbage boards fashioned from walrus ivory became popular souvenirs during the Alaska gold rush of the 1890s. They are still produced by Inuit artists today.



LEFT:
Tlingit frontlet headdress, ca. 1870. Nass River, British Columbia, Canada. Hide, maple or alder wood, ermine skins, abalone, sea lion whiskers, wool cloth, eagle down, paint. 9/6739

A Tlingit chief or other high-ranking individual wears a frontlet headdress to welcome guests to social gatherings. This frontlet—so-named because it is worn above the forehead—is decorated with the image of an ancestral crest animal, the Beaver.

RIGHT:
Kayapó man's headdress, ca. 1990. Gorotire, Brazil. Cordage, feathers, wool yarn, cotton twine. 25/4894

Roriro-ri caps are often worn by older, privileged Kayapó men to indicate their importance in the community. The caps are made by attaching sets of colorful bird feathers to a knotted cordage frame.

FAR RIGHT:
Flathead man's headdress, ca. 1915. Jocko Reservation, Montana. Wool felt hat, eagle feathers, cotton cloth, glass beads, silk, ribbon, horsehair, peacock feathers, ermine skins. 14/3536

An eagle feather headdress was worn by a warrior who had proven himself worthy in the eyes of his community. By the 20th century, these headdresses became more frequently associated with respect and privilege.

Honor and Respect

In some Native cultures, tribal members gain prominence by serving the community. In others, positions of honor are inherited. Respected individuals are often identified by the headdresses they wear. For Plains Indians in the 19th century, a bonnet of eagle fathers indicated a man's exceptional abilities or courage in battle. Today, headdresses are worn by highly respected individuals.

Elegance of Presentation

Adornments—including hats, hoods, jewelry, and other accessories—enable Native women to express who they are and where they are from during their daily lives, at social gatherings, and while traveling abroad. Ultimately, a woman's distinction rests on how she carries herself and presents the beauty of the pieces she wears.

ABOVE:
Nez Perce woman s hat, ca. 1910. Idaho. Hemp, cornhusk. 22/9589

Traditionally, Nez Perce women wore basketry hats woven from natural fibers such as hemp, beargrass, and cornhusks. Today the hats are considered treasured possessions, worn only at special ceremonial and social occasions.

RIGHT:
West Main Cree woman s hood, ca. 1840. Moose Factory, Ontario, Canada. Wool cloth, silk cloth, glass beads, sinew, thread. 16/9880

Designed to protect the wearer from the elements, peaked hoods were often ornamented with silk ribbon, glass beads, silk embroidery, and other trade goods, which signaled a woman s status and skill.

LEFT:
Tlingit rattle, ca. 1880. Alaska. Alder or maple wood, hide. 8/1650

Tlingit shamans shook round wooden rattles to communicate with the supernatural world. This rattle is carved with depictions of a bear and a hawk, which may have been spirits the shaman solicited to help cure illness.

RIGHT:
Aymara *charango* (guitar), ca. 1910. Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia. Armadillo shell, wood, shell, metal, twine. 13/5730

The *charango* is commonly played by Aymara men at indigenous festivals throughout the Andean regions of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. It is made using the shell of the *quirquincho*, or armadillo, whose spirit is said to live in the instrument.

BELOW:
Lakota drum and stick, ca. 1870. North or South Dakota. Wood, hide, paint. 10/5940

The Lakota traditionally used drums during powwows, large gatherings, and ceremonies. The painted image on the inside of this Lakota drum depicts a warrior on a blue horse; the horse's mane and tail are tied up, indicating the animal would be ridden in battle.

Communicating through Sound

Musical instruments accompany indigenous ceremonies and social gatherings, and can be used as a means of communication. For many, the beat of the drum reflects the heartbeat of Mother Earth. For others, the resonant sound of a conch shell signals the beginning of ceremonial activities. The soulful sound of a Plains flute expresses a young man's affection for the woman he loves.

RIGHT:
Acoma *olla* (water jar), ca. 1890. Pueblo of Laguna, New Mexico. Ceramic. 20/8482

This Acoma *olla* was used to carry and store water. A woman would dip the jar at the cistern and carry it back home on her head.

BELOW:
Odawa (Ottawa) feast bowl, ca. 1880. Michigan. Maple, brass tacks. 16/9037

For the Native people of the Great Lakes region, personal, tribal, and intertribal events were marked by feasts. Each person used his own spoon and bowl, which he owned. Bowls were often ornamented with carved designs, including animal effigies.

Tools of Existence

Tools used for everyday life are often enhanced with decorative elements that reveal the personal importance of the tool to the user. In North America, Native women stitched designs made of porcupine quills on tool cases and iron knives. In Brazil, young Bororo boys make arrows ornamented with the feathers of sacred birds, said to attract animals during hunting.

Carib celt, AD 1000–1600. Saint Vincent, West Indies. Stone. 2/5346

Carib people of the West Indies used celts—a form of stone axe—for carving canoes from ceiba trees. Carib canoes could hold as many as 100 people.

LEFT:
Paviotso (Northern Paiute) carrying basket, ca. 1900. Pyramid Lake Reservation, Nevada. Willow shoots, leather. 13/3795

Northern Paiute women made and used carrying baskets—also known as burden baskets—to carry pine nuts and other seed-foods. The basket's cone shape conformed to the carrier's back and evenly distributed the weight of the load, which was secured by a strap across the woman's forehead.

RIGHT:
Jicarilla Apache parfleche, ca. 1875. Arizona. Animal hide, paint. 12/7565

Native women created different-sized parfleches—bags made from rawhide—for holding clothing, feathers, arrows, food, and valuables. The tanned-hide fringe on the sides of this bag and the use of red, yellow, and green colors with a black outline are typical of Apache parfleches.

Containing Culture

In the past, bags took the place of pockets. Great care was taken to make parfleches, burden baskets, quill bags, and other containers, often sized and shaped for specific objects. Native people could tell at a glance where another Native person was from just by looking at the shape and decoration of their bag, or the materials used to make it.

BELOW:
Cree-Metis bag, ca. 1850. Manitoba, Canada. Moose or elk hide, porcupine quills, dyes. 5/3105

Quillwork—the indigenous art of stitching designs made of porcupine quills on leather—was widely practiced in Native North America. This porcupine quill bag was a necessary part of a Cree-Metis man's total outfit.

Karuk woman's two-piece skirt, ca. 1890. Northwestern California. Deerskin, beargrass, woodwardia, maidenhair, fern stems, abalone shells, clamshells. 15/1840–41

Unwed Karuk women wear two-piece skirts for ceremonial occasions. The skirts are decorated with clam and abalone shells, which clatter in musical accompaniment as the dancer moves.

Expressions of Movement

Native American regalia commonly include elements that move. Feathers sway as they are danced, fringe reveals the wearer's gait, and shell pendants mark the dancer's movement. Anyone can make sound with shells, but not everyone can use them for instrumental accompaniment. Dancers have to know how to wear these pieces and how to carry themselves.

ABOVE:
Walla Walla man's leggings, ca. 1880. Washington State. Cornhusk, hemp twine, wool yarn, wool cloth, cotton cloth, hide, rabbit skin, silk ribbon. 10/8091

When worn during ceremonial dances, the fringe on these Walla Walla man's leggings swayed in synch with the dancer's movements.

RIGHT:
Kiowa woman's legging moccasins, ca. 1890. Oklahoma. Leather, hide, glass beads, yellow pigment, German silver bosses. 2/1220

While northern Plains women wore moccasins *and* leggings, women on the southern Plains wore "legging moccasins" that combined features of both. Yellow and green pigments, representing the sun and fertility, were used to dye the soft, supple hide.

Yup'ik *agayut* (mask), ca. 1910. Goodnews Bay, Alaska. Driftwood, paint, iron nails. 12/927

Yup'ik people believe that animals will only surrender themselves to hunters who have demonstrated respect for the animal's soul. This mask was worn during a dance ceremony held to satisfy the spirit of an animal and ensure a successful hunt.

Power of Transformation

Elaborately carved and painted wooden masks are worn during ceremonies and performances to reenact origin stories, historical events, or encounters with supernatural beings. By donning a mask, the wearer is transformed into a character in one of these stories. Though masks can appear static when still, they come alive when worn.

ABOVE:

Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl) mask, ca. 1880. Cape Mudge, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. Red cedar, paint, hide, iron nails, twine. 19/8963

Kwakwaka'wakw dancers in British Columbia, Canada, wear masks that demonstrate their ancestors' ability to transform from human form to animal spirit. Transformation masks are created with hinges and strings, which enable the masked dancer to emerge as one being and transform into another at the pull of a cord.

LEFT:

Nahua mask, ca. 1950. San Francisco Ozomatlan. Guerrero, Mexico. Wood, paint. 24/5840

Beginning in the 16th century, Mexico's indigenous people drew on their rich mask-making tradition to lampoon their Spanish rulers. This Nahua mask appears to be a non-Native person wearing a helmet; Nahua people say it is a non-Native person being swallowed by an eagle.

Aleut (Koniag) hunter's hat, 1820–1860. Kodiak Island, Alaska. Spruce root, paint, glass beads, dentalium shells, wool cloth, sea lion whiskers. 6/9253

This hat protected an Aleut sea otter hunter from the glare of the sun while he paddled his kayak. The hat is decorated with beads and dentalium shells, which marked the hunter's elite status. Sea lion whiskers indicated the hunter's past successes.

Design as Identity

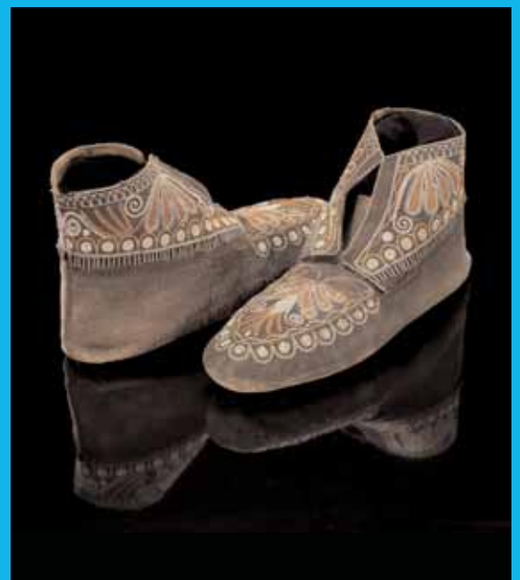
Native Americans have demonstrated a distinguished ability to integrate new materials into their creations, yet make them uniquely and culturally identifiable. Pre-contact art forms were modified to incorporate materials introduced from Europe and Asia, and new art forms were conceived to reflect new realities. Native art continues to flourish, and today, as yesterday, beauty surrounds us.

LEFT:
Shawnee bandolier bag, ca. 1830. Probably Ohio or Kentucky. Wool cloth, silk ribbon, cotton cloth, glass beads, wool yarn. 10/3133

Bandolier bags, worn with the strap across the body, are associated mainly with the Anishinaabe people of the Great Lakes region. Made by women, the bags were badges of status, worn exclusively by men for ceremonial and social occasions.

RIGHT:
Huron moccasins, ca. 1820. Quebec, Canada. Hide, moose hair, metal cones, dyes. 9/6604

These elaborately embroidered moccasins identified the wearer as a prominent member of the Wyandot (Huron) community. The floral decoration, standing in bold relief against the dark hide, was made using moose hair.



Acknowledgments

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The United States Congress; The City of New York, with support from the Office of the Mayor, New York City Council and the Manhattan Borough President's Office through the Department of Cultural Affairs; and the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, which is funded through Community Development Block Grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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Accenture
(Cempoala-style Huastec conch shell trumpet, AD 900–1500)

Bank of America
(Mapuche woman's jewelry, ca. 1900, 1990, 2000 and 2001)

Barbara and James Block
(Tsimshian chief's staff, ca. 1850)

Cantel Medical Corp.
(West Main Cree woman's hood, ca. 1840)

The Central National-Gottesman Foundation
(Wasco or Wishram spoons, ca. 1870)

David Cooke Fine American Art
(Walla Walla man's leggings, ca. 1880)

Paul W. Critchlow
(Lakota drum and stick, ca. 1870)

Jean C. and James W. Crystal
[Taíno guiro (musical gourd), 1900–1950]

Charles and Valerie Diker
(Shawnee bandolier bag, ca. 1830; Tlingit frontlet headdress, ca. 1870)

Lois Sherr Dubin
[Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw (Kwakiutl) mask, ca. 1880]

Donald Ellis
[Lenape (Delaware) knife and sheath, ca. 1760]

John and Margot Ernst
(Crow girl's dress, ca. 1915; Quinault woman's breastplate, ca. 1880)

Susan L. Foote and Steven Feinberg
[Kalaallitt (Greenland Inuit) girl's boots, ca. 1925]

Catherine Morrison and William T. Golden
(Kiowa woman's legging moccasins, ca. 1890)

Goldman, Sachs & Co.
(Mojave woman's collar, ca. 1910)

Grimmer Roche American Indian Art
(Jicarilla Apache parfleche, ca. 1875)

Samuel and Ronnie Heyman
(Chitimacha covered double-woven basket, ca. 1870)

Jonathan Holstein—The Four Corporation
[Odawa (Ottawa) feast bowl, ca. 1880]

Ned Jalbert
[Aleut (Koniag) hunter's hat, 1820–60]

Mr. and Mrs. Wilmot H. Kidd
(Cree-Metis man's gauntlet gloves, ca. 1930)

Francesca Kress and John Mayberry
(Sioux possible bag, ca. 1870)

The Lauder Foundation—
Leonard and Evelyn Lauder Fund
(Karuk woman's two-piece skirt, ca. 1890)

Andrew Lee
(Iroquois lacrosse stick, ca. 1890)

Ellen Liman—The Liman Foundation
(Caddoan bottle, AD 1500–1700)

Margot and Robert Linton
(Caddo woman's hair ornament, ca. 1900)

Loews Corporation
[Yup'ik yaaruin (storyknife), ca. 1880]

Phyllis Mailman
(Apache child's moccasins, ca. 1890–1920)

Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
(Huron moccasins, ca. 1820)

Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc.
(Western Apache or Chiricahua Apache playing cards, ca. 1880; Flathead man's headdress, ca. 1915)

Nancy and Morris W. Offit
(Cree-Metis bag, ca. 1850)

Pali Capital, Inc.
(Inupiaq cribbage board, ca. 1980)

William and Ronnie Potter
[Tapirapé tãwa ãxygetãra (Cara Grande Karajá mask), ca. 2000]

Benita and Stephen Potters
(Taos Pueblo girl's moccasin boots, ca. 1930)

Richman Family Foundation
(Nahua mask, ca. 1950)

Rockefeller Group International, Inc.
(Inupiaq man's toolbox, ca. 1880)

Valerie and Jack Rowe
[Acoma olla (water jar), ca. 1890; Navajo saddle blanket, ca. 1880]

Sealaska Corporation
(Tlingit rattle, ca. 1880)

Selz Foundation
[Paviotso (Northern Paiute) carrying basket, ca. 1900]

Seneca Nation of Indians
[Seneca gustoweh (headdress), ca. 1890]

Francesca and Bruce Slovin
(Haida ceremonial feast ladle, ca. 1870)

Ann and Richard Solomon
(Nez Perce woman's hat, ca. 1910)

Ted and Vada Stanley
(Kayapó man's headdress, ca. 1990)

Marianne and Roger Staubach
(Inupiaq high-kick ball, ca. 1910)

Howard Teich
(Moche trumpet, AD 200–600)

Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw
Charitable Trust
(Yup'ik boy's parka, ca. 1915)

Thornburg Charitable Foundation
[Shuar/Achuar man's tayukúnchi (back ornament), ca. 1900]

The Tisch Family
(Oglala Lakota courting flute, ca. 1870)

John L. Tishman
[Quechua child's outfit, ca. 1940; Kuna woman's wini (wrist and leg ornaments), 2005]

A. Robert Towbin and Lisa Grunow
[Shuar/Achuar man's wauo (ear ornaments), ca. 1915]

Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III
(Cora bag, ca. 1920)

Mr. and Mrs. John L. Weinberg
[Yup'ik agayut (mask), ca. 1910]

Beauty Surrounds Us is the inaugural exhibition of the Diker Pavilion for Native Arts and Cultures, the Heye Center s new art, education, and performance facility.

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New York, NY 10004
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