

ATADA at Red Earth:

Mike McKissick Reports

Just a quick synopsis of the Red Earth Fair held in September in Tulsa. Peter Carl, Scott Hale and myself staffed the booth. Thanks to a wonderful last minute shipment from Arch, we had supplies enough to satisfy everyone. We handed out over a hundred Directories . There was a large number of interested people. Both Native peoples and others were in attendance. We even had the curators of the Cowboy Hall in Oklahoma City, and the Philbrook Museum in Tulsa, both major institutions. There was much interest, even among the Native attendance, who were somewhat interested that there was such as ourselves out there. We should be getting some feedback in the form of Association applications, which I feel should be included in the directory packets if we plan to do this again. The flyers that Tom wrote were a hit; multi-lingual things are impressive. All in all, we were welcomed. I'm not so sure this is our marketplace, but I think we made a good impression. My thanks to Peter Carl for the idea and the time he spent out of his busy life.

-Mike



Member Close-Up

Kim Martindale

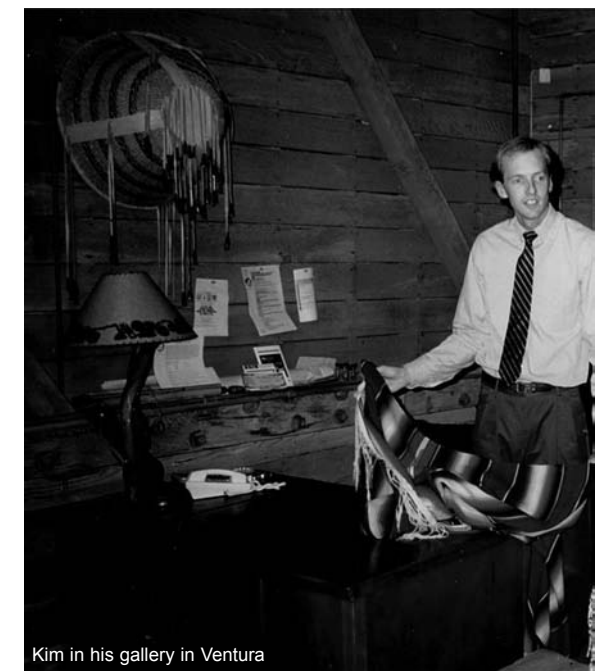


Kim in Nahaula Guatemala 2001

When asked about his life before American Indian art, Kim Martindale laughed and said, "There was no life before American Indian art." His sister told him that when he was still in a stroller, his mother would take the family to the Natural History Museum in Regina, Saskatchewan. "There was a diorama of Blackfoot Indians, and my mother would park my stroller in front and I would sit there happily for hours. If they tried to move me somewhere else, I'd cry. As a young boy, I used to pick up stones that I was convinced were arrowheads." By the time he was five, he had so much possibly Indian material that his family called his room the Kimrarium Museum.

The Martindale family moved to Santa Barbara when Kim was 12, where he started going to Indian shows. "I met Chicago collectors George and Grace Marsik at a

Dealer/gallerist/show producer Kim Martindale is a world-class multi-tasker and a long-time veteran of the American Indian art world. But his broader interest in many kinds of art has led him to include tribal art in his Indian art shows and to produce shows focusing on contemporary fine art. He is currently partnering with John Morris to produce a show in Santa Fe debuting in August 2009 that will feature a broad spectrum of contemporary fine art and Native American and tribal art . Kim's help and generosity were invaluable in putting on the ATADA Lifetime Awards dinner.



Kim in his gallery in Ventura

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show in Los Angeles when I was 13," Martindale said, a friendship that led to his first sale as a budding dealer. "The Marsiks took me to the swap meet at the Rose Bowl. When we got there, they took off in one direction and I took off in the other, so we wouldn't be competing. I found what I believed to be a Navajo transitional blanket, which cost \$125. I only had \$110, which I had saved from a year of baby sitting and cutting grass. I knew I'd still need something left for lunch, so I offered the seller \$100 and he took it. When I saw the Marshicks again, they had a dealer friend with them. They loved the blanket, and their friend want-



Kim Martindale with Vivi Letsou and staff

ed to buy it, and asked me to name a price. I really wanted to keep it - it was good looking and had Spiderwoman crosses, which I love and now have in my logo -- but I told myself that if I wanted to learn to buy and sell, I should start with this blanket. I asked \$400, and when he said yes, I almost fainted - that was more money than I'd ever seen."

At a show before his trip to the Rose Bowl, the first show Kim attended in California, the Marsiks introduced Martindale to Don Bennett. "I was 13, and he told me, 'If you

want to learn, come into my booth and I'll teach you to fold rugs.'" Bennett ended up teaching Martindale a lot more.

Martindale worked for Bennett every weekend there was a show in California. "My parents would drive me to the show or drop me off at Don's for the weekend, and then when I turned 16, I could drive myself. I drove out to Santa Fe to work with Don for his first show at the Hilton that year and many years after that." Kim took over management of Bennett's Santa Fe shows when he was 20, and continued to manage the shows for



Kim with Grace and George Marsik

many years after that.

When he was 17, Martindale went to college in Iowa, and hunted for Indian things in the Midwest. "That's where I met Ramona Morris, who was in Kansas City then."

When he was 18, Martindale went to school in Japan, where he "learned about Asian art - before that, I only knew Asian art from what I call the Late Restaurant Period." He would return to Santa Fe in August to work with Bennett,

and when he was 19 and back in the U.S., he went to work for Sotheby's in Los Angeles in their warehouse. He ended up working with the Asian art department and used to fly to Hong Kong to work on sales.

He also continued working at and attending Indian art shows, and when he was 21, he started the Marin show - this February marks the 25th anniversary of that first show. "Actually, the first year, the show was held at the Concourse exhibit facility in San Francisco, but we moved to the Marin Center the second year and have been there ever since."

Why did Martindale feel the need to become a show manager as well as a dealer/gallerist? "Out of young passion," he replied, "and because of Don, I got involved with production when I was 16. It all comes from loving art. And both sides, dealer and show manager, complemented my goal of helping to spread knowledge of and interest in various art forms. I feel responsible for all those exhibitors and for the larger statement they all make. For the most part, I believe that a show's combined energy can make a bigger statement than a single gallery can. Besides, the art world seems to be event-driven now, and a unified effort can create interest and a dialog. Also, I like to be part of something bigger than myself, and like to see the industry working together."

Martindale estimates that for the last five years or so, he spends about 90 percent of his time producing shows and 10 percent running his Venice gallery. "At first, I was primarily a dealer, then for a long time I split my time 50/50, but in the last five years, I have spend much more time on show production." He misses being in

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Kim Martindale with sister Linda Neilsen

the gallery - "the one-on-one contact with collectors" - but shows demand more time. "I had to make a decision to devote more time to production if the shows were to really progress."

One of those shows in the L.A. Art Show, held at the Los Angeles Convention Center the last weekend in January, which Martindale has produced for 14 years, grew out of his passion for Fine Art. In fact, Martindale says he only produces shows focused on art he feels passionate about.

A current passion is to mount two museum exhibits: modern interpretations of Native American art by non-Native contemporary artists, and an exhibit of Native American artists' reflections on contem-

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porary art.

But no matter how demanding show production becomes, Martindale said he will "always keep a gallery - that is a part of my life. I will never devote less than 10 percent to the gallery, and hope to improve on that."

When describing his gallery's inventory, Martindale said, "I am not a specialist (although more dealers are becoming specialists these days). Along with baskets, pottery, beadwork and jewelry and Guatemalan and Mexican masks, we have work by contemporary Latin American and Native American artists."

Also, "Being a dealer helps me to be a better producer. I set up at other shows, which helps me understand exhibitors. My style is to create a comfortable process for exhibitors."

In the more than 30 years Kim Martindale has been in the American Indian art busi-



Kim, Goleta CA 11 years old

ness, he has seen many changes. Among the biggest: "When I first started, there were very few people who presented this material as art, but as ethnographic material instead. The pricing structure was lower, and people would just stack their things on a table. This was part of the American Indian business tradition, and some dealers at the Marin show still exhibit that way.

"But the tribal art dealers always presented their material solely as an art form, and in the last 30 years, both dealers and museums have taken to presenting Native American material as art. Many dealers have gone from being traders to gallerists, and all this has resulted in an increase in pricing.

"In addition, there is now a trend towards dealers specializing, really knowing baskets, beadwork, etc. Specialists have the advantage of knowing values, collections, and can home in on a price and buy and sell at the right price. And when you are looking for a specific item - a



Danvers MA 9 years old

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He also plans to create a show for the San Francisco Fine Art Dealers Association which will debut at Fort Mason in September 2010. He will continue to exhibit as a dealers at Terry Schurmeier's Great Southwestern show in Albuquerque, at a show in Denver (formerly held in Cody, WY), and at his own Marin show. It's a full schedule, but Kim Martindale isn't complaining - collecting, buying, selling and exhibiting art is what he has wanted to do since he was a small child, and his enthusiasm still shows.

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(310) 822-9245

25th Annual Marin Indian Show: Art of the Americas
February 21 and 22, 2009
Marin Center/Embassy Suites, San Rafael, California
www.marinshow.com

14th Annual Los Angeles Art Show
January 21-25, 2009
Los Angeles Convention Center
www.laartshow.com

www.krmartindale.com

Saskatoon Saskatchewan 6 years old



basket or a piece of beadwork, for instance - you go to that person."

Martindale believes that in two or three years from now, he will have more time to devote to his gallery. Before that, however, there are two new shows he wants to produce. First, with co-producer John Morris, he plans to put on The Santa Fe Show in August 2009 at El Museo Cultural, "a new concept, a ten-day show that will start the weekend before Indian Market and continue through the next weekend. The exhibits will be American Indian, tribal, contemporary painting - all kinds of art."