

# Salvator Mundi

I've been fortunate to see a lot of wonderful things through my job as editor of this magazine. But I would say the highlight of my career was being in the room at Christie's on November 15 and watching Leonardo's *Salvator Mundi* sell for \$450 million after a 19-minute bidding war between two phone bidders standing right next to each other on the Christie's elevated platform, unassumingly raising each other by \$10 million bids at a time each second.

"The masterpiece by Leonardo, Christ the Savior, been in the collection of three kings of England, King Charles the First, King Charles the Second and King James the Second. What am I offered here? Let's open this at \$70, \$70, \$75 million," the auctioneer Jussi Pykkänen rattled off to get the sale going. The increments started at \$10 million, then lowered to \$5 million and then, at one point, to \$2 million, all accompanied by gasps from the packed room which included dealers Larry Gagosian and David Zwirner as well as collectors such as Bli Broad, Michael Ovitz, Martin Margulies and Stefan Bdlis.

I travel to New York quite often but I live in Arizona. I didn't know the faces in the room but luckily I quickly befriended an editor from *Elle Décor* magazine who was standing next to me in our little sectioned-off quarter of the room. We were the first two to arrive. The room was completely empty except for us. As the room gradually filled, he started telling me who everyone was, what they owned, what real estate belonged to them. It was the perfect narration for the evening events.

When the hammer finally was brought down at \$400 million—bringing the actual sale, with the juice, to \$450.3 million—the room erupted in cheers. Cheers that replaced the gasps that were heard when Alex Rotter, Christie's co-chairman of postwar and contemporary, jumped the bidding \$30 million to arrive at \$300 million and then another \$30 million to arrive at the final price, which in the parlance of today, was the mic drop of all mic drops.

At the end of the night, while people have criticized the sale, the auction house, the painting and whatever else they might see as a target, what remains true is that for that moment, in that 19-minute span, art and the acquisition of art was at the center of the universe and managed to grab the headlines from whatever else was happening in the world at the moment. And, as a magazine devoted to art and art collecting, we find that to be a very good thing.

Let's hope 2018 brings many more joyous moments of art and art collecting. It's a wonderful experience and we feel everyone should be able to bring original art into their lives and reap the benefits it offers.

Sincerely,



Joshua Rose  
Editor



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# Life Ways

An exhibit at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture explores Apache history.

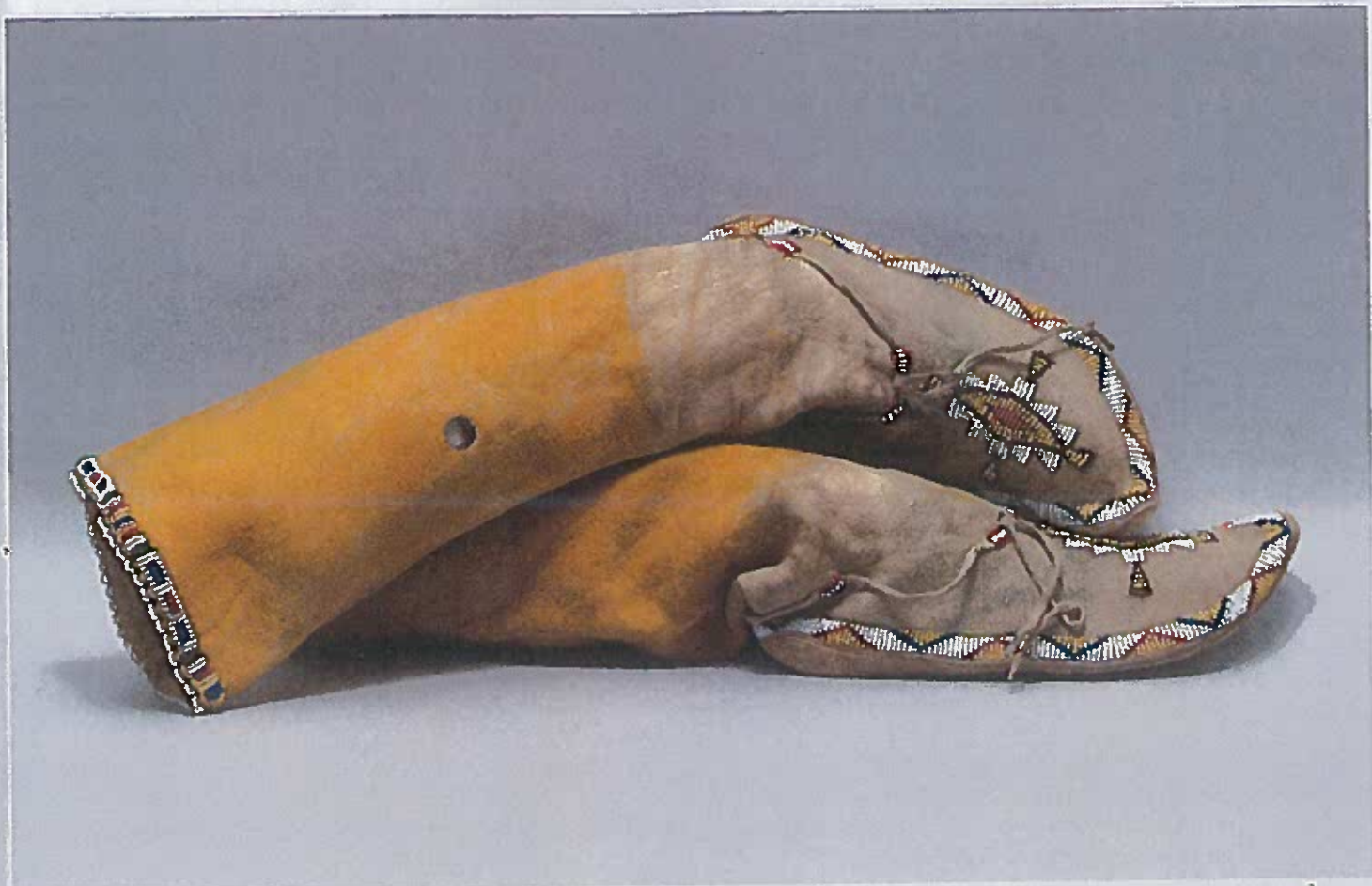
SANTA FE, NM By Iris McLister

For many years, Apaches—and many Native American tribes for that matter—have been associated with war and pillaging. At *Lifeways of the Southern Athabaskans*, a new exhibition at Santa Fe, New Mexico's Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, visitors will find nary a tomahawk on view; one can however, expect to discover intricate woven baskets, ceremonial robes and well-loved dolls. On opening night, curator and MIAC's education director Joyce Begay-Foss introduced herself as a member of the Navajo Nation, and said she had a deep curiosity about other tribes; it makes sense then that she found herself at the helm of a show as thought-provoking as *Lifeways of the Southern Athabaskans*. Begay-Foss acknowledged the word "Athabaskan" is one most of us are largely unfamiliar with. Athabaskan is something

of an umbrella category that includes over 50 dialects, which, though unique, share characteristics stylistically and conceptually. Athabaskan languages are spoken by indigenous people in Oregon, Alaska and the Canadian Yukon, among other areas, but this exhibition focuses primarily on more regional, Southwestern tribes. By exploring these connections, the *Lifeways of the Southern Athabaskans* acts not only as a visual display but also as an educational, anthropological endeavor.

"The most interesting part of this exhibition," says Begay-Foss, "was working with different tribal consultants from Jicarilla, San Carlos and Mescalero. They told me information that I would never have learned even by doing research on certain objects or tribal communities." Many items on view have never been publicly shown. Particularly striking were a pair of what looked like large, open-sided cloth moccasins. These were horse hoof coverings, which would obscure the clip-clopping giveaway of a stolen horse, muffling tracks and sounds so the theft would go undetected. "The show came about because I was concerned about the lack of information in schools or textbook material





2

about the Apachean groups," explains Begay-Foss. "In academic and historical documents the Apachean history is portrayed in a very negative context. Most visitors and school groups that come to the museum know maybe a few Pueblos, Navajo and very few know about the Apaches."

The show is oriented around artifacts, or what Begay-Foss calls "material culture" from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during a period when the Apache tribe was largely nomadic, hunting and foraging in the harsh environs of the Southwest. Instead of organizing artifacts according to tribe association, Begay-Foss grouped things together based on what they were used for and by type. With sensitivity and elegance, *Lifeways of the Southern Athabaskans* deftly demonstrates its subjects' deep relationship with the natural world. Large-scale, black-and-white photographs serve as dramatic backdrops for a range of objects, from small purses to arrows. Alongside ceremonial attire, elaborately decorated mantels and heavily beaded

1. Chiricahua Apache quiver, ca. 1886, brain tanned leather, glass seed beads and flannel wool cloth. Gift of Mr. Grover B. Minser 44379/12. Photo by Addison Doty, Courtesy Museum of Indian Arts and Culture.
2. Mescalero Apache moccasins, ca. 1860-1900, buckskin, beads, yellow ochre. Courtesy of John and Linda Comstock and the Abigail Van Vleck Charitable Trust 1705/12. Courtesy Museum of Indian Arts and Culture.
3. Dana B. Chase (1848-ca. 1920), *Apache runner*, New Mexico, ca. 1884-92. Courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (NMHM/DCA), Neg. No. 110506.



3

leggings are more poignant artifacts, like well-loved dolls and an especially tiny pair of green-beaded moccasins.

Homes were ingeniously designed to be portable or else entirely disposable. Jicarilla and Mescalero Apache used animal hides to make teepees, while the Chiricahua instead constructed tree branch and mud huts called wickiups. Homes were built by women, a somewhat surprising division of labor between the sexes, until you learn that Apache tribes have largely matrilineal family structures—women were hugely important to the weft and weave of the tribe's day-to-day life. One of the most beguiling aspects of the show was the detail and ornament applied to things we might consider everyday—such as a brightly colored, meticulously beaded knife sheath. Patterning on a man's work shirt incorporated esoteric symbols: loosely depicted stars and moons and swirled, astral-like forms.

"As the curator," Begay-Foss notes, "I wanted to

4. Carl Wermtz (1874-1944), *White River Apache woman dressing young girl's hair*, Arizona. Courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archive (NMHM/DCA), Neg. No. 037417.
5. Jicarilla Apache women's cape, ca. late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, deerskin, bone beads, brass bells, glass seed bead, ochre dye and sinew. Gift of Helen Blumenschein 7461/12. Courtesy Museum of Indian Arts and Culture.
6. Mescalero Apache Burden Basket, ca. late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, willow and tin tinklers. Courtesy of John and Linda Comstock and the Abigail Van Vleck Charitable Trust 23255/12. Courtesy Museum of Indian Arts and Culture.



4



5



6

portray the Apachean groups based on their material culture and call attention to their language and lifeways. I am glad to have been given this opportunity to curate the exhibition, and I hope visitors come away with a better understanding of Apachean peoples." It's no small feat to put on a show of this scale and duration; for Begay-Foss, the most challenging aspect "comes down to funding and also the type of objects that are in our collections. It also takes a team effort from the other departments within the museum system to come together and make exhibitions happen." «

Through July 7, 2019

**Lifeways of the Southern Athabaskans**

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