

Fritz White

Fritz White was born January 14, 1930 in Milford, Ohio, near Cincinnati. The little Miami River, which borders Cincinnati on the east, was a main thoroughfare north and south for the Shawnee tribes that were settled throughout Ohio. Artifacts of the Shawnee, Miami, Mingo and even mound builders were common to the area. From these artifacts, his interest in the Native American and their mythology was kindled. As a kid, I used to think when I followed a path along the river that the Shawnee had been there only moments ago. Perhaps my need to do the Indian came from all the stories I heard and read growing up. That interest and feeling has grown dramatically with my research into the day-to-day life of the American Indian. The thrill comes from exploring one small facet of life after another & we as observers have barely begun to tell their story. We will never be able to tell the entire saga of the thousands of years of their civilization.

Although the central theme of White's art is the history of the American West, it is anything but traditional. Indeed, White made his break with tradition early. By the time he was 12, his father had enrolled him in an adult art class in a college in Cincinnati. The war was going on and those small colleges needed all the students they could get, so they agreed to take me. I got a lot of special attention from the teachers. It was great, he recalls.

While art might have been his first love, it was not until 1962 that White entered the three-dimensional world of the sculptor. Without formal help or instruction from other artists, White developed his own unique style. Sculpting in clay came next, and White's art stood out in the crowd. His distinctive style was immediately applauded and appreciated by the art buying public. A decade later, in 1972, White was elected as a member of the Cowboy Artists of America, and he is now widely accepted as one of the finest sculptors of this century. He strives to capture the spirit of the persevering American in his work, and his monumental sculpture, *Out of the Mystic Past*, was the first outdoor sculpture, installed at the Cowboy Artists of America Museum in Kerrville, Texas.

However, more important than the astonishing number of medals and accolades he has won is White's own sense of remaining true to the vision he has for his art. While his way of doing things may be different, no one can dispute that it works beautifully. Resisting the status quo, he confidently proclaims, "I have developed what I feel is the only intelligent way to approach the challenge of making a piece of sculpture feel alive."

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