

The Virtual Coe *Being together while being apart....*

February 19, 2021

*Do moose
and porcupines get along?*





In the 19th century, Indigenous makers from across the Great Lakes and Northeast Woodlands adapted centuries-old art forms such as quillwork and moose hair “embroidery” into new forms. While moose hair, porcupine quills, and birchbark materials go back to the beginning of making in regions across North America where they are available, handkerchief or glove case making began in conjunction with the rise in tourism and expanding White settlement across the Northeast. This particular case is a brilliant example of this wise and innovative expansion of form.

The **Huron-Wendat** are recognized for this particularly floral style and detailed moose hair embroidery or applique. Both of those technical terms are not quite accurate for the

process of using dyed moose hair for detailing. The colorful moose hairs are gathered together and then carefully stitched down onto the surface of buckskin or other hides for adornment on clothing or pouches, or as seen here, birchbark, creating floral or figurative details. The hair itself is typically harvested from the cheek or neck and occasionally the rear of the large animals. By the 19th-century, aniline or chemical-based manufacture dyes widely replaced natural dyes, resulting in a change to colors and brightness, providing the makers with a larger and more varied color palette.

For more about this piece, click [here](#).

Artist Unknown (Huron-Wendat attrib.), [Handkerchief or Glove Case](#), c. 1860.
Birchbark, silk, porcupine quill, moose hair, 10 x 5.5 in. NA1050

*Sometimes
the object finds you...*



Alison Guzman recently joined the Coe Center as a writing and research intern. Alison was born in Austin, Texas to a Tejano/Paraguayan family. She grew up in Central and South America and Africa returning to the US for college, completing her master's at American University in 2008. In addition to her work in international community economies, in December 2020, she graduated from the online Museum Studies certificate program at the Institute of American Indian Arts. She lives in southern Chile where she works closely with Indigenous Mapuche communities and has recently joined the Coe Center as a writing and research intern. Here, she writes about this bowl:

There was something about this set of bowls, one of a pair, that caught Ted's attention during a trip to the market in central Mexico in the middle of the hustle and bustle of the crowd. Indeed, sometimes the object finds you, and not the other way around.



The design suggests that this bowl may have been used to make concoctions of sorts- whether it be medicines, ritual beverages, or other forms of remedies and nutrients. Ted believed this bowl originated from the Post Classic period, around AD 1250, perhaps in today's western or northern Mexico, when great civilizations were thriving, such as the Toltec and Nahuatlacas. Ritual ceremonies were common in those times, as offerings and healings, and as solemn gatherings for the family elites. Ceremonial beverages were common, such as the cacao, fermented pulque from the maguey plant, or sacred hallucinogenic brews.

At times, the design in the bowl may look like a plant or flower. With its six triangle petals, and one more on each side, the center dot illuminates from within the pistil of the flower. The bottom half forms the rest of the plant, with its cross-like petals and stem. But taking a closer look again, one can depict an image of the sun and the midnight skies, as clear as the day and night. The cosmos at that, beckoning the traveler to its universe.

Artist Unknown (Mexican Pre-Contact), [Bowls](#), c. 1250 CE, Post Classic. Ceramic, 1.5 x 4 diam. in. PC0005a

You got to watch this one...



[Karen Ann Hoffman](#) hosted COLLECTIONS SPOTLIGHT on February 16, 2021. If you missed it—experience it [here](#).



Karen Ann is a member of the Oneida Nation and lives in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. She studied Iroquois-raised beadwork with Samuel Thomas and Lorna Hill and now teaches the technique to others. The NEA named her a Heritage Fellow in 2020. She exhibits nationally, and her artwork is in many public collections. Hoffman earned her master's degree in human development from the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point.

COLLECTIONS SPOTLIGHT, a program developed in partnership with **First American Art Magazine**, is an interactive, online monthly experience that brings together diverse scholars and Native artists who select artworks from the **Coe's collection** to interpret and discuss. It is an amazing journey that brings the past, present, and future together through the artist's perspective

and art. The virtual Zoom format also brings together attendees from diverse regions. Attendee questions are accepted throughout the experience via chat, and at the end, open to audio. These events are free and open to the general public.

To view past The Virtual Coe issues, please click [here](#).

[Donate today](#)



The Ralph T. Coe Center for the Arts is a private operating 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent of the Internal Revenue Code. Please [donate online](#) or mail checks to the Ralph T. Coe Center for the Arts, 1590 B Pacheco Street, Santa Fe, NM 87505. Your support creates connection. Thank you.

Ralph T. Coe Center for the Arts | 1590 B Pacheco Street, Santa Fe, NM 87505
[\(505\) 983-6372](tel:(505)983-6372) | info@coeartscenter.org | coeartscenter.org

[Unsubscribe](#) | [View our Privacy Policy](#)

Connect with us

