

# Montana's Circle of American Masters

*Inspired by Our Lands...Made by Our Hands*



## MCAM

MONTANA'S CIRCLE *of* AMERICAN MASTERS

### Review Criteria

The folk arts are complex with a diversity of aesthetics requiring a broad range of criteria to encompass all the art forms. Consideration must be given to the traditional methods and techniques used, the skill of the artist, and the method in which they learned their art.

This award focuses on master artists, how they learned their art form, their body of work, and their contribution to their community and art form. As the embodiment of a tradition, the body of art should be of high quality, considering aesthetic excellence, workmanship, and authenticity. The artist's contribution should speak to how a cultural way has been sustained.

#### 1. Artistic Excellence

The aesthetic qualities of the body of work depend on its design and how that design creates visual appeal, marries with the materials, and satisfies function. The design:

- ✓ Is visually appealing.
- ✓ Has components (color, texture, shape, proportion) that are balanced and relate to each other as a whole.
- ✓ Satisfies and even enhances the function.
- ✓ Reflects the artist's understanding of materials, their limitations and possibilities.
- ✓ Displays the artist's investment of time, thought, knowledge, and skill.
- ✓ Shows strength in the originality or tradition use of design.

#### 2. Craftsmanship

The technique with which the art is executed in the body of work is important both to enhancing the design and in fulfilling the intended function of the pieces. The work:

- ✓ Demonstrates the artist's technical skill in working in the medium.
- ✓ Proves the artist's proficiency in the tools and techniques required for the work.
- ✓ Proves the artist's working knowledge of the medium, its qualities, and its limitations.
- ✓ Is constructed soundly, with a view to fulfill its function.
- ✓ Shows that the artist has paid attention to all details in the work.
- ✓ Illustrates the artist's mastery of the execution of the art form.

3. Authenticity

The authenticity of the work speaks to both honoring the past and giving to the future.

The body of work of a Master artist:

- ✓ Reflects established traditions, forms, mediums of the culture or group it represents.
- ✓ Has become a significant part of its artistic tradition.
- ✓ Reflects individual growth and creativity within the tradition.

4. Contribution

Traditional arts are not created in a vacuum. Therefore it is important that the selection criteria for a Master include the individual's contribution to the community through sharing the art form and raising public awareness. A Master is:

- ✓ Held in respect by his or her peers and in the community, a position proven by the level of support and the awareness of their art form in the community.
- ✓ Has made on-going contributions to the excellence, vitality, and public appreciation of their art form through teaching, advocacy, organizing, and preserving their artistic tradition.
- ✓ Has contributed to the awareness of their art form by significantly increasing the public visibility of traditional arts, crafts, and artists.

For more information about the program or the nomination process, contact the Montana Arts Council at (406) 444-6430.