



Blackbear Bosin (1921-1980)

Born to a Kiowa father and a Comanche mother on June 5, 1921, in Anadarko, Oklahoma, Blackbear Bosin became an internationally recognized artist. He was named Blackbear - Ksate Kongia - after his great-grandfather, and was raised in a Comanche surrounding for the early years of his childhood. He attended St. Patrick's Mission schools, where he was first exposed to the traditional art of the Five Kiowa painters. (these were 5 paint He started painting then and never ceased until the day of his death, August 9, 1980. He was a graduate of Cyril High School and attended a trade school in Chilocco while painting at night and peddling his pictures for \$2.50. He left Oklahoma and joined the Marine Corps where he served for two years during World War II. He was given the opportunity to hold his first one-man show in Honolulu, Hawaii. It was a sellout.

Back to Wichita, the city he adopted as his home, he developed his skills further and devoted all his efforts to portray scenes and tales of his beloved Indian heritage. Although he held several positions in the commercial art field with local businesses, Blackbear's deep desire was to be a full-time artist.

National Geographic gave Blackbear Bosin his first national recognition in March 1955, with the publication of his painting, "Prairie Fire."

From there on, working from his studio, Blackbear Bosin, contributed to the traditional Indian painting with a majestic, daring and dramatic touch.

Blackbear Bosin used several media in his works but kept coming back to his favorite one, an opaque tempera called gouache, although he experimented in acrylic paints in his later years, enjoying the challenges of a completely alien medium.

Among the most famous pieces Blackbear Bosin created is a mural commissioned by the Farm Credit Bank of Wichita, in Wichita, Kansas, entitled "From Whence All Life." His only sculpture, the design of which he donated to the City of Wichita, "Keeper of the Plains", is a forty-four foot tall sculpture of Cor Tan steel expressing the essence of the Indian heritage. The "Keeper of the Plains" remains Blackbear's most famous contribution to the City of Wichita.

He was commissioned by the Franklin Mint of Franklin, Pennsylvania, to contribute to a metallic Historical series and by the United States Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C., to create several paintings.

Besides being recognized as an artist, Blackbear Bosin held executive positions on the Mid-America All-Indian Center Board of Trustees; the Indian Center Museum's Acquisition Board of Wichita and the Kansas Arts Commission. He was made a Fellow of International Arts and Letters in Kreuzlingen, Switzerland.

With his art, Blackbear Bosin not only contributed to American Indian Art but helped enhance a better understanding of his heritage by presenting it so beautifully to the world.

His works brought him recognition across the nation and overseas. Among the numerous awards he was given was the Waite Phillips Award of the Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma; the National American Indian Achievements Award for Visual Arts in Los Angeles and the A. Price Woodard Brotherhood Award. In 1965 he was selected to represent American Painters at the Festival of the Arts' reception at the White House. For his tremendous contribution to the State of Kansas he was nominated "Governor's Artist" by Governor Robert Bennett in 1977. His paintings have been shown widely across the nation and featured in numerous private collections. Some pieces are shown on a permanent basis at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona; the Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma; the Whitney Museum in Cody, Wyoming and the Indian Center Museum in Wichita.

With recognition and fame, Blackbear Bosin became the theme of many written articles in Time Magazine, Indians of Today, Song from the Earth, American Indian Art, and Who's Who in American Art, to list only a few publications. Blackbear Bosin's works became recognized as the utmost in his field and placed him among the leaders of American Indian painters. As such he was asked to deliver many speeches and lecture before multiple audiences such as the University of California in Berkley, Princeton University, the Wichita Art Association, the Wichita State University and local museums.