

Western artist Tom Lucas passionate about preserving “old ways”

Using his art to preserve the “old ways” of Native American culture has been a life-long passion for Western artist Tom Lucas.

The artist, who lives in Lander, Wyo. on the Wind River Indian Reservation, calls Native American traditions “a deeply-rooted part of me. I’ve lived it, I’ve gathered sweet sage and made drums and whistles for the sun dance. For the last 45 years on the reservation, I’ve been blessed and honored to be a part of their culture.”

Lucas, a self-taught artist, spent much of his youth on Indian reservations in Montana and Wyoming. During those years he developed a deep admiration for Native American culture that led him to learn the centuries-old techniques of making war bonnets, drums whistles, bows, arrows and beadwork.

Lucas’ skill at ancestral tool making has been documented in a Wyoming Public Television film series about the Sheep Eater Indians (Mountain Shoshone). He recently completed a big horn sheep bow, knife, comb and scoop that will be permanently displayed in a Yellowstone National Park Sheep Eater Indian exhibit.

Eventually, Lucas turned to oil painting as another medium for preserving a vanishing way of life. Today he uses a paintbrush and oil to tell the stories that are a “direct reflection of my life experiences.”

In 2009, Lucas’ oil painting, “Brave Heart”, won the “Purchase Award” at the Wind River Valley Artists Guild’s National Art Show in Dubois. The painting is on permanent display at the guild’s gallery in Dubois. Lucas also participates in Heart of the West show in Lander and 2 Shot Goose Art show in Torrington, Wyo.

Lucas spends most of the year in his Lander studio or at the Silver Sage Gallery in Dubois he owns in partnership with Dubois artist Gary Keimig. In January to March

2010, Lucas will demonstrate and exhibit his work in booth 139 at the Celebration of Fine Art show in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Lucas' paintings and Native American tool replicas can be purchased at the Silver Sage Gallery in Dubois (www.silversagegallery.com), his Lander home gallery (www.tomlucas.us), and Shadid Fine Art Gallery in Edmund, Okla. (www.shadidfineart.com). Lucas may also be reached at 307-335-9384.

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