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A unique collection representing the traditional and contemporary aspects of American Indian art is currently drawing capacity-plus crowds at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland and is slated to open September 26 for a two-weeks showing in Berlin, Germany.

In addition to examples of the traditional Indian forms of past cultural achievements, out of which the experimental developments are growing, the show includes scheduled readings of ancient Indian legends, modern poetry and prose. Fred Stevens, Navajo sand painter, and his wife, Bertha, are with the exhibition, demonstrating sandpainting and weaving.

The exhibit, sponsored by the Department of the Interior, the Department of State, the United States Information Agency, and the Center for Arts of Indian America, was designed and installed by James McGrath, assistant director of arts at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Enthusiastic commentary in the Edinburgh press has been underlined by the public in the form of what McGrath termed "turn-away crowds" for the limited audience poetry and prose readings and "tremendous crowds" in the open galleries.

The contemporary aspects of American Indian Arts are proving particularly exciting to Scottish audiences, according to McGrath. Among these are the weaving experiments by the Skokomish involving cedar bark, shell and horse hair; the Sioux and Crow painting experiments evolving out of the three-dimensional shield cultural pattern; the Eskimo jewelry built around a working knowledge of jade, ivory, bone and shell; the new Apache sculptural forms emerging from experiments in such media as marble and cast stone.

These new forms are being received in Scotland as important new developments in the world of art--new, deep, natural-rooted directions extending from the ancient native sources of the Americas.

All the contemporary pieces in this exhibition have been conceived by artists who, according to one Edinburgh reviewer, "seem to have discovered their Indian sources reflecting and casting shadows on the new worlds of arts elsewhere. The Indian artists in this exhibition," the review continues, "have a right to stand in dignity alongside any working artist today, creating anywhere."

The exhibit, according to McGrath, does not have the intent of showing all, the best, or the very esoteric of Indian artistic situations. It has as its objective the showing "of some of the mystery, some of the soul and much of the love of the American Indian for his communications between the spirit of man and the spirit of the cosmos."