

Images of the Old Southwest

July 22, 2010 11:15 AM New Wave staff
newwave@tulane.edu

The New Orleans Museum of Art will unveil a little-known American Indian archive from Tulane University on Saturday (July 24). "Ancestors and Descendants: Ancient Southwestern America at the Dawn of the 20th Century" is the first comprehensive presentation of photography, artifacts and archival research from the George Hubbard Pepper Native American Archive.



This image, *Leisure Time at George Pepper's Tent*, is part of the new museum exhibit. (Hand-colored glass lantern slides courtesy of Tulane University's Middle American Research Institute.)

In collaboration with the [Middle American Research Institute](#) (MARI) and the [Latin American Library](#) at Tulane, the exhibition offers a special glimpse of the Tulane archive featuring 150 objects from Pepper's personal art collection as well as 140 photographic images. It will be on display until Oct. 24.

Pepper, a museum ethnologist and scholar, used textiles, pottery, baskets and other Pueblo and Navajo paraphernalia as visual complements to his lectures. Many of the images and the objects in "Ancestors and Descendants" have never been published

or seen by the general public since 1924.

“There has never been an opportunity to bring together this many items from the Pepper archive,” says Paul Tarver, curator of the exhibit. “Even in his lifetime, Pepper could only display a handful of objects with a few dozen images he projected through a magic lantern. This is the first time the breadth of the archive has been researched and displayed.”



Sumner W. Matteson's photo is titled *Portrait of Hopi Maiden with Hair Whorls*, 1901.

The exhibit documents the relationship between American Indians and the scientists, photographers and tourists who traveled to New Mexico and Arizona at the turn of the 20th century. It is co-curated by Cristin J. Nunez, who received a master's degree in art history from Tulane in 2009.

“For the past two years, I have been working on this museum exhibition and catalog in collaboration with the New Orleans Museum of Art and Tulane University,” Nunez says.

“We were very excited to be awarded grants from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and the Cudd Foundation, but we were thrilled when we received a large grant from the National Endowment for the Arts,” she says.

On Wednesday (July 28) at 6 p.m., there will be a free exhibition walk-through at the [New Orleans Museum of Art](#) with the curator and co-curators, followed by live music by Flow Tribe from 7–8 p.m.

Entrance to the museum is free at all times to anyone with a valid Tulane I.D.