

Encounters with Nature: Selected works from the Harold D. Peterson Collection

Encounters with Nature, is full of quiet solitude and connections to a larger purpose. This exhibit presents a selection from the Harold D. Peterson collection, which highlights prints that have a human/nature component. The Peterson collection provides the Blanden a vast assortment of artistic vision and printmaking that allows the museum to curate a multitude of learning opportunities for the community.

The Blanden's gratitude to Harold D. Peterson is boundless, generation after generation of local families and visitors will have the opportunity to see works of significant 16th through 20th century European and American artists.

Art has a way to provide a concrete way to connect to the mystical experiences nature can evoke. Art and nature share continuity in the fact that they both exist, but each can only provide a moment of truth, beauty, or wisdom if experienced by someone.

Throughout history, recordings of human interactions and awe of nature represent this continuity. Reflected in the paintings, writings, and drawings of many artists throughout history, nature is on full display the beauty, the danger, and the awe. Nature and man's interactions with it have been one of control over the unknown and one of a mystical/religious experience. These interactions are reflected in cultures around the world. Made evident by the creations of nature deities and rituals that center on connecting to aspects of nature for guidance and control.

It is interesting to see the different ways cultures connect to nature; in some cultures, one can see an understanding of the power and role of nature in one's life. Nature as eternal and great in relationship to human temporal and small. In contrast, cultures have an understanding of nature is to be controlled and dominated by man; it is here to serve the advancement of civilization. Whatever side of the coin individuals' fall on each is amazed by the boundless and sublime beauty presented in nature.

Mr. Peterson of Portland, Oregon, is a native of Fort Dodge with a passion for prints that stem out of being a "pack rat by nature" and collecting stamps, maps, and paintings. He had a desire to acquire examples by the world's best printmakers. Peterson's collection donated to the museum totaled 219 and represented one of the most substantial single donations received by the Blanden Art Museum.