

Ron Mitchell's CHEROKEE ARTIST NEWSLETTER

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RED EARTH

Park Hill artist wins Grand Award

BY KAREN KLINKA
For The Oklahoman

A large painted sculpture with a powerful and enduring message won the Grand Award for best in show Thursday at the 32nd annual Red Earth Festival's juried art competition.

"Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness - Removal," was painted by Cherokee artist Ron Mitchell of Park Hill.

The \$7,500 artwork, which combines both sculpture and painting elements, uses an enlarged copy of the Constitution of the United States as a canvas backdrop on which are superimposed both painted images and carved metal figures depicting Cherokee Indians being marched from their ancestral homelands in the 1830s removal known as "The Trail of Tears."

In an interview after his award was announced, Mitchell said he wanted to contrast the promises to American citizens that are written in the Constitution with the reality that Native American people were not covered by the Constitution or considered U.S. citizens until the 20th century.

"I was really drawn to the irony between what the Constitution says about 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' and what happened to the Cherokee and other Native people," said Mitchell, who has been a full-time artist since 1971.

Mitchell said the Cherokee Nation has purchased numerous pieces of his artwork to decorate its hospitals and casinos.

The artist said his art style is based in the ledger tradition of Indian art. "But instead of painting on old ledger paper, I use copies of the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and other documents," Mitchell added.

Mitchell said he did all of his own metal work and welding on the winning artwork. "I got into welding kind of backwards - a friend was teaching me and then he got hurt - so I started doing it on my own," the artist explained. "Welding is kind of like an airbrush that shoots fire."

In addition to a rosette ribbon, Mitchell was presented with the 2018 Red Earth medalion and a \$1,500 cash prize.



Ron Mitchell, the Best of Show winner, the Grand Award at the Red Earth Festival, stands by his artwork.



Son, Tommy Roe Mitchell and his 2nd Place Sculpture, "Dance of the Phoenix".



Granddaughter, Ashley Mitchell and her First Place, "Seven Clans", youth division.

More 2018 Awards



1st PLACE
"Children Of The Earth"
Tulsa Indian Art Market
February, 2018



Honorable Mention
"When The Buffalo Return"
5Tribes Museum, Muskogee Ok.
April, 2018



3rd PLACE
"Eagle Dancer Shield"
Tulsa Indian Art Market
February, 2018



Honorable Mention
"Out Of The Darkness"
Cherokee Heritage Center
April, 2018



Honorable Mention
"Remember The Removal"
5Tribes Museum, Muskogee Ok.
April, 2018



2nd PLACE
"Topsy Turvy"
Chickasaw Nation Artesian Festival
May, 2018

UPCOMING 2018 ART SHOWS

JULY 13 - 15 Contemporary Indian Art Show
Cahokia Mounds, Collinsville Illinois

SEPT. 14 - 15 Oklahoma Indian Summer Art Show
Bartlesville Community Center - Bartlesville, Oklahoma

AUG. 31 - SEPT. 2 Gift Shop Holiday Art Show
Cherokee Nation - Tahlequah, Oklahoma

Oct. 6 Chickasaw Nation SEASAM Art Festival
Tishomingo, Oklahoma

SEPT. 8 - 9 Haskell Indian Art Market
Lawrence, Kansas

OCT. 12 - 14 Cherokee Art Market
Sequoyah Convention Center, Hard Rock Casino
Catoosa, Oklahoma

See Ron's originals, prints and show schedule at www.cherokeeartist.net

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