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MUSEUM ACQUIRES SIGNIFICANT COLLECTION OF KACHINAS

The Museum of Western Art is the recipient of a gift of 108 kachina dolls collected by William H. Seelbach, Jr. of Rockport. They are now on view in the museum and range in size from almost 2 feet high to just under 2 inches high.

A kachina doll is a tangible manifestation of the spirit world and of the real world, according to the Pueblo and Hopi peoples of the southwestern United States. There are three different aspects of a kachina: the supernatural entity; the masked dancers who participate in special ceremonies; and the dolls which are carved into the likeness of the spirit and are often given to children to encourage good behavior.

The collector, William H. Seelbach, Jr., was a supporter, sponsor and benefactor to many of the artisans that are represented in the collection. He became good friends with many of them and especially those who resided near the Seelbach home in Cubero, New Mexico. Most of the dolls were acquired in the 1990s, and most of the artisans were from Acoma and Laguna Pueblos in New Mexico and Hopi and Navajo reservations in Arizona. Most of the artisans are deceased with the exception of Aaron Abeita, who began carving at a very young age; Mr. Seelbach purchased Aaron's first carving and encouraged him to continue his craft. Other craftsmen made many of the kachina dolls specifically for Mr. Seelbach.

The award-winning museum is located at 1550 Bandera Highway in Kerrville. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Kerr County residents may visit the museum at no charge during the last Saturday of every month. For more information, please call 830.896.2553.