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1991

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Geske, Norman A., "Review of An Illustrated History of the Arts in South Dakota" (1991). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 567.

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An Illustrated History of the Arts in South Dakota.

By Arthur R. Huseboe. With a section on Sioux Indian arts by Arthur Amiotte. Sioux Falls, South Dakota: The Center for Western Studies, 1989. Prologue, foreword, photographs, afterword, notes, index. xiii + 396 pp. \$24.95.

In the concluding pages of this nearly four-hundred-page volume the author acknowledges previous attempts to write the history of the arts in South Dakota and concludes, quite properly, that "the large task lies ahead." One wonders how much larger the task might be in the light of the present work, which covers the performing arts, the visual arts, and the literary arts, with a special section devoted to the arts of the Sioux. It appears in a review of the 132 chapters, many of them dealing with single individuals and organizations, that a conscious effort was made to leave nothing out of consideration. The result is what has been called a "telephone book" of names and dates in chronological order. All of this information is, of course, valuable and indispensable to scholars, and even to the curious, who wish to explore the field in the future. The groundwork has been well and truly laid.

It is to be hoped that the large task is, in fact, an even larger task, that of establishing a context that is somewhat larger than the survey lines that identify South Dakota's physical existence. As I plowed through the seemingly endless pages of local matter, I wondered whether a similar book on the arts in North Dakota or, for that matter, Nebraska, might be composed in a matching format, almost page for page. The overriding historical consideration, it seems to me, is whether all of these developments in architecture, painting, or poetry are defined in any enlightening way by the fact that they have taken place in South Dakota. I do not mean to imply that the author is oblivious to the larger regional and national contexts, but there is very little indication of the intrinsic importance of the contributions made by South Dakotans to the history of the national art.

It is my guess that the most valuable part of this book lies in the chapters having to do with the arts of the Sioux, written by Arthur Amiotte, Janette K. Murray, and Lynn Huenemann. There is in these pages some sense of the development of ideas and techniques during the time period that frames the book as a whole.

Certainly one of the best passages in the entire book is in the prologue where the author describes the Clovis point found in Shannon County in 1980. It is very probably the only instance where a concern for the character and importance of a work of art is clearly evident. In a few words Professor Huseboe describes the aesthetic act. It does not appear again in the text that follows, except for the discussion of Sioux art.

One strictly academic point deserves mention and commendation. Throughout the text the author acknowledges the various masters and doctoral theses that have compiled a considerable part of the data that is used. It is encouraging to know that these academic exercises are finding a useful posterity.

The book is well laid out with plenty of eye-relieving white space and there is a handsome section of color reproductions wherein South Dakota's contemporary artists receive a gener-

ous share of attention. Included, as a kind of climax, is a video image, entitled "Fiddle," produced by South Dakota Public Television!

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