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Review of *The Biographical Directory of Native American Painters* Edited by Patrick D. Lester

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The Biographical Directory of Native American Painters. Edited by Patrick D. Lester. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995. Foreword, preface, acknowledgments, explanatory notes, tribal index, bibliography. xvii + 712 pp. \$49.95.

have to wait almost another three decades for the next Directory.

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Here is a long-needed and critically important reference work sure to be welcomed by the many scholars, collectors, artists, and others who will consult it frequently. The last work of this nature, Jeanne Snodgrass's *American Indian Painters: A Biographical Directory*, was published in 1968, hence the importance and timeliness of Lester's *Biographical Directory*.

The body of the work (the actual Directory) is organized alphabetically by artists' names, each entry including biographical data, tribal affiliation, name in tribal language, and lists of awards, commissions, and works in public collections. If an artist works in more than one medium, the others are also listed.

Another feature many will find helpful is a listing of tribal names, including synonyms where they exist. For some long time, many Native American tribes have been known to non-natives by something other than their own term for themselves. The list attempts to correct these long-standing errors.

In his preface, Lester describes his work as "monumental," a modest characterization of what must have often seemed as unending as the labors of Sisyphus. He acknowledges that his volume's listings are not 100 percent complete and cites reasons, such as a lack of success in contacting some artists, the failure of others to return biographical data forms, and the controversial matter of who may correctly be termed a "Native American Artist" and who may not. Lester and his dedicated associates are not to be faulted for what is lacking. Rather, we should be grateful for the remarkable body of information they have assembled. Here is something of basic importance for the libraries of everyone with even a passing interest in the subject. One hopes we will not