

Basic Detail Report



Indian Potter

Date

c. 1914

Primary Maker

Eanger Irving Couse

Medium

Oil on canvas

Description

Indian Potter is an example of the passion Eanger Irving Couse felt for the vanishing “West.” The painting depicts Ben Lujan (his birth name was Walsai meaning “of the red-willow people”), a young man from the Taos Pueblo who was adopted by Couse at the age of four months old. Ben, in the role of a potter carefully examining his work, connects the importance of pottery to Pueblo life and its people. Pottery making and pottery decorating is generally viewed as principally in the woman’s domain, but there has been documentation that some potters and pottery decorators have been men. The delicate elegance, dignified air, and sensitivity that is evident in Couse's mature works is beautifully depicted in Indian Potter. E.I. Couse is best known for his idyllic and serene paintings of Native American life. He created some 1,500 paintings, some in collections owned by the Smithsonian Art Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and at the Bowers Museum. Couse first came to New Mexico on the urging of his friend and fellow artist, Ernest Blumenschein, to visit the now World Heritage Site and National Historic Landmark, Taos Pueblo. Along with Blumenschein and like-minded artists, Couse was captivated by the spectacular light and landscape of New Mexico. He would return every year with his family to paint and in 1928 settled there permanently. He was an active member of the Taos Art Colony, founded in 1915, and was its first president. Like many of his fellow artists, there was a sense of urgency to document on canvas the “vanishing” culture of the Pueblo people of Northern New Mexico.

Dimensions

Framed: 29 1/2 x 33 1/2 in. (74.9 x 85.1 cm) Overall: 24 1/16 x 24 in. (61.1 x 61 cm)