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Collecting in a Changing World Exhibit Explores Evolving Art, Culture, and Science

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. – Artists create, animals evolve, plants adapt, and Indigenous cultures flourish. As the world changes, so too do the Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA) collections, which grow to reflect shifts in art, culture, and science across the Colorado Plateau.

A new MNA exhibition, *Collecting in a Changing World*, highlights recent acquisitions that enhance the museum’s research, exhibits, and educational programs and offers a window into how people engage with changing environments.

Among the featured works are pieces examining the continuation of art forms. Works from the renowned Nampeyo-Namingha family of potters and artists showcase enduring artistry in the Hopi-Tewa tradition.

Other items in the exhibit reflect recent events, such as new paintings by Hopi-Tewa artists Duane Koyawena and Ed Kabotie that explore humanity’s complex relationship with nature and the sacred. Indigenous items from the COVID-19 pandemic and moccasins worn by Bearsun, a rez-famous Instagram phenomenon who walked across the Navajo Nation, are statements of resilience in contemporary society.

Artifacts in *Collecting in a Changing World* also reveal how the museum collects pieces with specific exhibitions in mind. Highlights include a Diné (Navajo) beaded Yoda pin by Amanda Bahe, a sand-cast silver cuff depicting the iconic Millennium Falcon, and wood carvings of Star Wars figures by Diné artist Virgil Wood. These objects were acquired for MNA’s popular 2019–2020 *The Force is With Our People* exhibition, exploring the profound influence of the Star Wars franchise on Indigenous communities.

In addition, the *Collecting* exhibit emphasizes the Museum of Northern Arizona’s focus on the art, culture, and science of the Colorado Plateau. Newly acquired Hopi kachina dolls depicting plant and animal life are positioned alongside corresponding regional botanical and insect specimens, underscoring the connections between culture and ecology.

Collecting in a Changing World is on view in MNA’s Lockett Gallery from March 1, 2025, through January 4, 2026.

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MUSEUM of NORTHERN ARIZONA

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About the Museum of Northern Arizona

The Museum of Northern Arizona sits at the base of the San Francisco Peaks on the road to the Grand Canyon. For nearly 100 years, MNA has served as a gateway to understanding the Colorado Plateau by engaging visitors with life-enriching knowledge and experiences centered on culture, art and science. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Monday. Closed Tuesdays through Feb. 25. Learn more at <https://musnaz.org/>.