

Folk Arts - Kevin Locke - OSEU #3

Our official designation is folk arts. And if you look at folk arts...these are things that all communities around the world...they all have their folk arts. It's very broad. It's like any kind of tradition that's passed down from generation to generation within the community. That's kind of a broad definition of folk arts. But the beautiful thing about folk arts is that these folk arts represent universal signs...or indicators...or expressions of the nobility of the human spirit. Over time, these folk arts are just passed down like that so the next generation will take it and pull out all those things that are beautiful and make it relevant to them. So it becomes refined over time. So these folk arts have universal currency. They have validity everywhere in the world because what they do is accentuate the nobility of the human spirit...this innate quality that we have to express ourselves in harmony and balance and beauty.

So these things that I do...those are just folk arts you see. I didn't make it up. It doesn't belong to me either. I'm just trying to bring it along and do the best I can with it. So then I found in my touring...I've been to 93 countries you see...so everywhere...they don't belong to me. I've just, in a humble way, tried to carry it along. But yet, people can see that in those folk arts. They can see how it universally uplifts us. Here in South Dakota, we have such an abundance of these traditions that are so beautiful all over the world.

I've been going over to China through the State Department and to Indonesia. Again, this spring I'll be going over there again. So we just go to the minority areas in China. It never fails. They appreciate that. And they have the same thing. It's a beautiful way to share the riches of the human spirit, the human heritage. And so, what I like to do is make everything participatory. It's no good to do everything vicariously. That just reinforces this thing that we exist and everything else is foreign or extrinsic to us. Once you get people to participate...just like you were singing last night...the minute you do that, you have taken ownership of that. You are a participant.

I think we need to begin to cultivate ways where...especially the young people...we can see ourselves as legitimate heirs of the human family. So Lakota people can contribute to this as well.