



CELEBRATING ALLAN HOUSER

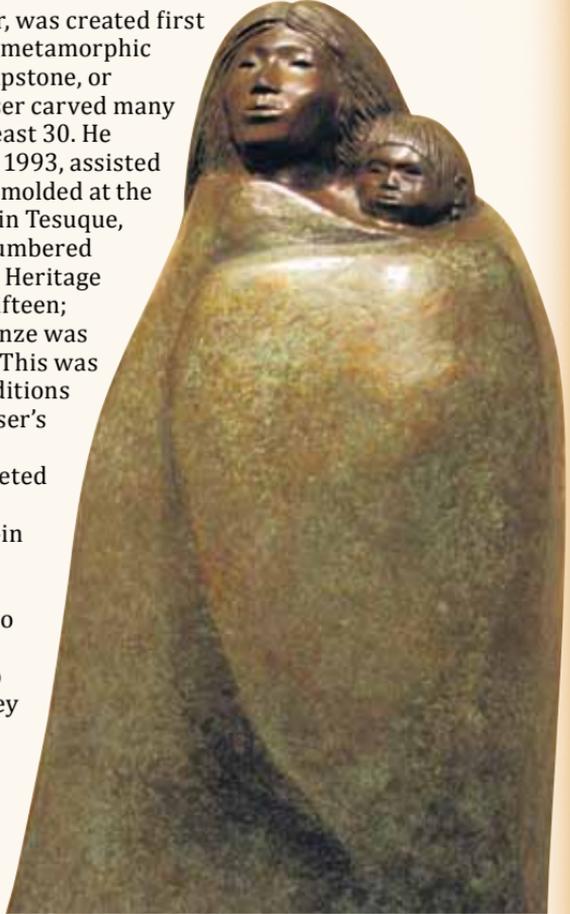
AN OKLAHOMA PERSPECTIVE



Allan Houser: Legend Born Free Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, Duncan June 1 – August 15, 2014

Desert Flower, by Allan Houser, was created first in stone – steatite – a silky black metamorphic rock, also known as a type of soapstone, or sometimes “wonder stone”. Houser carved many works from this same stone, at least 30. He carved this original stone in late 1993, assisted by Tony Lee. The stone was then molded at the facilities of the Shidoni Foundry in Tesuque, New Mexico, and set forth as a numbered edition of 15. The Chisholm Trail Heritage Center houses an edition of the fifteen; the casting of this particular bronze was completed in December of 1994. This was among the latter of the bronze editions put into production prior to Houser’s death in August of 1994.

Desert Flower could be interpreted as either referring to the child in the composition or the mother—in a sense of the beauty among the barren landscape of the desert. However, *Desert Flower* could also be a composition representing the Tohono O’odham people, also known earlier as the Papago. They are the subject of the 1962 book *The Desert People*, written by Ann Nolan Clark and illustrated by Allan Houser. A number of the original book illustrations, on loan from the Allan Houser Foundation, are displayed as part of the exhibit.



Desert Flower (Bronze, 1993)
Garis Gallery of the American West, Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, Duncan, OK.

Activity

1. Looking at the photograph of the bronze sculpture, *Desert Flower* by Allan Houser, the sculpture is seen as a two-dimensional picture. Two-dimensional means having or appearing to have length and width but no depth. How do you know that *Desert Flower* is a three-dimensional form (having length, width, and depth)?
2. *Desert Flower* depicts a Native American mother and child. Looking at the photograph, write three sentences about why the mother is holding her child so close.
3. Allan Houser cast this sculpture using a hard metal called bronze. Texture is an element of art that means the way things feel, or look as if they would feel if you touched them. Texture can be rough, smooth, sticky, fuzzy, soft, or slick. Name something that feels rough, one that feels smooth, sticky, fuzzy, soft and slick. Draw a picture of each example.
4. Research Allan Houser’s Native American heritage. Write a few sentences about his Oklahoma heritage.