



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of the American Indian*

## Edmund Shaw photographs of Dick West

Emily Moazami

2024

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Museum of the American Indian
<b>Title:</b>	Edmund Shaw photographs of Dick West
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1938
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAI.AC.320
<b>Creator:</b>	Shaw, Edmund Chase (Photographer)
<b>Extent:</b>	7 Photographic prints
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	This collection contains photographs of artist Dick West (also known as W. Richard West, Sr.) at Bacone Collage, Oklahoma. Photographs shot by Edmund Shaw, circa 1938.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Gift of Edmund Chase Shaw, 1966.

### Processing Information

Collection processed by Emily Moazami, Head Archivist, 2024.

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Edmund Shaw photographs of Dick West, image #, NMAI.AC.320; National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

Access to NMAI Archives Center collections is by appointment only, Monday - Friday, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Please contact the archives to make an appointment (phone: 301-238-1400, email: [nmaiarchives@si.edu](mailto:nmaiarchives@si.edu)).

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Dick West

Dick West (Wapah Nahyah/Wah-pah-nah-yah/Walter Richard West, Sr.), Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne), 1912-1996

Biography from the Oklahoma Historical Society:

"Cheyenne Indian artist and educator (Cheyenne name Wah-pah-nah-yah) Walter Richard "Dick" West was born in a tipi near Darlington Agency, Oklahoma, on September 8, 1912, to Lightfoot West and Rena Flying Coyote. Dick West attended Concho Indian Boarding School and graduated from high school at Haskell Institute, at Lawrence, Kansas, in 1935. He attended Bacone College from 1936 to 1938 and then acquired bachelor's and master's degrees in fine arts in 1941 and 1950, respectively, from the University of Oklahoma. He subsequently studied mural techniques with Olaf Nordmark in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1941–42 and undertook graduate study at Northeastern State University, the University of Tulsa, and Redlands University in California.

He began teaching in 1941 at Phoenix Indian School. Serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II, he saw action in the European Theater from 1942 to 1946. After the war he taught at Phoenix Indian School in 1946–47. He chaired the art department in Bacone College from 1947 to 1970 and in Haskell Indian Junior College from 1970 to 1977. During the golden age of Indian art, 1946–80, West influenced a generation of students while exhibiting, winning awards, fulfilling commissions, and illustrating books. He was a popular lecturer, show judge, and well-known sign linguist, wearing his Cheyenne bonnet and buckskins. He believed education was key to survival of Indians and all people. He stressed research to his students, some of whom were Jimmy Anderson, Sharron Ahtone Harjo, Virginia Stroud, Joan Hill, Enoch Kelly Haney, Johnnie Tiger, Antowine Warrior, Don Secondine, Dennis Belindo, David Williams, Marlene Riding In Mameah, and Roland Whitehorse.

In 1941 West received a WPA–PWA mural commission for the U.S. Post Office in Okemah, Oklahoma. His teacher, Acee Blue Eagle, also competed for the job. West received two grand awards from Philbrook Indian Annual, in 1949 for Dance of the Soldier Societies and in 1955 for Peyote Vision. In 1954 he began Indian Christ, a series of eight oil paintings portraying the universality of Jesus.

Dick West was a dean of the traditional flat style of Indian painting and an innovator in contemporary abstract and semiabstract painting. He was also a sculptor. Characteristics of his work are sophisticated color, subtle brushwork, master draftsmanship, and detailed rendering of anatomy. His subject matter was the North American Indian, especially the Cheyenne tribe, on which he was an authority.

West's exhibit venues included the American Indian Exposition in Anadarko, Philbrook Indian Annuals and Oklahoma Annuals, the Denver Art Museum, the Joslyn Museum, the DeYoung Museum, the Museum of New Mexico, the Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonials, and the Heard Museum in Phoenix. In Washington, D.C., his work was shown at the U.S. Departments of Interior and State, Kennedy Center, and the Museum of Natural History. His work is held by Bacone College, the University of Oklahoma, the Southern Plains Indian Museum in Anadarko, and the Gilcrease Museum in Oklahoma and by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, and the Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

The artist's honors include the 1964 Waite Phillips Outstanding Indian Artist Award from the Philbrook Museum of Art and honorary doctorates in humane letters from Eastern Baptist College, St. Davids, Pennsylvania, in 1962 and Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas, in 1976. He served as a commissioner on the Indian Arts and Crafts Board in 1979–80 and as professor emeritus at Bacone College. West married Maribelle McCrea in 1940 and Rene Wagoner in 1970. His children are W. Richard West, Jr., founding director of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, and James Lee West. Dick West, Sr., died May 3, 1996."

## Edmund Shaw

Edmund Chase Shaw was born in 1912 in Somerville, MA. He earned a Bachelor's degree and Master's degree from Tufts University in 1936 and 1936 in Visual Education. He also spent time as a professor at Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection contains 7 photographs depicting artist Dick West (also known as Wapah Nahyah/Wah-pah-nah-yah / Walter Richard West, Sr.), Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne). West was photographed by Edmund Shaw at Bacone College in Oklahoma, circa 1938. The majority of the photographs depict him wearing a feather headdress and regalia.

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## Arrangement

Photographs are arranged in catalog number order.

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)

Cultures:

Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)

Names:

West, W. Richard (Walter Richard), 1912-1996

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## Container Listing

P19658: [Dick West, circa 1938](#)

1 Photographic print

Creator: Shaw, Edmund Chase

Notes: Portrait of artist Dick West, also known as W. Richard West [Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne); 1912-1996] wearing a feather headdress. Photography by Edmund C. Shaw, circa 1938. Stamped on reverse: "Edmund C. Shaw 533 Chandler Lane Villanova, PA."

Names: West, W. Richard (Walter Richard), 1912-1996

Culture: Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)

P19659: [Dick West, circa 1938](#)

Notes: Portrait of artist Dick West, also known as W. Richard West [Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne); 1912-1996] wearing a feather headdress and standing on a boulder. Photography by Edmund C. Shaw, circa 1938. Stamped on reverse: "Edmund C. Shaw 533 Chandler Lane Villanova, PA."

Culture: Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)

P19660: [Dick West, circa 1938](#)

1 Photographic print

Creator: Shaw, Edmund Chase

Notes: Portrait of artist Dick West, also known as W. Richard West [Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne); 1912-1996] wearing a feather headdress and standing on a boulder. Photography by Edmund C. Shaw, circa 1938. Stamped on reverse: "Edmund C. Shaw 533 Chandler Lane Villanova, PA."

Names: West, W. Richard (Walter Richard), 1912-1996

Culture: Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)

P19661: [Dick West, circa 1938](#)

1 Photographic print

Photographer: Shaw, Edmund Chase

Notes: Portrait of artist Dick West, also known as W. Richard West [Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne); 1912-1996] wearing a feather headdress and pointing in the distance. Photography by Edmund C. Shaw, circa 1938. Stamped on reverse: "Edmund C. Shaw 533 Chandler Lane Villanova, PA."

Names: West, W. Richard (Walter Richard), 1912-1996

Culture: Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)

P19662: [Dick West playing a drum, circa 1938](#)

1 Photographic print

Photographer: Shaw, Edmund Chase

Notes: Portrait of artist Dick West, also known as W. Richard West [Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne); 1912-1996] playing a drum.

Photography by Edmund C. Shaw, circa 1938. Stamped on reverse:  
"Edmund C. Shaw 533 Chandler Lane Villanova, PA."  
Names: West, W. Richard (Walter Richard), 1912-1996  
Culture: Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)

P19663: [Dick West and student, circa 1938](#)

1 Photographic print

Photographer: Shaw, Edmund Chase

Notes: Portrait of artist Dick West, also known as W. Richard West [Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne); 1912-1996] teaching a student painting techniques. Photography by Edmund C. Shaw, circa 1938. Stamped on reverse: "Edmund C. Shaw 533 Chandler Lane Villanova, PA."

Names: West, W. Richard (Walter Richard), 1912-1996

Culture: Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)

P19674: [Dick West, circa 1938](#)

1 Photographic print

Photographer: Shaw, Edmund Chase

Notes: Portrait of artist Dick West, also known as W. Richard West [Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne); 1912-1996] wearing a feather headdress and regalia. Photography by Edmund C. Shaw, circa 1938. Stamped on reverse: "Edmund C. Shaw 533 Chandler Lane Villanova, PA."

Names: West, W. Richard (Walter Richard), 1912-1996

Culture: Southern Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne)