Discover

There are different animals and creatures depicted on the objects in this exhibition. In the box provided, draw your favorite animal that you found.

Snake  Bird  Turtle  Spider  Panther  Fish

Scavenger Hunt & Coloring Activity

Search the gallery and match the drawing to the actual object it represents.

If you could put any animal in the world on a work of art, what animal would you choose and why?

Lost Realms of the Moundbuilders: Ancient Native Americans of the South and Midwest (formerly titled Spiro and the Art of the Mississippian World) is organized by the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. This exhibition is supported in part by the Henry Luce Foundation, the Kirkpatrick Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The local presentation is made possible by the Estate of Mr. Harris Saunders, Jr. and Jean Saunders. Additional support is provided by the Jefferson County Community Service Fund at the recommendation of Alabama Representative Jim Carns, HD 48.

Coloring activity illustrations based on:
- Engraved Circular Palette With Hand-And-Eye Motif and Intertwined Serpents [REPRODUCTION], Mississippian culture, Dallas County, Moundville Site, 1300–1450, Stone, Alabama Museum of Natural History, 1941.004.549R
- Engraved Gorget With Spider and Cosmic Motif, Mississippian period, Likely Tennessee, 1350–1450, Marine shell, Collection of Dr. John Rahhal
- Engraved Shell Gorget With Two Dancing Figures Holding Rattles and Drums – Craig Style, Le Flore County, Oklahoma, Spiro Site, 1200–1450, Marine shell, Woolaroc Museum, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, UoA-186
- Engraved Shell Cup With Birdman Motif – Craig Style, Le Flore County, Oklahoma, Spiro Site, 1100–1250, Marine shell, Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian, 189121.000
What is an exhibition?

An exhibition is a public showing of a large selection of art, artifacts, or other items that may be interesting to people. These items are often united by a theme. For this exhibition, objects made by the ancient Native American Moundbuilders is the uniting theme.

Who were the Moundbuilders?

Did you know that more than 1000 years ago Alabama was home to the Mississippian civilization, one of the largest and most important Native American cultures ever to exist? This ancient civilization is also known as the Moundbuilders, as they built large platform mounds for burial and ceremonial purposes. The Mississippian Moundbuilders also produced remarkable works of art, intricate jewelry, detailed pottery, sophisticated weapons, and more.

This exhibition features 175 historic objects from four major Mississippian Moundbuilder sites:
- The Spiro Mounds in Oklahoma
- Moundville in Alabama
- Etowah Mounds in Georgia
- Cahokia Mounds in East Saint Louis, Illinois

There are also contemporary Indigenous works of art that connect the art and artistry of the Mississippian Moundbuilder peoples to their modern descendants.

Time to discover!

This family guide has multiple activities to help you and your family explore the exhibition, ignite curiosity, and get creative.

Along with the activities provided in this guide, we also have a digital scavenger hunt game to play, audio to listen to, and a storyteller tour on our smartguide! To access these additional activities visit www.artsbma.org/guide and type in the three digit code to the left.

Next to each object in the exhibition is a label. Labels are associated with specific works of art and reveal information about the object, like its name or what it is made of.

Search the labels in the exhibition to find the words and phrases provided below. Can you find them all? What did you learn about the object?

- Shell
- Clay
- Gorget
- Hero Twins
- Constellation
- Limestone
- Palette
- Earthmother
- Morning Star
- Pleiades