

### Old American Artifacts Make New Pieces of Art

Timberlake has been a hobbyist arrowhead hunter for over 17 years. All her points are from Texas. Common types found in the area include the Pedernales, Bulverde, Langtry, Marshall, Nolan, Enslr, Marcos and Montell.

--Staff photo by Rost



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by CAROLYN ROST, Country World staff writer

Feb. 7 - “You can almost feel on the arrowhead the areas where it would have been wrapped - the notches,” said Lori Timberlake as she carefully secures an arrowhead to a river cane shaft using hog intestine.

A hobbyist arrowhead hunter and bird breeder for many years, Timberlake combined her knowledge of interior design with her creative talent and began turning her collection of ancient artifacts into unique displays in 2003.

At her gallery Indian Creek, after the creek which is located near her home in Spring Branch, Timberlake makes arrows, bows, spears, knives and tomahawks from authentic artifacts and reproduction blades. She builds her own furniture including chests, bookshelves and cabinets.

The idea for her hand crafted pieces, she said, began when she decided to change her home decor.

“I wanted to decorate my house in Indian motif,” said Timberlake, who is part Choctaw.

When she started looking for spears and tomahawks in stores, she found many were made using plastic beads and tempura paints.

“It didn’t look like an authentic piece and it wasn’t really what I was looking for. I wanted something that looked a little more rustic.”

So Timberlake had a brainstorm.

“I thought, well, I’ve got these real arrowheads and I’ve got the feathers. I’m creative. I’ll just make my own.”

Using an authentic blade, rattle snake skin and cactus stalk, Timberlake made her first tomahawk. Before long, her house was filled with one-of-a-kind pieces. Visitors to her home were impressed with her artifact art and soon her work was in demand.

“They asked me if they could pay me to make one for their home.”

About a year later, she said, through a lot of encouragement from her friends, she started marketing her artifact art at various market days and American Indian powwows.

At the powwows, Timberlake said she enjoys viewing the craft work done by the Native American Indians and taking part in the ceremonies. And, she tries to learn as much as she can about her heritage.

“I read a lot of books and study about their lifestyles and what they went through. I guess in hopes to teach my children so that the heritage won’t be lost.”

All her artifacts, she said, are found in Texas and she has a collection of the most common types.

“I’m hunting Central and South Texas so I’m finding certain types. The most common types of points that I’m finding are Pedernales, Bulverde, Langtry, Marshall, Nolan, Marcos and Montell.”

To identify each arrowhead she has, Timberlake does a lot of research, spending hours looking through guide books to find the style names. Once identified, she carefully bags the point and labels each one with the name and the place where it was found.

Finding the supplies she has needed for her craft has been rather easy. Her work area is filled with shelves of hides, bones and horns she has received from taxidermists and others whom she has met over the years.

“People will see what I’m doing and go, ‘Oh, I have a whole bunch of that.’”

For her tomahawk handles, she uses items such as mule deer antlers, choya cactus, buffalo or coyote bones. Some knife and spear handles and arrow shafts are wrapped with black buck antelope hide, white-tailed deer hide or elk hide. Rabbit, mink or coyote fur is often used for added decoration.

The ages of the authentic points and blades Timberlake uses range from approximately 6,000 to 11,000 years old. Depending on its condition, the older the point is the more valuable it is.

“My most expensive one I have right now is a Marshall. It’s super thin and is done in the Edwards Plateau flint.”

That mount, she said, will sell for close to \$500. Timberlake stressed that she never sells just the artifact.

“I’m an artist. I’m not an artifact dealer.”

To assure clients who purchase an authentic piece of artifact art that they bought the real thing, they receive a certificate of authenticity. The certificate also lists the artifact type, where it was found and how old it is.

For clients looking for lower priced display pieces, Timberlake works with several flint knappers who provide reproduction blades.

“They make an arrowhead exactly like the Native American Indians. They use either a hammer stone, which is another rock, to knock flakes off or a butted end of an antler. There are no machines.”

At her workshop, there are no machines either. Timberlake hand-makes each weapon just as it was done thousands of years ago as a way to honor her Choctaw Indian heritage.

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