

# Eddie Owens Martin

(1908–1986)



Eddie Owens Martin created a world of his own in **rural** Georgia. Martin grew up in Buena Vista, Georgia, as the son of sharecroppers—farmers who give part of their crop as payment to use the land. At the age of fourteen, he ran away from home to New York City and began developing his art practice. During an illness in the 1930s, Martin had a vision of **deities** from the future who told him he was going to become a “Pasaquoyan” named St. EOM. In 1957, Martin permanently returned to Georgia, moving into the family home he inherited, and began altering the house and grounds to transform the home and land into an art environment called Pasaquan.

Influenced by his research on the temples of pre-Columbian Mexico and the fabled lost continents of Mu and Atlantis, he embellished temples, pagodas, shrines, walls, and walkways with brightly painted, concrete **totem** faces, **mandalas**, snakes, and figures. After Martin’s death in 1986, the Pasaquan Preservation Society cared for the site. In 2008, Pasaquan was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2014, the Pasaquan Preservation Society, Columbus State University, and Kohler Foundation, Inc., preserved the site. It was gifted to Columbus State University for long-term **stewardship**.

## Rural

A location with a small population in the countryside, typically consisting of farmland or forests.

## Deities

Gods and goddesses in polytheistic religions, which are religions with more than one God.

## Totem

An object or animal that is believed to have spiritual significance.

## Mandala

A geometric figure representing the universe in Hindu and Buddhist symbolism.

## Stewardship

The looking after, caring for, and managing of a place or object(s).



1 Eddie Owens Martin at Pasaquan, n.d. Courtesy of Columbus State University.

2 Eddie Owens Martin, Pasaquan (site view, front entrance, Buena Vista, GA), 1957–86. Photo: Brianna Wright, 2016, courtesy of Columbus State University.

# A World of Inspiration

St. EOM drew inspiration from different cultures when designing Pasaquan.

What cultures have you learned about? For example, you might have learned about different cultures from your family history, in school, in books, on tv or in movies, or from traveling.

Do you have objects in your home that remind you of these cultures?

Research about one or more different cultures. You could look online at history museum websites or in books at your local library. Can you discover:

- What patterns are common on clothes, buildings, or objects?
- What foods are eaten daily and what foods are eaten for special occasions?
- If there are dances or traditions that are a part of the culture?
- What language is spoken and how to count in that language from 1 to 10?

## Create!

- Create a visual journal entry about the culture or cultures you have learned about.

A visual journal entry combines both writing and drawing to describe an idea. What is the information that you found most interesting? What would you like to use as inspiration for an artwork one day?\*

*\*Remember it is important that when you learn about different cultures and then create artwork inspired by them to not just copy something the people from that culture have created and use it out of its context. This is called appropriation. Always make sure to talk about how and why you were inspired in your artwork and to be sensitive about not using culturally significant or ceremonial images, objects, and ideas from that culture in your work. If you are not sure if it is ok, have a conversation with someone about it or choose a different idea.*

## Keep Exploring!

Other artists in the Arts Center's collection were influenced by their travels or objects from other cultures. Look at the work of Mary Nohl and Ray Yoshida for more examples.

View more of Eddie Owens Martin's work at [artpreserve.org/artists/eddie-owens-martin](http://artpreserve.org/artists/eddie-owens-martin).

### For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connection

Visual Arts Connecting 11.1

Anchor Standard

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Enduring Understanding

People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art

Essential Question

How does art help us understand the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures? How is art used to impact the views of a society? How does art preserve aspects of life?