



THE INDIAN CRAFT SHOP

Department of the Interior • 1849 C Street, NW • Washington, DC 20240 • (202) 208-4056
 Open Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm & the 3rd Saturday of each month 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
 www.indiancraftshop.com • email: indiancrafts@erols.com
 Representing American Indian Arts and Crafts Since 1938

HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH PROGRAM

With the New Year comes a new program at the Indian Craft Shop, the **Highlight of the Month Program**. Most of you are familiar with the Artist of the Month Program that started in June of 1999. This year, the program has been adapted to a “Highlight” where the Shop will focus on a particular craft area, region or artist family/group. We believe this adapted program will better serve the artist community by bringing attention to more artists. We also believe it will offer you the opportunity to see a broader reach of the innovations in today’s world of Indian art. Our aim is the same as the Artist of the Month Program—“to illustrate the diversity of tribal groups and the wide variety of artistic expressions and traditions in the country today.” And, as with the Artist of the Month Program, Highlight information sheets will be available in the shop and on the web. As these highlights will be much broader, they will run for two weeks each month—mark your calendars now! As always, we appreciate your feedback on all we do—call, write or email!

First Highlight of the Month—Navajo Folk Art! March 8-20th

Our first highlight of 2004 will focus on Navajo Folk Art. We hope you will enjoy this wonderfully diverse art form. The Navajo Folk Art selection will include works in wood, clay, sandstone, textiles and more. Join us March 8th through the 20th as we explore the color—the whimsy—the realism and great variety in folk art. Works from the following artists will be included: Roger Armstrong, Elsie Benally, Delbert Buck, Cecelia Curley, Sarah Descheny, the Herbert family, Leland Holiday, Elizabeth Ignacio, the John family, Reva Juan, the Manygoats family, Dennis Pioche, Ellen Tsosie, Charlie Willetto, Harold Willetto, Betty Yazzie, and Tom Yazzie, among others.



Assortment of Navajo folk art

HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH Spring/Summer

March 8-20
Navajo Folk Art

April 12-23
Arts of the Hopi

April 15-17

Guest Artist:
Leo Lacapa (Hopi)
Katsina Carver

May 10-21

Chilton Family
Tlingit Art

June 14-25

Arts of the Iroquois

July 6-17

Turquoise Jewelry

UPCOMING

HIGHLIGHTS- Fall (dates to be announced)

American Indian Beadwork, Pueblo Pottery, American Indian Sculpture, Arts of Alaska, Innovators in SW Jewelry



Assortment of Iroquois art



Chilton family art

Contemporary Navajo Folk Art

by Georgiana Kennedy Simpson

A few years ago, I traveled to New Mexico with some new colorful carvings as part of my collection. Upon first sighting of these brightly decorated chickens, my father exclaimed, “...And what on Earth are those supposed to be?” A new art form had slowly crept its way into our lives, work which bore no similarities to the jewelry, pottery, rugs or baskets to which we were intimately familiar except for the fact that they were created by Navajo artists. Chickens burst upon the Native American art scene in a rainbow assortment of colors, a swirl of patterns, and a variety of shapes. Every chicken lover known to man or woman swept up the comical creatures with such raucous enthusiasm that many were led to believe that yes, indeed, the chicken did come before the egg.

Well, let’s talk about that egg, better known as the beginnings of Navajo folk art, as well as American folk art. In preindustrial times, craftsmen created ship figureheads, weather vanes, toys, cross-stitched samplers, hand-hooked rugs and hand-stitched quilts. While many were highly decorated objects, they were predominantly utilitarian in nature. Because our society possesses an ongoing need to define everything, including this particular American folk craft movement, various labels were assigned to this artwork as early as the 1930s. In Herbert W. Hemphill, Jr., and Julia Weissman’s book, *Twentieth-Century American Folk Art and Artists*, he documented labels such as “self-taught,” “primitives,” and “masters of naive art.” After much deliberation, “folk art seems to be the most

appropriate term. It represents the work of truly American folk who are generally unaware and unaffected by the mainstream of professional artists trained artists, trends, intentions, theories, and developments.” When applying this last definition to Navajo folk art, I find it to be true for many of the artists, although there are several who are very aware of movements in contemporary art. They have taken that exposure and applied it to their own work in unique and interesting ways.

Historical recordings of Navajo folk art date to the 1870s when it was noted that simple mud toy figures were being made. Recognition of the contemporary movement began in the 1960s with artists such as Charlie Willetto and **Tom Yazzie**. **Tom Yazzie** was known for his fine woodcarvings depicting Navajo vignettes such as a silversmith working or a Navajo woman weaving. My mother gave me some of these carvings as “Show and Tell” items when I was a child. Luckily, actually miraculously, the pieces were all returned intact and now have more revered positions on shelves featuring other southwestern art objects.

Charlie Willetto started carving in 1961 and completed over four hundred pieces before he passed away in 1964. He carved figures of Navajo men and women as well as animals with a dream-like quality. Charlie’s figures, as well as those now created by his widow, **Elizabeth Ignacio**, and their sons, **Robin and Harold**, portray the most visionary and spiritually challenging pieces in Navajo folk art today.

Roger Armstrong, another artist from the same area of the reservation as **Robin Willetto**, is also willing to tackle difficult subjects in his artwork. These artists aren’t content with “playing it safe” and therefore, confront each and every one of us with the darker side of humanity.

Roger’s brother, **Leland Holiday**, has a somewhat lighter approach to his work. **Leland** has his finger on the pulse of contemporary art movements and applies his colorful acrylic painted imagery to wood carvings as well as canvas and masonite. His animals possess a whimsical flare, his Navajo women have been introduced to Picasso, and his masks have a touch of the Oogie Boogie in them. **Delbert Buck** is another young artist who loves to tickle Navajo and non-Navajo funny bones alike with comical renditions of traditional men and women.

Many more Navajo artists are vital to this movement and my great pleasure is in watching the constant and rapid innovation in this area of Native American art. **Elsie Benally** and **Rose Herbert** are two of a handful of women who create mud toys. The **Herbert** and **John families** continue to hatch multi-colored flocks of chickens. Many weavers across the reservation capture the nuances of traditional and modern life in their pictorial weavings. The **Manygoats family** builds traditional pitch pots with their own unique blend of animal imagery while artist **Gregory Holiday** explores the pottery of the Ancient Ones. I love baskets and rugs, but Navajo folk art is the area in which I have the most fun. As with other forms of art, it brings great pleasure to the owner. Perhaps its best contribution is the laughter it inspires while it pushes us to explore and reconsider the Navajo point of view.



Navajo folk art

Arts of the Hopi

April 12-23, 2004

Guest Artist and Demonstration: Leo Lacapa (Hopi), April 15-17

The Highlight of the Month in April will be the “Arts of the Hopi” showcasing katsinas, pottery, jewelry, basketry, rattles and more from the Hopi Pueblo.

The Hopi live in the remote high desert plateaus of northern Arizona. The influences of this starkly beautiful land can be seen in the arts produced there. Corn and the rain needed to grow it, are at the center of their ceremonial and daily life. Katsinas embody the spirits, and proper performance of ceremonies play a significant role in bountiful crops and the well being of the people. Art is inherent in these ceremonies, from hand woven kilts and sashes, body painting and masks to the baskets used and katsina carvings and toys given out to the children. It is not surprising that over seventy percent of the Hopi people earn income through art¹.



Sun Katsina by Leo Lacapa

BASKET WEAVING is an ancient art form found at Hopi. Ranging from simple plaited yucca trays and sifters to plaques and bowls made of yucca coiled around grasses, Hopi baskets are highly sought after by collectors. This is a time consuming art form and most baskets made today are made for use in every day life at the Pueblo. A limited number of baskets are made for the retail market. Colors are achieved in some baskets by natural methods, and in others, such as wicker plaques, by commercial dyes for bright colors. Basketry from **Elene Atokuku**, **Sarah Secklestewa**, **Dora Tawahongva**, **Velma Wadsworth** and others will be included in the exhibit.

POTTERY, another ancient craft, can range from traditionally shaped pots painted with designs that have been passed down for generations, to elegant, contemporary plates with textures that look like sand dunes. Some potters use ancient designs that today appear modern and abstract, while others may carve realistic



Hopi pottery bowl

depictions of katsinas or corn into their pots. Pottery by **Preston Duwyenie**, **Steve Lucas**, **Nona Naha**, **Les Namingha**, **Iris Youvella**, **Nampeyo**, **Nolan Youvella** and more will be included in the exhibit.

Hopi **JEWELRY** often incorporates clan symbols, rain clouds, corn, birds and katsinas in several techniques. Most common is overlay jewelry, a technique developed in the late 1930s to give Hopi jewelry a distinctive look. Artists cut Hopi symbols out of silver and gold with a tiny saw. In an appliqué-like technique, the designs are



Overlay pin by Mitchell Sockyma

soldered onto a bottom layer of silver that is textured and oxidized and becomes a contrasting background. Other jewelers are inspired by the work of the late Charles Loloma, whose innovative work of the 1970s still influences Native American artists. He used stones, fossilized ivory and other materials to echo the Hopi world - its landscape, ceremonies and corn. Jewelry by **Bennard and Frances Dallasvuyaoma, Watson Honanie, Sherian Honhongva, Dawn Lucas, Trini Lucas, Phil Poseyesva, Daren Silas, Mitchell Sockyma, Charles Supplee, Don Supplee, and Roy Talahaftewa** will be included in this exhibit.

KATSINAS are the spirit essence of everything in the real world, representing everything from game animals, rain, snow, insects, the sun and even death. Hopi men represent these spirits in dances or ceremonies in which the people ask the katsinas to intercede for them. To include the women in this process, the men who are representing a katsina will carve a replica, called a *tihu*, to present to the young girls or women in their families. Although often referred to as dolls, these pieces are made to remind them of the katsinas and what they represent. They have evolved from flat, rigid dolls to realistic sculptures full of motion. Modern tools such as dremels and woodburners allow carvers to incorporate fine details into their work. Katsina dolls by **Lawrence Dallas, Leslie David, Neil David, Jr., Malcolm Fred, Coolidge Roy, Paul Sewemaenewa, Clark Tenakhongva** and others will be included in this exhibit.



Katsina by Leo Lacapa

Joining us April 15-17 will be guest artist, **Leo Lacapa**, who will demonstrate carving from noon to 4PM each day. Leo has been carving katsinas for over 30 years. He is from the village of Walpi on First Mesa, and a member of the Water Clan. Taught by his uncle, **Maxwell Namoki**, Leo is a prolific carver depicting a wide range of katsinas. Leo's work shows great attention to detail and accuracy in depicting the katsinas he carves. Regular participation in the various katsina ceremonies enables him to have first hand knowledge of the katsinas. Enjoy the opportunity to meet Leo, who will be visiting Washington, D.C. for the first time.

¹Treasures of the Hopi, by Theda Bassman, Northland Publishing, 1997, pg. 5.



Want the most recent Indian Craft Shop news?

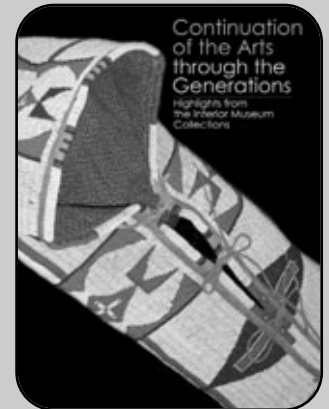
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Exhibitions at the Interior Museum

Continuation of the Arts: An exhibit that demonstrates the continuation, adaptation, and innovation in American Indian Art over the past 65 years.

Opening on May 28th! At home with Frederick Douglass: An exhibition featuring personal items and furnishings from his Washington residence and telling the story of his life and achievements.



Photograph of a 19th century Plains Indian baby carrier on display in the exhibit "Continuation of the Arts Through the Generations."

For information on museum exhibits and tours, call 202-208-4743.

The Indian Craft Shop Welcomes the National Museum of the American Indian!

The National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall in Washington, DC will debut on September 21, 2004, after the culmination of nearly 15 years of planning and collaboration with tribal communities from across the Western Hemisphere. The Museum's grand opening will include a Native Nations Procession, Opening Ceremonies and First Americans Festival, a six-day event featuring Native performers, dance, music, storytelling, and demonstrations. Timed free passes will be needed for the Museum due to expected crowds and some small gallery spaces. Advance passes are available at www.americanindian.si.edu or at tickets.com or by calling 866-400-NMAI (6624) for a fee of \$1.75 per ticket plus a \$1.50 service charge per order. For more information on opening week events, visit the museum's web site: www.americanindian.si.edu.



Southwest corner of the Museum of the American Indian

New Books!

A Guide to Zuni Fetishes and Carvings, by Susan Lamb, Western National Parks Association, 2002, \$4.95.

Timeless Textiles—Traditional Pueblo Arts 1840-1940, by Tyrone D. Campbell, Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, 2003, \$14.95.

Navajo Saddle Blankets—Textiles to Ride in the American West, Museum of New Mexico Press, 2002, \$29.95.

Jewels of the Navajo Loom: the Rugs of Teec Nos Pos, by Ruth K. Belikove, Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, 2003, \$14.95.

Blanket Weaving in the Southwest, by Joe Ben Wheat, The University of Arizona Press, 2003, \$75.00.

The Pottery of Zia Pueblo, by Francis H. Harlow and Dwight P. Lanmon, School of American Research Press, 2003, \$59.95.

When Rain Gods Reign—From Curios to Art at Tesuque Pueblo, by Duane Anderson, Museum of New Mexico Press, 2002, \$29.95.

Masterworks From The Heard Museum, The Heard Museum, 2001, \$55.00.

Totem Pole Carving, by Vickie Jensen, University of Washington Press, 2003, \$22.95.

Lifeworlds—Artscapes—Contemporary Iroquois Art, Stadt Frankfurt am Main, 2003, \$22.50.

Path Breakers—The Eiteljorg Fellowship for Native American Fine Art, 2003, Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, 2003, \$22.50.

Navajo Ceremonial Baskets—Sacred Symbols, Sacred Space, by Georgiana Kennedy Simpson, Book Publishing Company, 2004, (Release Date April 2004), \$16.95.



REMINDER: The Indian Craft Shop is open the third Saturday of each month from 10 am to 4 pm

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