



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 • www.indiancraftshop.com • email: indiancrafts@erols.com
 Representing American Indian Arts and Crafts Since 1938

SANDPAINTING IMAGERY IN NAVAJO ART

September 11 - October 6

Guest Artists and Demonstrations September 14-16

Open until 8pm on Thursday, September 14

Store Hours for Saturday, September 16 10am-4pm

Demonstrations by Navajo Artists

September 14 - 11:00am - 2:00pm/6:00pm - 8:00pm ♦ September 15 & 16 - 11:00am - 2:00pm

- ♦ Sandpainting Demonstration by **Joe Ben, Jr.**
- ♦ Rug Weaving Demonstrations by **Bertha Beall** and **Brenda Crosby**

- ♦ Sandcast Jewelry by **Ira Custer**
- ♦ Fabricated Jewelry by **Al Joe**
- ♦ Pottery Demonstration by **Ida Sahmie**

The Indian Craft Shop is pleased to announce a new show, *Sandpainting Imagery in Navajo Arts*, highlighting the variety of work created today by Navajo artists incorporating images similar to those in Navajo sandpaintings. A wide range of craft areas will be featured including sandpaintings, metalwork, pottery, folk art, weavings, basketry, jewelry and other items that include depictions of figures found in sandpaintings.

This show is in honor of the recent installation at the Department of the Interior Museum of a very rare, mural-sized sandpainting rug woven in the 1930s by Bahe Shondee. For approximately a hundred years, the evolution of sandpainting figures in a permanent art form has been gradual. It began slowly and hesitantly, in picture and woven form. Today many artists are preserving representations of their culture and religion in a great variety of art forms. In addition to work from our guest artists **Joe Ben, Jr., Bertha Beall, Brenda Crosby, Ira Custer,**



Al Joe and **Ida Sahmie**, we will be including works by **Arnold Begay, Gerald Begay, Thomas Begay, Jr., Kee Joe Benally,**

Lorraine Black, Peggy Black, Ric Charley, Carl and Irene Clark, Bruce Hathale, Jim Harrison, Elsie Holiday, Lorenzo Hogue, Tommy Jackson, Sam Keams, Chester Khan, Dennis Long, Al Nez, Kee Nez, Lorenzo Reed, Tommy Singer, Irving Tsoisie, Kee Yazzie, Ken and Irene White, Hank Whitethorne, Harold Willeto, Lorraine Williams and others.

NAVAJO SANDPAINTING

An integral feature of Navajo religious ceremonies is sandpainting, when a *hataalii* ("singer"/medicine man) uses ground dried plants and stones to create an image on the ground. For hundreds of years, only those participating in or conducting these rites saw these images. Each ceremony has its own specific set of chants, steps and sandpainting images. As an individual singer learns to perform a particular ceremony, he learns all of the associated chants, ritual observations and sandpaintings. Chants must be recited exactly and the appropriate sandpainting image must be accurate to every detail. Reproducing or re-enacting any part or portion of the ceremony is strictly prohibited.

During the early 1900s there was a great deal of interest in Navajo ceremonial art forms. Around 1920, a Navajo medicine man, Hosteen Klah, created a weaving that reproduced a sandpainting image. Although this was very controversial within the Navajo community at the time, Hosteen Klah produced several weavings that illustrated sandpainting designs, and by the 1930s a few other weavers were creating them as well. Most chose to leave out or modify certain elements of the design to avoid the ritual prohibition on reproducing the exact image. Many artists relied on ceremonies to protect them from the negative

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Department of the Interior Museum Exhibit *The Arrow People: The Story of a Navajo Sandpainting Rug*

An innovative museum exhibition, *The Arrow People: The Story of a Navajo Sandpainting Rug*, provides an in-depth look at a Navajo treasure. This vibrantly colored, boldly designed, mural size rug by Bahe Shondee (also known as Bullsnake Springs Woman) depicts one of the sacred histories of the Navajo Nation.

The exhibit chronicles the tapestry's commissioning by Roman Hubbell of the Hubbell Trading Post at Ganado, Arizona, its creation in the early 1930s by Bahe Shondee, and subsequent purchase by the Department of the Interior in 1937. Included in the exhibit is the inspiration for Bahe Shondee - a watercolor by Miguelito of a sandpainting design, *Shooting Chant*.

The weaving will remain on exhibit through August, 2001. Open until 8pm on Thursday, September 14, 2000. Tours of American Indian murals in limited access areas of the Main Interior Building are available with advance reservations (two weeks notice required). Please call (202) 208-4659.

GRAND SUCCESS FOR THE BASKETRY SHOW

The American Indian Basketry Show in spring 2000 was a great success! Customers were able to meet and talk with guest basket makers **Joann** and **Ramona Johnson** (Navajo) and **Gerald Barnes** (Passamaquoddy). Many even tried their hand at the

wrapped-rod technique, learning the skill (and strength!) required to pull stripped sumac around sumac rods of Navajo ceremonial baskets. Guest co-authors **Sarah**



Peabody Turnbaugh and **William Turnbaugh** signed copies of *Indian Baskets* and *Basket Tales of the Grandmothers*, and discussed basketry with the artists and customers. Over twenty different tribal areas across the United States were represented in basketry.

Navajo Sandpainting

(continued from page 1)

consequences of reproducing a sacred image out of its context. At about the same time, some weavers began isolating individual design elements from sandpaintings and using these as a motif in weaving. The distinctive representation of a ye'i (a holy person, or god) is the most common sandpainting design element seen on its own.

During the 1930s there were many significant developments in the evolution of modern American Indian art. Art programs in the Indian schools in Santa Fe and Albuquerque provided one of the first opportunities for American Indians to study conventional forms of art in classroom settings with trained instructors. Painting and "easel art" were a relatively new medium for Navajo artists, and most of the formal training available at the time placed emphasis on painting subjects from the artist's own culture. While only medicine men know sandpainting images in their entirety, the imagery and graphic characteristics are well known by most Navajo.

An excellent example of this is the mural painting on the south wall of The Indian Craft Shop. Executed in 1938 by Navajo artist Gerald Nailor, it shows three hunters stalking deer. While the main subject matter is executed in the style taught in The Studio at The Santa Fe Indian School where Nailor was a student, the details of the sun and decorative border of ye'i figures around the door of the shop are clearly derived from the manner of stylizing figures in sandpainting. In the penthouse of the Department of the Interior there are other murals executed by Nailor which also include similar sandpainting elements and ye'i figure borders. Other Navajo painters of the thirties and forties used sandpainting imagery in the same manner, isolating elements which are common ceremonial designs and using them as components in their painting.

Today, there are many types of work from Navajo artists that include sandpainting imagery. In jewelry we see ye'i figures produced in a variety of forms including overlay and sandcast techniques. There are also Navajo inlayers using a great variety of stones and shell, bringing dynamic life to bracelets, pins and neckware. Weavings, pottery and basketry take on a whole new look with representations of ye'is, yeibachai and other designs from sandpaintings. Carved wooden figures and fabricated metal sculpture bring yet another dimension to the use of sandpainting elements. There are also artists creating "memory aids" that are flat style paintings on muslin cloth. And, of course, there are the sandpaintings - created by artists using an array of crushed minerals that are laid on designs outlined in glue, one color at a time.

Join the Indian Craft Shop in welcoming our guest artists for this special show, a rare opportunity to see a consolidated and significant representation of sandpainting imagery as used in Navajo art today.

ARTIST OF THE MONTH PROGRAM

Our *Artist of the Month Program* has been tremendously successful for the artists highlighted. This program showcases an individual artist from a different tribal area each month, giving guests a chance to appreciate the wide variety of artistic expressions and traditions found in the country today. While there is a special highlight and larger selection during the month an artist is featured, be sure to ask to see the work of other *Artists of the Month* in which you are interested. *Artist of the Month* bio sheets are available on each artist.

Artists of the Month for 2000

- 🌀 *January 2000* – **George “Shukata” Willis** (Choctaw) – Jewelry – Indian Arts and Crafts Association (IACA) Artist of the Year for 2000.
- 🌀 *February 2000* – **Terrill O’Brien** (Mohawk) – beaded pouch necklaces.
- 🌀 *March 2000* – **Levi Tetpon** (Yupik) – carvings of walrus ivory well known for his transformation figures.
- 🌀 *April 2000* – **Arlene Caesar** (Kiowa) – leather and bead work.
- 🌀 *May 2000* – **Charlene “Charlyn” Reano** (Santo Domingo Pueblo) – Jewelry – Known for innovative metalwork techniques.
- 🌀 *June ~ August 2000* – **Eddie Morrison** (Cherokee) – wood and stone sculpture.

Upcoming Artists

- 🌀 *September 2000* – **George Blake** (Hupa) – Silver and gold jewelry, clay, wood, bone, elk antler and more, using traditional Northern Californian basketry patterns.
- 🌀 *October 2000* – **Madeline Naranjo** (Santa Clara Pueblo) highly polished blackware pottery with deeply carved designs.
- 🌀 *November 2000* – **Allen Roy Paquin** (Jicarilla Apache) – innovative jewelry with inlay work, known for his inlaid shoulder lizard pins.
- 🌀 *December 2000* – **Loris Langley and Darlene Robinson** (Coushatta) – mother and daughter team who make beautiful split stitch, coiled pine needle baskets, often decorated with raffia and/or pinecones.

SHOP RENOVATION COMPLETE ~ COME SEE!

“When did you put those beams in the ceiling? They look just like the Southwest!”

“What great light fixtures! Where did you get them?”

“Wow! Look at these murals! Have they really always been here?”

These comments demonstrate the fabulous effect of the shop’s recently completed renovation. It all began with the need for new jewelry cases... and then to replace the carpeting. So it began.

The showcases in the front room were removed for refinishing in a lighter color and voila! There they were. The Rainbow Ye’is and clouds around the front door have been released in their full, original glory. New jewelry cases have more room for display and go back to the classic straight lines that make the shop feel wider. The pottery cases have been cut down to echo the cloud steps around the door and allow more space for entering the back room.

Wouldn’t the back room be lighter if the walls were lighter? The resident painter thrived on the challenge of duplicating the original paint job on the mural walls in the front room, doing research and experimenting for weeks until he found just the right technique.

The office space in the back room has been opened up and has released perhaps one of the most unique aspects of the shop that almost nobody knew about! Who would have guessed that the office was once a special space for cleaning spittoons? That would explain the tiled walls and that strange bathtub-like structure in the corner that now makes a wonderful seating area for those who want to look at books or have a place to rest their feet while a companion looks at every fascinating item in the shop.

We are sure you will appreciate the result which is showcasing the arts and crafts in an even better way and bringing out the best in this charming, historical shop!

Special Thanks to the National Business Center (NBC) of the Department of the Interior

The recent renovation work at the shop could not have gone as well without the tremendous support and teamwork from the National Business Center (NBC) of the Department of the Interior. A great deal of thanks goes to NBC for their partnering with the shop’s renovation. It was a wonderful experience having the combined efforts of so many talented individuals and groups working together.



NEW BOOK PICKS

- *A GUIDE TO NAVAJO SANDPAINTING*, by Mark Bahti. Rio Nuevo Publishers, 2000. \$9.95.
- *TREES IN A CIRCLE: THE TEEC NOS POS STORY*, by Kerry Hannon. Teec Nos Pos Trading Post, \$49.95/\$125.00.
- *INDIAN BASKETMAKERS OF THE SOUTHWEST*, by Larry Dalrymple. Museum of New Mexico Press, 2000. \$29.95.
- *NORTHWEST CARVING TRADITIONS*, by Karen and Ralph Norris. Schiffer Publishing, 1999. \$59.95.
- *TRADITIONAL HOPI KACHINAS: A NEW GENERATION OF CARVERS*, by Jonathan S. Day. Northland Publishing, 2000. \$14.95.
- *INDIAN TRADER: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF J.L. HUBBELL*, by Martha Blue. Kiva Publishing, Inc. 2000. \$32.50.

Upcoming Events Calendar

Arts of Alaska

November 6 - 30, 2000

McLean Museum Shops Show

November 24 - 26, 2000

Southwestern Innovators in Jewelry

December 14 - 16, 2000

Guest Artist, TBA

Flags and Eagles in Indian Art

January 15 - February 28, 2001

ARTS OF ALASKA


This year's show will be better than ever! Many new contacts were made at the recent Indian Art Northwest show in Portland, Oregon. Be sure to mark your calendars November 6 - 30 for Arts of Alaska!

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



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Guest Services



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