

# Southwest Native Pottery and Silver



ART&CULTURE

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Evolving Traditions: Southwest Native Potter and Silver

Drawn from the Academy's anthropology collections, this exhibit highlights Native American pottery and silver jewelry created by members of the Navajo, Hopi and Zuni tribes and by the Rio Grande Pueblos. As you explore the exhibit on Level 3, complete the following tasks! You may proceed in any order.

Complete the Venn diagram comparing characteristics of **Zuni** and **Navajo** jewelry:

T. Atwater © CAS



Zuni jewelry

Both



Navajo jewelry

Kevin Twomey © CAS

List four common materials used in **Southwest Native** jewelry:



M.Schufreider © CAS

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### Discuss with your peers

What do you think are some of the similarities and differences between **ancient** jewelry and **modern** jewelry crafted by Southwest Natives?

Describe your **favorite piece** of Southwest Native jewelry using words or pictures.

Draw **your own design** inspired by a piece you've seen in the exhibit!

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Label each pottery term according to its role by writing a letter in the box at left. Use an **S** for terms used in pottery **shaping**, **F** for terms used in **firing**, or **D** for terms used in **decoration**.

M.Schufreider © CAS



M.Schufreider © CAS



Pottery Terms	
	coiling
	redware method
	turquoise-coated
	paddle-and-anvil
	blackware method
	incisions ( <i>sgraffito</i> )
	painting

How is **Zuni** pottery decoration distinguished from that of other pueblos?



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Find a tribe that has a **unique** style or method of making pottery. What is the tribe and what makes them unique?

Brainstorm with your peers

Are the **storyteller figures** from the Cochiti Pueblo realistic? What might the different parts of the figures represent?



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Many objects give you hints as to the **wildlife**, **habitats**, **climate**, or **natural resources** available to the pueblo residents.

List as many examples as you can using observations of the objects themselves.

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Use your list to discuss with your peers

What can be **inferred** about the **environment** in which pottery is created?



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# At-Academy Activity: Southwest Native Pottery and Silver

GRADE LEVELS	4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> ; California Content Standards for 4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>
SUBJECTS	Visual Arts; Investigation and Experimentation; History-Social Science
DURATION	Preparation: 5 minutes    Activity: 40 minutes
SETTING	Evolving Traditions, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Balcony

## Objectives

Through this scavenger hunt, students will:

1. describe artistic elements of jewelry and pottery crafted by Native Americans of the Southwest
2. compare jewelry and pottery of different tribes and of different time periods.
3. create an image of a piece of jewelry based on the observed pieces.

## Materials

- ❖ Southwest Native Pottery and Silver Scavenger Hunt (one sheet per student)
- ❖ pencils
- ❖ clipboard (optional)

## Vocabulary

- ❖ **blackware method:** a method of firing that results in a piece of pottery that is black, though the original clay can range in color; this method involves placing wood or dried manure into the fire, which creates a smoky environment that blackens the pottery.
- ❖ **clay slip:** a thin layer of clay on the outside of a piece of pottery often used in decoration.
- ❖ **coiling:** a pottery making technique in which additional clay is shaped into ropes and then added one at a time to the exterior of the base, with each succeeding coil placed atop the previous one. The coils are pinched together and the interior and exterior surfaces are scraped so the coils adhere to each other and produce a smooth surface that can be decorated.
- ❖ **firing:** a step in the making of pottery that hardens the clay and often changes its color.
- ❖ **Hopi:** a tribe of Pueblo Southwest Native Americans
- ❖ **incisions (sgraffito):** a method of pottery decoration, where the artist carved into the outside layer of clay.
- ❖ **Navajo:** a tribe of Southwest Native Americans that is currently the largest in the United States. They live primarily in the northeastern corner of Arizona.
- ❖ **Overlay:** a silver working technique used predominately by Hopi, in which designs are cut out from one sheet of silver and then that sheet is soldered to a second sheet
- ❖ **paddle-and-anvil:** a pottery making technique in which a lump of clay is roughly hand-formed into a desired shape. A stone “anvil” is then held against the inside surface of the emerging vessel while the exterior is pounded with a flat board or paddle, causing the vessel walls to become thinner and rise higher.

# Southwest Native Pottery and Jewelry: Scavenger Hunt

- ❖ **pueblo:** a term that describes a community of Southwest Native Americans, from the Spanish word for “town.” Pueblo also refers to the groups of Southwest Native tribes that include the Zuni, Hopi, and Taos.
- ❖ **redware method:** a method of firing that results in a product that ranges from reddish brown to orange (the original clay does not have to start as red); the color change is due to the high iron content of the clay that is fired at low temperatures.
- ❖ **turquoise:** a blue-green mineral that is found in the Southwest of the United States.
- ❖ **Zuni:** a tribe of Pueblo Southwest Native Americans

## Teacher Background

This exhibit highlights Native American pottery and silver jewelry created by members of the Navajo, Hopi and Zuni tribes and by the Rio Grande Pueblos.

## 2000 Years of Pottery History

*(Adapted from a background article (unpublished) provided by Russ Hartman, Senior Collections Manager of Anthropology at the California Academy of Sciences.)*



Native Americans in the Southwest have been making pottery for almost 2,000 years. Since the late 1800s, their wares have developed an international following, raising craft to the level of art. During those years, the pottery has changed dramatically in some ways, while core cultural traditions and an ingrained respect for Mother Earth and her clay have remained constant. The Academy exhibit *Evolving Traditions: Southwest Native Pottery and Silver* offers an overview of that 2,000 year journey and a look into the lives of some of the individuals who have sustained this ancient craft within their specific tribal groups.

Exactly when and where pottery production began in the American Southwest is a question that likely will never be definitively answered by archaeologists. People have lived in the Southwest for many thousands of years, but pottery began showing up in the archaeological record only around A.D.200.

Two pottery making techniques are used by today's Native potters. The potter's wheel was unknown prior to the arrival of the Spanish and is still not used today. Maricopa potters in the Phoenix area employ the **paddle and anvil technique**, in which a lump of clay is roughly hand-formed into a desired shape. A stone "anvil" is then held against the inside surface of the emerging vessel while the exterior is pounded with a flat board or paddle, causing the vessel walls to become thinner and rise higher.

All other pottery producing groups, i.e. all **Pueblos** and the **Navajo**, begin a pot by hand forming a pancake-like base and then completing the vessel with the **coiling technique**. Additional clay

## Southwest Native Pottery and Jewelry: Scavenger Hunt

is shaped into ropes and then added one at a time to the exterior of the base, with each succeeding coil placed atop the previous one. The coils are pinched together and the interior and exterior surfaces are scraped so the coils adhere to each other and produce a smooth surface that can be decorated.

Learning the many steps required to produce quality pottery is a lengthy process accomplished primarily through observation. Gathering raw clay, sifting and curing it, and polishing pots completed by older relatives are all vital steps that involve communal labor and strengthen family ties. Children are encouraged to participate in the process from the time they are very young, and are given increasingly more responsibility as they master each step. Sitting alongside their mothers, grandmothers or other relatives, younger potters are shown how to do each step, but they are never told, “Do it this way.”

“Evolving Traditions” presents examples of pottery from many different tribal groups, allowing for the comparison of the vessel forms, designs, and colors from one group to another. All of the pots are made from clay, but no two clay deposits are the same and the traditions of one tribe or pueblo also differ markedly from each other. As one goes through the exhibit, it should be easy to discern some of these differences that readily identify the cultural identity of the person who made it.

In some tribes and pueblos, families form pottery dynasties, almost always overseen by a family matriarch. Perhaps the most famous Native American artist of all time is Maria Martinez, who along with her husband, Julian, re-invented black-on-black pottery and propelled a growing demand for Native American pottery. The couple demonstrated their craft at the St. Louis World’s Fair in 1904. In addition to family dynasties, many hundreds of other potters make equally beautiful and equally collectible pottery as a symbol of their cultural pride and heritage.

### Southwest Native Jewelry

(Adapted from a posting by Russ Hartman on the Academy's Science Now blog.)

For most of us, the words “southwestern Indian jewelry” usually conjure up images of sterling silver and **turquoise**. But it’s not that simple. While it’s true that the two materials have dominated the work of Navajo and Pueblo jewelry makers for more than 100 years, it’s actually a relatively recent innovation among southwestern native crafts, beginning around 1870. What’s more, the craft and style is different between the native peoples in the area.

Jewelry making, itself, is an ancient craft among southwestern Indians, dating back 2,000 years or more to the region’s pre-Pueblo ancestral inhabitants. Turquoise mined from local deposits was shaped into beads and pendants for more than a thousand years, but only during the last quarter of the 19th Century was silver introduced by Mexican craftsmen.

At **Zuni Pueblo** in New Mexico, men learned to work iron and copper about the same time as the **Navajo**, in the 1850s. Around 1872, a Navajo silversmith taught a Zuni man how to work silver. Not surprisingly, Navajo and Zuni silver jewelry looked very similar in the late 1800s and

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well into the early decades of the 1900s. Jewelry made for native use was often very heavy and set with just a few large stones, as turquoise was still considered very scarce and valuable. To service a growing number of tourists to the Southwest, one company began the production of lighter weight pieces and, as early as 1899, had contracted with a turquoise miner in Nevada to supply turquoise pre-cut into specific sizes and shapes.

The **Hopi** Indians learned silver working from their trading partners, the Zuni, sometime in the 1890s, and by 1906 there were Hopi silversmiths in all Hopi villages. Predictably, early Hopi jewelry looked very similar to that made by the Zuni and the Navajo, and remained so until circa 1940s.

Following World War II, a number of factors combined to allow the Navajo, Zuni and Hopi to develop different styles of jewelry that would set their work apart from each other.

**Navajos** preferred the look of both silver and turquoise in combination with each other, so they retained a style where the silver serves as a base for stone settings. Equally popular is jewelry that does not include any stone settings at all, relying upon filed or stamped designs to accentuate the silver.

The introduction of electricity at **Zuni** Pueblo in the 1940s allowed for generators to power electric saws to cut ever smaller pieces of turquoise. Previously, Zuni men and women laboriously cut turquoise pieces by hand. The ability to cut smaller and smaller pieces allowed the Zuni to further develop their inlay techniques as well as the setting of hundreds of small stones on a single bracelet or necklace. Unlike the Navajo, the Zuni like to accentuate the stone settings. The silver is merely a means to support the stones. Turquoise, coral, black jet, and white shell are especially significant to the Zuni people and these four materials are often combined on a single piece of jewelry.

Many Native American men served in the military during World War II, and like other veterans, they often returned home with few opportunities for employment. In 1947, a group of **Hopi** veterans enrolled in a federally-funded GI training program on the Hopi Reservation. The students learned basics of design and how to adapt traditional Hopi motifs from pottery and textiles to silverwork. They used a technique known as **overlay**, in which designs are cut out from one sheet of silver and then that sheet is soldered to a second sheet. The cutout areas of the first sheet are then oxidized to make them stand out against the surrounding silver. This technique was immediately popular and remains the hallmark of contemporary Hopi silverwork.

Contemporary Native American jewelers capitalize on the traditions fostered by earlier generations, but they also work in a completely different world from their predecessors. Many of them have degrees in art, engineering, and other subjects and have traveled internationally and been exposed to many different cultures. Like their ancestors, these younger artists are influenced in their work by their own life experiences – people, places and events. They combine seemingly divergent traits from one culture with those of their own, just as they fuse one type of metal to another for an entirely different effect. In the end, however, they remain rooted in their own traditions while also forging new ones.

# Southwest Native Pottery and Jewelry: Scavenger Hunt

## Activity

### Preparation

1. Print out the *Southwest Native Pottery and Silver Hunt* for each student.
2. Go over the scavenger hunt questions with your adult chaperones ahead of time and make sure they are familiar with the activity and vocabulary.

### Introduction

The collections in *Evolving Traditions: Southwest Native Pottery and Silver* focuses on the jewelry work and pottery of the tribes of the Southwest United States.

- ❖ Draw attention to the two areas of the exhibit – the pottery is in the back section and the jewelry is in the front along one wall. In general, the collection is organized by tribe.
- ❖ Go over the questions on the scavenger hunt with your students and make sure they understand what they will be doing. Remind them that they can do the scavenger hunt in any order and that many of the questions do not have one correct answer.

### Procedure

1. Divide students into their chaperone groups. The *Evolving Traditions* exhibit space is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor balcony. The exhibit space is relatively small so you may wish to stagger the time each group will be spend in the exhibit.
2. Allow time for students to explore, observe, and answer the questions on the scavenger hunt.

### Wrap-Up

Discuss the questions that your students answered from their scavenger hunt. Ask students to share their experiences observing the jewelry and pottery. What did they see that surprised them? What do they wonder about now that they have seen the exhibit?

## References

Hartman, Russ (2011). *Southwest Jewelry* <http://www.calacademy.org/scientetoday/southwest-jewelry/>

American Museum of Natural History. *Totems to Turquoise: Native North American Jewelry Arts of the Northwest and Southwest*. <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/totems/>

## Correlated California Content Standards

### Grade Four

#### Visual Arts

- 1.5 Describe and analyze the elements of art (e.g., color, shape/form, line, texture, space, value), emphasizing form, as they are used in works of art and found in the environment.

## Southwest Native Pottery and Jewelry: Scavenger Hunt

3.1 Describe how art plays a role in reflecting life (e.g., in photography, quilts, architecture).

### Science: Investigation and Experimentation

6a. Differentiate observation from inference (interpretation) and know scientists' explanations come partly from what they observe and partly from how they interpret their observations.

### Grade Five

#### Visual Arts

- 1.3 Use their knowledge of all the elements of art to describe similarities and differences in works of art and in the environment.
- 3.3 Identify and compare works of art from various regions of the United States.
- 3.4 View selected works of art from a major culture and observe changes in materials and styles over a period of time.

#### History-Social Science

- 5.1.1 Describe how geography and climate influenced the way various [pre-Columbian] nations lived and adjusted to the natural environment, including locations of villages, the distinct structures that they built, and how they obtained food, clothing, tools, and utensils.
- 5.1.2 Describe their [the pre-Columbian natives'] varied customs and folklore traditions.

### Grade Six

#### Visual Arts

- 1.1 Identify and describe *all* the elements of art found in selected works of art (e.g., color, shape/form, line, texture, space, value).
- 1.2 Discuss works of art as to theme, genre, style, idea, and differences in media.
- 3.2 View selected works of art from a culture and describe how they have changed or not changed in theme and content over a period of time.
- 3.3 Compare, in oral or written form, representative images or designs from at least two selected cultures.

### Grade Seven

#### Visual Arts

- 1.1 Describe the environment and selected works of art, using the elements of art and the principles of design.
- 3.2 Compare and contrast works of art from various periods, styles, and cultures and explain how those works reflect the society in which they were made.

### Grade Eight

#### Visual Arts

- 1.1 Use artistic terms when describing the intent and content of works of art.
- 3.2 Compare, contrast, and analyze styles of art from a variety of times and places in Western and non-Western cultures.
- 4.3 Construct an interpretation of a work of art based on the form and content of the work.