

Hopi artists offering show in Sisters

It can be a rare privilege to peek into a culture different than our own, one that predates the European discovery of the Americas, one that carries on traditions and ceremonies over a thousand years old, a culture that dwells as a sovereign nation, albeit dependent, within ours.

We become so absorbed in our annual traditions at certain times of the year — the late November feast with family; a reflective, sacred evening in early winter followed by the exchange of presents; July fireworks celebrating self-determination — that we forget other cultures may not share these activities.

They have their own tradition: the gathering of eaglets for sacred ceremonies; a men’s Bear Society that holds dances and offers medicinal help; priests dancing with snakes at the height of summer, praying for rain and fertility. They may not pay much attention to ours.

Juxtapose these cultures, and each has traditions that seem strange and exotic to the other. Yet, there are a few portals offering a narrow passage through the unfamiliarity and apprehension — one of those being artwork.

Three great plateaus of sun-baked, wind-scrubbed earth rise into the sky in northeastern Arizona. These island mesas of smooth yellow sandstone boulders, laying in both tight, neat stacks and pell-mell jumbles, provide elevated vistas that seemingly reach beyond distant horizons and into the dimension of timelessness.

Long ago, a people were drawn to settle these mesas that offer secluded natural springs. Whether or not they were the first to occupy these islands in the sky matters not, the Hopi stayed. A thousand years later, they remain; their traditions still very much alive.

Sonwai, Verma Nequatewa of Third Mesa, became a preminent Native

American jeweler 30 years ago, after apprenticing for 25 years beside her uncle, the legendary Charles Loloma. Charles redefined the concept of Native American jewelry; his works are revered for their innovation, the skill required to create them and their astounding beauty.

First learning the basics of metallurgy and lapidary from her uncle, then the guiding concepts of form and content, Verma eventually came to understand the rich subtleties and nuances that define a true masterpiece from a fine work of art. She carries forward the understanding that, when a work is being constructed, there is only absolute precision with every detail. The end result is jewelry that has distinguished styling, is refined yet visionary, and leads one to consider something distant and ageless.

The Hopi are structured as a matriarchal society. Upon marrying, the man goes to live with the woman’s family, adopting her clan. All material things are in the woman’s name, with the exception of the livestock that he tends. A sovereign nation, each village considers itself autonomous, is divided into clans based upon matrilineal lineage, and has a headman serving as the spiritual leader.

Dry-land farming and ranching are the primary livelihoods; positions in the schools, medical field, or various government entities offer a small number of Western world job opportunities. Art- and jewelry-making are the primary means of income for some families.

Pesavensi, Donna Humetewa Kaye of Third Mesa, belongs to the Tobacco Clan. Depictions of landforms, plants, land and sky reflect the sacred symbols of her homeland. The mesas are rich in ancient layers of earthen mineral pigments. She hand-gathers these naturally occurring colors, grinds them, and makes her own paints in order to

create ethereal, meditative paintings.

Donna, having long worked with fiber arts, found a mentor in James McGrath. The former art director of the Institute of American Indian Arts College encouraged her to use the resources from her homeland when creating art and to follow her intuitions. Her warm earth-tone images are now seen each year at the juried Santa Fe Indian Market and Heard Museum shows.

The Hopi attribute success to their spiritual ways, known as the Katsina religion. Their ceremonies and dances are prayers for moisture, germination, and the well-being of everyone. They believe their land to be the center of the universe, their prayers essential to the harmony of humanity. Many Native American tribes acknowledge the Hopi as a model for peace and sustainability; theologians note a similarity between the Hopi and traditional Tibetans.

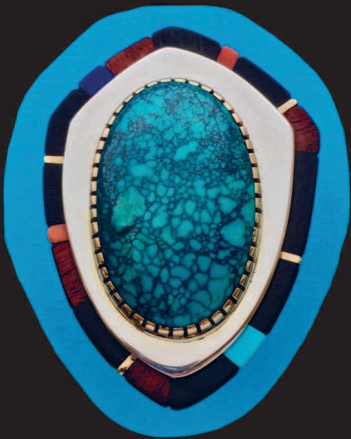
Dorothy Ami, Hopi-Tewa, comes from the ancient pottery making village of Polacca on First Mesa. She began making pottery in her late teens. It was in her late 20s, when her cousin, the celebrated potter Mark Tahbo, began guiding her that she evolved into an award-winning potter.

Ami’s works are fully traditional — coiled with local earth materials, fired outside with cedar wood and sheep manure and stone polished. Her intricate and beautiful designs are painted with natural clay pigments or gathered plants.

Sonwai, Pesavensi, and Dorothy Ami will be offering a show and exhibition of their works September 28-30, with an artists’ reception on Friday from 4 to 7 p.m. They will offer an open forum, question-and-answer session on Saturday from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. All events will take place at Raven Makes Gallery at 182 E. Hood Ave.



18K Gold, Kingman Turquoise Pendant



18K Gold, Silver, Cloud Mountain Turquoise Ring

Hopi Women’s Show
Sonwai
Distinguished Master Jeweler
Pesavensi
Painter
Dorothy Ami
Potter



Yungyupa, Earthen Pigments Painting, 36”d

in person Artist Show
September 28 – 30
Fri 4 – 7 pm Artists Reception
Saturday 1:30 – 2:30 pm
Open Forum Discussion



Traditional Hopi Polychrome Pottery

Raven Makes Gallery
182 E Hood Ave
www.ravenmakesgallery.com

Come in and have a B.L.A.S.T. with us!

Crispy bacon, avocado, tomato, on a bed of mixed greens, with brioche croutons and avocado vinaigrette.



NOW OPEN 7 days a week, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 403 E. Hood Ave. | 541.549.2699
 Serving Breakfast & lunch

