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Balancing identity and culture: the evolution of the traditional Zuni palette

Charlaine Clerc

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Charlaine CLERC

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BALANCING CULTURE AND IDENTITY: THE EVOLUTION OF THE TRADITIONAL ZUNI PALETTE

Sous la direction de Prof. Samuel LUDWIG et de Dr. Jennifer K. DICK

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Le 18.09.2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clerc', written in a cursive style.

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Introduction

Ever since the so-called discovery of America by Europeans, Native American art has attracted the fascination of outsiders for what the latter have long perceived as its exotic and primitive features, characterized by “crude” drawings and a “naïve” use of mostly primary colors. This perception, which can be detected in scholarly works as well as in the public attitude towards Native American art in general, has been deeply influenced by the Eurocentric mentalities of former generations of researchers and art dealers alike. Because of this attitude, both academic research and general public opinion have relied on obsolete representations of Native culture and art that do not take into account tribal worldviews and important cultural specificities or the evolution and important recent changes in tribal art and culture. My study aims to develop a better understanding of Native American art by investigating the art of the Zuni tribe, and more specifically the use and significance of color in Zuni art, in order to dispel some of the outdated misconceptions that still today relegate Native art and culture to a “primitive” or “artisanal” status in contrast to Western artforms. As the approach to colors in Native American cultures can vary and a grouped study would gloss over the many differences between tribes, this dissertation will focus on the Zuni tribe only, with other Native American tribes mentioned mainly for comparison. We will seek to balance out the information gleaned from previous studies, and correct preconceived Western notions by referring to explanations and insights offered by Zuni artists themselves. By engaging directly with contemporary Zuni artists, we will also be able to map the outside influences on traditional Zuni colors, principally due to increased interaction with the Western world and a slow integration of the social and economic values of the United

States, and trace the subsequent shifts away from certain traditional forms, uses, and even concepts of color towards the more modern notions and ranges that constitute the contemporary Zuni palette.

Zuni village is located about 150 miles west of Albuquerque near the Arizona border and numbers about 10,000 tribal members. It is the largest of the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico¹ and is also considered the most traditional. Zuni village is the most secluded Puebloan settlement of New Mexico, and this geographical isolation also contributed to the tribe's strongly self-reliant culture and the development of their unique *Shiwi'ma* language, which remained the tribe's first language until the English language was fully adopted by the younger generations only about 30 years ago. The tribe's strong resistance in retaining their own traditions in the face of the colonizing powers, rebelling against religious or cultural indoctrination during most of the 19th and 20th century, makes the Zuni experience an important and interesting subject of study in learning about the consequences of cross-cultural relationships with the West on the Native American color palette.

The tribe's cultural and religious traditions are entrenched in their deep connection to the surrounding mesas, waterways and deserts of their ancestral territory. Their social structure is divided into various clans and societies, each of which is responsible for precise tasks within the pueblo. The most active societies include the medicine society in charge of healing the sick, the hunting society which traditionally provided the tribe with meat and animal hides, and the

¹ *Pueblo* is the name given by Spanish in the 16th century to the settled Native American tribes of the southwestern US. The other pueblos, in alphabetical order, are the Acoma, Cochiti, Isleta, Jemez, Laguna, Nambé, Ohkay Owingeh, Picuris, Pojoaque, Sandia, San Felipe, San Ildefonso, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Santo Domingo, Taos, Tesuque, and Zia.

kachina² society, whose role is to ensure the goodwill of the spirits for the tribe. The latter is divided into six groups, each of which is attributed a specific kiva, a ceremonial chamber strategically located to correspond to each cardinal direction, with the addition of the zenith and the nadir. During Shalako, the winter solstice celebration, the role of the kachina society is to incarnate the kachinas, the Zuni pantheon of deified ancestral spirits that bring messages from the gods and good fortune to the tribe. Dancers from the society impersonate each kachina with the use of sacred body paint, ceremonial garments, and a painted mask. The kachina spirit then enters the body of the dancer, bringing the tribe guidance and protection against witchcraft. Because of their ceremonial role in representing and providing communion with the spirits, the painted masks of the kachina dancers, as well as other artwork associated with the kachina, are deeply sacred, and any reproductions outside of the tribe, such as photographs, paintings, or dolls, are strictly taboo. The ceremonies in which they are used are open only to members of the tribe, although friends may attend if given the proper invitation.

Zuni cultural and ceremonial knowledge is passed down from generation to generation through participation in tribal ceremonies and also through storytelling, in particular that of their Creation or Migration myth, the *Chimik'yanakona pename*, which relates how their ancestors appeared and forged the culture which still underpins tribal life today. This pillar of oral history contains different events from the tribe's past, as well as stories and references concerning their most important religious figures, such as the Creator of Life, *Awonawilona*, who fathered the Sun Father, *Yātokīa*, who in turn fathered the War Gods, the *Ahayu:ta* twins, who guided the tribe's ancestors to Zuni village.

² The spelling may vary; see also katchina and kaccina, and other versions with a capitalized first letter.

The myth also introduces the six protective “Beast God” deities that surround Zuni village: the mountain lion, bear, badger, wolf, eagle and mole, which in the Zuni’s culturally-specific system of color symbolism respectively correspond to the colors yellow, blue, red, white, multicolor and black. Colors are at the core of Zuni cosmological and cultural beliefs, and as a consequence the Zuni express their cultural traditions and their identity through colorful art, chiefly in the forms of painting, pottery, fetish carving (small carved effigies of Zuni deities and important animals), silversmithing, and lapidary art. Today, the majority of Zuni people make a living from such skills, and the tribe’s artists are especially famous for carved fetishes and handcrafted turquoise and silver inlay jewelry, both of which follow strict color codes. There has also been a revival of traditional pottery, encouraging Zuni artists to create exceptional contemporary pieces using hand-collected and processed clay decorated with traditional black-and-red-on-white motifs. In parallel, new and innovative forms of color that some Zuni artists label as “contemporary” have come into existence as the tribe’s artists experiment with departures from the traditional Zuni color codes in search of individual artistic styles, even at the risk of not being seen as “Zuni” artists. These experiments have relied on the use of techniques such as nuanced color and shading to create depth and perspective in painting, working with newly accessible imported stones in bright colors, and reliable, industrially-produced pigments, paints, and other diverse color materials, as well as many Zuni artists’ new Westernized approach to art learned at university, and the access to technology and new sources of information such as YouTube tutorials. As new color material and artistic techniques appear, artists have progressively replaced many natural pigments

with commercial products, but also experiment with mixing old and new techniques, such as the addition of natural pigments to acrylic paintings.

Information on tribal art comes from two main channels: the marketing of commercialized artworks, and scholarly publications, mostly of an anthropological nature. The first scholars to take interest in the tribe and publish massively about them were Frank Hamilton Cushing and Matilda Coxe Stevenson, both of whom spent time with the Zuni in the late 19th century, and their detailed reports provide important data on the state of art and use of colors during this period. However, their condescending view of the Zuni pushed them to over-mystify Zuni culture and colors, and they often presented Zuni art and its color system through the lens of myths and legends. Many other scholars have broached the topic of Zuni colors as part of their study of the tribe's culture, but even some of the most recent studies on Zuni art and culture still rely on the work of 19th-century anthropologists such as Cushing and Stevenson, as well as Jesse Fewkes, Elsie Clew Parsons, and Ruth Leah Bunzel. It must be noted that despite the cultural bias and sometimes dubious intentions of these 19th-century anthropologists, their reports on Zuni culture and ceremonial life laid the groundwork for future Zuni studies; since the Zuni were less guarded about their ceremonial life during this period in history, researchers managed to obtain crucial information and images that today would be strictly taboo and are kept secret by the tribe,³ allowing them to make observations and carry out analyses of ceremonial artistic elements that have been indispensable to later researchers and to this dissertation as well. However, not only have these researchers'

³ The tribe's mistrust and the heightened sense of secrecy and taboo are indeed partly due to these very scholars having published information on sacred topics such as the kachina masks, as well as having taken away ceremonial objects that they then allowed to be publicly displayed in museums.

Eurocentric prejudices been, to varying extents, tacitly carried over into modern studies, the reliance on these studies, now a century old or more, perpetuates an erroneous vision of the tribe as they clearly do not take into account the constant cultural evolution which has generated more recent aesthetic changes. Even more problematic are studies that group all Native American tribes under one cultural umbrella, passing over the intricacies and particularities of each tribal nation. Fortunately, other scholars such as Dennis Tedlock, Edward Chappell, James Ostler and Maria Rodee, and Seto Sei have conducted studies in close partnership with the Zuni; however, they each focus on Zuni colors within their specific area of expertise, without necessarily analyzing the evolution of color use in conjunction with the Zuni conception of color and art.

Starting around 1917 when entrepreneurs who traded various of the tribe's wares and handicrafts settled at Zuni, the tribe came into contact with commercial networks that eventually led to the global marketing of Zuni art. Marketing strategies included labels such as "Indian-made" to attract customers with the idea of hand-crafted authenticity, and subtly transmitted the image of a "primitive" artistic culture in comparison with the West and its "sophisticated" artistic movements. Cushingian legend-centered scholarship also pushed such "primitive" notions with its focus on magical spirituality. As these publications were at the time the only source of information on the tribe for the Euro-American public, this piqued the interest of entrepreneurs who saw an opening to tout mystical characteristics of Zuni art as a marketing strategy. Such traditional and contemporary Zuni art is now bought and sold all around the world and has contributed to the present popularity of Native American artwork. However, in order to cater to the tastes of potential customers, Native American artists and

craftspeople have gradually altered their selection and use of colors, and now employ complex artistic skills that blend traditional practices (such as silversmithing and lapidary work) with contemporary subjects and trends (even Disney characters). The stylistic and ideological gap between the creation of traditional works for private, tribal, ceremonial use and the public and commercial works produced by Zuni artists is one of the main forces driving the 20th and 21st-century evolution of Zuni artistic practice. Browyn Fox, the owner of Keshi, a co-op for Zuni artists, states that because of financial hardships, most Zuni artworks are now “artistic objects” and are no longer “ceremonial ornaments.” This division is detectable in artists’ choice of “exotic” Western colors and color materials as well as in the representation of non-ceremonial or non-religious subjects.

The marketing of many forms of Zuni art and craftsmanship as charms and totems and the resistance to including more contemporary artforms within the Native art market have capitalized on and contributed to the over-mystification of Zuni art, perpetuating an obsolete image of the tribe and often blinding the Western world to the real complexity and the true reasons behind the Zuni’s use of colors. Moreover, scholars who have not worked closely with the current generation of Zuni artists cannot understand the significance of more recent developments in Native American art. The focus of many studies on certain intriguing singularities of tribal art and culture often causes them to overlook the equally fascinating ways in which the Zuni people have adapted to contemporary society and how these adaptations have carried over into their application of color. A source-oriented voice has been missing, a space for the Zuni to shape their own tribal image, contribute information and perspective to guide the scholars in their understanding Zuni culture, art, and colors, and to be treated not

as mere objects of study, but as a complex group of humans who share a unique worldview, cognition, and sense of identity. This study will attempt to provide such a space by incorporating interviews with Zuni artists to benefit from their first-hand accounts of Zuni color use, color categorization, color materials and conceptualization of colors, in order to reveal the complex evolution of both traditional and contemporary Zuni culture and identity. We will attempt to anchor Zuni art within the contemporary cultural landscape not as curio-art but as the culture of artists who deserve an objective representation of their ever-expanding skills and their clever, competitive marketing strategies. We will show that far from being restricted to the fixed color system that has been portrayed in publications since the late 19th century, Zuni colors are in constant evolution as they draw from cross-cultural exchanges with other tribes and the rest of the world, and we will also seek out new methods of color categorization that reflect the Zuni's culturally specific ways of perceiving and conceptualizing color. By doing so, we will refute the authority of certain Western color concepts as applicable to the cognitive and artistic processes of other cultures, and place Zuni artistic production, and by extension tribal art in general, on the same level as the artistic production of any other culture or civilization, putting forward the notion that Zuni artists are artists first and foremost, whose works, like those of any other artist, contain the unified expression of both their unique culture and their individual personality.

The key element on which this dissertation relies is the analysis of color use accompanied by first-hand insights provided by five active Zuni artists whose work bridges the gap between the notions of traditional and contemporary art within all of the main Zuni artforms: pottery, painting, fetish carving, and silversmithing/lapidary work. Interviews with these artists and observation of their

finished pieces as well as their processes and techniques were crucial in understanding the diverse definitions of “traditional colors” that exist even within the same community and for identifying contemporary departures from tradition. Field research for the project was planned and carried out in two stages: first, a historical mapping of color evolution was drawn up using resources from the archives of the University of Berkeley, California and the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. These sources made it possible to complete a thorough situational analysis of Zuni colors, as well as providing a wider vision of how these colors have been studied in the past and specifically to what extent such studies were based on an *a priori* projection of primitivism onto the tribe and its art. Visits to museums and art galleries, such as the Berkeley’s Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, the Heard Museum in Phoenix, and the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque provided necessary access to examples of visual artwork in order to consolidate data on traditional color materials and fill in a historical timeline of Zuni color use and development. More current conceptual and technical uses of color in Zuni art were investigated during a thorough study of the paintings created for the Map Art Project at the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center at Zuni (a large-scale project initiated in 2002 which invited Zuni artist to counter-map Zuni lands in a huge collective work representing places in Arizona and New Mexico that were part of their cultural past before the US government imposed its own borders and territorial limits). Further research within the fields of color theory, psychology, and cognitive studies also permitted a better understanding of the relationship between color and culture, and how the Zuni conceptualize colors.

Native artists' use of colors has evolved and is still evolving with the appearance of new materials and new technology, a process concerning which the still widely-referenced studies from the late 19th and early 20th centuries are clearly lacking any pertinent information. In order to research the most recent developments in Native American art and benefit from the perspective of the artists themselves, the second part of my project entailed a short field trip to Zuni in November 2019, made possible with the financial support of a grant for a *projet innovant et risqué*, and by the relationship of trust I formed with several Zuni artists with whom I had been in contact during the preliminary research phase, which allowed me to obtain an official invitation from the Zuni Council, despite the latter's overall justifiable reluctance to invite outsiders to study the tribe. This trip provided me with a unique opportunity to meet the artists in person, hear their comments on their artwork and culture, study the tribe's traditional and contemporary art first-hand and, when given permission, collect exclusive interviews and images for use in this dissertation. The goal of the conversations and interviews carried out with these artists was to better understand what their conception of color was, and to compare the current palette and color materials in use with the first non-Native explorer's reports and earlier studies on Zuni art. Moreover, seeing the artwork in person was important in order to study certain color nuances more accurately, since sometimes in photos these subtleties can be concealed by variations in lighting or the reflection of a camera flash.

The following artists within the tribe who generously allowed me to study and interview them (complete transcriptions of the interviews are included in the appendix) are therefore my most important sources of new information concerning each Zuni artform. Zuni potters Jaycee Nahohai and Noreen Simplicio

represent two different approaches to traditional color use. I will subsequently refer to Jaycee by his first name, in recognition of the hospitality and friendship offered during the 10 days during which he welcomed me as a guest in his home, as well as to more easily differentiate between the many Nahohai family members who will be mentioned in this dissertation. Jaycee sees tradition as the respect for hand-made colors and makes his own pottery paints out of natural pigments; however, he experiments with components and shades of color to create unique combinations that are new to Zuni pottery. In contrast, Simplicio sees tradition more as the respect for the traditional black-and-red-on-white color scheme that is emblematic of Zuni pottery, even when it is created using controversial new industrial pottery paints and glazes.

In painting, Keith Edaakie and Elroy Natachu Jr. are the current generation's references and mentors. They both take influence from non-Native American art, and their paintings are therefore testimonies of how outside trends impact current Zuni colors. Elroy Natachu Jr. upholds Zuni tradition by almost exclusively painting kachinas, but contrary to his mentors of the previous generation, he learned Western art and color techniques at university, which he employs to add both dynamism and extra symbolic meaning to his work. Edaakie's thirst for innovation has led him in search of new and different media as well as color techniques, such as layering acrylic paint, spray paint, and stencils on both canvases and skateboards, and treating subjects that vary from traditional Zuni figurative paintings of sacred kachinas and scenes from the migration myth to completely abstract works with randomly blended colors created through paint pouring techniques.

In the field of fetish carving, Jeff Shetima was interviewed for his insight concerning the impact of commercialization on Zuni fetishes. His own style is mostly traditional but instead of remaining strictly within the Zuni's symbolic six-color system, he innovates with the use of atypical stones and composition, explaining that the competitive art market challenges carvers to use more fragile and also unusually colored carving media to distinguish their work. Several silversmiths were approached for interviews, such as Raylan and Patty Edaakie, who work with the traditional turquoise-coral-mother-of-pearl-jet color combination in emblematic Zuni motifs set in silver; and Veronica Poblano, who alternates between traditional Zuni styles and a more modern, innovative approach to jewelry which is not as easily recognizable as "Zuni." Finally, several other experts from within the tribe including potter Milford Nahohai, painter Kenneth Seowtewa, A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center director Curtis Quam, entrepreneur and clothing designer Raelynn Cachini, and Zuni Visitor Center guide Shaun Latone all provided invaluable insights into Zuni culture and colors.

This study aims to understand the concept and categorization of color from the Zuni point of view. To this end, various cognitive associations that reflect how humans perceive the world around them and interact with it will be analyzed and extracted in the form of metaphors and metonymies, most often as a way to encapsulate the Zuni mentality and perception of colors; these metaphors will help us to better understand the Zunis' unique cognitive processes and ways in which they perceive colors in association with objects, as opposed to the more abstract perception of absolute colors that is prevalent in Western culture, and

will also get to the roots of certain preconceptions and clichés associated with the tribe, which can then be deconstructed.

The usage and definitions of two key terms that have already been and will continue to be recurrent throughout this dissertation are in need of clarification. First, the term “Zuni” will be used to refer to the tribe instead of the *Shiwi’ma* word *A:shiwí*, meaning “people of the flesh,” which is the name the Zuni call themselves. I have chosen to use the Americanized term “Zuni” as being standard in Western studies of the tribe, because I consider it more neutral than its Spanish counterpart “Zuñi,” and to emphasize the fact that even if this study is backed up by interviews with Zuni artists, it is written from an external point of view that is neither Spanish nor Zuni. Although for some, the non-*Shiwi’ma* word “Zuni” may carry with it certain colonial of connotations, I have chosen to employ this more widely recognizable term in an effort to disassociate it from such outdated preconceptions and reassociate it with a valid, contemporary cultural identity.

The term “Western” has also been used by many scholars, such as Zuni fetish specialist Kent McManis, and art historians William Rubbin and Laura E. Smith, to differentiate Native American cultures from European cultures and from the Anglo-European culture now dominant in the United States. Despite the geographical illogicality of using such a term to distinguish between two cultures co-existing in the Western United States and the cultural bias that may be inherent in such a term, I have chosen to consolidate the terminology in this dissertation with that used by many of the authors cited throughout it, and also prefer this term to the equally unclear synonym “Anglo,” which is used in the Southwest of America to refer to members of the non-Hispanic, principally

English-speaking community, and in addition to glossing over many multicultural nuances is also heavily loaded with colonial connotations. As it is employed here, the term “Western” does not represent the geographical localization of a group of people or any notion of geo-cultural superiority, but refers on the most basic level to Europeans and North Americans whose geographical and cultural origins can be traced mostly to Western Europe in contrast to other cultural groups, and more complexly to the concept of an Americanized way of life and vision of the world that is reliant on a capitalist economy and its associated industries, technical innovations, profit-based mass production, and global commerce.

The evolution of Zuni color traditions and related issues of culture, identity, and artistic process will be studied in three chapters. The first chapter raises the questions of what Zuni tradition is and what traditional Zuni colors are, issues which we must first discuss in order to demonstrate how change has been a part of Zuni art and Zuni identity in the past and continues to be so in the contemporary cultural context. We will provide the background analysis of the traditional Zuni sexpartite color system, tracing its origins in oral history and ceremonial use and its subsequent integration in the tribe’s visual arts, and undertake a review of the existing theoretical research on Zuni colors, which will show that much of the current scholarship on Native American colors is based on the first anthropological reports by Cushing and Stevenson, and thus perpetuates many of their erroneous observations made from a perceived position of Christian and Euro-American superiority and a tendency to undermine any rational system behind Zuni colors in their desire to portray Zuni culture as based on mysticism and magical thinking. This judgment of the tribe as “other,” and therefore of lesser value, has often blinded scholars to the complexity of color use in both traditional

and contemporary Native American art, an attitude which has been unconsciously perpetuated by some of Cushing and Stevenson's intellectual heirs, such as Kent McManis, who continued Cushing's work on Zuni fetishes with perhaps more empathy for the tribe but with a similar fixation on legend rather than on objective analysis. Once we are attentive to these sources' issues, however, we can more accurately exploit their data on colors to map out the traditional, hierarchical, sexpartite Zuni color system which is the basis for understanding Zuni color concepts. We will also study the complex and culturally-specific concept of multicolor and explore a different traditional color scheme used specifically on Zuni ceramics, relying on two strong reference studies to trace the chronology of ceramic styles and color changes: Edward A. Chappell's gargantuan 2015 work, one of the three primary references on Zuni pottery, entitled *Pride Flared Up: Zuni (A:shiwí) Pottery and the Nahohai Family*,⁴ and Dwight P. Lanmon and Francis H. Harlow's *Pottery of the Zuni Pueblo*,⁵ which catalogs Zuni styles from the 1300s up to current Zuni polychromes with accurate descriptions and information on colors and pigment composition. Finally, the notion of color as a reflection of Zuni identity will be explored. We will see how specific colors are embedded in the Zuni worldview, cosmology, and daily life.

Once this theoretical foundation is laid, the second chapter will put the spotlight on the artists, examining how art became the main source of income for the Zuni people, and how the subsequent demand influenced Zuni art and colors and sparked the transformation and modernization of traditional models. We will

⁴ Contrary to his peers, Chappell deciphered Zuni iconography and ancestral symbolism by working closely with families of artists in order to document the *Shiwí'ma* names for symbols, which he presents in a source-oriented translation that allows the reader to understand the associated meanings and pigment formulas.

⁵ In their work, Lanmon and Harlow insist on the subtle differences of colors from one style to another, which are crucial in dating the evolutions in pottery color schemes.

first clarify the definitions of tradition in contrast to concepts of modernity and exoticism before focusing on the differences between traditional and current uses of colors and color materials in each artform based on information gathered during interviews with the artists, which demonstrate how Zuni art is adapting to meet the demands of the Native art market and how definitions of traditional art are evolving during this process as ceremonial objects are transformed into art-objects not only as a way to maximize profits but also as a venue for artists to display their skills, exploiting new access to different color materials in an exploration of new styles and expressions of individuality. In pottery, the study ranging from ancestral to current ceramics will contrast the dominant black-and-red-on-white motifs using natural pigments with contemporary use of chemical and industrial colors as well as natural pigments that depart from the traditional color scheme. An overview of Zuni ceremonial accessories and garments will be made using information from Virginia More Roediger's *Ceremonial Costumes of the Pueblo Indians*, which will be compared with contemporary pictures of Zuni dancers to reveal subtle changes in textile colors and accessories. We will also be able to study the evolution of color in Zuni textiles and understand the influence of the ceremonial palette in Zuni daily life thanks to insights from Elroy Natachu Jr., one of the last weavers of Zuni, and by studying examples of both his and Keith Edaakie's digital printed art. We will then move on to a more detailed study of the artforms that demonstrate the integration of new colors into the traditional palette: jewelry, fetish carving and painting. In carving and lapidary arts, we will be able to make use of the research of James Ostler and Marian Rodee, which benefits from the Zuni point of view of their co-author, Milford Nahohai, and includes many interviews with Zuni silversmiths and lapidary artists

in the mid-90s. In the field of fetish carving, we will also benefit from the added perspective of Jeff Shetima, whose own approach to color composition in fetishes contradicts certain elements found in many other publications on the Zuni fetish color system. Finally, we will arrive at an analysis of the evolution of Zuni painting, from kiva wall painting using natural pigments to the recent switch to painting on canvas and other substrates with Western media such as oils, acrylics, and spray paint. This will also show us how not only Western media but Western techniques and educational resources have influenced Zuni painters to use color differently, and allow us to discuss how the commercialization of Zuni art enabled easier access to imported material and a wider variety of colors.

During this chapter, we will finish with a focus on the relationship between colors and personal artistic style, in which the notions of tradition as well as individual and cultural identities are intimately linked. Artists use colors as a signature to establish their individual style and be recognized as artists first, even without the “Zuni” adjective; still, we can often observe the use of fixed color systems, such as those signifying Zuni tribal clans, that anchor and communicate the artists’ identities as Zuni people. Again, close study of the available record of Zuni art from ancestral vestiges up to the current day will allow us to chronologically map the integration of new colors and color materials in different artforms and discuss the time it takes for a new color to be accepted within the traditional palette. We will also analyze the social structure and criteria that are decisive in determining if and when a color becomes traditional and how a consensus is reached on what colors are considered traditional, and what colors are considered exotic.

This exploration of contemporary Zuni artists' original and unique uses of color paves the way for the third chapter, which explores how color is used in the construction, representation, and communication or transmission of Zuni identity, both in terms of the self-identity of the artist and the sense of membership within a community. The study of *Shiwi'ma* color terms will reveal how the Zuni language uses object-equivalents to name colors, and will allow us to observe how the adoption of the English language in recent generations has affected the way they conceptualize colors. Then, an analysis of Zuni art and artistic practices will reveal how colors can be manipulated to broadcast specific messages, in many ways similar to a coded language that is often used to preserve Zuni culture and tradition. We will show how artists use color as a way to either educate about or maintain the secrecy of sacred significations, illustrating scenes from the Zuni Creation Myth to inform about and record their past, passing on notions and practices to the next generation, and countering artistic plagiarism by ensuring that certain uses and combinations of color are strictly their own. Colors can also communicate culturally-specific meanings, which have links with the tribe's language, and are then transferred into visual art. Finally, we will see how colors convey a message of belongingness to tribal members, with the Zuni sexpartite colors concept as a representation of their home. We will thus look into the importance of colors as a cathartic means of expression and in an introspective, grounding process that reaffirms individual and cultural identity, as well as how colors are wielded by many Zuni artists as both defensive and offensive tools to communicate social and political commentary, preserve tribal knowledge, and gain back or revalidate lost cultural elements.

This discussion of transmitted messages and meanings, in addition to the discussion of the focal colors and color materials in chapter two, will lead us to a deeper analysis of Zuni color concepts in an experimental section that will propose the notion of phantom colors, or cultural meaningfulness associated with and encoded in a color, which can be effectively applied to the Zuni people's singular way of employing mentally-pictured colors. An inherent part of Zuni religious ceremonies and storytelling, phantom colors provide codes and chronotopes which storytellers can employ in order to guide the audience's process of imagination, suggesting important notions of time, space, atmosphere, and characteristics. Carried over into painting, the notion of phantom colors can be used to discuss how artists to use different techniques to suggest otherwise invisible colors and their accompanying significations to the viewer's imagination. European color theorists whose ideas and experiments are at the foundation of the Western science of colors, such as Isaac Newton, Leonardo Da Vinci, Wassily Kandinsky, and more recently John Gage and Michel Pastoureau will be discussed in order to arrive at a comparative study of the Zuni and the Western perceptions of colors and better understand how colors are conceptualized within a specific cultural context. This will cement one of the central ideas of this study by showing how evolution in traditional color use is intertwined with evolution in traditional culture and in the very perception of tradition, how Zuni colors are reflections of both self and tribal identities as Zuni people in a cross-cultural world, and how colors are the tool they use to anchor their culture in the "now", deliberately choosing change instead rather than subjugation to the Western worldview.

Throughout this dissertation, we will be continually confronted with the evolving notion of “traditional colors” and the conditions under which newness or modernization can be either integrated or rejected in traditional artforms, a topic that has not yet been studied in application to Zuni art. In this study of the relationship between traditional and modern Native American colors, and the analysis of Western and other tribal influences on Zuni color usage, concepts, and materials, we will see that the Zuni have a unique perception of color, unique cognitive or at least imaginative processes, and drastically different color terms and concepts than those commonly referred to in Western art; all of this reflects a culturally specific worldview that often renders analysis based on Western artistic criteria irrelevant. However, Zuni artists are also integrating more and more Western techniques and criteria (and elements of Western culture in general, including the English language) within tribal art, which generates a complex fusion of color systems, perceptions, symbols, and even cultural identities. While embracing a cross-cultural approach to art, contemporary Zuni artists often struggle between a strong sense of tradition and obligation as Zuni tribal members to place the Zuni community first and meet expectations of tribal solidarity and representation, and their need to be recognized as individuals and successful artists within the global art community. We will therefore witness how these same artists use their own artistic journeys and their mastery of Zuni colors as a vehicle for mentoring future generations, providing them with access to their heritage and helping them reaffirm their place within the tribe, as well as in the world beyond.

1. Understanding the traditional Zuni color palette

1.1. Color Systems and Significations

1.1.1 A Color System Rooted in Oral History

The colors we see are not the colors of the present, explains the color specialist John Gage in the introduction to *Color and Culture* (8). The colors of an artwork are seen in the present but show the colors of the artist's past; thus, the colors used in an artwork act as a witness of the past. The study of past uses of color reveals the trends, styles, and aesthetics of a certain period. Colors act as landmarks of change and immortalize the past in different materials and media, allowing us to see the colors of yesterday have influenced and led up to today's use and perception of colors. This means that to understand the focal colors and color associations that govern a culture's uses of color today, it is necessary to look at the past color materials, shades, and techniques of a culture's influential artists.

To better understand Zuni colors and their evolution, it is crucial to understand the starting point, the origins of colors within the context of the tribe, and map out a color system. For the Zuni tribe, colors are at the very core of their cosmology and their ceremonial life, and have been and remain an intrinsic aspect of their daily arts and crafts from the beginning of their civilization to the modern day. However, the historical artform that holds the key to understanding Zuni colors is not painting or sculpting, but rather the centuries-old practice of storytelling that anchors past events to the present, and in turn reveals the origins of colors and symbolic color use within the Zuni culture.

According to color specialist Fäber Birren, a person's "response to color is deep-set" and "entwined in the life process" (Birren *Human Response* 48). The

Zuni “life process” can be found in their oral history. Like any culture, the Zuni recorded their people’s journey and narrated their past from generation to generation. The Zuni perception and observation of the world is revealed through their narration of legends, as Native American scholars Robin and Tonia Ridington explain:

Mythical cosmologies are not the attempt of savages to explain in fantasy where empirical knowledge of reality is absent but are rather the opposite—statements in an allegorical form about knowledge of the interrelations between what we would call natural (objective), psychic (psychological), and cultural (learned adaptation) aspects of reality. (Ridington 191)

As “mythical cosmologies,” legends, folktales, and oral histories display the Zuni relationship with their environment and illustrate their sensitivity towards nature while establishing and teaching a perception of colors to those listening to the stories. They are also a record of Zuni history and a form of guidance for the Zuni people.

Storytelling was once a thriving artform in Zuni culture and has only recently disappeared. The storytelling season entailed a two-day recitation of the Creation Myth to be carried out from beginning to end. In her collection of interviews with Zuni artists, Jennifer McLerran discovered, however, that transmission of the Creation Myth is currently incomplete. Only parts of the whole myth are known, and often rather approximatively. Many of the youth have had little exposure to these narratives from the beginning of the century up until the practice disappeared in 2015 (Enote 11). Nowadays, the Zuni youth’s understanding of the myth mainly relies on the knowledge of religious leaders, parents or grandparents. They can also understand bits and pieces from Zuni artists, which engrave scenes of their history in different media, such as painted canvas, carved stones, or decorated ceramics.

Zuni migration started from *Chimik'yana'kya dey'a*, which is the *Shiwi'ma*, or Zuni language name for Ribbon Falls in the Grand Canyon. It is said that the *A:shiwi* people, as the Zuni refer to themselves in their own language, emerged from the Earth's underbelly and journeyed to *Halona: Idiwana'a*, the village of Zuni today. The myth introduces the tribe's origins and its journey through a sacred topography that can also be traced back to artifacts such as pot shards, ruins of kiva villages, and petroglyphs scattered along the Zuni pilgrimage route. In their 1985 *Zuni Atlas*, anthropologists T.J. Ferguson and historian Richard E. Hart based their analysis of the Zuni's ancestral territory on both historical documentary records and oral tradition, the latter being fundamental in finding sacred Zuni ancestral sites, and claim that "[t]he oral traditions of the Zuni people and the historical documentary record indicate that the Zunis had an intimate knowledge of this region, based on ancient, historical patterns and land use (3)." These records allowed them to pinpoint Zuni migration points and draw a map of places where the tribe settled, extending from the Grand Canyon to the Rio Grande.

The *Chimik'yanakona penane* is the most importance source for understanding the origins of the Zuni color system, which is itself inextricably intertwined with Zuni concepts of place and sacred places. The Zuni differentiate their Creation Myth from folktales by naming it *Chimik'yanakona penane* (21) or alternatively, according to 20th-century ethnologist Ruth L. Bunzel in her 1932 *Zuni Origin Myths*, *Tcimik'äna'kona pe'na'we*, literally, "first beginning words (Bunzel, *Origin* 549)." The words of the first beginning embody sacred truth and are thus different from the *telapnane*, folk tales. For generations, Zuni people have consulted their elders and their narrative of the *Chimik'yanakona penane* to

understand their origins. The Zuni myth or history of the origins was orally transmitted from one generation to another, which enabled the first Western explorers to record it in writing. However, we will see that since the loss of the storytelling tradition during the past decade, other artforms have arisen to allow the Zuni tribe members who retain knowledge of the myth to inform the new generation.

From the first explorer's arrival in the 19th century, scholars have documented rough, target-oriented translations of the *Chimik'yanakona pename*. This dissertation, on the other hand, opts to introduce the myth through the interpretation of a transmedia work that illustrates it, on display at the A:shiwi A:wam Museum and Heritage Center (commonly known as the Zuni museum). This five-panel painting, entitled *Zuni Emergence and Migration Mural*, covers the right wall of the entrance hall (see figure 1), and is the result of collaborative,



Figure 1: Ronnie and Raelynn Cachini, Alex Seowtewa, *Zuni Emergence and Migration Mural*. 2008. (photography Jim Enote, Enote 11)

dynamic thought processes on how to record the myth in another way than through the books published for English-speaking audiences.

In an interview I conducted in 2019, Raelynn Cachini, a woman entrepreneur with a sewing company in Zuni and program assistant for the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project (ZYEP) talked about her participation in drafting and painting this piece of art. A non-profit organization, ZYEP began operating in 2008 and continues to work with youth in the aim of preserving Zuni culture by educating the new generation about what the Zuni call “the old ways,” teaching them about Zuni culture, language, and traditions to help strengthen their sense of heritage and place. Cachini explained that these panels were commissioned to educate the youth on Zuni history, and were co-painted by herself and two other skilled painters, Ronnie Cachini and Alex Seowtewa. The five-panel mural traces the tribe’s ancestral history through scenes of the Creation Myth and the tribe’s pilgrimage from Ribbon Falls to Zuni village. In partnership with the Zuni school, Curtis Quam, the current director of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center, invites groups of young Zuni and provides commentary on the panels. The following paragraphs explaining the myth combine five orally recounted versions gathered during my interviews with previous transcriptions from the late 20th to the early 21st century⁶, using the far-left panel of the work in figure 2 as illustration:

In the beginning, the Earth was immersed in water, and humanity was trapped in its fourth dark underbelly, the *A’witën te’hula*. The Sun Father,

⁶ This interpretation relies mainly on versions provided in Zuni storyteller Andrew Peynetsa’s “When Newness was Made”, recorded by the ethnologist Dennis Tedlock (Tedlock, *Finding the Center* 243-82), anthropologist Ruth L Bunzel’s *Zuni Creation Myth* (584-603), T. L. Ferguson and Richard Hart’s “General Directions of Zuni Origin and Migration” (23), anthropologist Mathilda Coxe Stevenson’s *The Zuñi Indians* (28) and ethnologist F. H. Cushing’s analysis of *Zuni Fetiches* in “Zuni Iliad” (5-10).

*Yātokiā*⁷, was displeased because the people beneath the Earth's surface, the *A:shiwī*, could not worship him properly, so he fathered two deities, the *Ahayu:ta*⁸ twins, or "war gods," named *Kōw'wituma* and *Wats'usi*, by impregnating his rays with two bits of foam. Then the Sun (a) gave birth to the *Ahayu:ta* twins, represented by the two bright stars beneath the celestial being (b). The twins

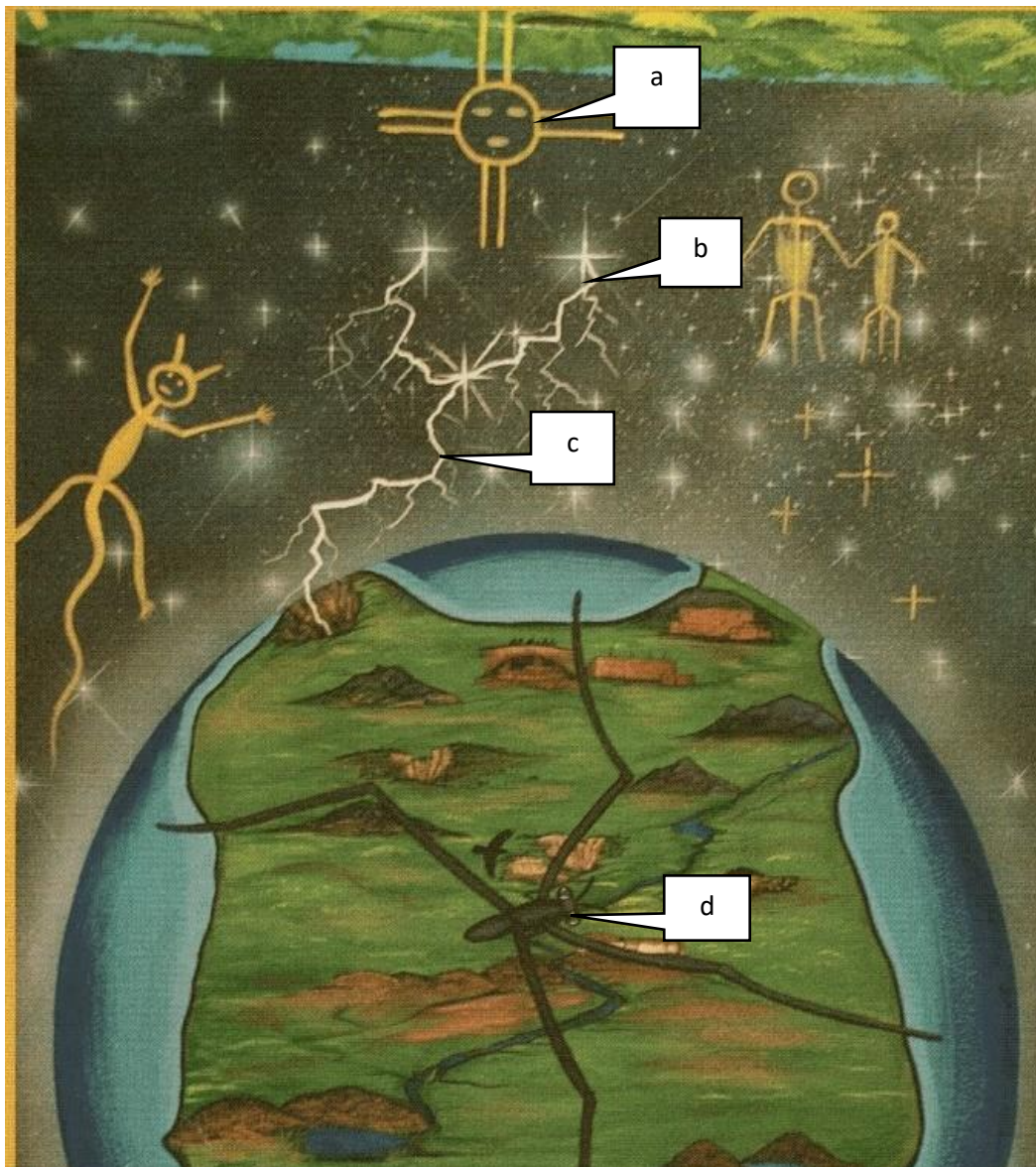


Figure 2: Ronnie and Raelynn Cachini, Alex Seotewa "Locating the Center of the Zuni World," Zuni Emergence and Migration Mural, 2008. Illustration of the Creation Myth, detail of a scene from the first of the five panels.

⁷ Different versions exist: instead of *Yātokiā*, *Awonawilona*, the hermaphrodite creator of life, also called He-She or Father Sky, is sometimes mentioned

⁸ A source-oriented translation of "Ahayu:ta" from the *Shiwī'ma* language would be "waterfall."

inherited the Sun's powers and were equipped with *a'mitolan pi'tlänně*, a bow made of a rainbow, *wil'lolonanně sho'liwe*, lightning arrows, and *kĩa'alänně* †, a cloud shield. The brothers shot a lightning arrow with the Sun's bow to create a fireball that dried the Earth. In the painting, the lightning arrow is represented by a bolt of lightning (c) originating from the twins.

The following part of the myth is not illustrated in this panel of the mural but is supported by the aforementioned collections of legends: the twins sought a method to retrieve the Zuni people. They performed a ritual, placing a yellow prayer stick at the north, a blue prayer stick at the west, a red prayer stick at the south, a white prayer stick at the east. The sticks caused trees to sprout from the Earth, allowing people to climb up to the surface, passing through the Earth's underbellies—the *A'chianapi'akoa*, the *A'wishote'hula*, the *Pa'nanula chula*, or the third, second, and first underbelly respectively – to reach *Te'hohaiakwi u'ka'ilia*, the outer world. Once freed from their subterranean prison, the people had to overcome another hurdle because of the hostile beasts that populated the Earth, so the *Ahayu:ta* twins wielded their powers to turn the animals into stones.⁹ As the Earth was made hospitable, people started to travel across the continents. Finally, after many adventures, the Zuni located their home (d), the “Middle Place” or *Halona:Itiwana*, with the help of a giant male water spider named *K'yan'asdebi*, who stretched his legs out towards the four oceans in the north, west, south, and east, and also touched the zenith and the nadir. Reaching out in the six directions, his heart fell over the Middle Place, where the Zuni ultimately settled. Just to the right of this scene in the first panel is Cachini's representation of the people

⁹ N.B. In some versions of the myth, the terrible beasts bask in the water that covered the earth. The twins use their lightning arrow to dry the earth, which then turns the beasts to stone.

climbing from the Earth's underbelly with the help of the *Ahayu:ta* twins' prayer sticks, using the yellow and blue feather-like plants as a ladder.

The myth displays how the association of six colors with six directions is key to understanding the Zuni color system. In his *Native American Encyclopedia*, Pritzker states that "The Zuñi recognized six points of orientation, which corresponded to the cardinal directions as well as mythological events. Each had its color, position [...] and ceremonies." (Pritzker 109) The Creation Myth shows that *Halona: Itiwana* is at the center (*itiwan* meaning "middle") of four colored cardinal directions, yellow for the north, blue for the west, red for the south, white for the east, as well as multicolor¹⁰ for the zenith, and black for the nadir. These

six directional colors are the basis of most Zuni color codes.

Cachini's colors on the "Zuni Emergence and Migration Mural painting" are telling examples of this color-coding system (see figure 3). My interpretation is that on the painting, the colored prayer sticks are the colored vertical lines that separates the different underbellies. The fourth and deepest underbelly of the Earth is painted black at the bottom of the painting. The third underbelly is dark blue and separated from the fourth by a thick dark blue line, which may represent a blue prayer stick. The second underbelly is painted green and is separated from the third by a red prayer stick. Finally, the

first underbelly is painted blue on the canvas and is

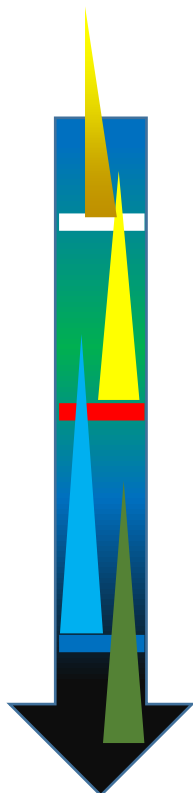


Figure 3: My interpretation of Cachini's version of the prayer stick's scene and visual representation of the trees and underbelly colors (my sketch)

¹⁰ As we will see in section 1.3.3, multicolor is conceptualized as one of the six traditional shades for the Zuni. There are many different interpretations of this term that aimed to find an appropriate English. This dissertation opted for the use of the most standard word "multicolor" that is also used by Jeff Shetima, Elroy Natachu Jr. and Milford Nahohai, to include the meaning of all possible colors.

separated from the second by a white prayer stick. A closer look at Zuni storytelling leads to a better understanding of these colors. In *Finding the Center* (1999), ethnologist Dennis Tedlock's collection of legends uses a source-oriented approach to the translation of the *Shiwi'ma* language which aims to reproduce the lyrical quality of storytelling without additional flourishes. In this way, he represents the meaning and the words as bluntly and faithfully as possible. Tedlock focuses on the pitch of the storyteller's voice, which is translated through the use of upper- and lower-case letters in the typography and a peculiar text layout. He worked with well-known Zuni storytellers such as Andrew Peynetsa and Walter Sanchez; Peynetsa was a medicine society member¹¹ and specialist in society liturgy, and Sanchez was a "layman" with an interest in ancestral craftsmanship, hunting procedures, and domestic rituals (Tedlock, *Finding* 63). They both contributed to Tedlock's collection of legends and to the author's understanding of Zuni culture.

Peynetsa's story includes the Creation Myth, "When Newness was Made," in which he describes colors similar to Cachini's painting. In Peynetsa's account, the *A:hayuta* twins thought of a way to bring the people from the fourth underbelly, which is black in this version. They meet with the Sun priest, along with the North priest, the Evening priest, and the Coral priest. Acting on their advice, they go to the fourth underbelly and ask the people to "MAKE THE YELLOW PRAYER STICKS" from which a "fir tree" grows. Once in the yellow third underbelly, they

¹¹ The medicine men of these societies are called upon when a Zuni suffers from an illness, and initiation to medicine societies is only possible once cured. Each of its members benefits from the knowledge of the most achieved medicine men, who share their sacred esoteric knowledge throughout their life. The Beast Gods are the patrons of the medicine societies, with the Bear as their chief.

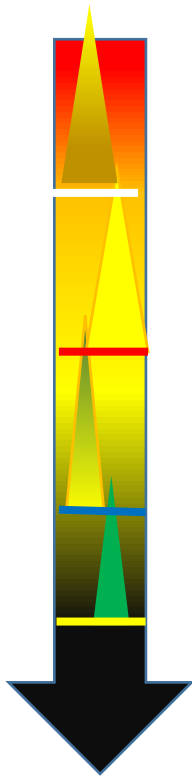


Figure 4: Gradation of the Earth's underground rooms or underbellies according to Peynetsa's version of the Creation Myth

“bring the BLUE prayer sticks to life” from which an “aspen” grows. Then, in the yellow second underbelly, they “make the red prayer sticks” from which a “COTTONWOOD” grows. Finally, they “finish the WHITE PRAYER STICKS” from which a “CANE PLANT” grows to cross the red fourth underbelly (Tedlock 266-270). Thus, my theory is that each prayer stick is planted to correspond with a cardinal direction; white in the east, yellow in the north, blue in the west, red in the south.

Figure 4 is a visual transcription of the colors that appear in Peynetsa’s oral history. The prayer sticks are represented by vertical colored lines, which correspond to the color of the sticks

from which the trees grew, while the trees’ colors are represented by triangles. Comparing my interpretations of the colors used by Cachini and those in Peynetsa’s version of the

Creation Myth, various similarities and differences come to light, which are summarized in the following table:

	Color of the underbelly		Type of tree		Color of the tree		Color of the prayer stick	
	Cachini	Peynetsa	Cachini	Peynetsa	Cachini	Peynetsa	Cachini	Peynetsa
First underbelly	Blue	Red	/	Cane plant	Dark Yellow	Yellowish branches/green leaves	White	White
Second underbelly	Green	Yellow	/	Cottonwood	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red
Third underbelly	Blue	Yellow	/	Aspen tree	Blue	green/orange / yellow	Blue	Blue
Fourth underbelly	Black	Black	/	Fir tree	Green	Green	Yellow	/

Figure 5: Colors of the Earth’s underbellies, trees, and prayer sticks in the Chimik’yanakona Pename

Though the colors of the underbellies and the trees themselves don’t entirely match in the two versions, the lines representing the colored prayer sticks reveal that the three colors, blue, red, and white, have stayed fairly intact through time,

despite the inherent inconsistencies in the Zuni's narration of stories in order to transmit their knowledge of the past.

In the myth, the colored prayer sticks play a critical role in bringing the people to the Earth's surface, as the trees sprout from them and provide a way for the people to climb up. Let us then first focus on the colored prayer sticks themselves. In her *Introduction to Zuni Ceremonialism*, Ruth Bunzel defines the function of prayer sticks as follows:

Prayer sticks provide clothing for the supernaturals. Just as the supernaturals nourish themselves on the spiritual essence of food offered in the fire or in the river, they clothe themselves in the feathers of the prayer sticks. [...] The offering of prayer sticks is one of the most important acts of Zuni ritual [...]. (46)

The prayer sticks are thus at the core of ritualistic life and offerings to the supernaturals. In the *Chimik'yanakona pename*, the *Ahayu:ta* twins use the prayer sticks to establish a connection with the Sun Father. With the Sun's goodwill, they plant the colored prayer sticks at each cardinal direction and thus are able to raise the human race up to the Earth's surface. The colors themselves correspond to the directions detailed in Peynetsa's tale. If my theory that Cachini paints the prayer stick scene with thick lines of white, red, and blue paint is correct, the sticks are represented in the same color by Peynetsa. The underbelly colors do change in the new version, but the directional colors remain the same.

Many specialists on Zuni culture have tried to provide explanations for such associations. According to Cushing, if the directions are colored, this means that the respective colors attributed to them are observable in nature:

We do not fail to see in this clear reference to the natural colors of the regions referred to – to the barren north and its auroral hues, the west with its blue Pacific, the rosy south, the white daylight of the east, the many hues of the colored sky, and the black darkness of the 'caves and holes of the earth.' Indeed, these colors are used in the pictographs and in the mythic symbolism of the Zuñis, to indicate the

directions or regions respectively referred to as connected with them.
(13)

Cushing's conviction that the source of Zuni color symbolism is found in the colorful landscape visible in each direction indicated by the Water Spider's legs in the Creation Myth paves the way for an explanation of the Zuni topography of colors. Half a century later, in her 1941 *Ceremonial Costumes of the Pueblo Indians*, Virginia Roediger, a specialist in Pueblo dances and paraphernalia, supported Cushing's theory. She argued that the colors central to Zuni art and life are reminiscent of life in nature and its colorful hues. According to her, the yellow north refers to the angry winter storms that sweep down the mountains, the blue west refers to the blue of the Pacific Ocean, the red south refers to the "ruddy warmth of summer," and the white east to the morning light (Roediger 90-93). Both scholars therefore pinpoint the landscape's colors as the source for the four cardinal colors.

The theory of color mimesis explains much about the four colors' importance; color studies have shown that colors are used a tool to represent the world in all the cultures in the world.¹² If the Cushing/Roediger theory is correct, this means that the mystical cardinal filiation to each color thus originates from the Zuni (and more widely, Native American) observation of the landscape. Though this dissertation doesn't completely disagree with the idea that the Zuni color system originates from color mimesis, we can argue that a more important origin can be found in the observation of cosmological phenomena and the

¹² In her 2015 essay *Colorado*, Toudoire-Surlapierre explains that writers have to reinvent colors with black ink on white paper. According to her, colors are thus mediators between literature and art, as it facilitates human representation of the world. She establishes that "[t]he theory of color mimesis as a way to represent reality builds the world we live in." (My translation) "Le principe mimétique des couleurs comme modalité de représentation de la réalité est constructif du monde dans lequel on vit". (9)

motions of celestial bodies, in particular, the passage of the sun. Four cardinal colors can be seen to be derived from the Sun's daily and yearly movements, and the two remaining colors are linked with the vertical concept of "Middle Place."

In the Creation Myth, the *Chimik'yanakona pename*, the Sun or the Creator (*Yätokĭa* or *Awonawilona*) is responsible for bringing the Zuni out of the Earth's underbelly. The Sun is therefore most crucial supernatural being. Ruth Bunzel emphasized the Zuni belief that the soul is related to the Sun, pointing to the fact that the *Shiwi'ma* etymology of the word "life" *ʔekʔohanan:e* is related to daylight (*Ceremonialism* 20). In a more recent study of Zuni cultural symbolism and the perception of rock art, *Signs from the Ancestors* (1988), M. Jane Young attributes the Zuni view of the world in general to the Sun's movement in relation to the cardinal directions in a chapter entitled "Directionality as a Conceptual Model for Zuni Expressive Behavior (95-107)," in which she suggests that:

One way to make an entrance to the Zuni culture is to investigate the hypothesis that their cosmological outlook—that is, their perception of the motions of the Sun, moon, and stars, as well as concepts of time and space—form an organizing principle for much of their expressive behavior. (95)

The schema reproduced in figure 6 was drawn by Young to describe the Zuni's quadripartite philosophy. She specifies that "the inner circle and dotted lines could represent the heart and legs of the Water Spider described in part of the Zuni origin myth (*Signs from the Ancestors* 98)," which we also find painted by Cachini in the "Zuni Emergence and Migration Mural." Thus, the Water Spider's heart, *Halona:Itiwana*, is at the center of the colors, which surround the village. This is the basis of Young's concept of *a'witen*, (meaning four) (102-103) for the four directions of the Sun, which combines the dualities of winter/summer and morning/evening.

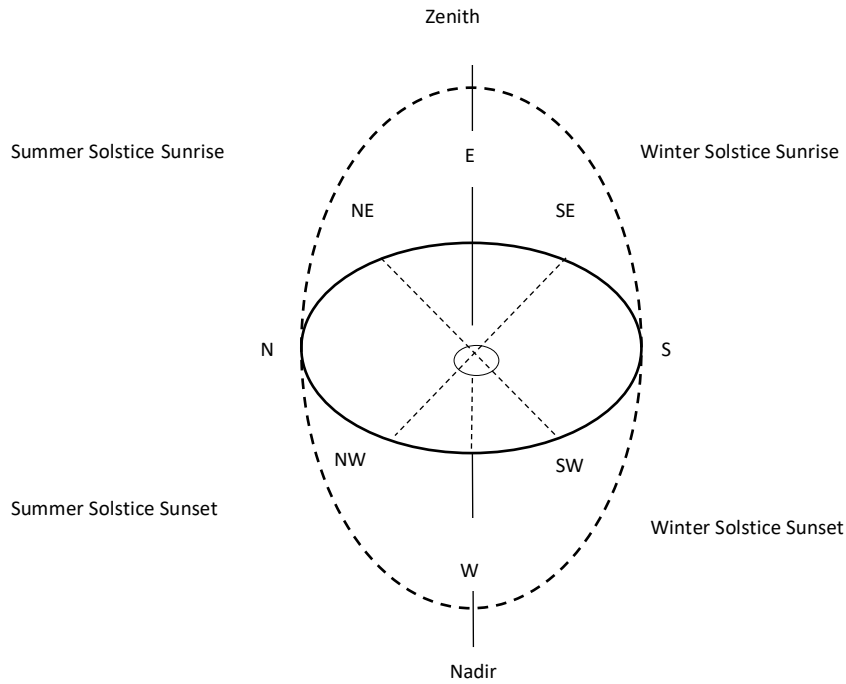


Figure 6: Jane Young's schematic drawing of the circle of the earth's horizon with solstice rise and set points marked.

To better understand how colors come into play with the concept of “a’witen”, it is important to study the Zuni language for each direction. The *Shiwi’ma* terms for the east and west directions are both derived from references to the sun’s movements. The eastern direction is *Ṭeluaïnkwin tàhna*, the archaic meaning of which was the “Direction of the Home of Day,” which today has become “The Place whence comes the Day.” Thus, the Sun comes from the brightest white direction. Conversely, the term for the western direction is *Ḳä’liciïnkwin tàhna*, the archaic meaning of which was the “Direction of the Home of the Waters” and today is interpreted as “Place of the Evening” (Cushing *Fetiches* 12-13). Thus, the Sun sets in the blue evening direction. The Zuni people pray to “our Father the Sun” in the mornings as he rises from his morning home in the eastern ocean (the white direction of the morning light). They also thank him each day with offerings until he goes to sleep in his evening house in the western ocean (the blue direction of the night) (Young 97). This also explains

the translation of east and west for the places where the sun rises and sets in Zuni legends and the oral history of the Creation Myth.

As was shown in the first part of this chapter, the *Ahayu:ta* twins were in charge of freeing the people from the Earth's fourth underbelly. Before that, they consulted with their sibling priests, who are also sons of the Sun. Both the "Sun priest" (*Finding the Center* 253), also called *Pekwinne*, who is in charge of greeting the Sun every morning with offerings and prayers (Tedlock 211), and the "Morning Priest" (261) of Tedlock's "When Newness Was Made," are represented by the color white as they are associated with the east. (262) Similarly, the "evening priest" (257) is represented by the color blue for the east and west direction. Thus, "white" and "blue" are metonyms for "East/Sun/Daylight/Morning" and "West/Evening/Night" respectively. Being directly linked with the Sun's movements, they are located opposite one another, and connected by the village located midway between them.

A second axis of movement is the north/south – yellow/red axis corresponding to the Sun's position during the solstices. Before the arrival of the cash economy in the early 20th century forced the Zuni to decrease the time dedicated to religious practices, they used to celebrate both summer and winter solstices for days. On those occasions, they danced and prayed for the souls of their ancestors. This tradition still survives in a shortened version called *Shalako*, often celebrated around Thanksgiving. In her report to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Matilda Coxe Stevenson described how the Zuni tracked the Sun's motion and integrated the solstice in their calendar:

According to Zuni calculation, when the rising Sun strikes a certain point at the southwest end of To'wa yä'lanně [currently *Dowa Yalanne*] (Corn Mountain), it is the winter solstice. Then the Sun moves north, passes the moon at A'yonawa yä'lanně and continues round to a point

northwest of Zuñi which is called Yäl'lä'ñlan'na (Great [or Big] Mountain), where it sets consecutively for four days at the same point. The last day is the summer solstice. (*Zuñi Indians* 108)

Twice a year, the Sun rests for four days during the solstices, which used to be the most celebrated times of the year. The archaic *Shiwí'ma* term for the winter solstice is *Yä'tokia l'tiwannan kwí te'tchi* (sun father – Middle Place – reaches there) and the archaic *Shiwí'ma* term for the summer solstice is *Yä'tokia te'tchi* (sun father – reaches there.) The locations the sun “reaches” are north or the “Direction of the Swept or Barren place,” currently referred to as “Mountain Yellow” for the winter solstice, and south or “The Place of the Salt Lake,” currently referred to as “Mountain Red” for the summer solstice (Cushing *Fetiches* 12-13). The winter/north is thus associated with yellow, and summer/south is associated with red. This is shown in legends such as Peynetsa's account of the Creation Myth, “When Newness Was Made,” in which the color yellow is associated with the “North Priest.” (Tedlock 265) When the Zuni need to call upon the North Priest, they will plant a yellow prayer stick at the north. Similarly, the color red represents the “Coral Priest”, for the south (Tedlock 253). When the Zuni need to call upon the Coral Priest, they will plant a red prayer stick at the south. Thus, “yellow” and “red” are metonyms for “north/winter” and “south/summer,” respectively. Being directly linked with the Sun's movement, they are connected as they are located opposite one another, with the village at their center. In both cases, the Sun Father is shown to be the central figure in the fundamental celebrations of the Zuni calendar.

Young adds another concept besides *a'wíten* in order to explain the two remaining two directions (zenith and nadir) mentioned in the *Chimik'yanakona pename*, which is *'itiwan*, the middle, a vertical zenith/nadir concept that the Zuni

think of as defining the point of their home. The nadir, *a'witen te'hula*, is the black fourth underbelly of the Earth Mother, from which the Zunis originate, beneath the Middle Place, while the zenith or *a?po?yan:e* is the multicolored sky above it, the land of the Sun Father. When asked, Zuni artists such as painter Kenneth Seowtewa immediately confirmed the associations of color with these six places and directions. In a short interview conducted in 2014, Seowtewa stated that “[w]e automatically think of colors in the cardinal directions as it is ingrained in our thinking from time of birth, [as we are] a tribe of artists (my transcription).” Milford Nahohai, Jaycee Nahohai’s uncle and a well-known Zuni artist and contributor to many publications on Zuni art, further confirmed this concept during an interview in November 2019. He claimed that “yellow is north, red is south, white is east, blue is west, up is all the colors, and underground is black (my transcription).” That the six colors are ingrained in Zuni daily practices, art, and ceremonies is demonstrated in collections of translated legends with copious references to directions. For instance, both Tedlock and Cushing’s collections mention “yellow direction” or “Mountain Yellow” for the north, “evening’s direction” or “Mountain Blue” for the west, “Mountain Red” or “coral direction, an esoteric term for ‘south,’ whose color is red” and “morning[’s]” direction or “Mountain White” for the east.¹³ In addition to these four colored places, other collections and studies such as Quam’s and Stevenson’s¹⁴ refer to the black nadir direction, *An’noeiyan te’hula*, the world of utter darkness or “the dark[...] fourth womb,” as well as the multicolored zenith direction, the “spotted” or “mountain of many-colors.” In figure 7, we can see all six color-direction associations presented in an embellished

¹³ See Tedlock, *Finding the Center* (123, 163, 269, 270) and Cushing, *Zuñi Fetiches* (13).

¹⁴ See Stevenson, *Zuñi Indians* (25), Quam (107). Cushing, *Zuñi Fetishes* (22).

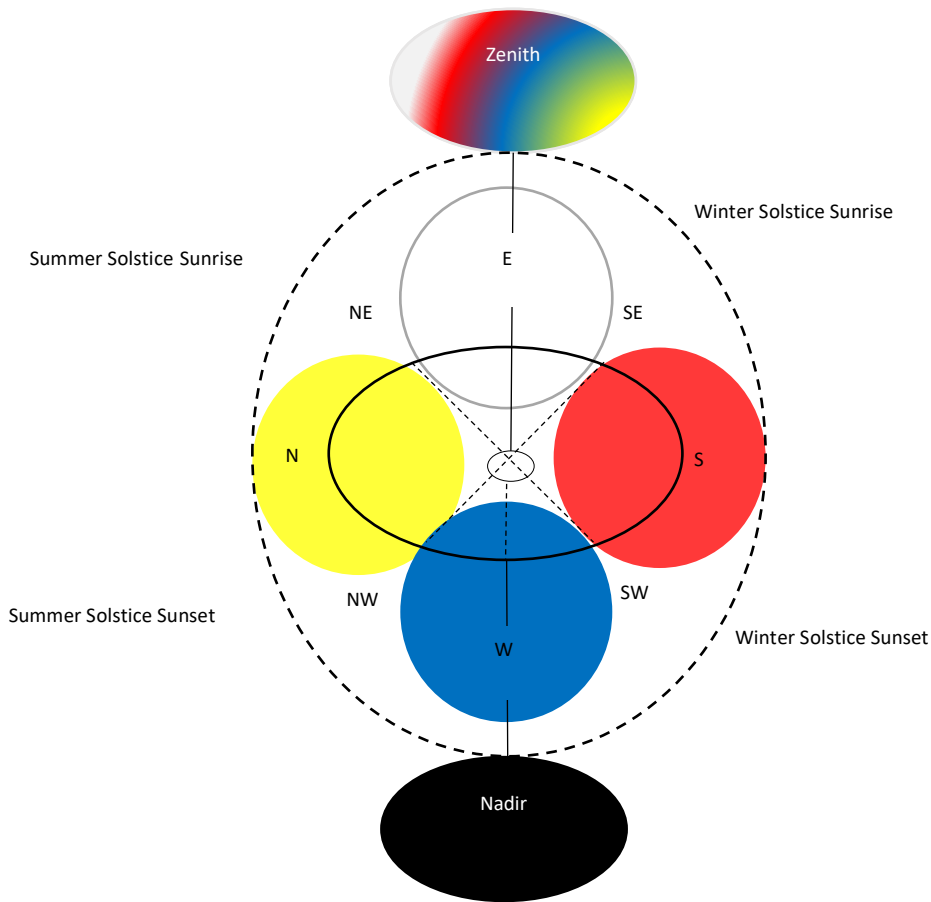


Figure 7: The Zuni *a'witen/itiwan* color system

version of Young's schematic drawing with the addition of the *a'witen/itiwan* color system based on the horizontal/vertical sexpartite concept

These color-direction associations are fundamental in the transmission of proper worship practices through oral history. In the tale of "The Two Orphans and their Grandmother," the Grandmother teaches her sons the proper way for men to grow corn. She instructs them to "place the [sacred] stalks towards the four directions. [...] 'You will paint these yellow [north] and the others blue [west], red [south], white [east], one spotted [up], and the rest black [down] (Quam 24).'" Only then would the spirits be willing to bless the fruitful crops. Just as the colored prayer sticks led the Zuni out to the surface of the Earth in the *Chimik'yanakona pename*, the six colored stalks guided the sons to find the right way. This adds another dimension to the color sticks; as we previously saw , the four prayer sticks

that freed the people from the Earth were the tools of supernatural beings, the *Ahayu:ta* twins, but this tale shows that they are to be used by human beings too. Their colors provide clues to solve problems, allow the Zuni to protect themselves and their descendants, and indicate the right path.

We can encapsulate the relation of the six colors to their respective places and directions in the metaphor COLORS ARE LOCATIONS, which can then be divided into the more specific metaphors YELLOW IS NORTH, BLUE IS WEST, RED IS SOUTH, WHITE IS EAST, MULTICOLOR IS UP and BLACK IS DOWN. These metaphors are fundamental to the construction of the traditional Zuni color palette and in understanding the color schemes and patterns used in Zuni paraphernalia and paintings. The COLORS ARE LOCATIONS metaphor is also reflected in the Zuni deity-based belief system, which, as we will see, further reveals the association of colors with the concept of guidance.

1.1.2 Colors as Guides: the *K'ia-pin=á-hâ-i* Colors

Colors are intrinsically linked to divinities such as the Sun Father, and to the higher powers which protect and are called upon in times of crisis; for example, white stands not only for the north but includes all the deities located in the north. This section will take a closer look at the different Zuni deities and their influence on color usage and perception to complete the metaphorical associations that govern the Zuni color system.

The deities associated with the *a'witen/itiwan* colors are primarily guardians who belong to the direction of a given color. The research on Zuni “esoteric secret cults” conducted by Paul Radin, a specialist in Native Indian religion, indicates that the colored prayer sticks are offerings to the sacred “animal deities” of respective colors and places (*Primitive Religion* 237). Also called the “Beast Gods” (See Young, *Signs* 103 and Stevenson’s works), they are part of what is known in the *Shiwi'ma* language as *K'ia-pin=á-hâ-i*, first discussed by Cushing in 1881. *K'ia-pin-na* means “raw” and *á-hâ-i* means “beings”¹⁵ (Cushing, *Fetiches* 3). These *k'ia-pin-na*, or “raw beings” live in a symbiotic relationship of mutual dependency with the *Ak-na=á-hâ-l*, or “cooked beings”, as explained by Sam D. Gill, a professor of religious studies at the University of Colorado, in *Mother Earth* (1987):

In terms of Zuni taxonomy, there is a wide class of beings, *ʔa'hoʔʔi*, that may be roughly considered to be people. This category is divided in two subdivisions, or two kinds of persons: *kʔapin ʔa'hoʔʔi*, or ‘raw people,’ and *ʔakna ʔa'hoʔʔi* or *tekʔohannan ʔa'hoʔʔi*, cooked people or ‘daylight people.’ The raw people eat uncooked food, that is, food offered to them by daylight people, and they can change their forms. Cooked or daylight people are human beings [...] More importantly, in the Zuni perspective, they are dependent on each other. (81)

¹⁵ Also spelled *kʔäpin hoʔʔi* in Bunzel’s *Introduction to Zuni Ceremonialism* (23).

Gill clarifies that the *k'ia-pin-na á-hâ-i* depend on the *Ak-na=á-hâ-i* to survive, as they live on the “uncooked” food (offerings and prayers) that they provide. Similarly, the *k'ia-pin-na á-hâ-i* provide life for the *Ak-na=á-hâ-i* and control elements of nature such as the rain, wind, animals, and plants. According to the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, these terms explain the borders and margins between “raw” nature and “cooked” culture. In his 1969 study, *The Raw and the Cooked*, he claims that “not only does cooking mark the transition from nature to culture, but through it and by means of it, the human state can be defined with all its attributes (164).” However, in Zuni beliefs, “raw” and “cooked” have nothing to do with acculturation. “Cooked” beings are solid and thus able to live on earth, whereas the “raw” beings are “supernatural;” they are otherworldly, belonging to the divine world. These otherworldly beings include the Zuni pantheon of kachinas, each of which has its own personality and hierarchy, showing another culture beyond this world that is a mirror version of the “cooked” beings’ world.

The study of Zuni *k'ia-pin-na á-hâ-i* in legends and art shows that the colors that label them are related to the *a'witen/itiwan* color system. The six colors, when tagged on a *k'ia-pin-na á-hâ-i*, enable an *Ak-na=á-hâ-i* to identify them. For instance, the Corn Maiden, *a'towa e'washtok'i*, is one of the essential *k'ia-pin-na á-hâ-i* figures of Zuni lore. She is corn personified, born from the Sun Father’s powers, and has been a symbol of life for the Zuni ever since they began to cultivate crops. In legends, white corn is living flesh and a bringer of life. For example, in Dennis Tedlock’s collection of legends, the Corn Maiden is introduced as follows:



Figure 8: Current standard representations of the Corn Maiden, January 17 (my sketch.) The color white for the body prevails.

RAW people, HOLding your waters, HOLding
 your seeds
 BRING in your Pollen Ways, FLESH by which we live, FLESH
 of white corn, HOLY meal, strong meal. (Tedlock 108)¹⁶

The maiden is alive, and her white flesh feeds the Zuni, which is the “FLESH by which we live.” The most common depiction in Zuni art is a white, female figure shaped like an ear of corn, with flat, black horizontal lines for her eyes and a small dot for her mouth. Her belly is composed of corn kernels, and her body wrapped in linens is adorned with delicate coral, black onyx or jet, and turquoise. The color white for the body is prevalent, as can be noted in Cushing’s 1986 target-oriented translation of the legend. In his transcription of “The Presentation of the Perfected Seed to the Fathers of Men, and the Passing of the Maidens of Seed” in *Outlines*

¹⁶ In this excerpt, we can see a typical example of how Tedlock uses typography and particular layout to mimic the tone of the storyteller as faithfully as possible, with line breaks and capital letters referring to stressed syllables.

of the *Zuñi Creation Myth*, the Maidens of Seed are transformed into Corn Maidens and are described as being “clothed in white cotton (444-45).”

Matilda Coxe Stevenson claims that the Zuni believe that six Corn Maidens came from the nadir (the Earth’s fourth underbelly), and emerged with the Zuni at *Chimik’yana’kya dey’a*, Ribbon Falls. According to Zuni oral history, the Corn Maidens hid amidst the people for four years until two witches noticed them and asked them who they were. They answered, “We are a’towa e’washtokii (Corn Maidens).” “Where is your corn?” asked the witches. “We have none.” “This is not right. If you are Corn Maidens, you should have corn (Stevenson, *Zuñi Indians* 31).” The witches then appointed a cardinal direction for each Corn Maiden to protect, symbolized by an offering: they gave a yellow ear of corn to the Corn Maiden of the north, a blue ear of corn to the Corn Maiden of the west, a red ear of corn to the Corn Maiden of the south, a white ear of corn to the Corn Maiden of the east, a multicolored ear of corn to the Corn Maiden of zenith, and a black ear of corn to the Corn Maiden of nadir. In the legend of the “Rediscovery of Corn Maidens,” there are six Corn Maidens who were given a *te’likinawe*, prayer-plumes, of the sexpartite colors, each corresponding to their very own color and direction:

A basket containing six *te’likinawe* stood by the meal painting—one yellow, for the Yellow Corn maiden of the north; one blue, for the Blue Corn maiden of the West; one red, for the Red Corn maiden of the South; one white for the White Corn maiden of the East; another white dotted in all colors, for the Every-color [multicolor] Corn maiden of the Zenith, and a black one, for the Black corn maiden of the nadir. (Stevenson 52)

The story of the six Corn Maidens illustrates how the COLORS ARE LOCATIONS metaphor enables the listener to immediately locate a deity according to its color direction. The same principle applies to many other deities

who are represented with the *a'witen'/itiwan* colors and follow the COLORS ARE LOCATIONS metaphor, such as the renowned six animal deities or Beast Gods, the Zuni village guardians. Bunzel gives their name in the *Shiwi'ma* language, *we'ma:we*, literally “prey animals”, in her chapter on “The Cult of the Beast Gods.” She states that they are “associated with the six directions as follows: North, Mountain Lion; west, Bear; south, Badger; east, Wolf; above, Knife-wing [or eagle]; below, Gopher¹⁷ (Bunzel *Zuni Ceremonialism* 81-88). Stevenson introduces these Beast Gods in a short recap of the Creation Myth as follows:

The Divine Ones [War Gods or *Ahayu:ta* twins], wishing that the world should be well guarded by those keen of sight and scent, visited Shi'papolima, home of Po'shaiyänkī, [a supernatural being] Zuñi culture hero, and his followers, and converted the medicine men who came to this world with Po'shaiyänkī into Beast Gods. They converted one into the Cougar, giving him the north region to preside over. Another was converted into the bear to guard the west. A third was transformed into the badger to guard the south. Another was converted into the White Wolf to preside over the east. A fifth was converted into the Eagle to guard the zenith, and another was transformed into the Shrew [or Mole, depending on the translation] to guard the nadir or earth. (*Zuñi Indians* 49)

The myth shows us that, contrary to the Corn Maidens, the six Beast Gods were originally Zuni medicine men who were transformed into animal deities. The colors attributed to each Beast God were first mentioned in Cushing's study, in a more detailed version than Stevenson's. Contrary to the Corn Maidens, who are differentiated only by their respective colors, the Beast Gods' colors are attributed in correspondence to their animal characteristics rather than just being arbitrarily assigned to them, as is demonstrated in Cushing's translation of the episode in which *Po'shaiyänkī*¹⁸ addresses the animals:

¹⁷ The Zuni currently categorize the mole as the most popular animal for nadir, though there are older versions in which the animal for nadir was another tunneling animal, either the gopher or the shrew.

¹⁸ Spelt “Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia” in Cushing's version, see *Zuni Fetishes* 13.

‘Long Tail, thou art stout of heart and strong of will. Therefore give I unto thee and unto thy children forever the mastership of the gods of prey, and the guardianship of the great Northern World (for thy coat is yellow) [...]’ Then, [Po’shaiyänkĩ] said [...] to the Bear, ‘Black Bear, thou art stout of heart and strong of will. Therefore make I thee [...] the guardian and master of the West, for thy coat is of the color of the land of the night. [...]’ To the Badger, ‘Thou art stout of heart but *not* strong of will. Therefore make I thee [...] the guardian and master of the South, for thy coat is ruddy and marked with black and white equally, the colors of the land of summer, which is red, and stands between the day and the night, and thy homes are on the sunny side of the hills. [...]’ To the White Wolf, ‘Thou art stout of heart and strong of will. Therefore make I thee [...] the guardian and master of the East, for thy coat is white and gray, the color of the day and dawn.’[...] And to the Eagle, he said: ‘White Cap (Bald Eagle), thou art passing stout of heart and strong of will. Therefore make I thee [...] the guardian and master of the Upper regions, for thou fliest through the skies without tiring, and thy coat is speckled like the clouds. [...]’ ‘Prey Mole, thou art stout of heart and strong of will. Therefore I make thee [...] the guardian and master of the Lower regions, for thou burrowest through the earth without tiring, and thy coat is of black, the colors of the holes and caves of the earth,’ etc. (Cushing *Fetiches* 13-14)

More recent studies tend to confirm Cushing and Stevenson's century-old accounts, such as Kent McManis' 2004 expanded edition of his 1998 study, *Zuni Fetishes and Carvings*. McManis, who is known for his elaboration of Cushing's work on Zuni Beast Gods, confirms that:

The north is protected by the mountain lion, the west by the bear, the south by the badger, the east by the wolf, the sky by the eagle, and the underground by the mole. Each direction has its own specially related color. The north's color is yellow, the west's is blue, the south's is red, the east's is white, the sky's all colors, and the underground's is black. (9)

McManis also raises an interesting point that sheds more light on Stevenson and Cushing's accounts of the Beast Gods: in recent Zuni color studies,¹⁹ it is made

¹⁹ Contemporary research primarily mentions color associations with directions, and links color-systems to other related concepts such as the Beast Gods at a later stage. For instance, in her 2020 article entitled “Color in the Pueblo World” in *Color in the Ancestral Pueblo Southwest*, Munson explains that “Most Pueblos associate north with yellow, west with blue, south with red, and east with white [...]” before introducing the colors of zenith and nadir. Only later does she state that “In addition to colors, the directions were associated with a range of phenomena, creatures, spirits, and places (13).” See also Kent McManis' and Hal Zina Bennett's works on Zuni fetishes, which present similar arguments.

clear that it is the association with the six *a'witen/itiwan* directions that bestow the colors upon the Beast Gods, not the other way around. This means that the color still refers to a direction even without any mention of a Beast God. Therefore, any colored *K'ia-pin=á-hâ-i* is a personification of the colored *a'witen/itiwan* system; the color itself indicates the direction (and by association, the corresponding *we'ma:we*, or Beast God). Thus, these personifications of the COLORS ARE LOCATIONS metaphor are at the origin of Zuni esoteric color coding.

Colors are also used as gifts from the Zuni people to the supernatural beings in exchange for their protection. The Zuni make colored offerings to the colored deities, such as prayer sticks, six-colored corn, and bright stones and seashells. As will be seen in section 1.1.3, they also make offerings of sacred paintings to the deities. The legend of "The White Shoomehcoolie" (Quam 60-62), classified as "History" by the Zuni who narrated it in the previously-cited collection of legends, illustrates this link between the tribe and the supernatural beings. Though there are different versions of this episode of Zuni history, each of them emphasizes that colors not only give supernatural powers to deities and heroes but also allow human beings to communicate with supernatural beings in order to receive protection and guidance. Teresa Pijoan also presents this legend in her collection of legends entitled *Healers on the Mountain* (106-8), with some differences. Contrary to the source-oriented translation of Quam's legend, Pijoan's version starts the legend with indications for the non-Native reader: "When one is near death, it is called the time of the White Shoomehcoolie. If the person is healed by a medicine man, then that person can join his clan (106)." Oral history thus establishes the deity as a personification of "near death." In this

legend, the tale refers to the time of three ancestral villages inhabited by the Zuni until the 15th century, *Hawikuh* (located southwest of Zuni,) *Hehshokda* (also known as *Heshotathluptsina*, the Yellow House, located northeast of Zuni, near the Horsehead canyon), and Kechipbowa (also located southeast of Zuni). It is said that the people of the villages were feeling jaded and consequently started to look for a ceremony that would enliven them. They called the Yellow Ant who lived at *Heshotathluptsina*, "for he had a brilliant mind and a great imagination (Quam 60)." They asked Yellow Ant to teach them rituals and celebrations to bring back to life the people's spirits and appease the villagers' loneliness. Yellow Ant proclaimed:

'In four days, the time for scheduling will be set. Eight days will be set aside for the ceremony. When four days are up, we will make contact with the spirits of our fathers through our offerings and prayer sticks. Four days following, the day with dancing will arrive and dancing shall commence all that day.' The Bow Priests had declared the ceremony to be held, and for the next eight days, prayer sticks were prepared. Prayer sticks for each direction of the earth were represented, also prayer sticks for animals held sacred, then for the fathers of the earth, the supernatural beings who brought upon the earth all it possessed. From the innermost place in the earth came the supernatural beings. They ascended upon the plaza in the village where the priests all awaited the appearance of these beings. There the offerings of prayer sticks were given to them, and so it was announced that the dances were to commence in four days. (61)

The excerpt above confirms that colors and their personifications as Beast Gods and other deities are synonymous with guidance for the Zuni people. The way to fight the people's apathy and loneliness was to "make contact with the spirits" by summoning the color-associated supernatural beings. The colors function as a pathway between the world of "cooked" and "raw" beings; the color of the prayer stick in the corresponding location on the earth calls upon the respective colored deity for guidance.

This link between colors and guidance is even more apparent in the last part of the legend, which continues as follows: Yellow Ant was elected as the dance leader with his relative, Blue Girl, as a partner. Blue became Yellow Ant's second in command, corresponding to a color hierarchy "yellow over blue" that will be detailed further in section 1.3.1. Yellow Ant's helper, the Black Ant, was also appointed, with the Turquoise Girl as his partner. The four beings left the village to prepare for the dance for the three remaining days. From the supernatural world, one from the *Shoomehcoolie* clan was summoned to Hawikuh: the White Shoomehcoolie. In Pijoan's collection of legends, the White Shoomehcoolie is described as a Hopi deity who is "many spirits combined in one dancer:"

As Shoomehcoolie continued to dance in and out of other dancers, his energy was interrupted and he became exhausted. He stepped back from the round dancers, and the leader spirit sprinkled corn meal ahead so that the Great Dancer [the White Shoomehcoolie] would go directly to the Spirit World. Without warning, the Shoomehcoolie darted out and ran into the wooded hills. The people were very alarmed. This was not traditional; this was not the way of the dance. [...] The Spirit World sent up two Shoomehcoolies and went to Hawikuh to follow the White Shoomehcoolie Great Dancer [...] and bring him back. The White Shoomehcoolie was not yet ready to go into the Spirit World of the Great Place of Fathers. The spirits found the White Shoomehcoolie and took him into the Spirit World. Yellow Ant, who was leading the dance now, came to life as a real Katchina; Blue Girl became a mockingbird; and Turquoise girl was transformed into a hummingbird. (Pijoan 107-8)

According to Quam, the thoughts of the dancing Shoomehcoolie were interrupted because the altar surrounding the dancers did not contain all the necessary offerings, and thus "was not honored and held sacred as it should have been (Quam 62)." From this point, the tale's moral varies. Pijoan's 2010 version ends as follows:

The mockingbird and the hummingbird told the people that from that day on, should anyone want to perform this dance, the leader must have the help of the birds and be happy and content with his life, or great tragedies would befall the people. (108)

Quam's source-oriented version ends with a more severe moral; the people were not happy enough to correctly perform the dance and not diligent enough to present all the offerings. Quam's 1972 collection of Zuni legends adds several other crucial elements:

Black Ant was told to roam extensively through valleys and that, should his people encounter anyone ill in health, they should with their weapons, inject into the ill person the venom of life and good health. It is from this happening that our people believe only in practicing these rituals by following the given patterns of the supernatural ones. (Quam 62)

The legend of *The White Shoomehcoolie* shows how vital "given patterns" and colors are to ceremonial life. Even in today's more abbreviated ceremonies, landmarks are always respected: the four days of preparation, the ritualistic creation of the prayer sticks, the grinding and then the sprinkling of six-colored cornmeal, the color of the prayer sticks and corn that draw the attention of the corresponding deity, the dancing, and the people's mindfulness of their relationship with the supernatural, must all be rigorously observed, because if the colored offerings are not correctly prepared, the Zuni may lose the guidance of the supernatural "raw" beings.

In his previously cited *Primitive Religion*, Paul Radin lists three "stages in the history of offerings" to *K'ia-pin=á-hâ-i* deities

[...T]he first [...] represents purely a mechanism for ensuring the separation from the undesired and unwilling proximity of a spirit; [...] the second [...] represents a free exchange of gifts and amenities between voluntary parties to a contract; and [...] the third [...] represents an expression of gratitude and thankfulness on the part of a humble suppliant toward a wise and understanding deity. (177)

According to Radin, the last of the three was most implemented in the latter half of the last century. The color of the sacred meal offered to the *a''witen/itiwan* *K'ia-pin=á-hâ-i* deities is like a contract agreed upon between humans and

spiritual beings; the offerings are given in exchange for the deities' healing powers. Nevertheless, the oral history of the "White Shoomehcoolie" shows that colors as offerings in dancing rituals are also used as a means of reconciliation, to appease potentially volatile deities and allow the carefully crafted ceremonial life to carry on peacefully.

Through oral history and metaphorical associations, the Zuni have given life to the six colors in their visual representation of the tribe. These oral histories and legends show how the Beast Gods and other deities which are color personified lead the people to live their lives in accordance with the Zuni belief system. Thus, the metaphor COLOR IS GUIDANCE can be used to sum up this practice. For the "cooked" *Ak-na=á-hâ-i* beings, colors are a way to earn the "raw" beings' goodwill in a contractual relationship of interdependency. Rituals are designed so that the deity is satisfied by the dedication and efforts of the Zuni, and the colors of prayer sticks, dry-painting, and sacred meal are offered to attract the corresponding deity's protection, guidance, and goodwill, with each color and its deities possessing their own unique attributes. This explains why the six *a'witen/itiwan* colors are at the core of Zuni ceremonial and esoteric practices, which in turn govern Zuni daily life.

1.1.3 A´witen/´itiwan Colors in Ceremonial Healing

Throughout the tribe's long history, ceremonial healing practices have been linked to the sacred six colors and their role as a conduit to and from the supernatural or the divine. This section will summarize published knowledge on healing practices and focus on the healing properties of colors, studying how the Zuni have traditionally used them in medicine ceremonies.

Traditional Zuni medicine consists of both spiritual and medicinal healing. In her *Zuñi Indians*, Matilda Coxe Stevenson explains that the Zuni practiced the ritualized use of narcotics and other drugs to cure and bring relief to patients (384). Traditionally, the Zuni attributed ailments and suffering to witchcraft, and colors were seen as an effective tool against such malevolent powers. According to Stevenson, medicine men invoked the aid of the colored Beast Gods, who possess the power to counteract the witchcraft that caused the illness. The directional colors play a major role in this type of healing. For example, the Zuni word *U'shaa'wa*, which means "painted in all colors", is the name of both a multicolored poisonous snake and a multicolor-spotted plant, from which an antidote can be made to cure the latter's poison (*Plants* 27). The Zuni see multicolor snakes as more powerful because multicolor beings belong to the sky, the realm of the Sun Father. Thus, this multicolored plant and this poisonous snake are both powerful, and one can cure the other.

Following the same logic, other related colored plants and animals would also be used to heal a patient. Some of the most powerful healing plants that the Zuni use pharmaceutically are related to the sexpartite system and the colors corresponding to the Beast Gods. Dennis Tedlock explains that the Zuni harvest flowers with many color combinations for healing, such as yellow and blue, a

complementary combination symbolizing the continuity of life that we will explore further in section 1.3.1. In her study on Zuni plants, Stevenson adds that:

Some plants are curiously associated in names with animals, others are named from the medicinal qualities attributed to them, while others receive their names from those of animals to which they are believed to belong. Of the last-mentioned class, there are, for example, the cougar, the bear, the badger, the wolf, the eagle, and the shrew medicine, these animals being assigned cosmic regions[.] (*Plants* 3-4)

The colors of the “cosmic regions” provide the most powerful medicines. For instance, Zuni lore mentions a six-colored plant identified by Stevenson as the “te'nas^tsäli, the mythical medicine plant which is said to bear blossoms of the color of the six regions (*Zuñi Indians* 384).” The *te'nas^tsäl²⁰* is a mythical flower created by the Zuni god of music, *Paiyatemu*.²¹ Each petal is of the *a^ˈwiten/ˈitiwan* colors (see Stevenson *Plants* 29-30). The Zuni admired the mystical plant because it contains the potent healing powers of all six colors together, supposedly giving it the ability to cure all illnesses. Colors are therefore seen as related to the healing powers of the plant or Beast God they refer to, and these healing powers are connected to the supernatural, or the spirit world. Thus, there are six colored medicines, related colored prayer sticks, fetishes, and, as will be seen later in this section, six-colored sand-paintings.

Before going further into detail on the healing attributes of colors, we will explore some examples of the more important medicine societies, along with their origins and influence. Stevenson's research shows that the healing power of ants and snakes is strongly present in Zuni lore. Although the Yellow Ant kachina disappeared long ago, a Red Ant society (or *halo:kwe*) has remained very powerful.²² In her 2012 article entitled “ANT MEDICINE: A Narrative Ecology”

²⁰ Stevenson also spells the name of the plant *tenatsäli* in other works.

²¹ See Wright, *Kachinas of the Zuni* 72

²² The extinction of clans will be discussed in section 1.1.4

Patrisia Gonzales explains that “The power of ants is the foundation for certain curing ways among the Native groups, such as the Red Ant People, a medicine society of the Zuni, which cures skin afflictions (82-93).” The Red Ant society is associated with the Beast Gods in oral history.²³ The first observation we can make about this association is that red, which today is often seen as the color of danger in Western cultures, is not traditionally perceived in the same way by the Zuni. On the contrary, the Zuni love red animals such as the red parrot for their association with one of the six sacred colors. The second observation to be considered is that the color can be associated with both the illness and the cure, such as in the case of the *U'shaa'wa* snake and its homonymic plant antidote.

Stevenson gives detailed information about the origins of the Beast Gods, the six zoomorphic guardians of the *a'witen/itiwan* directions, in her "Origins of the Fraternities" in which she introduces the deities and their respective directions before moving on to the next part of the history as follows:

Others were converted into rattlesnakes that they might preside with wisdom over the six regions: others into ants that they might scatter their houses over the earth, these becoming the zoic gods of the A'shiwi. (*Zuñi Indians* 409)

The rattlesnake and the ant are each the patron of their own Zuni fraternity, composed of a priest and tribe members who are responsible for different tasks. The ant fraternity, like the other societies, participates in ceremonial life. The Zuni use an altar to their effigy to communicate with and worship the zoic gods properly. When they need to cure patients, they dry-paint

²³ According to Stevenson, the name for the Middle Place and home of the people, *Häl'ona*, means the "Ant place" (*Zuñi Indians* 409). *Häl'o* refers to the red ant, and *Häl'ona* becomes the "[red] Ant place." This place is the core of directional color orientation and is always surrounded with the *a'witen/itiwan* colors. Another former Zuni village was named *Halona wa*, or "ant hill place." The ruins of *Halona wa* are located south of the Zuni river. The color red was attributed to the place in reference to the biting red ants populating the area, and the red ant society, which is one of the most powerful fraternities.

figures around the altar and place fetishes on it before proceeding with the ceremony.²⁴ Contrary to the Hopi, who cherish the Black Ants which guided the Hopi ancestors to their homeland, the Zuni cherish the Red Ant for its "powerful sting". Stevenson explains that the Divine Ones elected and trained two people in "the mystery of medicine which cures disease caused by angry ants [....]. This fraternity was named Hä'lo'kwe [...] (*Zuñi Indians* 410)." In his 2006 *The Orion Zone*, Gary David provides a contemporary interpretation of Zuni zoic ant belief:

Red ants and other stinging insects are frequently associated among Pueblo People with warfare [...]. For instance, at the Village of the Great Kivas in New Mexico, a Zuni war chief was known to have carved a petroglyph of a red ant along with other venomous insects, thus enhancing his power to sting his enemy in battles. In the Zuni culture, red ants are associated not only with the Warrior society (Priests of the Bow) but also with the Snake Society and the eponymous Red Ant Society—the latter two involved with healing powers. (293)

Jane Young had interpreted this petroglyph of the "red ant along with other venomous insects" as being a stink bug (see *Signs* 162-3), yet both authors still agree that ants are related to the Beast Gods, which is in line with Stevenson's reasoning that both societies are devoted to the *a'witen/itiwan* animal-deities.

As illustrated in the legend of *The White Shoomehcoolie* in the previous section, Zuni people call upon zoic/zoomorphic deities to guide, protect, and heal them. The Yellow Ant kachina and the Red Ant society are both examples of color-related deities that are invoked with sacred paint and colored shells, stones, and prayer sticks. In Stevenson's 1902 illustration of the former Red Ant fraternity altar, the Zuni have painted the six colors of the sky in tribute to the realm inhabited by the supernatural beings. The dominant colors are red, associated

²⁴ In her *Zuñi Indians*, Stevenson published a drawing of the Red Ant altar, which is an absolute taboo for the tribe.

with the ants, and blue for the sky. There is also a Knife Wing symbol, a zoomorphic half man-half eagle Zuni spirit or deity with razor sharp feathers made of flint that Cushing describes as follows:

His dress consists of the conventional terraced cap (representative of the dwelling-place among the clouds) and the ornament, badge, and garments of the Kâ'-kâ. His weapons are the Great Flint-Knife of War, the Bow of the Sky (the Rain-Bow), and the Arrow of Lightning, and his guardians or warriors are the Great Mountain Lion of the North and that of the Upper regions. (*Fetiches* 52-3)

In Stevenson's illustration, the Zuni have symbolically depicted the lightning arrows as multicolored spotted snakes climbing up the altar on which the Knife Wing is usually present. They have also decorated the altar with sky designs such as stars and sun to represent the all-colored realm of the Sun, once again in reference to the "daylight" that also means "life" in *Shiwi'ma*. The altar also includes mountain lion fetishes: one yellow lion, as the big brother of the north, and one multicolor as the little brother of the sky. These symbolic colors link the red ants with the supernatural realm, an essential interconnection for healing against witchcraft.

Stevenson describes the Zunis' early 20th century practice for curing a sick person, in which the spirit of the animal-deity is summoned and personified. She says:

Nothing is left but to appeal to the creature of superior qualities, and thus a system of theurgism develops. Religion and medicine become a dual system. The animals that are worshiped become healers, acting through the agency of the theurgists. These theurgists have no power in themselves to advert the evil of sorcery; they must first pass entirely under the influence of the Beast Gods. In order that the theurgist should heal his patient, this foreign object in the body [which is commonly called witchcraft or sorcery] must be excavated, and the method usually adopted is curious. Extravaganza before the altar and the animal fetish induces the spirit of the animal to enter the body of the theurgist, giving him the power to discover the afflicted part, which is often done by holding a quartz crystal before the patient; the lips are

then applied to the flesh, and the disease is drawn by sucking. (*Zuñi Indians* 414-5)

As personifications of colors, the Beast Gods inhabit the theurgist's body, who then literally embodies the color, representing and becoming a conduit between the respectively colored supernatural being who guides him in order to locate the origins of the sorcery and the patient. Colors therefore become a communication channel in the healing process. The white color of the quartz crystal is also essential; white is the color of light, and the most sacredly connected to the Sun, and is therefore the color that is most efficient against sorcery. Wyman referred to the quartz crystal that is set upon the Knife Wing design during the annual ceremonies of the Thle'wekwe (wood) society as the "heart", in reference to its importance (Wyman 216).

Another important part of the ritual process involves the use of colored powders made from both finely and roughly ground stones and pigments to decorate kivas, the Zuni secret ceremonial chambers around which their ceremonial practices revolve. This activity is the basis of dry-painting or sand-painting, also known as powder painting. The Zuni present this sacred "paint" made by grinding minerals (such as azurite) corn, and other colorful substances, as offerings intended to be the food of the supernatural beings. In his 1983 *Southwest Indian Sandpainting*, Leland Clifton Wyman categorizes two types of powder painting: sand-painting and meal-painting. He explains that contrary to the exclusively sand and mineral-based painting of the Navajo, the Puebloan tribes use charcoal and "vegetable pigments" as well as colored sand, with the most recent addition of sprinkled cornmeal (201). Stevenson describes the process as follows:

A ground color in sand is laid on the floor before the tablet altar and made perfectly smooth, and upon this, figures are delineated by sprinkling powdered pigment with the thumb and index finger. These paintings, of more or less elaborateness, are common among all the pueblo Indians, the Navahos²⁵, the Mission Indians of California, and tribes of the north, and all are used in connection with medicine practices. (*Zuñi Indians* 415)

In Stevenson's theurgist interpretation of the healing ceremony, dry-painting is part of the "extravaganza" before the Red Ant altar; the Zuni paint the walls, ceiling, and ground according to the six directions, associating each "animal god" with their respective color. In their 1932 leaflet on tribal sand-painting for the Denver Art Museum, Frederic Douglas and Willena Cartwright give a more detailed explanation of the materials, colors, and shapes used in Zuni ceremonial dry-painting:

They [the dry-painted pictures] are rather small, squares, rectangles, and sometimes circles from 2 to 4 feet in the greatest dimension being usual. The subjects of the pictures are clouds, rain, rainbows, lightning, snakes, various animals, and representations of the masked figures called kachinas. The colors are connected with the points of the compass. Yellow, made from ochre or sandstone, is north, green, made from copper carbonate, is west; red, made from sandstone, is south; white, made from gypsum, is east. Black powdered charcoal is also used. The background is sand of various shades. (43-4)

This excerpt refers to Hopi ceremonies but the authors clarify that this description fits the Zuni artform too. This shows that the *a`witen`itiwan* colors continue to prevail in dry-painting created for healing ceremonies, in which the six-colored system is represented with organic and mineral pigments derived from ochre, sandstones, gypsum, and charcoal, and the location of the artwork in the kiva corresponds to the cardinal directions in addition to up/down. Wyman also confirms that "In drypainting and on all ceremonial objects, colors have directional significance (Wyman 214)." Both Wyman's and Douglas's information concerning

²⁵ Original typography

the materials used in dry-painting are compiled in the chart in figure 9 below: The

	Black	White	Gray-blue	Blue	Green/blue green	Yellow	Red
Mineral	charcoal	sandstone	sand			sandstone	sandstone
	clay	sandstone	crushed blue turquoise			ochres /lemonite	ochres/ hematite
	shale	clay/kaolin		copper ore (malachite)			
	coal	gypsum			sandstone		
	manganese magnetite/ hematite						
Vegetal	charred corncobs	cornmeal		cornmeal flowers petals (larkspur)	crushed turquoise	cornmeal corn pollen	

Figure 9: Puebloan dry-painting material (see Wyman 212 and Douglas)

pigments are relatively similar to those used in kiva wall painting, as we will see in section 2.1.2. The Zuni create their dry-painting from the outlines to the center. Dry-paintings around Zuni altars are systematically built upon a white cornmeal base of clouds and other white meal-painting designs depicting rain symbolism, sometimes outlined in black charcoal (202-203).

Dry-painting or sand-painting is an ephemeral colored art, primarily used in healing, that has become well known due to Navajo commercialization of non-esoteric oeuvres. The Navajos excel in framed sandpainting, which has little to do with the healing ceremonial artform. In his book entitled *The Navajo Art of Sandpainting*, Congdon-Martin outlines the Navajo artform over the last century, revealing that sand-painting was taught to the Navajo by Pueblo Indians when they traveled to the southwest. During the Spanish occupation, the Navajo and Pueblo transitioned from permanently painted murals to ephemeral sand-paintings as a means of protecting their sacred knowledge (Congdon-Martin 3-4). The author stresses how commercialized Navajo sand-painting underwent a type of self-censorship, with certain colors and details altered to meet the approval of religious leaders.

In Garrick Mallery's 1889 research on "Picture-Writing of the American Indians," Frank Hamilton Cushing is cited as saying:

It is noteworthy that [...] powder painting is resorted to amongst the Zuñi only in ceremonials pertaining to all the regions or inclusive of the lower region. In such cases, paintings typical of the North, West, South, and East are made on the four corresponding walls of the kiva, whilst the lower region is represented by appropriately powder or paint colored sand [sic] on the floor, and the upper region either by paintings on the walls near the ceiling or on stretched skins suspended from the latter. Thus the origin of the practice of floor powder painting may be seen to have resulted from the effort to represent with more dramatic appropriateness or exactness the lower as well as the other sacramental regions, and to have been incident [sic] to the growth from the quaternary of the sextenary or septenary [meaning Hä'lo'na, Zuni village in addition to the *a'witen/itiwan*] system of world division so characteristic of Pueblo culture. [...] Further light is thrown on this practice of the Zuñi in making use of these suppositively vivified paintings by their kindred practice of painting not only fetiches of stone, etc., and sometimes of larger idols, then of washing the paint off for use as above described, but also of powder painting in relief; that is, of modeling effigies in sand, sometimes huge in size, of hero or animal gods, sacramental mountains, etc., powder painting them in common with the rest of the pictures, and afterward removing the paint for medicinal or further ceremonial use. (Mallery 211)

Cushing's statement that the Zuni dry-painted with ceremonial colors to create sand reliefs and flat paintings of effigies, including "idols [...]hero or animal gods [meaning Beast Gods], sacramental mountains, etc...." probably means that the Zuni portrayed kachina figures and personifications of nature, such as the Rainbow Man, an elongated personification of the multicolored rainbow. The colors used would thus be as symbolic as those on a kachina's painted mask, with the same colored symbols, such as the stars of the *Ahayu:ta* twins, figuring in the ephemeral painting. For healing societies, the Zuni might paint fetishes, the *Ahayu:ta* twins, and other sky symbols (see Wyman 216-8). A peculiar painting used for the initiation to a kachina society (see section 3.3.3) illustrates all the colored kachinas that

participate in the rite, such as the Salimobia, whose painted colors reflect their respective directions.²⁶

The time and precision spent creating dry-painting is part of the healing ritual, curing the patient through the gestures of the medicine man. The theurgist, who embodies the Beast God and its colors, connects with the divine through his art. Once cured, Stevenson adds that the patients can ask to integrate the clan that healed them. In that case, color is again of utmost importance to the initiate:

When a restored patient desires to join the order, a small quantity of sacred meal, composed of white corn, turquoise, and micaceous hematite, coarsely ground, the last being specially acceptable to the Beast Gods, is disposed in a corn husk. It is then folded in rectangular form, tied with the greatest care, and carried in the right hand of the restored invalid to the theurgist who effected the cure. [...] The theurgist carries the package at night to one of the points of the compass [the *a'witen* directions], makes an excavation, and sprinkles the contents of the husk into it as an offering to the Beast Gods. (*Zuñi Indians* 415)

Stevenson's details show that the sacred meal made of white corn (white for its healing property), turquoise (for its appealing blue that recalls the sky and the land of gods), and hematite (for its multicolored reflections and darkness reminiscent of the Earth's underbelly's) is also used in offerings to the Beast Gods, as a way for the Zuni to thank the divine healing powers for their generosity. The dry-paint, the sprinkling gestures, and the ceremonial artwork itself are part of a larger spiritual process. The medicine man provides healing through manipulating the material, which is itself connected to the six directions and thus to the guidance of the supernaturals during the curative process. For the patient, admiring the powerful dry-paint is part of the healing process; the painting is like

²⁶ Also spelled *Salimopia*, *Salimopiya*, and *Salimapiya*. There are six Salimobia who are attributed and portrayed in colors according to the respective direction they represent, as we will see in section 1.3.3.

a prayer, opening a connection to the supernatural. The colors in dry-painting are therefore a way of speaking to the supernatural beings, acting as a conduit between the divinities and men. The beauty of the painting is an important part of the healing process; for the Zuni, every sacred color is endowed with a power that can be used for the lives of men.

Magic or not, color heals the soul through the pleasure it provides, so it is no wonder that with their color history, the Zuni attribute an essential role to color in the process of healing. The powdered colors themselves are sacred, as are other colored objects such as fetishes, due to their link with the divine. This is why the *a'witen/itiwan* colors are so deeply representative of Zuni culture, and why Zuni visual identity is so inherently linked to these colors, as we will see in the next section.

1.1.4 Zuni Colors as Visual Indicators of Identity

The K'ia-pin=á-hâ-i deities are the key to understanding some of the core elements of the Zuni worldview, as anthropologist Ruth L. Bunzel explains: “Not only are night and day, wind, clouds, and trees possessed of personality, but even articles of human manufactures, such as houses, pots (*Ceremonialism* 23).” We have seen how this deep connection with nature has anchored the a'witen/'itiwan color system in Zuni ceremonial life. The personification of nature in the protective and guiding roles of the color-oriented Beast Gods reinforces the Zuni's connectedness and assimilation of the sacred sexpartite colors as exclusively theirs. It is logical then that they use the same six colors and assorted color-associated animals to identify their clans, giving the colors a further role in displaying identity and filiation as Zuni people and tribe members. This section will investigate how the Zuni color system communicates specific identities with the two representations of tribal affiliation: the Zuni Great Seal and the symbolic clan colors.

Several scholars have attempted to unravel the question of Native Americans' colored personifications of cardinal points, but their conclusions remain rooted in the concept of mysticism. They have unknowingly simplified the Zuni's complex system in the process. For instance, in his 1883 *Zuni Fetiches*, ethnologist Frank Hamilton Cushing²⁷ explains these associations mainly through the symbolism of colors and mysticism: they are “mysterious, powerful and

²⁷ Cushing spent years on the Zuni reservation and published a journal/pamphlet of his stay, entitled *My Adventures in Zuñi*. In this book, he narrates his journey as a member of the James Stevenson anthropological expedition to report on Pueblo Indians. Yielding to his stubbornness, the Zunis reluctantly welcomed him from 1879 to 1884. He participated in life at the Pueblo until he was so integrated that the Zuni initiated him as a Priest of the Bow in 1881. He then entered a War God society, and was thus granted access to privileged knowledge.

immortal” and thus “seem to be closely related to the higher gods (*Zuni Fetiches* 1).” The American author and expert on color theories Fäber Birren claims in his 1978 study that “[i]n human response to color it is curious to note man’s concept of the Earth as having four quarters or directions, each of which has a symbolic color. Here again, this had nothing essentially to do with beauty but with magic and symbolic meaning (*Response* 4).” However, Zuni symbology is derived essentially from the concept of the sentient Sun bestowing colors, which are themselves also alive, upon the world. Color specialists such as Birren base their theories concerning tribal color perception on anthropologists of the early 20th century, who, as previously noted, have been misled by their focus on the Zuni’s magical culture. However, to gain a better understanding of Zuni place assimilation, we need to distance color theory from past anthropological studies.

According to color theorists, the cultural assimilation of a place is made evident by the assimilation of colors, and vice versa. Associating a color with cultural concepts (such as directions, places and Beast Gods for the Zuni) is to assimilate or “place” the color within the culture, giving it sense, recognition, and importance. This means that when the Zuni associate colors with directions—and in turn refer to a place by mentioning its color—they anchor the color in their culture; by linking the colors to locations and animals that live in a given area, the Zuni assimilate both as theirs, hence the culturally specific notions of color attributed to Zuni places. In his famous treatise *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1954), Wassily Kandinsky seems near to this concept when he states that “words remain more or less hints, rather than superficial [material] indications of color (72).” Following Kandinsky’s idea, it can be concluded that these “hints” given by a word, such as “yellow,” are more or less representative of an overall approach

to colors. Zuni yellow is not simply a color; it “hints at” an intricate web of interrelated concepts linked together within the network of Zuni identity. Of course, Kandinsky’s work may refer solely to the Western European naming of colors and places. However, this theory is echoed by Zuni specialists. For William A. Dodge, who studied the notion of place in the Zuni community in his 2007 book *Black Rock*, the perception of place is culturally specific, since “perception is constituted by culture.” He argues that as people are “creature[s] of habitual culture and social processes (8),” they perceive place with their bodies. Thus, the Zuni yellow north is not any north, but rather it is a privileged place that only Zuni people can perceive. The Zuni north is the “yellow direction” and belongs to Zuni’s past, present, and future as a part of Zuni identity. The same goes for the other five colors.

The tribe’s assimilation of the six colors as inherently Zuni can be illustrated by studying the Great Seal of the Zuni Tribe (figure 11), which visually represents their legal identity and status. This powerful symbol depicts the tribe as a nation with a strong culture, and projects a distinctive, unified story of the Zuni nation's history, culture and social construct to the world. The seal also figures on the Zuni flag, which shows how colors are related to a sense of Zuni patriotism. The center of the seal represents *Dowa:Yallanne*, the Corn Mountain, which overshadows Zuni village, the Middle Place. Only the sexpartite *a’witen/’itiwan* colors are depicted. The seal is constructed of circles (b) made of blue and black layers, a thick yellow band, and white space. The *Shimi’wa* motto on the Great Seal of the Zuni Tribe, *Ulohnan, Do:Shonan, Udeman Dehya’ hon A:Deyaye*, is interpreted by Jaycee Nahohai as follows: “It’s basically giving us

longevity and slight prayer for us to be as great as our ancestors. Kinda to be as one (Facebook private message, 2020).”



Figure 10: Great Seal of the Zuni Tribe

This message of unity encircles the center of the seal. In the very middle of the seal is a bowl (c) bearing several offerings, including six-colored corn, fine Zuni silverwork, and turquoise. These items are placed below the *Dowa: Yallane* and are common to the lands. The Rainbow Man (a), whose home is the zenith, stretches over the top of the seal. His body is entirely made of the *a'witen/itiwan* colors with the addition of a black-and-white band symbolizing the Milky Way (see section 2.1.5). In the lower part of the seal are six dark blue stars (d) to represent the six members of the tribal council (corresponding to the six directions). The stars are four-pointed to remind the tribe of *a'witen*, the number four that governs

many of their beliefs. The bottom border (e) is a common stepped-design motif known in ceramic work as the terrace symbol. Cushing discussed this symbol in his *Study of Pueblo Pottery as Illustrative of Zuni Culture-growth* in 1888, suggesting that it represents clouds (*Culture-growth* 61). The motif is often red or black on a white base and may represent either a flat-topped mountain (according to Jaycee Nahohai) or rainclouds (according to Jaycee Nahohai and Noreen Simpicio). The symmetrical, step-like motif sculpted on ceramics is also prominently used in other artforms such as jewelry, as can be seen in the work of well-known husband-and-wife team of silver and lapidary artists Raylan and Patty Edaakie. In an interview in November 2019, Raylan commented on the colors used in the pendant whose motif is reproduced in figure 11:

This is the kind of work we're doing, this Surface piece. The [black] jet represents the Earth, the blue stones here [indicating the blue triangles above the jet inlay] are turquoise rain clouds. The mother-of-pearl that is the base of the face is chosen for its beige tones and because it reflects all the earthen colors. The red part of the Surface represents the rain, and this here [showing the terrace symbol] are coral rain clouds. (My transcription)

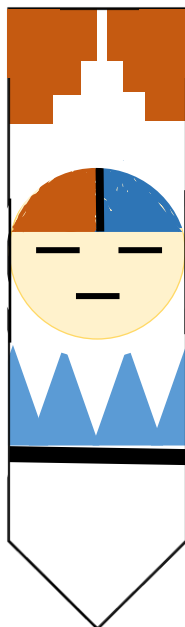


Figure 11: Reproduction of Raylan Edaakie's Surface pendant motif, November 2019 (my graphic)

The terrace-shaped red design symbolizes rain on the Surface, just as it does on the Zuni Great Seal. As Zuni lands are located in an arid area, depictions of water are especially cherished, explaining the significance of this red terrace symbol figuring on the Great Seal as a representation of the Zuni nation.

Logically, the Zuni selected the six *a'witen/itiwan* colors to use in the design of their seal as the best way of portraying their identity to the non-Native American world. This firmly asserts the colors as theirs, as we can

also see in artwork such as Edaakie's which continually reuse the same colors. The six colors together are a set that contains symbols of both protection and identity: since these colors belong to Zuni, they *are* Zuni. The people of the Zuni nation lay claim over the *a'witen/itiwan* colors by surrounding themselves with them. Traditional art and utilitarian art-objects are covered with the six colors and their use brands an object or artwork as "Zuni." Stevenson clarifies just how far this branding goes:

These primitive agriculturists have observed the greatest care in developing color in corn and beans to harmonize with the six regions – yellow for the North, blue for the West, red for the south, white for the East, variegated for the zenith, and black for the Nadir. (*Zuñi Indians* 350)

Stevenson's analysis of the development of different colors of corn and beans, which were among the Zuni's primary food sources until about fifty years ago, in correspondence with the *a'witen/itiwan* colors shows that the color system even impacted agriculture.

Roediger explains that during ceremonies, colored ears of corns are left as a gift to the deities in offering bowls that are set on altars to match the colors of the respective directions (90-3). Despite the decline in Zuni agriculture, this practice is still ongoing a century after her publication, such as when, for example, the Zuni people prepare the corn offered for the winter solstice two weeks before Shalako. Traditionally, the women don knee-length cotton dresses and a woven black fabric worn over one shoulder called a manta, which is decorated with polished turquoise and coral stones (see section 2.1.4), and kneel on the floor all night long, grinding the corn on a pumice stone with vigorous movements choreographed to the rhythm of the men's thunderous drums and songs to turn the sacred kernels into offerings to the gods. Nowadays, the Zuni buy vacuum-

sealed plastic bags of yellow, blue, red, white, and black and mottled corn kernels, which are then ground into fine powder. This shows how *a`witen/`itiwan* colors are part of Zuni's ceremonial life, from the virtually lost tradition of cultivating corn²⁸ to today's bought goods, and how, for exclusively ceremonial purposes, the specifically colored corn and by extension the six *a`witen/`itiwan* colors have remained symbols of Zuni heritage.

This principle is reflected in multiple artforms such as fetish carving, in which stone colors echo the attributes of the Beast Gods, as will be seen in section 1.2.3. The directions are always thought of as parts of a whole, with the six *a`witen/`itiwan* colors reflected in all artforms. The colors appeal to the viewers' minds and help to build mental associations, causing the color system to be deeply ingrained in Zuni thought. Colors are a source of tribal pride and contribute to a sense of belonging as a Zuni person; for the Zuni, the colors are their home, surrounded by the protection of the colored Beast Gods, portrayed in their arts and crafts, and originating from the sun's patterns that govern the ceremonial calendar.

The relationship between colors and Zuni identity also explains why the sexpartite colors are used to represent clan membership within the tribe. When Zuni people introduce themselves, it is their clans they mention. They also often wear a token of their clan on their clothes, such as a piece of jewelry, a T-shirt with a logo, or other items which indicate clan affiliation. Clans, which are inherited from the mother and father, are part of their identity as Zuni people, and

²⁸ The ZYEP is working hard to raise awareness about the importance of cultivating crops, and are growing corn in their traditional waffle gardens. This development only began in 2020, so the next decade will be crucial in deciding the next generation's approach to growing their own ceremonial corn.

that identity is represented by colors as well as plants, animals, and other natural elements. Clans create subgroups within the tribe, with different clans in charge of specific tasks. For instance, the badger clan is related to fire, probably due to its association with the red southern direction, so the members of the clan have responsibilities linked with fire, such as tending to the fire during the winter solstice ceremony, and selecting from within their clan the dancer who will become one with *Shulawitsi*, the fire god (Bunzel, *Katcinas* 959).

Painter Elroy Natachu Jr. further clarifies the system of clan divisions:

And a lot of our clan divisions are based on either animals, or plant-based, like the tobacco, mustard and then are like the dogwood, and that we also have animal clans like the bear, the eagle, the deer, the rabbits, and things like that. And each clan sort of came from either different areas, or they were created during the time in our migration, where the clan systems were sorted. (My transcription)

He divides the clans into two groups: plants, such as the *Ana:kwe* (tobacco,) *Aiyahâ:kwe* (mustard,) *Bikchi'kwe* (dogwood,) and animals, such as the *Aynshe:kwe* (bear,) *K'yak'yali:kwe* (eagle,) *Shohkwida:kwe* (deer,) and *Okshiko:kwe* (rabbit.) Many Western scholars have studied Zuni clans and phratries, starting with Cushing, Stevenson, Curtis, Bunzel, and the ultimate reference, Kroeber, in his *Zuni Kin and Clan*. However, the data needs to be updated according to the currently active clans. Natachu Jr. lists the following existing animal clans:

<i>Bikchi'kwe</i> (dogwood)		<i>K'yak'yali:kwe</i>	<i>Dona:kwe</i>	<i>K'o:lokda:kwe</i>	<i>Boyyi:kwe</i>	<i>Donashi:kwe</i>	<i>Suski:kwe</i>	<i>Aynshe:kwe</i>	<i>Shohkwida:kwe</i>	<i>Dakya:kwe</i>
<i>K'walashi:kwe</i> (Crow clan)	<i>Mula:kwe</i> (Macaw clan)									
		Eagle clan	Turkey clan	Sandhill crane clan	Road-runner clan	Badger clan	Coyote clan	Bear clan	Deer clan	Frog clan

Figure 12: Animal clans

The currently existing non-animal, plant and Sun clans are as follows:

<i>Yadokkya:kwe</i>	<i>Dowa:kwe</i>	<i>Ana:kwe</i>	<i>Aiyahâ:kwe</i>	<i>Qinna:kwe</i>
Sun	Corn	Tobacco	Tansy-mustard	Black (Corn)

Figure 13: Plant and Sun clans

The clans were formerly grouped “on a ceremonial basis into phratries associated with the six directions, and there is some mythological sanction for a dual division,” (Dutton 165-66) so it is interesting to note that the Dogwood clan, which would appear to be a plant clan, is divided into two animal phratries,²⁹ the *K’walashi:kwe* (crow) and the *Mula:kwe* (macaw). It is also known that the *Shohkwida:kwe* (deer) clan once included the *Ma’wi:kwe* (antelope) clan, which is now extinct. According to Zuni history, the *Qinna:kwe* is a subdivision of the corn clan, although many scholars disagree with this division.³⁰

Keith Edaakie explains the transmission of clans as follows:

So, each person within our community has a clan, one that they’re born into, their mother’s clan, so we’re a matriarchal society meaning that everything goes through our mothers. So, when a child is born, they’re born into their mother’s clan, and then they’re a child of their father’s clan. So, we have two different clans. So, my mother is a Turkey clan, so I’m a Turkey, and my father is a Sandhill Crane clan. So, I’m the child of the Sandhill Crane clan. But at this site is where the origination of our clan system started, and originally there were twenty-one different clans. (My transcription)

According to Edaakie, a child is part of both the mother’s and father’s clan, but only affiliated with the father’s clan as a “child of.” This gives a minor role to the

²⁹ This division is in reference to the Zuni Creation myth and the scene of the beautiful and plain eggs that split Zuni ancestors in two that we will discuss in detail in section 2.1.5.

³⁰ There is much debate surrounding this clan. In 1910, very few women were still part of this division, and associated with the corn clan. Though the name of the clan means only “black,” the Zuni translated it as “black corn” (Curtis 23-25). In current Zuni belief, the *Qinna:kwe* is related to an episode of the Migration Myth involving the meeting and war with the *Kianakwe* (see section 3.3.2). The surviving *Kianakwe* became the black corn people, and joined the corn clan.

father's clan. Many clans are extinct due to a rupture in the matrilineal legacy, as

Edaakie explains:

Right now, well, we have is about fourteen different clans, so there're seven that have become extinct. [...] it's passed down through the mother's side; when a clan has more males than females, that's when they slowly start to die down in numbers and then, eventually, if they're no more women to carry on the clan, then that's how it becomes extinct. And so, there are seven clans that have become extinct. (My transcription)

As a consequence of this, the *Yadokkya:kwe* (Sun clan) is the only remaining clan of the elements, which originally also included the *K'yana:kwe* (water/river clan) and *A'bo'ya:kwe* (sky clan).

In *Outlines of Zuni Creation Myths*, Cushing explains that once the Zuni separated from the Summer people who went south towards modern-day Mexico, the *Ahayu:ta* twins and the priest fathers—including *Po'shaiyänkĩ*, introduced in section 1.1.2—gathered together to divide the Winter people (i.e. the Zuni, those who went north during a scene of the Creation Myth we'll discuss in section 2.1.5) into clans, which they named according to their patron plants, animals, and places or elements (*Myths* 386-87). According to Cushing, the *K'o:lokda:kwe*³¹ (sandhill crane), *Boyyi:kwe* (roadrunner), and *Dalupts'i:kwe* (yellow wood or evergreen oak, now extinct) went north. The *Aynshe:kwe* (bear, extinct), *Suski:kwe* (coyote) and *Aiyahâ:kwe* (tansy-mustard) went west. The *Ana:kwe* (tobacco), *Dowa:kwe* (corn), and *Donashi:kwe* (badger) went south. The *Shohkwida:kwe* (deer), *Ma'wi:kwe* (antelope, extinct), and *Dona:kwe* (turkey) went east. The *Yadokkya:kwe* (Sun), *A'bo'ya:kwe* (sky, extinct), and *K'yak'yali:kwe* (eagle) went up. And finally, the *Dakkya:kwe* (frog), *K'yana:kwe* (water/river, extinct), and *Chitola:kwe* (rattlesnake, extinct) went down into the

³¹ The suffix “:kwe” means clan; removing the “:kwe” gives the name for the *Shiwi'ma* animal or plant.

Earth. According to the Zuni today, the dogwood clan stayed at the center, contrary to Cushing’s claim that the Parrot-Macaw people are “middlemost” (*Myths* 367-72). Since Cushing compiled his list, the Zuni have established other clans and subdivisions. In 1990, Young listed the clans noting another subdivision for the eagle clan with “Golden Eagle and Bald Eagle divisions (*Signs* 29);” for the turkey clan with “White Turkey and Black Turkey divisions;” and for the corn clan with “White Corn and Black Corn divisions.” Moreover, some of the Zuni will introduce themselves with undocumented clans, such as the Folded Arm People.

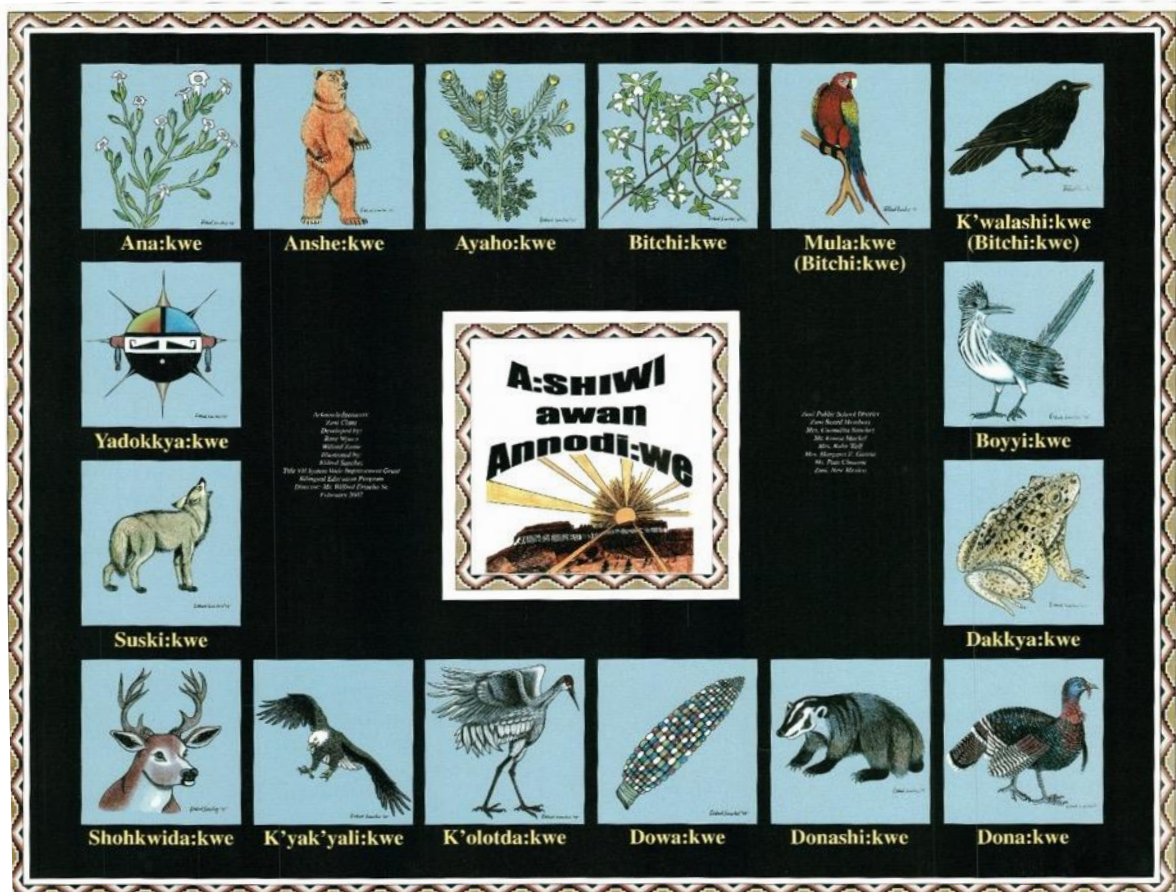


Figure 14: Eroacho Wilfred, Rose Wyaco, Willard Zunie and Eldred Sanchez, *A:Shiwi awan Annodi:we, the Zuni Clan System*, 2002.

In a 2002 project directed by Eroacho Wilfred, the still active clans were depicted by Rose Wyaco, Willard Zunie and Eldred Sanchez in the document *A:Shiwi awan Annodi:we, the Zuni clan system* (figure 14). The document includes an illustration created for the “System-Wide Improvement Grant

Bilingual Education Program,” an initiative to promote the teaching and use of both English and the Zuni language in Zuni Middle School. This image allows learners to understand the different names of clans in Zuni by connecting the Zuni word with the correct clan. The illustration features the fourteen Zuni clans mentioned by Edaakie. Far from forgetting their extinct clans, the authors created a second document, entitled *Annodi:we i:denkowa*, to portray the lost clans. These two documents, coupled with various private interviews with Zuni people which provided information on the Crow and Macaw of the Dogwood clan, allow us to place the current clans according to their colors in the graph in figure 15. As each clan refers to a cardinal direction and its respective color, this means that

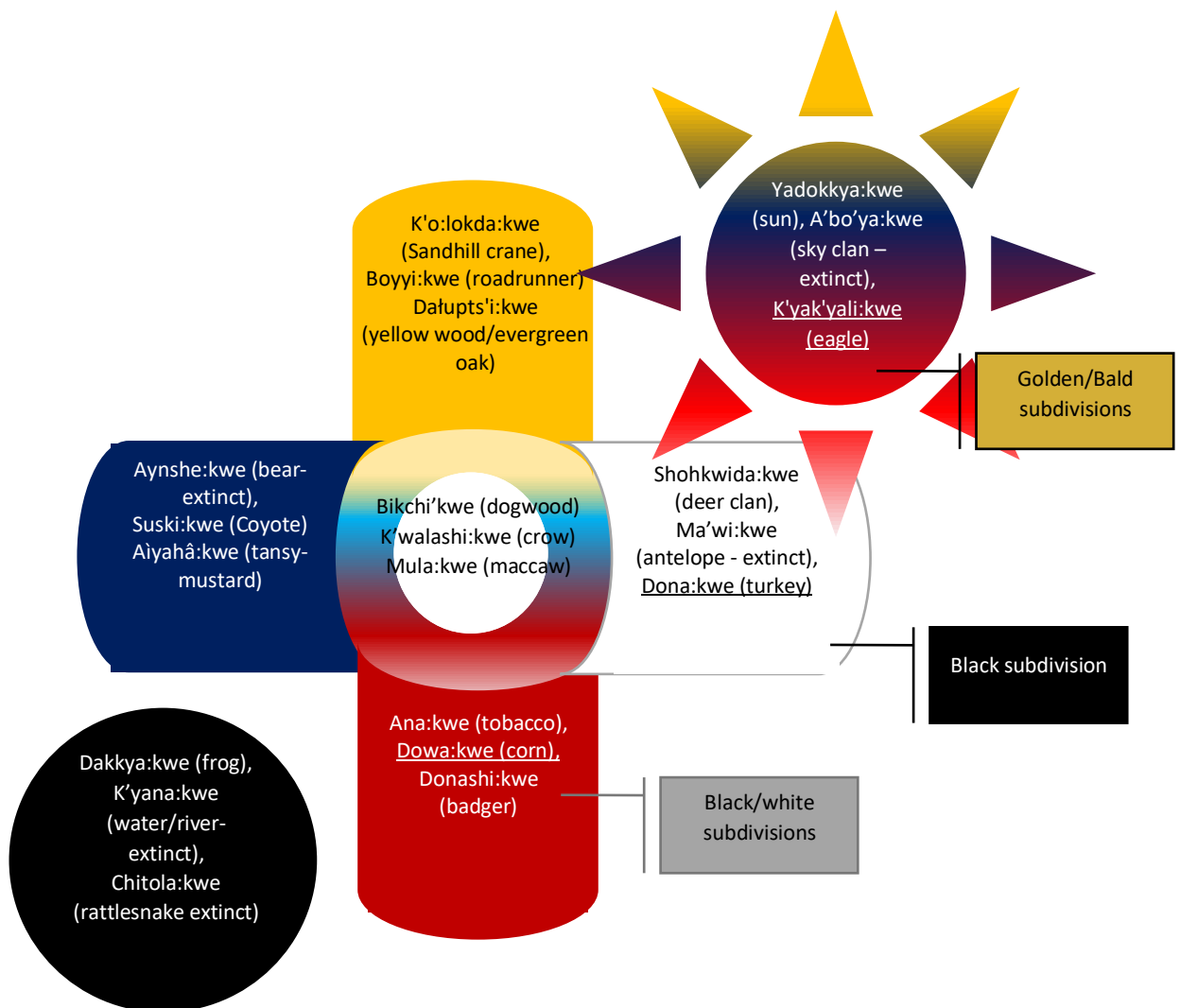


Figure 15: Zuni Clans and colors

the *a`witen/`itiwan* colors in turn refer to a sense of belonging within the community, through the close relationship between self-identity and the symbols that represent the parental clan, such as the animal or plant, and the clan's colors.

The study of the Zuni Great Seal and the clan color system shows that the *a`witen/`itiwan* colors represent and reflect Zuni tribal membership and roles in their society, providing a sense of belonging to the Zuni community. These colors are therefore deliberately chosen to represent Zuni identity to the Western world, through their use on the Zuni Great Seal as well as on art-objects sold to non-Native customers. However, this use of this clearly established color system as a reflection of the tribe's culture can be a double-edged sword; while Zuni colors are a unique way to pique the interest of potential clients and allow even non-Natives to visually recognize the identity of the tribe, the emphasis on this unique symbolic use of color often leads to dangerous simplifications, as will be discussed in the following section.

1.2 Western Projections on Zuni Colors

1.2.1 Indian Colors: A Dangerous Generalization

The Zuni *a'witen/itiwan* system, like many other tribal color systems, is generally presented to Western clients as a naive, primary-color-based art crudely adorning handcrafted goods. However, after having long been considered as mere knick-knacks produced by an “uncivilized” people, tribal art has more recently begun to attract the interest of art connoisseurs. European buyers have become avid collectors of these exotic compositions with their polychromatic features and naïve approach to color, sometimes seen as reminiscent of the artifacts of lost civilizations such as the ancient Aztec and Maya. The former label of "primitive art" has also been reevaluated to compete with the most prestigious artforms today, and auctions are organized in which tribal art is highly sought after. However, the average customer usually knows very little about contemporary tribes, and such ignorance perpetuates preconceptions. Associations with magic are often used to market Native American art and crafts in shops and trading centers, while in galleries, the primarily Euro-American owners and their staff sell contemporary Zuni art as colorful amulets or good-luck charms with different magical healing properties, so for many customers, this so-called “primitive” art still represents a somewhat dated view of Native American “primitive” cultures focused on obscure magical rituals. To buy Zuni is to buy a piece of a dying culture, a piece of the vanishing Indian, a taboo power of a pre-industrial culture. Countless fictions, websites, and advertisements have encouraged Western customers to push these preconceived ideas onto colorful tribal artwork. In his 2016 article "Magical Art—Art as Magic," Christer Lindberg acknowledges that in

non-Native American eyes, the notion of “primitive art” is substitutable with the notion of "magical art:"

What has been labeled as primitive art belongs to a magical worldview in which objects, designs, songs, and even words possess a soul or a spirit with the protective power of the ability to cause harm to another person. (Lindberg 102)

Native American “magical art” is seen as alive; a customer does not buy a dead *objet d’art*, but a fascinating piece of Zuni beliefs, a fragment of the traditional Zuni "magical substratum (Radin 59-78)." This type of publicity has raised awareness of Native Americans’ use of colors; in ceramics, the *a’witen/’itiwan* decorations are seen as an enchanting carrier of the tribe's prayers and are heavily promoted as such. Lindberg gives an explanation for this in his analysis of how Native pottery is made:

All Native American pottery is made by hand, without the use of the potter's wheel. The artist applied the design directly on the surface of the vessel, without first making drawings. Thus, the aesthetic and technical quality of the object became a visual metaphor for a spiritual attitude, a mental state of being. [...] The rain-magic designs of the Pueblo Indians are painted on pottery receptacles [...], which therefore ha[ve] the value of constant prayers. [...] They are involved in color patterns for the four cardinal points of the earth as well as for the above and the below. (603)

The increasing curiosity over what are perceived to be remote cultures, especially from a European point of view, has led to a profusion of inaccurate publications. The geographical and cultural distance between tribes and European enthusiasts largely prevents this public from validating the veracity of the information presented first-hand. Authors' fascination and awe for their objects of study often lead to over-mystification and over-generalization in potentially damaging "all-tribes included" publications. For example, in her 2012 and 2013 books *Les Porteurs de Calumet* and *Ecoute le Vent*, Yvon-Marie Bost takes great care in quoting the tribe for each legend she recounts. Yet her

apparently scientific writing gives rise to confusion. For instance, in her "Colors" section, she lists significant colors—black, red, white, yellow/orange, green, blue and purple—and gives their symbolic meanings according to three criteria: face paint, war paint, and pigment components (*Ecoute le Vent* 90-91). For yellow, she states that yellow face paint stands for intelligence and determination and that the yellow war paint means one is ready to fight to the death. She also informs the reader that the recipe for yellow war paint is made of the fruit of *Bixa Orellana* (achiote). *Bixa Orellana* is commonly found in Mexico and has spread as far as Argentina, but it is not available at Zuni. Therefore, Zuni recipes for yellow have never used this ingredient.

In her work on Zuni ceremonial body paint, Roediger claims that "[m]ouse-leaf blossoms mixed with ochre earth will color bodies yellow (89)," a recipe confirmed in Barbara Tedlock's 1983 article "Zuni Sacred Theater." Tedlock, who specializes in Zuni ceremonies and music, gives details concerning the clan system and the preparations for each dance and ceremonial practice. For example, concerning the official start of the Zuni year when the North priest asks the people to make prayer sticks for the winter solstice, she writes about the ritualized preparation of the Zuni yellow paint recipe:

Women offer peeled willow prayersticks that are painted yellow with yellow ochre (*heelupts'ikwa*³² "limonite, a hydrated oxide of iron"), which is gathered in the summer solstice once each four years during the pilgrimage to Kachina Village (Kothuwalaawa [or *Kothluwalanwan*]); the Zuni land of the dead. The ochre is then kept until the winter solstice when it is ceremonially ground by groups of women accompanied by groups of male singers and drummers and then mixed together with the yellow petals of buttercups and sunflowers. (Tedlock "Zuni Sacred Theater" 94)

³² Also spelled *heluptsikwa* (see Bunzel) and *he*lupc?i-kwa* (see Newman).

Kothluwanwan, the pueblo of the dead, which is located sixty-five miles southwest of Zuni at the bottom of the Sacred Lake (Parsons, "A Few Zuni Death Beliefs and Practices" 250), is the source of the yellow ochre used for both ceremonial paint (used to paint prayer sticks) and the body paint used by the Zuni dancers who impersonate deities during ceremonies such as Shalako. In the example of one deity, *Yamahukto*, Tedlock explains that the dancers' bodies are "splattered with the same mixture of ochre from the Kachina Village and the yellow flower petals ("Zuni Sacred Theater" 102)." *Yamuhakto* is also discussed by Ruth Bunzel in 1930 and Barton Wright in 1985 in their studies of Zuni kachinas. This deity is known as "The Wood Carrier" (Wright, *Kachina of the Zuni* 35), as "[h]e prays for the trees so that they may have wood for their house and for firewood (Bunzel, *Zuñi Katchinas* 967-69)." His role is symbolized by a headpiece on top of which rests a horizontal wooden stick. Bunzel's description of the body paint is similar to Tedlock's: "The shoulders, arms, and legs, and dots down the body and the arms are of yellow paint (*heluptsikwa*) (967)." Tribe member Jaycee Nahohai confirms that this practice is still honored at Zuni while specifying that the *heluptsikwa* is used exclusively for body paint:

Body paint is typically used for just that. Most times, however, the impurities aren't separated the way a potter would process it. And there are most often times some shouldn't be used on pottery either... Taboos of a sort, dealing with prayers and the usage, for what it is being used for as well.³³

These different accounts of specifically Zuni color use and paint recipes show that color usage can differ radically from one tribe to another, and that Bost's "all-tribes-included" approach to color study does not accurately represent the Zuni culture. Such a globalized approach cannot hope to properly introduce Native

³³ Jaycee Nahohai, facebook conversation, December 12, 2020.

American colors to the Western European and Anglo-American world, which is the target readership of books like Bost's; on the contrary, it blinds the reader to significant differences between tribes that mark their identity as tribal nations.

Information circulating on the internet, whose accessibility ensures it a much wider readership than Bost's books, presents similar issues with accuracy. For example, the 2012 website *Color Meanings and Symbolism* put online by Linda Alchin, an English history teacher, delivers general and categorical explanations of the symbols associated with body paint colors and lists cultural colors under the label of "Indigenous People of the United States", as can be seen in the following chart:

Color Meanings and Symbolism Chart

<i>Color</i>	Color Meanings & Symbolism of face paint	Color Meanings & Symbolism of War Paint
<i>Black</i>	Victory and Success	Power, Aggression & Strength
<i>Red</i>	Faith, Beauty and Happiness	Blood, Violence & Energy
<i>White</i>	Sharing, Purity and Light	Mourning
<i>Yellow / Orange</i>	Intellect and Determination	Willing to fight to the death
<i>Green</i>	Nature, Harmony and Healing	Endurance
<i>Blue</i>	Wisdom and Intuition	Confidence
<i>Purple</i>	A sacred color and symbolized power, mystery and magic	
<i>Color</i>	Color Meanings & Symbolism of face paint	Color Meanings & Symbolism of War Paint

Figure 16: Colors Meanings and Symbolism Chart according to Alchin's website

While the purpose of books and websites such as Bost's and Alchin's is laudable—after all, they do seek to provide global information on the topic—they do not seem to be aware of the disastrous role that portraying *all* tribes as one single culture may play in misinforming and implanting generalized misperceptions in the mind of the non-Native public. These overgeneralized approaches would not be so problematic had not even the most renowned scholars fallen into the same trap. From the French scholar Henry Beuchat (1883-

1959) in his 1912 *Manuel d'Archéologie Américaine* to Paul Radin (1853-1959) in his 1937 *Primitive Religion*, academic writers have chosen a globalized approach to tribal societies that treats various cultures, such as Aztec, Inca, Mayan, African, Canadian, Native American, and East Indian tribes, in the same way. Beuchat, for example, explored tribal art and philosophy in his study of ruins and artifacts, and mentions the *a'witen/itiwan* deity-related system, though not associated with color, and inaccurately, describing what he called "quarters' of space:"

This notion of the world's division according to the cardinal points exists in most of North American tribes. For modern Pueblo Indians, and especially for the Zuñis, it becomes a system which governs religious life and, partially, civil life.³⁴

He then switches to an explanation of the Mexican clan system and how quarters of space are maps, one for zenith and one for nadir, and originate from a tredecimpartite systems, wherein the number nine for four cardinal directions is counted twice or thrice, once for zenith, once for nadir, and potentially once for the terrestrial directions, plus the center. For the Zuni, however, it is the sexpartite system that is favored and needs to be aligned with colors; specifically referencing the Zuni in this chapter was therefore not relevant, as the author's development did not concern the tribe. Concerning colors, Beuchat mentions Zuñi, Acoma, Laguna, Cochiti, and Tesuke art, specifying that "[t]heir jars are mostly of a creamy white color and have blueish black drawings for Zuni." He then notes the increasing presence of human and animal figures on modern—meaning around the 1915s—Zuni ceramics, observing that "[s]ometimes, these

³⁴ My translation of the original text: "...les 'quartiers' de l'espace. Cette notion de la division du monde suivant les points cardinaux existe chez la plupart des peuples d'Amérique du Nord. Chez les Indiens Pueblo modernes, et surtout chez les Zuñis, elle devient un système, qui régit la vie religieuse et, en partie, la vie civile." (314)

figurines are made of white ceramics with black decorations; some other time, they are made of a reddish earth and covered in mica glitters."³⁵ Though his description is partially accurate, the author omits one of the most popular styles from the 1840s to 1920, the typical Zuni Polychrome with its bright colors that are so indicative of the Zuni's culturally-specific perception of color.

That Beuchat's work was lacking in crucial details concerning Zuni pottery colors is made apparent in the work of Dwight P. Lanmon and Francis Harlow, renowned scholars who thoroughly analyzed Zuni pottery. They specify that "[a]round 1850, the rather conservative style of Kiapkwa Polychrome changed rapidly to the exuberant design style that characterizes Zuni Polychrome pottery." Lanmon and Harlow describe Kiapkwa Polychrome as follows:

[K]iapkwa Polychrome jars had black rim tops and red slips covering the underbodies of the vessels and [...] the same color was also painted and polished in bands inside the necks. [...] On some jars of Kiapkwa Polychromes, the red color has been considerably darkened by the firing process, but even then the red interior is indicated by the contrast between the dark brown of black pigment on the rim and in the designs, and the color of the interior and underbody surfaces. [...] Toward the end of the Kiapkwa Polychrome period, black pigment began to be painted over part of the red neck interior slip. (143-44)

The post-Kipkwa period "exuberant design style" which Lanmon and Harlow categorize as Zuni Polychrome is characterized by a renewal in creativity and an abundance of "flamboyant" black-and-red-on-white colors, featuring, in particular, the addition of black on the interior of the jar's necks, contrary to the plain red slip used in previous styles. They quote the ethnologist George H. Pepper who explains that "[t]he red paint is made from a red stone or ocher, it is yellow when applied and turns red in the burning. It is [called] Hay-tho-tse'quah, and is found

³⁵ My translation of the original text: "Leurs vases sont pour la plupart du temps d'une couleur blanc crème et ont des dessins en bleu noirâtre. [...] Quelquefois, ces figurines sont en poterie blanche décorée en noir ; d'autres fois elles sont faites de terres rougeâtres et recouvertes de paillettes de mica." (223)

at Pescado.” (53) This red mineral-based paint can be manipulated to achieve a wide range of tones, from light red to bright red and copper-red. Thus, Beucha’s description of Zuni ceramics, meaning the previously mentioned black-on-white design and “reddish” colors with mica glitters, is a highly reductive representation of the Zuni’s most characteristic ceramic style.

Radin, for his part, first mentions Native American colors in the chapter "The Conciliation of the Supernatural," in which he talks about Zuni offerings as an "exchange of goods between human beings and deities (*Primitive Religion* 177)." Then he swiftly switches to the South African Bacwana practice of animal sacrifice for reconciliation. He observes that "[h]ere two different colored animals are selected: one black, to be sacrificed for the sin, and one white, to be used in the purification of the sinner (177)." This sudden switch to a different culture is disorienting for the reader, who may not clearly distinguish whose colors the author is talking about. And the potential for misinformation does not stop there. Radin's 1927 study, *Primitive Man as Philosopher* briefly discusses colors through observation of Oglagla practices:

A man ought to desire that which is genuine instead of that which is artificial. Long ago there was no such thing as a mixture of earths to make paint. There were only three colors of native earth paint, red, white, and black. These could be obtained only in certain places. When other colors were desired, the Indians mixed the juices of plants, but it was found that these mixed colors faded, and it could always be told when the red was genuine—the red made of burned clay. (*Primitive Man as Philosopher*, 177)

Radin mentions the Oglagla tribe only five pages prior to this statement, suggesting that his study of "primitive man" invites the reader to consider this and all other tribes as one. His discussion of Oglagla colors implies a generalized view of tribal color systems, in which the notion of “primitive” color systems covers all native American cultures, but uses only the Oglagla as an example. However,

the Zuni approach to color greatly differs from both the Bacwana and Oglagla approaches. This leads to approximate conclusions that have been quoted in more recent analyses concerning colors, including Claude Levi-Strauss' 1962 *La Pensée Sauvage* (56-58) and his 1958 *Anthropologie Structurale* (111,113-115, 172, 177). Both publications also group the world's tribes together under one cultural approach.

This presentation of categorical information to a non-Native American public leads to a distorted image of Native American art and culture. As a result, in Europe, the average Native American is still largely seen as the stereotype presented in Maurice de Bevere's *Lucky Luke*, an old, red-skinned man with a colorful feathered headdress smoking a pipe in a teepee. European people want to see Native Americans in such a way, to fit the ideal that has been tagged on them beginning with the Wild West shows which traveled through Europe in the late nineteenth century, with staged characters playing Buffalo Bill (Frederick Cody) and real Native Americans in extravagant and brightly-colored costumes. These performances also fostered a perception of Native American people as exotic tribes with a peculiar fondness for primary colors.

The real issue concerning colors is not the categorical listing *per se*, but the broad attribution of a fixed meaning/symbolism to a conglomerate of different cultures that in reality is made up of highly diversified tribes from all around the world. Watson Smith, an archeologist whose research focuses on Native American kivas, infers the following: "A very general summary with a few illustrative examples will suffice here to point up the proposition that while color certainly carries symbolic imputations, these are not by any means entirely consistent, even within a particular village (126)." Smith points to the unstable

nature of colors and the fact that symbolism differs depending on which tribe is studied. In short, too many studies of tribal colors in academic papers have been generalized, grouping several tribes together in order to draw a single conclusion. However, studying color signification according to each individual within a tribe can also be problematic. This issue is brilliantly illustrated in Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (1978), where he discusses possible methodologies for Native American studies: "Isn't there an obvious danger of distortion (or precisely the kind the academic Orientalism has always been prone to) if either too general or too specific a level of description is maintained systematically (8)?" From this observation it can be inferred that to study colors in Native American culture, one needs to be as precise as possible while also broadening the area of research to a group that identifies as one tribe and thus responds to similar, culturally-specific codes.

Portraying tribal colors as a whole is reductive, as it does not consider the beautiful nuances of each tribe's culture, and because colors are highly indicative of cultural singularities. This generalizing approach goes beyond the broader field of tribal research to include scholarly methodology in Zuni research relying on obsolete publications, as well as art marketing techniques. Unfortunately, opportunistic marketing and academic inaccuracies perpetuate misleading generalizations about colors and the cultures they represent. Marketing strategies that sell Native American art as magical, as well as academic texts and websites on Native American art and cultures, are generally the ways in which customers get information about Native American cultures. The emphasis on magic used to market tribal art, for example, contributes to an aura of mystery that entices the customer with enigmatic colors and the appeal of "authentic"

Native American art. However, this over-simplification of complex concepts pertaining to tribal color usage contributes to the distorted image held by art consumers all around the world of Native American art and culture as belonging to a primitive people dependent on magical thinking and with no clearly defined identity, a perception which is both reductive and harmful to true understanding of Zuni art and identity.

1.2.2 Legendary Colors: Selling Oral Histories

True understanding of Zuni colors has further suffered from scholars' fascination for Zuni legends, which has painted an inaccurate portrait of the tribe's use of color within the collective non-Native American imagination. A pertinent work on this topic is Eliza McFeely's 2001 *Zuni and the American Imagination*, in which she explores the distorting power of imagination that is generated by lumping all tribal peoples together and also warns scholars about the harmful habit formed over more than a century's worth of research of creating fictionalized narratives around tribes. The cultural identity and integrity of many tribes have suffered from fantasized or romanticized portrayals on the part of European and Euro-American scholars. However, the Zuni have been particularly impacted by this treatment due to the works of the most renowned Zuni scholars such as Frank Hamilton Cushing and Matilda Coxe Stevenson, who mostly focused on Zuni legends and myths to portray the Zuni as "primitives."³⁶ Furthermore, many specialists on Zuni culture to this day continue to take these first publications at face value, without taking into account subsequent changes within the Zuni culture.

McFeely describes how such scholars have used Zuni art and culture as the backdrop in a theater of misperceptions concerning the so-called primitive American Indian:

[The] Zuni served both the anthropologists and their audiences in less tangible ways, supplying these inhabitants of an industrial world with a stage set against which they could play out their fantasies of pre-industrial wholeness and cultural superiority. (11)

³⁶ Matilda Coxe Stevenson was adamant about her mission to improve the Pueblo's life, believing that white women had a responsibility to "civilize" the "primitive" Native American people. For instance, she and her husband introduced soap to the tribe and raised awareness of Pueblo ceramics and other crafts such as weaving.

By aligning the scholarly treatment of the Zuni with the theatrical enactment of fantasy, McFeely presents us with the metaphor ZUNI IS PLAY/FICTION, indicating how the Zuni have been "stage[d]" and consequently converted into a form of fictionalized entertainment for non-Zuni spectators. The type of fictionalization implied in this metaphor has had an impact on the worldview of the Zuni people themselves, as well as influencing scholars, especially in the early 20th century.

To better understand the effects of such a portrayal, let us first take a closer look at how this metaphor functions from a cognitive perspective. Based on linguists Friedrich Ungerer and Schmid Hans-Jörg's work on cognitive metaphors in their 2006 *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics* (114-162), we can construct the following metaphorical mapping:

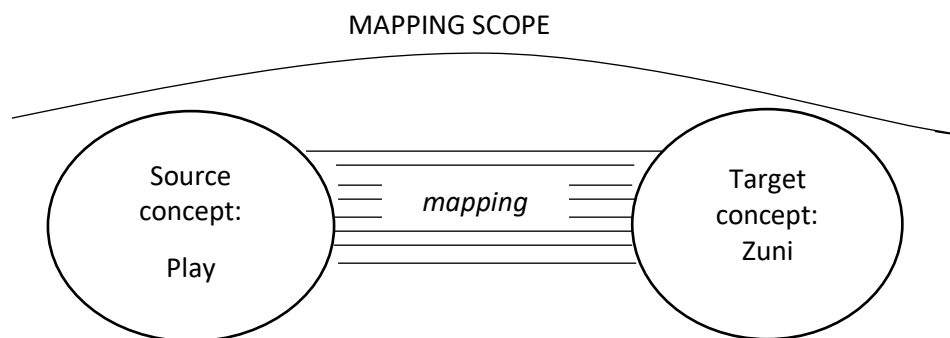


Figure 17: Metaphorical mapping of Zuni culture as a play

The source of the metaphor is a play, an entertaining piece of fiction, with actors playing expected roles based on a predetermined script. If the Zuni are portrayed as actors, playing the expected "primitive" role according to the script written by scholars, meaning their publications, then the audience being entertained is the non-Native public. Following this logic, colors are the costumes donned by the Zuni to fit their role as "primitives," therefore, colors are metonymies of primitivism. The simplification "all-tribal-colors" is thus produced, pushing all the

tribes into a single symbolic system, with no mention of why and how color is used or other intricacies of the artistic process; in short, with no mention of how the intricate color system transcends any notion of "primitiveness." The symbolic color system is thus one way for the average "civilized" person of European descent to compare Native American colors to their own "sophisticated" Newtonian/Davincian/Munsellian color wheel system, which they may perceive as more scientifically based since they don't attach the same symbolic or ceremonial value to such a system. This can also help to explain why, as Native American cultures are staged as "primitive", customers expect spirituality and mysticism in the Native art objects they collect. This leads to an additional metaphor, PRIMITIVE IS MYSTICAL, which has been a major marketing argument in commercialized Indian art, pushing consumers to buy Zuni crafts according to the spiritual symbolism attached to the colors.

According to Mcfeely, the Zuni were a curiosity among American Indians, mainly due to their adherence to a traditional subsistence economy. Because of the geographical remoteness from all capital cities, the tribe is one of the last to have entered into frequent contact with outsiders, and so the Zuni in particular were more resistant than other tribes to adopting European-style industrialization and other so-called "civilized" ways. Until 1881 when the Pacific Railroad reached Gallup, New Mexico, and brought traders to visit, the Zuni had not adopted the use of machinery or an international trading system with Europe, contrary to neighboring tribes such as the Navajo and the Hopi, and this resistance fascinated the then-industrialized Western world. McFeely explains: "The Zunis, as part of American popular culture, were more important for being what other Americans wanted them to be than for what they actually were (11)." The

PRIMITIVE IS MYSTICAL metaphor was likely first generated by scholars. Instead of objective reports on the culture, scholars tended to focus exclusively on unreliable, target-oriented translations of Zuni oral history and beliefs, thus primarily informing their audience of the Zuni's "primitive" mythology and rituals and painting them as inferior in a time when concerted efforts were being made to convert tribes to Christianity. As the Zuni rebelled against both industrial and religious conversion, they offended—and fascinated—Europeans and their American counterparts, who, in the process of selectively comparing aspects of Zuni culture with those of their "Western civilization," projected their own fantasies on the tribe from the first contact onwards, creating a precedent that remained in place for most exchanges between ethnologists and the tribe for generations to come.

The resulting preconceptions have greatly affected the Western view of Zuni colors. Cushing and Stevenson were the first ethnologists/anthropologists who introduced Zuni art and colors to a wider Western audience, and Cushing's work was and is still especially popular for its detailed and thorough reports on Zuni art, crafts, ceremonies and legends. Cushing's focus on the latter is relevant, as it shows how he implemented mythology as an entryway for both his own and his readers' knowledge of the tribe. However, Cushing did not introduce the Zuni color system as based on the *Chimik'yanakona pename*, the Zuni's own oral history of their creation as told amongst themselves, but rather through a storytelling process centered around his own target-centered presentations of Zuni myths.

In Cushing's work, the color system is first mentioned in a legend entitled "PÒ-SHAI-AD-K'IA" that is included in a chapter of his book on Zuni fetish carving:

In ancient times, while yet all beings belonged to one family, Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia, the father of the sacred band, lived with his children (disciples) in the City of the Mists, the middle place (center) of the Medicine societies of the world. There were guarded on all sides by his six warriors, À-pi-thlan shì-wa-ni (*pì-thlan*=bow, *shì-wa-ni*=priests), the prey gods; towards the North by the Mountain Lion (Long Tail), towards the West by the Bear (Clumsy Foot); toward the South by the Badger (Black Mark Face); toward the East by the Wolf (Hang Tail); above by the Eagle (White Cap); and below by the Mole. (*Zuñi Fetiches* 11-14)

Cushing then narrates how *Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia* appointed each deity to a region according to their color. As already observed in section 1.1.2, these "prey gods" are zoomorphic, colored personifications of a *'witen/itiwan* directions, and yet we have seen that, while the color system is intrinsically connected to all the deities, Zuni colors are first and foremost related to space (the six directions) and time (the movements of the sun.) However, Cushing's account, the first-ever scholarly mention of Zuni colors destined for a non-Native American public, introduces the color system through its association with the mythical Prey Gods, or Beast Gods, which are, we must underline, personifications of the directional colors. Through his desire to present the Zuni color system as magical—as colors personified which can influence events through mysterious or supernatural forces—he thus paved the way for an over-mystification of Zuni colors for centuries onward.

In his translation of the Zuni tale, Cushing's succinctness concerning the being called *Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia*, the "father of the sacred band," who appointed the *a'witen/itiwan* colors to the animal deities, adds to the mystery. Stevenson makes a similar presentation of *Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia*, describing the deity as a "Zuñi culture hero" (*Zuñi Indians*, 49) who "distributed the beast god medicines, also the tablet altars and sand or dry-painting to the fraternities," and holds the knowledge of "mystery medicine (*Zuñi Indians* 409-10)." Stevenson and Cushing's approach, focused on the mystical elements of Zuni legend, still

remains in use in more recent studies. Two studies in particular that date from the end of the 20th century show that little research has been added concerning *Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia*. In their 1995 *The Fetish Carvers of Zuni* detailing late 20th-century carving styles, Marian Rodee and James Ostler present "Po-shai-an-kia" as the "Father of the Medicine Societies [which] established predatory animals as guardians of the six directions. Each of the six directions is associated with a different color (*Fetish Carvers*, 17)." The second example is Hal Zina Bennett's 1993 *Zuni Fetishes*, which takes the reader on a spiritual journey to explore the world of the unconscious. In her version, "Poshaiankia" is again "the father of the Medicine Societies" who "brought with him the powers to make peace and war and to heal illness of all kinds." The author then adds a very succinct piece of information concerning the episode of the Creation Myth in which the unfriendly beasts were turned to stone: "Poshaiankia spoke to all petrified beasts, telling them that from this day forward they should serve humans and no longer be hostile toward them (28)." Then, just like Stevenson, Bennett proceeds to recount how the hero appointed a color and a place to each "guardian (28-29)."

Cushing's silence on *Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia*'s appearance and origins suggests that he is a figureless deity who seems to be randomly selected for the rather significant task of appointing colors and guardians. As there is no shape, color, or way to ground the deity in known territory, Cushing, Stevenson, and Bennett have left *Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia* to the reader's imagination, combining the mysterious shape with an exotic tale of colors appointed to unknown mystic deities. Consequently, the mythical nature of Zuni colors as they were first introduced to the non-Native American world made them a curiosity, an inaccessible puzzle piece, though somehow crucial to understanding Native culture. But as Bennett's

1993 study reveals, Cushing's approach has very much shaped subsequent studies on Zuni colors up to the present.

Still, the legend of *Pò-shai-aŋ-k'ia* does provide elements useful in understanding Zuni colors, since Stevenson's "Zuñi culture hero" (*Zuñi Indians*, 49) or Bennett's "father of the Medicine Societies" (*Fetish Carvers*, 17) can in fact be seen as an auxiliary of the Sun, whose position and behavior changes the colors of the landscape. The notion that ultimately it is the Sun's powers to guide beings that are bestowed upon *Pò-shai-aŋ-k'ia* isn't noted by the three previously-mentioned authors. Jean Cazeneuve, a French sociologist and anthropologist, and more recently, Teresa Pijoan, a non-Native American woman raised on the San Juan Pueblo and Nambe reservations, have provided us with more complete presentations of this Zuni deity.³⁷ In his 1957 *Les Indiens Zunis*, Cazeneuve includes the following in another episode of the Creation Myth:

When the people lived in the darkness of the fourth world, one of them, the wiser, named Po'shaiyänkĩ, managed to find the way to climb up to the third world, then the second, [sic] and finally to the surface of the earth. He then turned to the Sun and told him that it would be good to have the People come out under the light so that they could properly worship the creator. The Sun thought that it would be good that his children, mankind, might see Him and offer gifts properly. He thus granted Po'shaiyänkĩ's wish.³⁸

Pò-shai-aŋ-k'ia (or *Po'shaiyänkĩ* in Cazeneuve's version) is linked to the Sun Father; his voice stood out from all the People and acted as a conduit for the

³⁷ Pijoan's version may not be totally accurate, as she grew up in San Juan and Nambe and heard this Zuni myth recounted by other Puebloan tribes, but the stories she heard and collected were approved by several members of each Pueblo, and she took care to adapt the tales according to the tribe members' suggestions.

³⁸ My translation of the original text: "Alors que les hommes vivaient dans les ténèbres du quatrième monde, l'un d'eux, le plus sage de tous, nommé Po'shaiyänkĩ, réussit à trouver un chemin jusqu'au troisième monde, puis au second et enfin à la surface. Il s'adressa alors au soleil et lui dit qu'il serait bon de faire venir tous les hommes à la lumière, car ils pourraient ainsi rendre hommage au créateur. Le Soleil pensa qu'en effet il serait bon que ses enfants, les humains puissent le voir et lui donner des offrandes. Il décida donc d'exaucer la prière de Po'shaiyänkĩ." (Cazeneuve 70)

people's will, which finally reached the formerly unattainable deity, the bringer of light and life. The Sun, in turn, showed his approval by entrusting Pò-shai-aŋ-k'ia with the power to appoint colors to places and deities, and so Pò-shai-aŋ-k'ia bestowed each symbolic color to a place, a time, and an animal, in accordance with the different movements and positions of the Sun's. This episode allows us to deduce the metaphor PÒ-SHAI-AD-K'IA IS THE SUN, as the hero channels the Sun's powers in order to lead the Zuni people, and also to select the guardians who will act as the people's guides and protectors.

In her 2000 collection of legends entitled *Pueblo Indian Wisdom*, Pijoan reveals more about the hero's role in a tale of unknown origins called "AWONAWILONA," which recounts a version of the Creation Myth, and includes a scene with Poahaiyangk-yo. Although the author herself does not make the connection between this tale about *Po'shaiyänkĩ* and the Zuni Creation Myth, there are many similarities. These include the names attributed to the hero. The variations in spelling throughout the different versions can be largely explained by scholars' different interpretations of Zuni phonetics. It seems fairly obvious that the spelling *Poahaiyangk-yo* would sound quite close to both *Pò-shai-aŋ-k'ia* (as the name was recorded by Cushing) and *Po'shaiyänkĩ* (as recorded by Cazeneuve). Cushing chose to use the velar nasal <ŋ>, which sounds like /ŋg/, a similar phonetic effect to Pijoan's use of "ng" in *Poahaiyangk-yo*. In all three versions, the following consonants are placed in the same order: P- (S)H- Y- N/D –(G)-K. Adding similar vowels, we get P-O-H-A-I-A-N/D- K. In his outstanding 1965 work, *Zuñi Grammar*, linguist Stanley Newman, the leading specialist in the Zuni language, includes some details of Zuni phonetics and spelling by proposing two sets of orthographical symbols, one "technical," based on linguistic codes or

orthography, and the other "practical," based on sounds. According to Newman, the two sets look like this:

<i>Technical</i>	<i>Practical</i>
č	ch
h	j
ʔ	lh
k ^w	q
š	sh
c	z
ʔ	
(V)	(V): (12)

The sound spelled <h> sounds like /j/ and is a palatal approximant. However, in the *Spirants* section, Newman specified that in Zuni language, the phoneme /h/ is a glottal aspirant before vowels, such as in *Poahaiyangk-yo*. The symbol /š/ (or /ʃ/) represents a grooved alveopalatal (23). Both sounds are quite close and separate the vowel <o> from <a> in. Here then are the possible ways of spelling out similar pronunciations according to Newman's Zuni linguistic code, with the optional letters in parentheses:

Po	/j/	aiyan(g)k(i)	/o/
	/š/		/a/

Newman writes that end-vowels are quite often voiceless, which indicates that the end-vowels are less likely to be reliably recorded:

A word-final short vowel suffers from a subphonemic reduction, that of unvoicing, at the end of an utterance. [...] This change is optional, though it occurs with greater than fifty-percent frequency in my folktale texts and conversational material. (27)

It can be assumed that this is the case for the end-vowels in *Po'shaiyänkī*, making scholars' transcriptions less reliable; as there was no such thing as a standardized system for translating *Shiwī'ma*, different spellings were created to approximate sounds and scholars' transcriptions were based on their own interpretations of the less reliable vowels in recorded speech. However, the

consistency of key elements in all the spellings does indicate that the deity is one and the same character in these different versions.

The second and most important similarity between the hero's role in Pijoan and Cazeneuve's versions is found in *Pò-shai-aŋ-k'ia* chants to the creator deity.

Pijoan version's recounts the scene as follows:

Beings were born. [...] Poahaiyangk-yo was a being among them. He was a creature who learned to watch, listen and understand. There was a small shading of light which at certain times was more noticeable. Poahaiyangk-yo studied this light for four days. He found that when he was near it, there was warmth. In the quiet time, Poahaiyangk-yo made his escape to the warmer place. He was guided along a thin fragile path to the third womb where no one else had ever been. He followed the light, kneeling in a billowy foamy swamp to listen. There he raised his head and chanted to the spirits of those still submerged in the fourth womb. Sun heard the chanting and gave strength to Poahaiyangk-yo. As he did so, the fertility of Father Sky [Awonawilona] fell into the billowy swamp and life grew. Twins were born, they were named the Preceder and the Follower. Father Sky gave the colors of the rainbow and the thick heavy clouds (which bring confusion) to the twins. They were to use these tools for their purpose. They flew on the thick clouds to Poahaiyangk-yo [...who] cowered in the darkness listening to voices call out around him. The Preceder dropped from the thick clouds to stand in front of Poahaiyangk-yo. Follower followed behind. They asked what was needed from them. Poahaiyangk-yo told them of the people in the lower womb. (83-87)

The twins then guided the people to the surface where they were greeted by *Poahaiyangk-yo*. According to Pijoan's account, it is Father Sky, *Awonawilona*, who offers the rainbow colors to the *Ahayu:ta* twins: "Father Sky gave the colors of the rainbow and the thick heavy clouds (which bring confusion) to the twins (85)." What Pijoan neglected to explain is that Father Sky and Sun Father Sun are two manifestations of the same celestial deity. Some versions of the Zuni Creation Myth do indeed mention *Awonawilona* as the deity from which the World was born: s/he³⁹ is who first fathered all the waters of the world, thus giving birth

³⁹ Depending on the storyteller, *Awonawilona* is either male or female, or both, or neither.

to fog, clouds, large bodies of water, and air. Eventually, *Awonawilona* chose to incarnate the sun and so was transformed into the Sun Father and other deities directly related to the sun, such as the Rainbow, and shared the sky with all these deities of similar origins, all representing the Sun, all of whom thrive in the land of zenith, the multicolored direction whose range and hues originate from the sun's position. Therefore, when Pijoan mentions the "fertility" of Father Sky creating the warrior gods, it is a reference to the power of the Sun incarnated. This clarifies the PÒ-SHAI-AD-K'IA IS THE SUN metaphor; in both Cazeneuve and Pijoan's versions, *Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia* is able to contact a personification of the Sun (*Awonawilona*, the Sun Father and the Rainbow) by his voice or by means of "chanting," and thus received the power to represent the Sun Father's voice and guide the people up and away from the "lower womb."

However, contemporary versions of the Creation Myth show a gradual disappearance of *Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia* in legends collected after Cushing's publication in 1881; the hero's role in the *Chimik'yanakona pename* was slowly reduced until he disappeared altogether from the myth, leaving the Sun Father as the only deity mentioned. For instance, when *Poshayaank'i* is mentioned in Peyneta's 1965 source-oriented version of the Creation Myth, "WHEN NEWNESS WAS MADE PART II", a little more than half a century after Cushing's publication of the *Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia* tale, he was only portrayed as the father of all societies; not as the one who appointed colors, but as a member of the White House People, meaning the Sun's people, who are known to be the creators of the Zuni medicine societies (Tedlock, *Finding the Center* 317-18). What is more, the knowledge of *Pò-shai-aṅ-k'ia*'s existence within the Zuni tribe seems to have died out at least two generations ago, and the current generations of Zuni artists have never heard of

him. The potter and designer Jaycee Nahohai, when asked about the deity, went to his uncle Milford Nahohai, who, after further investigation, could not find out who *Pò-shai-an-k'ia* was. The disappearance of such an important figure from Zuni oral history can be explained by its redundancy; because *PÒ-SHAI-AN-K'IA IS THE SUN*, there was ultimately no need to duplicate the sun anymore and he was slowly absorbed by other theurgists of the Sun.

The loss of *Pò-shai-an-k'ia* from contemporary Zuni mythology can be seen to greatly impact the current Zuni view of colors, as the metaphor of *PÒ-SHAI-AD-K'IA IS THE SUN* thus gives way to the metaphor *THE SUN IS COLORS*. As Zuni oral history has erased this part of the myth over the last century, the current Zuni perception of colors does not consider them as originating in the Creation Myth or in any parallel myths. Instead, they are seen as being independently related to the Beast Gods and are always associated with their respective directions, which are in turn associated with the sun's movements. This means that although the origins of the color system can be found in the Zuni explanation of the sun's movements, which can be traced back to the Creation Myth as we saw in section 1.1.1, these origins are not an active part of contemporary Zuni color perception or related to contemporary knowledge of myths.

This shows how the scholars who continued to cite Cushing's version with the deity appointing colors to animals have presented anachronistic representations of the Zuni *Chimik'yanakona pename* to their non-Native American readers. This also proves that commercialized books that mention Zuni colors, including the most recent publications such as Pijoan's, are not up to date with current Zuni beliefs. By staging colors based on the legend of *Pò-shai-an-*

k'ia, thus associating them with the mythical, without considering the origins and function of such deity, salient aspects of the Zuni belief system were thus overwritten by the scholars, who favored the dramatic tone of storytelling.

As the source of the scholarly anachronisms that succeeded his work, the impact of Cushing's publication in the over-mystification of colors can be described using the following cognitive metaphor:

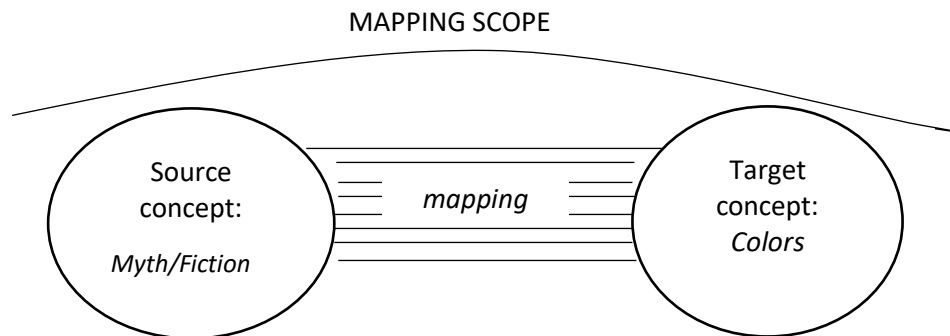


Figure 18: ZUNI IS PLAY/FICTION conceptual metaphor

Just as we saw in the previously-discussed ZUNI IS PLAY/FICTION metaphor, Cushing fictionalized colors through the metaphor COLORS ARE MYTH/FICTION embedded within his work. The source of the metaphor is a myth, an entertaining piece of fiction based on Cushing's script. If the colors are portrayed as fictional, they too are staged. This anchors colors in the collective imagination by way of myth, with *Pò-shai-an-k'ia* acting as the theurgist. Because he brings colors to the world in his legendary role as a mystical deity (in Cushing's accounts), the Zuni colors are necessarily related to the divine. That way, the non-Native reader's assumption is confirmed: the Zuni perception of colors stems from "folk superstition" compared to that of non-Native Americans, which stems from their own self-validated aesthetic and scientific traditions, and the origins of the Zuni color system in the sun's movements are completely overlooked. The results of this type of approach are not to be taken lightly; they have created a

serious discrepancy between actual tribal culture and the non-Native American view which portrays them as frozen in time and archaic mythology rather than as dynamic and evolving contemporary cultures.

The publications of scholars such as Cushing and those who followed him demonstrate how a longstanding Eurocentric attitude towards Zuni studies has perpetuated reductive interpretations of their artforms, projecting non-Native researchers' own fantasies of primitive mysticism onto interpretations of Zuni folklore and oral history. Cushing's publication sparked an interest in Zuni culture, and as the first Anglophone writer who spent years with the Zuni and was accepted by the tribe as a Priest of the Bow, his version of the birth of colors has been taken for granted as being correct, and has been quoted as such throughout the last century. Furthermore, Cushing's first mention of colors, which has been recycled in many scholars' work up to now, was part of a study supposedly focusing on Zuni fetishes, as the title *Zuni Fetiches* indicates. Nevertheless, Cushingian research focuses on the mystical and mythological aspects of colors and seldom and focuses on the meticulous art of fetish carving itself, such as the criteria actually used by fetish carvers to select and transform a stone. Cushing and his successors have preferred to wander through the realms of Zuni legends, burying the Zuni worldview under their own biased projections. The following section will further highlight the contrast between non-Native projections and expectations concerning the spiritual power of fetishes and what we can really learn about this artform if we break free from Cushing's approach and reintegrate the Zuni themselves as an authoritative source on their own culture.

1.2.3 Fetish Carving: Buying Colored Magic

For purchasers of Zuni art, knowledge about Zuni colors mostly comes from the fetish carving market, along with information taken from Cushing's study. Up until ten years ago, fetishes were usually sold accompanied by an account of their color symbolism. Customers were informed that the yellow mountain lion was the protective deity of the north, that the blue bear was the protective deity of the west, the red badger the protective deity of the south, the white eagle the protective deity of the east, the eagle the protective deity of zenith, and the mole the protective deity of nadir (see sections 1.1.2, 1.3.1 and 1.3.2). They were also told that it is the color of the stone that determines the direction, and thus, a blue mountain lion is the western-dwelling little brother of the yellow mountain lion of the north. This means that fetish carving is the Zuni artform in which the *a'witen/itiwan* color system is most advertised because of this connection between the stones' colors and the six directional colors.

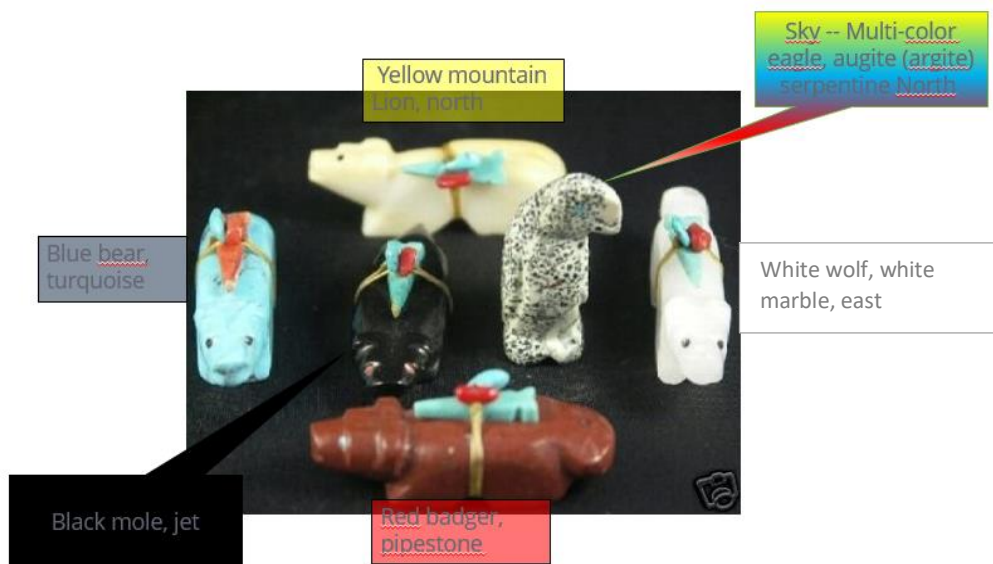


Figure 19: Typical example of a six directional fetish set

Archetypal fetishes are generally blocky carved figures made from stone, fossils, or organic material such as antler. The bear fetishes in figures 20 and 21

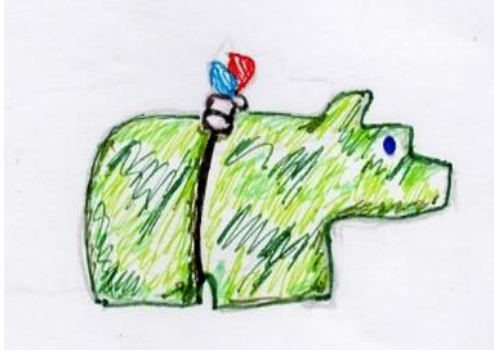


Figure 20: Composite sketch representing an “old-style” bear fetish, usually made of turquoise or other bluish to greenish stones (my sketch depicts variscite stone)

are composite sketches representing the characteristic details of traditional west/blue bear fetishes; the fetish is carved from a colored stone (a green multi-shaded variscite or blue turquoise for these examples), decorated with fine inlay work of a darker or contrasting shade in dots to

represent the eyes, ears, and anus. Inlaid heartlines (or breath lines) that adorn the carved figure are also a current traditional trend. The stone is smoothed with a polishing stone to give it a unique shine. Today, fetishes have moved beyond their traditional forms to become increasingly varied, as can be seen in the example of the less typical medicine bear in figure 22. Commercialized models are



Figure 21: Composite sketch representing an example of a trendy Bear fetish with an inlaid heartline (made with turquoise stone in my sketch)

increasingly detailed in their renderings of the animal. In any case, they are systematically marketed and sold with information about the magical properties of the fetish linked with their respective colors. When non-Zuni clients buy directly from Zuni artists at the village, they can benefit from explanations provided directly by the artists themselves; elsewhere, they are usually

dependent on information provided by non-Zuni shops and other outside documentation.

It must be understood that Cushing's PRIMITIVE IS MYSTICAL legacy still influences studies on Zuni fetishes. More than a century after its publication, his book on Zuni Fetishes continues to be seen as *the* reference on the topic.



Figure 22: Lasiloo, *Medicine Bear*, 2019 (courtesy of the Wright Gallery, my photos). From left to right: Profile, front and bottom view.

Cushing's ZUNI IS FICTION approach romanticized Zuni concepts by employing storytelling techniques. He used the lexical field and tone of storytelling in general when recounting myths and legends; for example, he starts an episode of the Creation Myth with the words, "In ancient times..." What Cushing translated as "In ancient time" is actually a very common Zuni expression that is loudly stated to catch the public's attention before telling a story. Dennis Tedlock, who is the authority on both Zuni folk tales and phonetics in storytelling, explains that the Zuni orator, the *Telaapi*, which literally means to "take out a tale," uses the phrase "So'nahchi," from the *Shiwi'ma Si ho'na ahhachi*, which means "Now we take it up (*Finding the Center* 3)," so the expression actually used by the Zuni contains no notion of "ancient time." Cushing also links mystic associations to colors without backing these associations up with any concrete sources, as illustrated by the following example in his *Zuñi Fetiches*, in which he states, "Indeed, these colors are used in the pictographs and in all the mythic symbolism of the Zunis, to indicate the directions or regions respectively referred to as connected with them (*Zuñi Fetiches*, 13)."

The problem does not altogether lie in Cushing's approach *per se*, but rather with the fact that later scholars continually refer back to him and duplicate the same storytelling processes. One such scholar was Kent McManis, the most cited authority on Zuni fetishes of the early 21st century. McManis dedicated his life to

the study and sale of Zuni fetishes, and shortly before his death, he opened Albuquerque's Zuni Fetish Museum, adjacent to his own Grey Dog Trading gallery, now tended to by his relatives. The museum grants access to some beautiful Zuni fetishes, from the roughest and most traditional to the most modern and polished. The current owner, Yvonne Stokes, describes McManis' work on Zuni fetishes as revolutionary because of his respect for Zuni culture and artists. Moreover, his career as a trader afforded him the trust of some of the most respected and commercially successful Zuni artists, interviews with whom were carefully transcribed in his work.⁴⁰ In his 1998 extended edition of *Zuni Fetishes & Carvings*, McManis introduced fetishes as follows:

If you say the word 'fetish' to most people, an image of a small carving does not usually come to mind. But 'fetish' is the conventional term used to describe one of these delightful Native American carvings, even though charm or talisman may be more appropriate. A fetish is an object believed to have a power greater than the object itself would naturally possess. [...] Most of the fetishes created today might more properly be called 'carvings' because they are made as art objects. (5)

After this quote, McManis carries on with historical facts about the Zuni. He uses the lexical field of the commercialized oeuvre, words such as "carving(s)," "objects," and finally "art objects," then later on, "inlaid," "carved" (same chapter), or "work of art (6, 11)." McManis also lays out the color system without flourishes, stating simply that "[e]ach direction also has its own specially related color. The north's is yellow, the west's is blue, the south's is red, the east's white, the sky's all colors, and the underground's is black (1)." Then he relates colors to the type of stone usually chosen, such as turquoise, "often used to carve the blue fetish animals of the west direction (50)." On first reading, it seems that, contrary to Cushing's myth-centered approach, McManis acknowledges the ceremonial and

⁴⁰ Yvonne Stokes, personal interview, November 9, 2019.

spiritual value of Zuni fetishes and the colors' associations with places while drawing clear boundaries between Native and non-Native American beliefs; the fetishes are presented as intertwined with Pueblo ceremonial culture, yet they are put under McManis' microscope as a color-full art. This will be further discussed in section 2.2.3.

Paradoxically, however, McManis falls back into Cushinian habits as his discussion of colors develops. Fetishes are described as charms or magic talismans whose colors are associated with or symbolic of their type of magic and healing. The trader chose to approach fetishes first according to their animal deity, then by type of stone, cataloging the types of stone selected for the carvings and detailing their magic properties according to color; for example, "[t]he white type is often used for white healing bears or east directional fetishes (37)." McManis emphasized that the magical properties are beliefs of the tribe, using expressions such as "the Zuni sometimes see them as (11) " or "Native American traditions have always recognized (9)," which shows that the magical properties exist only from the tribe's point of view and that these beliefs would not enter into the worldview or spiritual traditions of the Western purchaser at all. And yet, McManis simultaneously discourages over-mystification while still condoning the underlying idea of a fetish possessing some sort of mystical power, accessible both to the Zuni and to "Westerners" but in different ways, in accordance with their distinct worldviews. In his second chapter, "The Power of the Fetish," he explains:

While there are many interesting stories about fetishes, over the last years, misinformation has circulated about their functions. This includes non-Zuni concepts attributed to Zuni fetishes. It is inaccurate to attribute powers and psychological properties of Euro-American origin to a Zuni fetish and claim that the Zuni believe the same. Also, interpreting what other tribes believe about an animal and assuming

that the Zuni agree would be like assuming that Jews and Christians share the same beliefs about pigs. A fetish can represent anything you, as the possessor, want it to represent. It can also have whatever 'powers' you so desire. (9-11)

In the same paragraph in which McManis warns of projecting European and Euro-American beliefs or those of other tribes onto the Zuni, he grants non-Zuni customers the right to project whatever "powers" they want onto them. McManis also specifically draws attention to the powers associated with different colors, as in the example of the "white bear, which the Zuni consider especially powerful (10)." As we saw in section 1.1.2, white corn represents living flesh and is a bringer of life, so by association, the color white by adds special healing abilities to the nurturing bear deity. While McManis doesn't fail to remind his audience of the fact that these are "Zuni beliefs," his introduction to Zuni fetishes develops similarly to Cushing's, starting with a brief introduction on Zuni history, then immediately switching to a recap of the Creation Myth (McManis, *Fetishes & Carvings* 5). In following the Cushingian pattern, McManis's efforts to cleanly separate Zuni and non-Zuni beliefs fall short; his well-intended information on Zuni mystical beliefs related to color symbolism englobes the rest of his work and unfortunately overpowers his initially more objective approach, thus further perpetuating an outdated construct which equates perceived primitivism, in this case represented by an ancient and traditionally ceremonial tribal artform, with heightened spirituality, based on interpretations of mysticism projected onto the artform, as well as onto the tribe's oral history, by non-Zuni scholars and art purchasers.

McManis' influence can still be seen in those he trained as his successors; both his former employees and people who learned about fetishes from his book talk about the objects as if they were lucky charms. One of these people I met

during my visit, a self-described traveler who loves other cultures, confided to me: "I never fly without my yellow Mountain Lion fetish. When I wear them on my skin, I feel protected." Customers who have never set foot on the Zuni reservation are charmed by this type of magical description, which lends a further air of exoticism to the art object. A fetish is attractive to the targeted non-Native American clientele because of what Western perception projects onto the talisman, viewing it as an idol handcrafted by a "primitive" society from carefully selected stone, whose symbolic color seems to imbue the art object with magical properties. The non-Native consumer base may have been particularly open to this type of marketing in the context of developing New Age trends which coincided with the peak in fetish carving commercialization, during a period marked by an attraction to esotericism and mystical charms derived from non-Western culture traditions.

To break away from Western trends and prejudices and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the colors used in fetishes, it is necessary to consult the artists themselves. Nowadays, artists like Jeff Shetima take pride in learning new skills and experimenting with modern techniques, while at the same



Figure 23: Jeff Shetima in his workshop. November 14, 2019 (my photo)

time asserting their personal styles. When I interviewed him in November 2019, Shetima shed some light on where his inspiration comes from: “I work with almost any stone. It just depends on the moment, on what I'm feeling, what I visualize, something that I see within that stone...you know, I want to bring that animal out (my transcription).”

Artists like Jeff scout for stones they find interesting either for their unique colors or shapes, and then basically let the stone itself determine what its final form will be; they merely clear away the excess stone to reveal its inner *K'ia-pin=á-hâ-i* (raw being) shape, as can be seen in figure 25, which shows an uncarved Picasso marble rock to the left and then the square-nosed bear's face carved with a Dremel machine to the right. Shetima put his feelings as a Zuni carver into words in the following Facebook post:



Figure 24: Jeff Shetima's work on a raw Picasso Marble stone, November 15, 2019 (my photos). At the top, the original stone, at the bottom, the same stone during the process of carving the bear's face.

I wanted to share my experience with you all on how my carving career started, but to make a long story short... most of my creations are concretion carvings that I have shared with many of you throughout the years. I don't draw on the stones or cut squares to make individual carvings to be similar... I go with the flow and the feel of the material and the stone... hard to explain... my carvings aren't reminiscent of another carver's creation but my own... when you get a Shetima carving you're getting a one of a kind, no matter what.⁴¹

In addition to "go[ing] with the flow the and the feel the material and the stone" until the it reveals its shape, Shetima stresses his own uniqueness as an artist. Putting his name on his oeuvres and labeling them as a "Shetima carving" is a brand statement, showing that they are something to be proud to own and show off. On the other hand, Shetima talks very little about his use of color and instead focuses on shapes, such as the initial form of the stone which gives the fetish its identity. The artist's own words reveal that the mystical association with color has disappeared, especially in the non-sacred carvings produced specifically for sale. In the latter, the artist views the shape of the stone as what matters most in determining its nature, and color is treated more as an additional aesthetic aspect of the artwork rather than being charged with any mystical association or power.

When Zuni artists like Shetima market their own art, they focus on their personal artistic skills, their growth as artists, and the medium they like to use, rather than the sacred colors that are instead usually reserved for Zuni ceremonies. However, non-Native shopkeepers who market the fetish color scheme to Western customers are also selling the belief that the colors of a fetish have protective powers. What is advertised to the Western customer is the Cushingian vision of Zuni ceremonies and the six-colored fetishes used by secret societies in their rituals; however, the Zuni color system cannot be used in the

⁴¹ Jeff Shetima, Facebook post, December 7, 2020.

same ceremonial way by non-Zuni customers who do not share the Zuni worldview. Of course, customers may be aware they are buying a commercial art object and not a Zuni ceremonial artifact, but more often than not, their purchase will still be influenced by the marketing and general mindset which shrouds these objects in mysticism and attributes magical properties to them. A customer who buys a white bear specifically as a charm for better health is not being informed that a commercialized fetish is first and foremost an art object, and as such contains no healing properties, as we shall see in more detail in section 2.2.3.

This discrepancy between the non-Native vision of tribal art and the Native vision of their own commercial and ceremonial artforms art highlights how marketing fetishes through color symbolism implies the participation of both vendors and their customers in the PRIMITIVE IS MYSTICAL construct, which in turn has a direct impact on Zuni image. We have also seen how adherence to this same PRIMITIVE IS MYSTICAL metaphor, established by scholars like Cushing, has impeded subsequent scholars from engaging in objective analysis of the Zuni color system. However, that is not to say that the Zuni don't actually link colors to the sacred within their belief system; the previously-discussed SUN IS COLORS metaphor has generated the sexpartite color system in accordance with a strict space-related code that still governs Zuni categorization of colors to this day. It is through the consideration of current Zuni beliefs in the study of color categorization and combinations that we will be able to update our knowledge and understanding of the Zuni color system instead of continuing to fall back on outdated Eurocentric constructs or non-Native marketing of Native art.

1.3 Focal Colors: Categorizing Zuni Colors

1.3.1 Zuni Focal Color Combinations

We previously established that the Zuni *a'witen/itiwan* colors are the six colors generated by the sun's position and movements over the arid landscape and multicolored mesas that are the natural surroundings of what is today the Zuni reservation. The Zuni six-color system looks nothing like the European Newtonian/Davincian system, with its division into primary, secondary, and complementary colors. The Zuni "color wheel" is three-dimensional, with the sexpartite division of place corresponding to the cardinal directions in addition to the directions of up and down. This conception calls into question what members of European and Euro-American cultures presume to know about colors, and how our notions of color relate to other cultures such as the Zuni. Allowing ourselves to question our own perception of color and open our minds up to alternative systems will enable us to establish a categorization of colors that better fits with the Zuni mindset.

Henry Maldiney, a French philosopher interested in space and art, specifies that "shapes (and color) belong to space before belonging to the image, that its rhythm measures the dimensional field where it has to appear before measuring the figure (154)." While his argument mainly concerns Western painting, it is no less accurate when applied to daily life. In everyday life, colors are so entrenched in "space" that they are experienced unconsciously, and little attention is paid to the visual properties that a specific color provides. This can be observed in all cultures, as any human mind will react as such. Thus, one needs to pay attention, or pay special attention to colors, to truly "see" colors. Colors are primarily visual impressions, caused by light rays being registered by

receptors in the eyes, yet to the human mind they are also much more than that. The French critic Frederique Toudoire-Surlapierre explained that colors are a passageway from nature to culture and vice versa. In her reasoning, while natural colors are visual imprints, cultural colors belong to one culture and one culture only:

Each 'community' claims ownership of this tension inherent to color personally. Just as black and white calligraphy is the domain of Asian culture, so the aesthetic use of color is understood according to an occidental conception in which notions of progress, success, and wealth are dominant.⁴²

If we couple the concept of communities claiming “ownership” of colors with Maldiney’s idea of color entrenched in space, this means that colors need to go through different stages—from natural to cultural—before they are experienced consciously. In Zuni culture, colors are experienced in conjunction with the calendar, combining notions of time (the Zuni calendar based on the seasons and the Sun’s position) and space (cardinal points). They are thus “chronotopes,” from the ancient greek *Χρόνος* (meaning time) and *τόπος* (meaning space). For instance, we saw in section 1.1.1 that yellow was related to “The Place of the Barren Lands” and thus to winter. In parallel, yellow has a further spatial relation to the north. We can therefore theorize that a Zuni person only feels colors, sees colors, and experiences colors fully when relating to such concepts. In contrast, the Western categorization of colors is mostly based on Newton’s definitions of the terms of primary and secondary colors, or “[t]he Colours of Homogeneous Lights [...] Homogeneous and Simple; and those of Heterogeneous Lights,

⁴² My translation of the original text: “Chaque “communauté” va s’approprié à sa façon cette tension inhérente à la couleur. De même que la calligraphie en noir et blanc relève de la culture asiatique, de même l’usage esthétique de la couleur se comprend par rapport à une mentalité occidentale où les notions de progrès, de réussite, et de richesse dominant.” (Toudoire 27)

Heterogeneous and Compounds (60)." These notions and divisions represent the system that we will be comparing to the Zuni approach to colors.

To teach the younger generation *Shiwi'ma* (Zuni language) color terms, artist Janice Wyaco uses six slides depicting colored corn in a pottery bowl to illustrate directions and colors. Her teaching resources give the following information:

	North/yellow	West/blue	South/red	East/white	Zenith/multicolor	Nadir/black
Shiwi'ma directions	Bish'lanwki	Sunha:kwi	Ma'kyayakwi	Dewankwi	l:yamakwi	Manikkya
Shiwi'ma color terms	tups'ikwa	ti'akwa	shilowakwa	k'ohakwa	k'uchuchukwa	k'wi'ni'kwa
Meaning of colors	Yellow corn	Turquoise sky blue	coral	White corn	Mottled/beautiful	dark (no light)

Figure 25: *Shiwi'ma* six color terms according to Janice Wyaco

The *Shiwi'ma* color terms are for the *a'witen/itiwan* colors, meaning yellow *tups'ikwa* for "yellow corn," blue *ti'akwa* for "turquoise sky blue," red *shilowakwa* for "coral," white *k'ohakwa* for "white corn," multicolor *k'uchuchukwa* for "mottled," and black *k'wi'ni'kwa* for "dark." Each color is related to an object (except for black, which is related to the absence of light) that can have a range of several hues. For instance, coral ranges from orange tones to crimson tones, white corn ranges from white to off-whites, etc. On the one hand, this reveals the Zuni focal colors as being linked to an object rather than an exact shade. On the other hand, this shows that Newton and Da Vinci's concept of primary and secondary colors cannot be applied to the Zuni, as the Zuni mind simply does not differentiate between these two groupings.

If we take the term "primary" back to its Latin origin *primus*, meaning "first

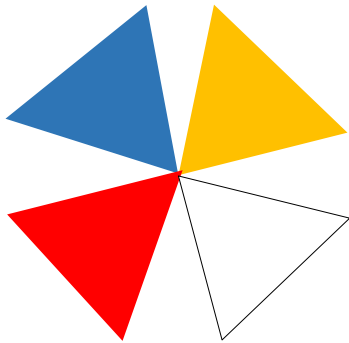


Figure 26: Four earthly colors

in order," "first," "the first," "first part," we can conclude that primary colors are the "first in order;" they are the most important, the down-to-(Mother) Earth base of a culture's color system. The Zuni repartition of the landscape into four primary divisions associated with colors is not insignificant: this division

represents the most important—meaning the most sacred—places by mapping the Zuni's most dominant colors. For Zuni people, these four colors and their related places are the focal points of every time and space-related event.

The quadripartite combination of chronotope colors prevails in Zuni polychromatic art. Zuni non-monochromatic jewelry, for instance, is principally composed of colored stones in blue, yellow, red, and white shades (see section 2.2.2). Traditional pieces with even one color out of the four missing are rarely found on the market or are seen as



Figure 27: Zuni pendant (C.G. Wallace collection, courtesy of the Heard Museum)

"contemporary." For example, the pendant in figure 27 shows the turquoise sky-blue *li'akwa* color in a cloud pattern, then the *shilowakwa* coral red that represents rainclouds, the yellow *tups'ikwa* in a terrace symbol, and the white *k'ohakwa* in two vertical lines. The combination of the four colors embodies the Zuni life cycle on Earth. Rather than primary colors, they are the earthly colors from Mother Earth, in contrast to the supernatural colors. In Zuni legends, the heroes are

asked to travel in all four directions, north, west, south, and east; this symbolizes the metaphorical life path that each Zuni has to follow on Earth in order to be elevated to another, un-Earthly level, represented by the color of the sky (multicolor) and the color of the underworld (black).

Multicolor and black are in a separate class from the earthly shades, which include the three colors classified as primary colors in the European tradition. It might therefore be tempting to classify multicolor and black as secondary colors. Etymologically, however, the term “secondary” from the Latin *secundarius* means

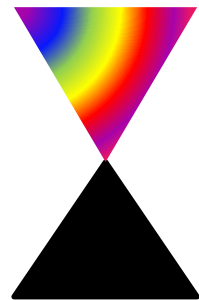


Figure 28: Zuni otherworldly colors

“pertaining to the second class, inferior,” and in the Zuni system, the multicolor of the zenith and the black of the nadir are in no way inferior or less important than the other colors, rendering such a term ill-suited. Through their affiliation with the supernatural, they are the otherworldly colors that are the home of the Sun Father and Earth Mother.

The peculiar notions associated with the use of black and multicolor patterns lead us to a different appreciation of colored artwork. The analysis that follows focuses on the use of and references to black and multicolor in visual art and legends that have had an impact on the colors’ symbolic associations. The first example from artist Kenneth Seowtewa concerns how the notion of multicolor is expressed in the Zuni language as a distinct color tone; to the question “Would you consider the sky’s multi-color associated with the zenith one specific color?” he answered “Yes, as it encompasses all the colors of nature (my transcription).” Another example is the Zuni personification of the rainbow, made up of the *a’witen* Zuni earthly colors coming together within one unit; the Zuni use “multicolor” to talk about the whole of the Rainbow Man’s color composition, as it

obviously encompasses the four colors. This notion of multicolor as being its own distinct color will be studied in further detail in the following section, when we discuss the origins of such an interesting phenomenon in the reflection of light on the opal stones and other iridescent color materials.

When black is presented symbolically, it is associated with the mole of the nadir or combined with another color. In section 1.1.1, we discussed the colored prayer sticks in the Creation Myth that helped free the people from the Earth's underbelly. Peynetsa's version of the Creation Myth even specifies the colors of each underbelly. Tedlock transcribed this part of the myth about the *Ahayu:ta* twins' journey to the people as follows:

THEY WENT ON
until they came to the Place of Emergence. [...]
THEY ENTERED.
When they entered, entered the first room
it was full of the color of dawn
The second
room they entered
was full of yellow.
IN THE ^{THIRD} ROOM THEY ENTERED
they could hardly make anything out.
THERE IN THE ^{FOURTH} ROOM
when they entered
IT WAS FULL OF DARKNESS, NOTHING COULD BE SEEN.⁴³
(Tedlock, *Finding* 243-82).

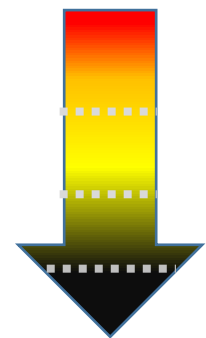


Figure 29: Gradation of the Earth's underbellies according to Peynetsa's version of the Creation Myth

According to Peynetsa's version, the first underbelly (or "room") of the Earth is basked in "the color of dawn," meaning a gradation from yellow to red; the second is "full of yellow;" and the last two rooms are "full of darkness." Black, or darkness, is the absence of light, as the further beneath the earth's surface we go, the less light there is.

⁴³ This example also shows how Dennis Tedlock uses typography to convey the storyteller's intonation.

It is important to remember that multicolor and black respectively are the colors attributed to the sky and the Earth's underbelly, contrary to yellow, blue, red, and white, all of which have an earthly place or direction associated with them. This organization places multicolor and black in the rank of abstract colors, as they represent unreachable or "otherworldly" places: the underworld or land of the dead, and the sky, the home of divinities such as the Sun Father. In legends, heroes and villagers can follow the "yellow direction," the "blue direction," the "red direction," and the "white direction," while the realm of Father Sky is only accessible to supernatural or flying beings such as the eagle, and the underground realm of the Earth Mother is the kachinas' and the ancestors' home. Spirits have constant access to this underworld, contrary to living humans, whose re-access was denied after their "emergence." Thus, the two otherworldly colors are usually linked with abstract concepts such as death, afterlife, and spirituality. As they are not part of this world and are the land of deities, they remain quite mysterious and awe-inspiring. We will see in section 3.3.1 that Zuni storytellers use such colors to create a certain mood; black will systematically refer to the concept of "unknown" and "darkness/evil" and evoke a foreboding atmosphere, while multicolor is "light/good" and "beauty" and thus comforts and empowers the listener.

Analysis of Zuni color combinations reveals that earthly and otherworldly colors are arranged in complementary pairs. For instance, multicolor is associated with all the sky's colors, and especially with the rainbow and its personification, the Rainbow Man, who is present on the Zuni Great Seal which we saw in section 1.1.4. In the European color system, black and white are

presented as opposites, and this is observed in many other tribes, such as the Oglaglas. There follows a logical opposition: white for pure light (east: daylight) and black for no light (west: no light, night). However, Zuni colors present interesting differences. The direction of black is not the same: black is down/the nadir, beneath the Earth's surface. Cushing records that the Earth's underbelly is named the "House of the Sun (*Zuni Fetiches* 19)," as according to the Zuni, the Sun goes to the nadir at night. As shown in section 1.1.1, the path to go "down"

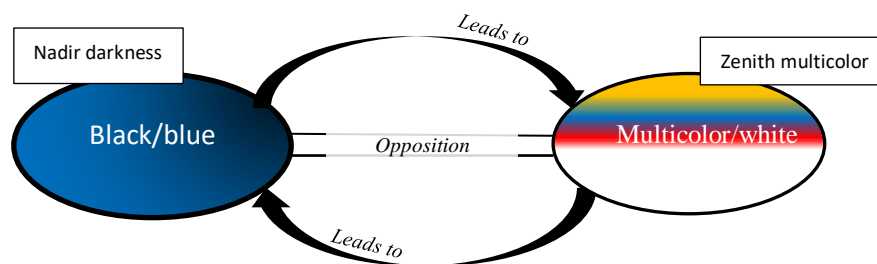


Figure 30: Zuni Black/ blue vs. Multicolor/white Opposition

is situated to the west, the blue direction. Thus, blue and black are closely related. They have similar effects and when used in narrative both may inspire fear. The opposite color to black on the sexpartite system is multicolor, the realm of the Sun father who generated all colors, as is explained by the many allegories and personifications in legends such as those of *Pò-shai-an-k'ia*, which we discussed in sections 1.2.2. In a similar manner to the blue and black relationship, white and multicolor are closely related. White is the "Direction of the Home of Day," thus "daylight," and multicolor and white have similarly comforting associations. Together, the complementary oppositions of blue/black and white/multicolor create an equilibrium.

The study of visual art linked with cosmology reveals other color pairings. Yellow is the morning light, whereas blue is the evening light; in legends they are partners. For instance, on the hide of the water serpent, *Kolowisi*, who saved the Zuni from the Great Flood in another episode of the Migration Myth, we find a



Figure 31: Beyuka Keith, Zuni Kolowisi, *Hand-painted cottonwood and feathers*, 2014 (private collection, Zuni).

yellow and blue pattern (see figure 31). This is a friendship symbol (also known as a hummingbird symbol) that represents a whole cycle. Thus, yellow and blue seem to have a symbiotic relationship. Artist Kenneth Seowtewa expresses that, "We identify with both blue and yellow, as they are referred to in our sacred prayers and chants (my transcription);" However, yellow and blue can also be opposites, as the symbolism associated with their respective *K'ia-pin=á-hâ-i* shows. *K'ia-pin=á-hâ-i* who are yellow in color are systematically knowledgeable, wise and intelligent creatures, such as in the example we saw in sections 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 of the Yellow Ant's "brilliant mind and a great imagination (Quam 60)," which also recalls the description of Long Tail, the Mountain Lion: "thou art stout of heart [...] (Cushing *Fetiches* 13-14)." The color yellow was attributed to the intelligent and creative mountain lion and ant because the animals, like the color, are associated with intelligence (and creativity). Bennett states: "Contemplate Badger, absolute single-mindedness, as it faces its opposite in the North, absolute knowledge (*Fetishes* 104)." This means that while yellow refers to

creativity and open-mindedness, blue refers to determination and single-mindedness. This well-known push-and-pull combination in Zuni culture is often depicted in primary symbolism. For example, a yellow star and a blue star (or a white star and a black star) represent the *A:hayuta* twins. Kenneth Seowtewa states that when put together, yellow and blue are the "continuity [sic] of life," and a half yellow, half blue circle adorns many fetish statuettes to symbolize the cycle of life.

The complementary nature of binary color combinations, such as we can see in the association of blue and yellow, reveals a network of hierarchical color relationships which can then be transposed onto the respectively colored Beast Gods. This creates a hierarchy of deities which respects the same hierarchy of colors, with the yellow/Mountain lion at the top, followed by the blue/bear, red/badger, white/wolf, multicolor/eagle and black/mole. This hierarchy is indicative of the spatially-temporally related concepts that are at the foundation of the Zuni calendar and more globally, the Zuni conception of time, which will be studied in the following section.

1.3.2 Color Hierarchy within the Sexpartite System

In section 1.1.2, we saw in the legend of *Pò-shai-aη-k'ia* that he bestowed a certain color to each of the six animals in a specific order. This order corresponds to a brotherhood system in which the mountain lion is the big brother of all deities, followed by the bear, big brother of the badger, who in turn is the big brother of the wolf, who is the big brother of the eagle, who is the big brother of the mole. However, rather than focusing on the hierarchy amongst animal deities, the purpose of this section is to demonstrate how the Zuni colors themselves hold the hierarchical power and bestow it by association upon Beast Gods of the same color.

In Zuni tradition, the yellow mountain lion is not only the strongest, but is also the most favored animal. This is shown in the corresponding hierarchy of Beast Gods, as well as what are also referred to as the Prey Gods, which present a few variations: the yellow mountain lion and black mole remain in their position, whereas the blue coyote, red bobcats, and multicolor falcon or Ground Owl replace the other Beast Gods (Cushing, *Fetiches* 20). Whether it is Beast Gods or Prey Gods that are mentioned, Cushing claims that the yellow mountain lion is the most potent beast:

For instance, the Mountain Lion is not only the master of the north, which takes precedence over all the other 'ancient sacred spaces' (Té-thlä-shi-na-we) or regions but is also the master of all other Prey gods, if not of all other terrestrial animals. (*Zuni Fetiches* 36)

This idea is illustrated in many legends such as "The Women and the Man:" after a wicked woman kills the man whose task was to make the sunrise in the sky, the villagers go and look for him. They summon the Mountain Lion and ask for his help (Tedlock, *Finding* 125-62). We saw in section 1.2.3 that yellow is related

to intelligence and creativity, which explains why the villagers turn to the yellow mountain lion for wisdom. However, the mountain lion is not always yellow; there are different color varieties of each Beast God and Prey God. Cushing explains the functions of this variety of deities as follows:

We find, therefore, that each one of the six species of Prey animals is again divided into six varieties, according to color, which determines the location of each variety in that one or other of the regions with which its color agrees, yet it is supposed to owe allegiance to its representative, whatsoever this may be or wheresoever placed. For instance, the Mountain Lion is primarily god of the north, but he is supposed to have a representative (younger brother) in the west (the Blue Mountain Lion), another in the south (the red), in the east (the white), in the Upper regions (the Spotted), and in the lower regions (the black Mountain Lion). (*Fetiches* 24)

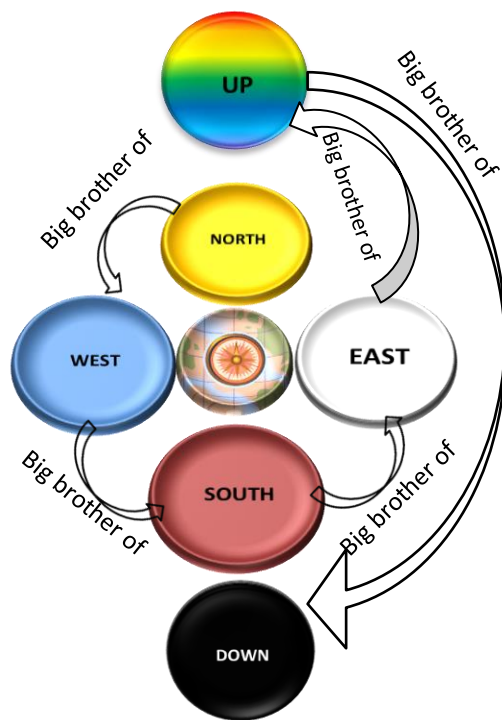


Figure 32: Zuni Hierarchy of Colors

The yellow mountain lion is associated with the most powerful or sacred place and is therefore the older brother, so lions of other colors are considered younger brothers and are lower in the hierarchy.⁴⁴ This shows us that the classification and the different degrees of power can be seen as attached exclusively to the animal's color and have nothing to do with the animal's species or strength. Each animal also has a brother of the same

species, of a different color, yet the color hierarchy between them still stands. Colors are therefore stable and fixed to their respective places; it is the Beast

⁴⁴ The same hierarchy is confirmed by McManis' study on Zuni fetishes. (McManis 7)

Gods and Prey Gods who are variable. The schema in figure 32 can help us visualize this hierarchical flow between place, color, and kinship.

Most studies have concluded that red is the favored color of Native American peoples. While this may be accurate for hunting tribes such as the Sioux, the Zunis do not historically show any particular affinity with the color red over other colors, except in ceramics, as discussed in section 1.1.4 with the example of the coral terrace symbol on the Zuni Great Seal. The rare times when red is mentioned in legends is to introduce the red south and its Beast God, the badger, or the bow-priest of the south. The Zuni worldview includes the concept that all the multiple colors seen together in the world are beautiful, which Dennis and Barbara Tedlock introduce with their translation of the *Shiwi'ma* expression *co'ya or tso'ya* as "beautiful" and "literally multicolored (*Teachings* 266)." In other words, the colors need to be combined together to be "beautiful," which suggests that one color on its own is less beautiful, or somehow lacking something compared to the colors combined as a whole. This may explain why Picasso marble, a stone with veins of all colors, has become one of the most popular stones used to portray the red badger, even though this type of marble was only introduced in Zuni in the late 1980s (McManis 43).

On the other hand, the Zuni's fascination with yellow and their notion of it as the most potent color is intriguing when we consider that Jill Morton's Global Color Survey classified yellow as the least liked color in the world. An answer to the Zuni exception can be found in agriculture. Because yellow is the "color of yellow corn," it is comparable to the Mayan "yellow of the nutritive corn (Lenclos 24)." In his *Native American Encyclopedia*, Pritzker confirms that the Zuni "grew at least six varieties of corn (110)," with yellow corn serving as the principal source of

nourishment, so its associated color is therefore looked upon with utmost respect. As Barbara Tedlock writes, it is used in a range of ceremonial activities from sacred offerings to corn-grinding songs (*Beautiful and Dangerous* 101).

Kaye Kaiser and Solomon H. Katz have studied the influence of Native American food sources on their color systems. In their 1992 article "Nourriture et Symbole. Le Maïs Bleu chez les Hopi," published in *Anthropologie et Sociétés*, they explain that the prominence of the color blue in Hopi symbolism is due to the blue color of their favorite variety of corn:

Hopis eat white, red, yellow, and black corn; however, the blue variety of corn is the one most regularly used and consumed during the most important ritual ceremonies. [...]. It is important to notice that the color blue is always the one chosen to emphasize the most important elements of the garments and equipment of the kachinas: their masks, hands and prayer sticks. The symbols associated with the color are also used in the representation of cardinal points; in this schema, the color blue represents the western direction, from which the rain, bringer of life, exudes.⁴⁵

Just as the study of Hopi food sources reveals the influence of the tribe's most important crop on their perception of color hierarchy, the Zuni's most harvested variety is yellow corn, making its color of the highest importance. This is also demonstrated in Mary E. Black's 1984 article "Maidens and Mothers: An Analysis of Hopi Corn Metaphors," published in *Ethnology*. The ethnolinguist starts her analysis with the matter-of-fact statement that "corn has provided the basis of unirrigated cultivation in a region that appears too arid for farming (279)." Her arguments lead to the metaphor PEOPLE ARE CORN, which is of utmost

⁴⁵ My translation of the original text : "Les Hopis mangent du maïs blanc, rouge, jaune et noir ; le bleu est cependant la variété dont ils font les plus abondants usages et qui est consommée le plus régulièrement à l'occasion des cérémonies rituelles les plus importantes. [...] Il est remarquable que la couleur bleue soit toujours celle qui est choisie pour mettre en évidence les éléments les plus importants du costume et de l'attirail kachina: les masques, les mains, et les bâtons de prière. Le symbolisme de la couleur est aussi dans la représentation des points cardinaux ; dans ce schème, la couleur bleue représente la direction ouest, d'où émane la pluie dispensatrice de vie." (Kaiser 57)

importance in understanding Zuni culture, and subsequently Zuni colors. The opposite metaphor, CORN IS PEOPLE, can also be inferred from both Zuni and the Hopi legends, in which people are born from the Earth's underbelly just like corn sprouting from kernels in the ground and are raised under their mother's (Mother Earth's) protection.

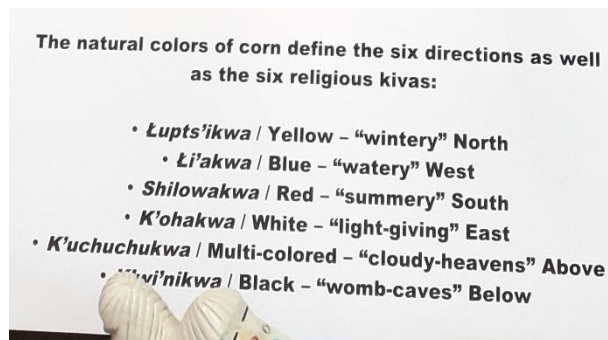


Figure 33: Kiva colors as revealed by the Zuni Visitor Center (my photo)

Guests at the Zuni visitor center are shown how the kiva system relies on the six natural colors of corn, with each kiva ceremonial chamber further linked to a season and an allegory of nature, such as water or lightning.

Corn is additionally seen as a symbol of fertility in Zuni culture (McManis 56). This dual personification of and identification with corn explains why *tups'ikwa* for "yellow corn" is placed above the other colors as the Zuni's most potent color.

The hard work and energy spent, the unreliable harvests, and past famines made the Zuni particularly aware of the importance of their food sources. When Seowtewa expresses the Zuni people's identification with blue, this is partly due to the rarity of lush vegetation and the value of water. Ferguson and Hart remark that the arid landscape offers little plant variety, and list "sagebrush, mormon tea, greasewood, four-wing salt-bush, rabbit bush, and yucca [...] desert scrub, with creosote, bur-sage, yucca and cacti as the dominant vegetation (Ferguson 117)." The Zuni landscape lacks the verdant aspect of northern climates. As blue is also linked to the waterways and rain that irrigate Zuni crops, the color is seen as a life-inducing element that is to be revered. This explains why the color of

turquoise stone is so pleasing to the Zuni and such an important part of their cultural heritage. Ferguson and Hart detail the Zunis' mining resources, finding that turquoise stone is available in profusion to the north and east of the village: "Trade items included a wide variety of materials. In pre-contact times, three important items the Zuni had to offer to distant tribes were salt, turquoise, and buffalo robes (53)." The availability of the stone and the Zuni's ancestral skills as artisans allowed them to weather the economic shift brought about by non-Native settlers. Turquoise's shiny layered blue hues are said to hold the power to defeat evil. It thought to be weaker in power than yellow yet is still a strong color. Turquoise is offered to honor the deities, and in legend, it is most often the material of the carved weapon used by supernatural people to defeat evil beings, as in the example of the *Ahayu:ta* twins' weapon in Tedlock's "The Sun Priest and the Witch Woman:" "It was a TURQUOISE CLUB. This is what the Sun, their Sun Father, had given them, and they had been keeping it (*Finding* 192, original capitals.)" The turquoise club destroys the witch, thus serving as the tool of justice handed down by the Sun father. The color's importance is also observable in Zuni jewelry, which can feature turquoise stones for blue and pale amber for yellow in a fashionable combination of colors that respects the yellow/blue hierarchy.⁴⁶

The Zuni affinity for yellow and blue illustrates that the Beast God and Prey God hierarchies arise from culturally specific codes associated with color-objects. This hierarchy goes beyond mythical creatures and can also be observed in the association of colors with notions of time (see figure 35), allowing us to understand Zuni color relationships via temporal metaphors: If YELLOW IS

⁴⁶ The Zuni love for turquoise and its inclusion in lapidary work will be discussed in section 2.2.2.

BEGINNINGS, or morning, and WHITE ("like the sunlight") IS COMPLETION or autumn, then BLUE IS MIDDLE HALF or evening, spring and youth, and RED IS MIDDLE END, or summer, afternoon, and adulthood.

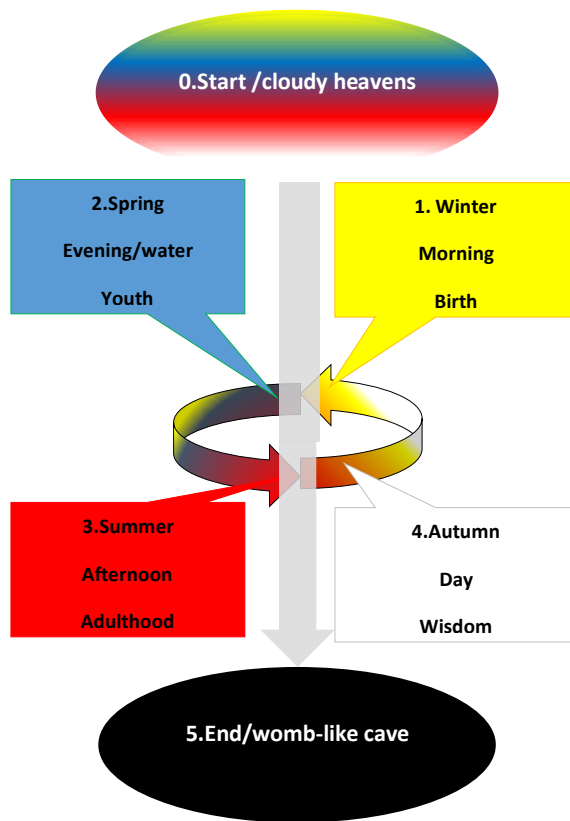


Figure 34: Zuni chronotope colors

regulate events according to spatiotemporality. Together, blue and yellow represent the earthly life cycle of humanity. A similar example is the pairing of black and multicolor, which represent the otherworldly cycle. Since life is seen to originate from the Zuni Father Sun, multicolor is the START OF LIFE, in opposition to black which is the END OF LIFE. Multicolor and black stand for the cycle of before-life and after-life that are in parallel with the human life cycle.

Colors are thus more than just reflections of light in the Zuni culture, but contain culturally specific spatiotemporal associations. The kinship and hierarchy of the colored Beast Gods depend upon a specific chronology to be respected, wherein seasons, hours, and years are each given a color, and ceremonies are

The opposition of blue and yellow changes the time-related hierarchy, however; they are both opposite and complementary. Hence the "evening" time of the day is attributed to blue, instead of noon as the chronological order would indicate. This means that the path of the Sun (father of all colors) regulates Zuni day cycles. Again, Zuni observation of nature has led to the association of symbols that

carried out at the season or time in the place associated with each color. This observation will be linked with additional development in sections 3.1.1 on Zuni names for of colors, and can only bring us to the conclusion that colors as we define them according to the typical Western mindset simply do not exist in Zuni; the basic color terms and color systems as expressed in English, for example, are void of any essential associations with objects or spatiotemporal concepts. Furthermore, certain Zuni colors call into question the very concept what a “color” is, by Western definitions: the Zuni *co’ya/K’uchuchukwa*, or beautiful/multicolor includes many other colors, as does the closely related “evergreen” color, and the following section will explore how these heavily symbolic and culturally specific color concepts are essential in understanding the whole narrative process of Zuni color representation.

1.3.3 Conceptual Colors: Multicolor and Evergreen

Now that we have acquired enough knowledge of Zuni colors and cultural specificities, we can finally unlock the core concepts behind the notion of the multicolor hue, and the not unrelated functioning of the symbolic evergreen hue. Western thinking allows for the concept of absolute colors, but the *Shiwi'ma* language does not even really have an equivalent for the word “color,” so the otherworldly multicolor concept challenges the Western definition of color and hue. However, multicolor is not the only multifaceted symbolic color on the Zuni color spectrum; a similar concept is attached to the evergreen color, which can also be used to suggest multiple other colors. In order to understand how these concepts function in the Zuni world and how they differ from the Western perception of color, we will first discuss the vocabulary and different translations given to the Zuni terms for multicolor and then examine some examples in both artwork and media which will allow us to appreciate the parallel roles of the multicolor and evergreen color concepts as well as their significance within Zuni artistic expression.

The complex notion of Zuni multicolor contrasts with Western scientific theories on color perception; while Western studies might agree that all colors are connected (through their division from white light via a prism), they distinguish each one as a distinct, single shade. This is explained scientifically by the color specialist Israel Abramov, who says that “color vision is the ability to distinguish wavelengths of light regardless of their relative intensities (92),” meaning that the eye can only perceive hues distinctively, even if colors originate from a common source (light). Enlightenment thinkers’ study of the rainbow aimed at discovering how it was produced and how many different colors appeared rather than

considering the phenomenon itself as the manifestation of a single, complex and multifaceted color (Gage, *Culture* 93).⁴⁷ In the categorization of colors as well, Western thinking distinguishes pure hues and mixed hues (usually close to each other on the color spectrum), but never groups multiple, even contrasting hues together as one color. For example, Bill Wooten and David Miller state that "[u]nique colors are also called elemental colors to suggest that all other non-unique colors are compounded of them" (75), illustrating this with the example of orange—a compound of yellow and red—and purple—a compound of red and blue. Thus, from early European color theories such as Goethe's *Theory of Colors* to more modern interpretations, such as Munsell's color wheel, colors are studied as "unique" ("elemental" primary colors) vs "non-unique" (compounds/secondary mixes of unique colors), and there is no equivalent in European thinking of a concept or term for one equally distinct color composed of several colors perceived together simultaneously. However, the Zuni multicolor is a genuine elemental color, composed of the both elemental/unique and compound/non-unique hues of the sky and the earth, just as the Sun Father's light produces the ensemble of colors seen in the world.

We have seen in section 1.3.2 that each Beast God and Prey God's color gives information about the deity's location, and connects them within a system of brotherhood. For example, the yellow mountain lion is the big brother of the blue wolf, and the wolf—even when manifested in its yellow version—is always the mountain lion's little brother. When the Zuni explain the color system, they agree that the otherworldly multicolored deities all belong to the zenith, and this

⁴⁷ Color specialist John Gage cites the remarks of the 18th-century chemist Joseph Priestley that the rainbow "has always engaged the attention of philosophers", and then goes on to explain that the order and number of colors were subjects for interpretation and debate.

North/yellow	West/blue	South/red	East/white	Zenith/multicolor	Nadir/black
<i>thluptsin'ona</i>	<i>thlia,'ona</i>	<i>shelow'ona</i>	<i>kohan'ona</i>	<i>Itapanahnan'ona</i>	<i>shikan'ona,</i>

Figure 35: Salimobia colors

color association applies to any deity of the Zuni pantheon, such as the six Salimobia, described by Barton Wright, specialist in Zuni kachina, as “the epitome of youth, vitality, and beauty” (*Kachinas of the Zuni*, 57) who are in charge of protecting six sacred chambers at the bottom of the Sacred Lake. As with other figures, the Salimobia's colors evoke their location, as is summarized in chart figure 35. A telling aspect of the Zuni classification of multicolor with regard to this interconnected system of color relationships is found in the complementary pairing of multicolor with black, its otherworldly counterpart. As with other complementary pairings of the elemental Zuni colors, such as blue with yellow, the zenith and nadir colors function in a complementary opposition and preside together over the same ceremonies, as Roediger describes:

Certain of the supernaturals are characterized in sets, which corresponds to the cardinal directions and colors. During ceremonies, these supernaturals appear in the masks and body paint of their world quarters. The Zuñi Salimapiya are an interesting example of one of these series. There are twelve of them. They appear together only once every four years; at other times, two of them, each of a different color, may be seen simultaneously. The black may appear with the many-colored, representing respectively the nadir and the zenith; again, the yellow may appear with the blue, representing the north and the west. (94)

This system of pairings demonstrates how, contrary to Wooten and Miller's Western notion of elemental colors combined to make compounds, the Zuni categorize multicolor not as a compound, but as distinct as any other elemental/unique hue.

The multicolor hue is present in many symbols, such as the raincloud and the *hepakine* symbol, a geometric rosette composed of the elemental/unique

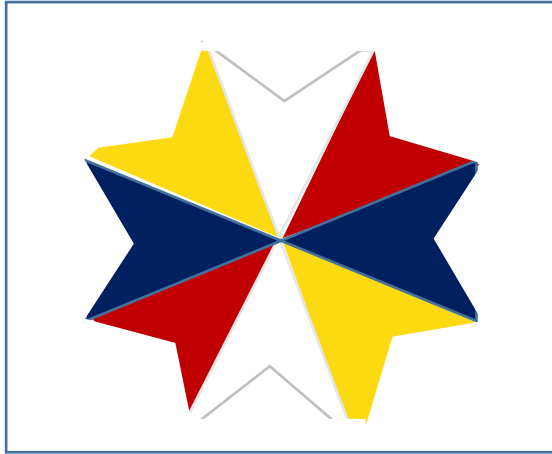


Figure 36: Multicolor Hepakine motif

a'witen/itiwan colors, each represented singularly but with the overall shape forming a whole: the multicolored hue (figure 36). This symbol is often depicted over the ears of Shalako dancers, and is probably a graphic rendering of the mythical flower *te'nastsäli*, whose petals are

composed of the different *a'witen/itiwan* colors (see section 1.1.3). This further illustrates the ambiguous nature of the multicolor hue, which is simultaneously all the earthly hues together and at the same time a very much independent color.

The *Shiwi'ma* language contains multiple terms for multicolor, and scholars have offered various interpretations and analyses of *Shiwi'ma* expressions. For instance, linguist Hickerson breaks down the word *'?amitola-nne*, also spelled *amidolanne*, into the lexeme *'?amitola*, "rainbow," and the particle *na-nee*, producing the meaning "like the rainbow" or "rainbow-colored," as we will see in detail in section 3.3.1 (332). Janice Wyaco gives *k'uchuchukwa* as the most common *Shiwi'ma* term to talk about zenith's color (see section 1.3.1). To illustrate the term, she refers to six-colored corn, implying that the multicolor is constructed of the *a'witen/itiwan*. However, there is also the term *co'ya*, which includes all the beautiful colors in the world, and is thus even more encompassing than *amidolanne*. Although the three terms can be used synonymously, *co'ya* refers to the concept of beauty created with colors rather than to multicolor as a specific shade.

The English translations of the *Shiwi'ma* color terms expose many scholars' struggle to name this hue, and various metaphors have been used to give an approximation. While these solutions tend to not differentiate precisely between *amidolanne*, *k'uchuchukwa* and *co'ya*, they are generally used in reference to the zenith's colors, and so correspond mostly to the term *k'uchuchukwa*. Most of the current translations are Cushing-inspired, as he was the first scholar to live at Zuni and translate *Shiwi'ma* into English in his collections of legends. For Cushing, multicolor can be translated either as "all colors," which suggests that this color is not a part of a whole but is the result of all the colors together, or as "many hues of the colored sky," similar to the wording in Montoya's 2014 Zuni Mainstreet Program, which uses the term "hues of the sky." This idea of multicolor as the changing hues of the sky seems to poetically suggest the infinite range of colors produced by sunrises and sunsets, storms, moonless nights, etc. Cushing also uses other similes, including the expression "speckled like clouds," suggesting the image of clouds spotted with all the hues produced by the reflection of sunlight and rain.

Other than the interpretations offered by Cushing, there are those offered by scholars who did not translate the *Shiwi'ma* language but still tried to describe the concept in general terms. Roediger, for example, based her analysis on other scholarly reports, whereas Bennet worked with English-speaking Zuni. Both of them arrive at the solution of "many-colored" as a translation for multicolor.⁴⁸ Roediger also develops Cushing's idea of the rain/cloud simile with "speckles" creating colored spots in one of her reports about winter dances, in which she describes body paint as "spots of paint of different colors (...) [that represent] the

⁴⁸ See Bennett's *Zuni Fetishes* (29) and Roediger (94).

rainbows falling down from the sky (94-95)." The recent work of Munson and Hays-Gilpin, who prefer the translation "variegated" for the otherworldly color (Munson and Hays-Gilpin 14), argues that the hue does not necessarily contain the colors of the rainbow as is often suggested in books on Zuni fetishes. Variegated color also refers to the eagle's feathers, striped with darker and lighter shades of brown, yellow, and touches of white.

Even scholars who use English-speaking Zuni as sources don't seem to arrive at a consensus. Rodee and Ostler's translation comes from their partner Milford Nahohai, who uses the term "multi-color," though they also offer synonyms such as "many-colored" to give the idea of many distinct colors composing the final hue (Rodee and Ostler, *Carvers* 17). Barton Wright uses the term "mixed [color]," probably based on his collaborations with the English-speaking Zuni artist Duane Dishta (*Kachinas of the Zuni* 35). However, the adjective "mixed" is problematic, as it can be confused with color mixing or blending and thus be seen as a compound, whereas we have seen that multicolor is not a "secondary" shade created by mixing with other hues together, but rather all the very distinct and unique colors simultaneously existing together within a whole. Despite this trouble in giving the color an anglicized name, all scholars agree that multicolor is a distinct hue, composed of other hues and yet named independently, but none of them has studied this phenomenon as a central concept of Zuni color perception rather than as just a translation obstacle. We shall therefore try to find some more precise answers in the words of Zuni artists, who also evoke subtle differences in their ways of naming the hue.

Regardless of which colors exactly are present, the Zuni always favor materials containing several colors together to represent the "multicolor" hue, a

fact which explains why the Zuni often select multicolored corn, opal or shells that reflect several hues to use in jewelry. Elroy Natachu Jr., for example, talks about "the multicolored eared corn [...] known as Zenith or the sky" (my transcription) as the closest description of the hue. Stevenson listed the different colors of corn used for the ceremonial purposes that she witnessed during her stay: "The red varies from the palest pink to deep maroon. There are several shades also for blue, yellow, and purple. The white is true to color, and the black is intense. There is a great variety of shades in each color (*Plants* 65)." She also explains that *Kolowisi* (the "great plumed serpent") brings corn as an offering to the people every four years, and describes how the Zuni place the colored ears towards their respective directions around a medicine bowl in front of the ceremonial altar. The ear of corn represents the "four world quarters"—*a`witen*—coupled with the zenith and nadir—*itiwan*—with the center—*Halona Itiwana*—represented by the bowl.⁴⁹ These associations indicate that for Natachu. Jr., multicolor is all the earthly colors of the *a`witen*, associated with the *itiwan* black of the ceremonial ear of corn, and thus includes colors ranging from pink to maroon and gradations of yellows, purples, blues, along with pure white and deep black. The colors are the mental association of all the existing hues represented by varying colors of the corn. This ties in with the reversible metaphors PEOPLE ARE CORN and CORN IS PEOPLE to show that corn is life, making the multicolored ear of corn representative of all of life's colors.

As a fetish carver, Jeff Shetima refers to his carving medium to distinguish the particular hue, saying that "[t]he eagle might be like opal, because it, you

⁴⁹ The Zuni no longer cultivate corn, except for isolated projects like those of the ZYEP and the A:shiwí Awan Museum and Cultural Center. Curtis Quam hopes to raise awareness to the younger generation, and reintroduce colored corn cultivation and harvest, as the Zuni currently use GMO corn for their ceremonies.

know, has this different types of color variations, that could be like a multicolored type (my transcription)." In the article "Understanding Play of Colour and Patterns in Opal Gemstones", the Gemological Association of Great Britain explains how this multicolored characteristic is produced:

When white light waves enter the top of an opal, they refract and bounce around inside the opal, through all the microscopic spheres and the gaps between the spheres. As the light passes through the spheres and gaps, it diffracts (splits). Like a prism, the opal splits the white light into all the colours of the spectrum, and the light eventually bounces back out the top of the stone, at which point we get an eyeful of beautiful opal colours. The opal is the only known gemstone that is able to naturally diffract light in this way. (Bexfield, n.pag)

The colorful iridescence of the opal stone is the result of both surface and internal reflection of light, which, like the rainbow, acts similarly to the Newtonian prism. This shows that multicolor is the color of the prism, i.e., all the colors of reflected light, which also explains the rainbow metaphor attached to the multicolored hue; the reflection through the rain splits the sun's white light into several colors in a game of refraction and reflection, similar to the way light reflects on and in an opal. This prism-like capacity explains why Zuni carvers have formed the MULTICOLOR IS OPAL association, and why they are so particularly attracted to this stone, as well as other multicolored materials such as mother-of-pearl. Though it is no longer legal to harvest abalone shells, they were traditionally the source of mother-of-pearl, which contains aragonite to create the vivid multicolor iridescence the Zuni love. Cushing, for instance, explains that to best honor the Knife Wing, a creature of the sky, the Bow Priest uses a mountain lion fetish carved out of an aragonite crystal, as it is a "being of the sky." The iridescence of aragonite "is preferred by a Priest of the Bow above all other kinds of colors (*Fetiches* 52)."

“Multicolor” also seems to be the closest English equivalent to a generic *Shiwi'ma* term for "colors", as it encompasses the notion of all colors and refers to a unique Zuni concept. It is not just a name for a hue; it is all the hues present and originating within light that makes the world beautiful, *co'ya*. The Zuni, therefore, view multicolor as encompassing not only their other five elemental colors, but every other possible color manifested in nature. Long before Newton's prism experiment was published, the Zuni understood that light, or daylight, produces all colors, and that the opposite of light is the absence of light, darkness, blackness, no colors. Ironically, these two otherworldly colors, long categorized as uniquely and heavily symbolic of Zuni mysticism and spirituality, are the most down-to-earth Zuni scientific observations of the natural world.

With the concept of multicolor, the Zuni challenge the Western conception of “unique/elemental” colors. While multicolor is more easily identified as a color that regroups multiple colors in “all the beauty of the world” (i.e, all the colors ARE beauty, or *co'ya*), another particularly symbolic Zuni color, evergreen, follows a similar concept, with the difference that instead of being based on the principle of mottling or multicolored iridescence, the concept of evergreen is not limited to just a particular shade of green, but refers to a metaphorical greenness which encompasses “all the colors of nature.” The evergreen is therefore a fundamental color-object for the Zuni. The origins of this color are the spruce tree and the fir tree, *k'yatats'ilo*; the fir tree is the first tree the *Ahayu:ta* twins made to grow from the Earth's fourth underbelly to enable the ancestors to climb out to the Earth's surface, and is therefore a symbol of life. Roediger identifies evergreen as a spruce tree that the Zuni commonly use to decorate ceremonial costumes in the summer dances. She explains that spruce is used chiefly on kachina costumes,

and that sometimes juniper replaces it when spruce is not available (81). Bunzel also refers to the "spruce collar" (*Zuñi Kachinas* 99) as the kachina collars made with *Picea* and *Abies* species.

While this evergreen collar seems to be a symbolic accessory, kachina painter Elroy Natachu Jr. refers to evergreen more as a color, and not as a specific plant material, though it might be interpreted as the general color of an evergreen tree. Describing one of his works, he states: "These were left at the ears and then the evergreen collar, the mouth, the feathers, then once I'm done with the face I move to the body (my transcription)." When I asked Natachu Jr. what the evergreen collar represented, he answered as follows: "Right, yes, it's similar to a wreath type fashion, and a lot of times, those kachinas that do have every color have an association to, like, the forest in areas and things like that, things that are pertaining to nature (my transcription)." This indicates that evergreen is not just a shade of green, but the idea of the green of evergreen trees that is representative of nature in general. That is why this colored material was selected to cover the necks of kachinas that refer to nature, such as rain-bringers.

The evergreen color, like many others, is part of the sacred and secret ceremonial palette. The difference lies in the fact that evergreen is not associated with a specific direction but more generally with rain and nature.⁵⁰ As such, the color is distinguished from the supernatural element associated with multicolor, as it belongs to the earthly colors; the greenness of the "evergreen" color pertains to all the colors of nature, which also implies all of the Earth's colors. This generates the metaphor EVERGREEN IS EARTH'S NATURE, which includes the greenness of the trees and plants produced by rain and other sources of water,

⁵⁰ Evergreen also refers to water and nature in the black-and-green-on-white color scheme typical of miha embroidery that we will see in section 2.1.4

as well as the earthly *a'witen* colors. Thus, the green of evergreen also has many other colors hidden within it.

Studying the Zuni concepts of both “evergreen” and “multicolor” show how these shades are linked with the Zuni’s observation and appreciation of nature, since nature manifests all the colors in the world. Similarly, the MULTICOLOR IS OPAL metaphor encompasses the concepts of the ensemble of *a'witen/itiwan* colors along with the many hues of the prism. This further demonstrates the Zuni’s close relationship with nature—we must remember that even Zuni deities are personifications of nature—that allows them to study and understand the place they live in, effectively seeing the world in “multicolor” and appreciating the prismatic range of hues of the sky and their reflections on the earth below. This again suggests that Western studies have often misunderstood the Zuni perception of colors, focusing on the mystic symbolism and overlooking the highly observational side of the Zuni’s approach to their “multicolor” world.

1.3.4 The Beautiful Duckling: Zuni Archetypal Pottery Colors

Within the scope of color systems in Zuni art, it can be seen that most ancestral Zuni artforms reflect the earthly/otherworldly hierarchical symbolism, with the exception of pottery, which follows its own rules concerning colors. The color combinations found in Zuni pottery have been consistently reproduced for centuries, becoming a strong symbol of the tribe's artistic skills and an important factor in the representation of traditional Zuni art to the world. Though strictly coded, Zuni pottery colors rarely follow the *a'witen/itiwan* system, yet they are another brilliant example of how traditional art and color usage reflect Zuni cultural identity. Zuni ceramics are easy to distinguish from the popular pottery pieces of other Pueblos, mainly because their use of colors and shapes has remained very stable over the past centuries. The colored motifs on pottery pieces are no less traditional than the Sun-generated *a'witen/itiwan* system used in other artforms. However, the origins of these color choices are much harder to trace within the ancient and deep-rooted tradition of pottery in the southwestern United States.

According to Cushing, the original primary function of ceramic vessels was to transport water, which is of crucial importance in the Zuni's desert environment. He describes how, previous to the development of ceramic arts, the Zunis used monochromatic canes called *shò to me* (from *shò e*, canes, and *me*, wooden tube), which were rarely decorated. The successor of the *shò to me* was a large bladder-shaped gourd made of wood, first called *shòp tom me* (from *sho pò pon nai e*, bladder-shaped), and then named by the plant or fruit from which it was created. In "ritualistic recitation," the gourds "are said to have been the receptacles that the creation-priests filled with the sacred water from the ocean

of the cave-wombs of Earth, whence men and creature were born (*Pueblo Pottery* 10).” This means that while utilitarian, the shape of the gourd referred to the Earth’s womb, introduced in Zuni oral history, and thus to the *Chimik’yanakona pename*’s fourth underbelly, from whence the Earth’s creatures and the Zuni ancestors came.

Scenes from the Creation Myth are rarely represented on ceramic vessels, though they do feature creatures and elements from Zuni folklore, such as the heavily symbolic Rainbird, a key figure in Zuni pottery decoration, as well as thunder, clouds, human figures, mountains, flowers, the Sun Father, and so on. Two notable studies have been published on Zuni pottery, which Zuni artist Milford Nahohai jokingly refers to as the *Bible* and the *Testament*, so important are they to him and his nephew, Jaycee, also a ceramic artist. The first one is the 2008 study by Dwight P. Lanmon and Francis H. Harlow previously mentioned in section 1.2.1, entitled *Pottery of the Zuni Pueblo*. The second and most impactful is a 2015 study carried out by Edward Chappel, entitled *Pride Flared Up: Zuni (A:shiwi) Pottery and the Nahohai Family*. While the former analyzes the evolution in colors, shapes, and designs in Zuni ceramics, the latter offers a bolder



Figure 37: Pot shards found in the Village of the Great Kivas (my photo)

approach with tentative interpretations of symbols. Both show that colors on current traditional Zuni vessels vary from a warm peach color, usually the color of the raw clay, to a bright red and brownish-bluish-black on a white background. The works of both scholars are rigorously grounded in the history of Zuni pottery, starting with shards dating from the Ancestral Pueblo (formerly called Anasazi) period.⁵¹ Later, as Zuni Indians traveled along their pilgrimage route from Ribbon Falls to the current Zunilands,⁵² they left pottery remains along their way which are categorized as “Southwest pottery.” From this point onward, the colors found on vessels depend on clay resources and either mineral or organic pigments available around their settlements. Once a solid clay deposit was found, the tribe processed the clay to get rid of impurities, first by picking out the fragments and dry clay, then by beating it with a mortar to pulverize dry pieces of clay and pebbles. They then mixed the clay with a temper, such as sand, rocks, or, more frequently, shards of broken vessels which were thus given a second life. Afterwards, the clay was soaked with water and kneaded to soften it until the material was suitable for shaping into a vessel. Most early ancestral vessels were monochromatic, but as Zuni ancestors began to develop the skill of processing different minerals and organic pigments, colors began to flourish.

The following chart lists the significant trends in Zuni vessels, based on information from the two aforementioned books and the virtual collections of museums in the American Southwest. The chart shows that from 1350 onward, especially in Gila and Kechipawan Polychromes, colors on Zuni-shaped pots, jars, terraced and standard bowls, effigies, and ladles are primarily black-and-

⁵¹ See Appendix 6 for Ancestral Pueblo timeline

⁵² Zunilands represent the territories of the Zuni, represented on a map and enacted by the US government.

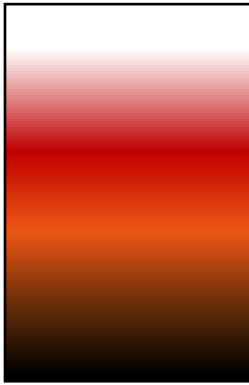


Figure 38: Range of shades for Zuni pottery paints - from light white to dark black (ca. 1350 onward)

red-on-white (see figure 38). As previously noted, color tones vary from dark bluish/greenish-black, reddish browns, and solid red, decorating a white/off-white background slip. These unique color combinations coupled with distinctive Zuni motifs make the Zuni style easily recognizable compared to that of other Pueblo tribes.

Milford Nahohai confirms that the *a''witen/itiwan* colors are rarely used in pottery, as the six colors “are only used to depict the four directions. Otherwise, they try to create interesting contrasts. It’s up to the artist (my transcription).” His explanation for the colors on ceramics therefore focuses on the search for aesthetic contrast, in which potters perpetuated a traditional *savoir-faire* that originated from using the pigments available around their lands to make colored paints and slips.

Usually, Zuni ceramicists first coat their pieces with a homogenous light color (most often white), then they fire it for the first time. Afterwards, they decorate the pots and jars with contrasting combinations of darker and/or brighter colors, such as black and red. In their recent 2020 study, *Color in the Ancestral Pueblo Southwest*, Mary K. Munson and Kelley Hays-Gilpin investigate colors in traditional Southwest pottery, observing that:

Plain utility pottery was usually grey, brown, white or red. For decorated wares, a great many—though not unlimited—color combinations were possible. Dual combinations were usually black on white, red or orange; black or brown on yellow; white on red; and for glaze wares, green or black on white, buff or red. Polychrome vessels were generally black and white on red or orange, black and red on orange, and sometimes white-outlined black or black-outlined red on yellow. (45)

This citation points to a separation between the colors of “plain” utilitarian and “decorated” ceramics. Monochromatic pieces were primarily utilitarian, while

decorated ceramics could be either utilitarian or ceremonial. The use of contrast in contemporary ceramics that Milford Nahohai talks about is of ancestral origin; Munson and Hays-Gilpin's text confirms that the Zuni choice of colors stems from traditional *savoir-faire*, which has strongly inspired the current generation of potters. This also shows that colors have changed from red or black-on-yellow, white-on-red, black-on-white, black-and-white-on-orange/tan, to almost exclusively black-and-red-on-white. The contrast of contrasting darker or brighter colors on either white or orange-slipped vessel surfaces is still alive in the Pueblo. A style similar to the Tularosa black-on-white design is also popular at Zuni.

Keshi, the Zuni Connection, a non-profit organization which promotes Zuni arts, education, and economic development while respecting tribal traditions, and provides sustainable economic exchange between tribal members and non-Natives via their Santa Fe boutique dedicated exclusively to the sale Zuni artwork, presents Zuni pottery as follows:

Traditional Zuni designs include water symbols such as tadpoles, frogs, dragonflies, and the Zuni 'rain bird,' as well as flower rosettes and deer with heartlines. Traditional forms include the stepped-edge cornmeal bowl (also known as cloud or prayer bowls), bird effigies, and vessels in such forms. Sculptural appliqué is a common feature in traditional and contemporary work. Today, we find the next generations of Zuni potters actively combining traditional and contemporary design and process. Many, such as the Kalestewas, Peynetsa, and Nahohai family members, still dig their own clay and gather organic materials to create natural paints.⁵³

Though pottery does not feature the *a'witen/itiwan* colors based on the *Chimik'yanakona pename*, the artform does contain *telapnane* elements, mostly animals symbolizing water, such as Rainbirds and frogs, both harbingers of the rain that is so crucial in arid, desert areas such as the New Mexican Zuni

⁵³ See the website of the Keshi Foundation: <https://www.thekeshifoundation.org/>




reservation and nearby Arizona. There are exceptions with recent symbols such as the rosette which will be discussed further in section 3.1.2, and the deer-in-his-house motif, related to the nearly extinct Zuni hunting tradition. While the Western mindset would generally expect the use of the colors blue or green in order to represent water, the Zuni make use of the warmer tones characteristic of their homeland, with the natural pigments Zuni artists love to use derived from the area's reddish soil.

The anthropological categorization of vessels by color combination reveals how much traditional continuity is found in pottery designs and colors. However, another perspective on pottery color tendencies can be gained through the association of a potter's name with his or her easily recognizable personal style. The work of ceramicist Noreen Simplicio is an excellent example. The artist was born into one of the most famous silversmithing families at Zuni. She fell in love with clay when she was very young:

So, we've been to high school, but I remember growing up and playing with mud a lot. You know, just regular mud be playing outside and making a little pottery. When I got to high school, they offered a class, so I took it, and I was very good at it. [...]. It's kind of like I just learned the basics there, like how to process, where to get the source. (My transcription)

Simplicio's early natural talent to shape "mud" into vessels resulted in her now mentoring the next generation of Zuni potters to carry on creating what she considers to be "traditional Zuni art." Simplicio has developed trademark designs such as a wide-eyed frog appliqué painted in reddish tones. She applies white pigments for the belly and decorates the frog with black dots. She explained her predilection for frogs (*dakkyā*) in an interview in November 2019:

So going back to some of the designs [...], the frogs are more Zuni. It's a rain symbol. Yeah, so I think, you know, like a lot of my frogs make people happy. I usually put one on the inside on the bottom. [...].

Pottery type and Period	Prototype	Location	Colors (surface)	Colors (decoration)	Colors (core)	Patterns	Ingredients	Comments
Heshotauthla Polychrome , circa AD 1275-1300 categorized as "black-on-red"		Atop El Morro	Orange (tan), red slipped surface	Green to black, white designs	Orange/red	A banded area inside in black and outside in black and white, showcasing <i>mi ha</i> designs such as stepped lines, pendant dots, parallel lines, and solid triangles	Lead and copper oxides, with iron and manganese; decoration made with manganese pigment (Lanmon 61-2)	
	(See Sullivan, "Zuni Wares" n.pag.) ⁵⁴							
Kwakima (located at the base of Dowa: Yalanne, South Est of current Zuni village) Polychrome 1325 A.D. - 1400 A.D. categorized as black- and white-on-tan exterior design		Atsinna Pueblo	Orange (tan) jars often exhibit a painted white band between red upper and lower portions of the vessel (See D. Wilson, "Kwakina Polychrome, n.pag.)	Designs are applied in well-controlled black to green glaze that is relatively thick. Designs in glaze paint were applied over the white to cream slip in bowl interiors (See D. Wilson, "Kwakina Polychrome, n.pag.)	White (which is the main point of divergence with Heshotauthla Polychromes)	Organized into banded areas divided into panels, often dominated by large interlocking triangular motifs. Other standard designs include parallel lines, stepped lines, checkerboards pendant triangles, interlocking keys, lines with pendant dots, and negative circles in solid black triangles	Lead and copper oxides, and manganese; decoration made with manganese pigment	"According to Greg Schachner, Asst. Professor at UCLA, the characteristic of not getting a good strong orange is common in the El Morro Valley." (See Schachner "Zuni Wares, n.pag.)
	(See Sullivan, "Zuni Wares" n.pag.)							
Tularosa Black-on-White , circa A.D. 1200-1325. Black-on-white (see Vance, no pg)		Pueblo area	White to light grey, Smooth; thick, crackled, and polished white to light gray slip; occasional fireclouds on jars. (see Vance, no pg)	Pigments: Matte or subglaze (rare) black to greenish-black, brown, red-brown, and orange-red (Lanmon 44-46)	White to light grey, sometimes darker in the center	Curvilinear and rectilinear opposed hachured and solid bands	Mineral pigments, occasionally mixed with some organics.	Tularosa Black-on-white ware has been found archaeologically in early trash deposits at Zuni, so the Nahohai family and others regard them as an ancestral resource (Chappel "on
	(Lanmon 45)							

⁵⁴ Repaired Heshotauthla Polychrome bowl with black-on-red interior and white-on-red exterior; identified to type by Barbara Mills, Professor and Chair of Anthropology at the University of Arizona, and Deborah Huntley, of the Center for Desert Archaeology.

Gila Polychrome, ca 1350-1450. NMAI, 18,0cmx23,0cm



(Lanmon 46)

Hawikuh

Bowl exteriors, red, sometimes white in part; bowl interiors, creamy white; jar exteriors, red and white; bases and brownish to brick-red. (see Peters, "Gila Polychrome" no pag)

Black, white slip

Brick-red, tan, gray to black. (see Peters, "Gila Polychrome" no pg)

fold design or horizontal band leaving an open circle in bottom, tapering triangles and scrolls with scalloped edges; steps, keys mazes; hachuring in triangular panels fairly frequent; horizontal stripe always present, usually just below the rim

Black: carbon
White slip

rainbirds" n.pag.)
Temper: Moderately abundant fine water-worn sand.

Sikyatki (Hopi) AD 1375-1625



Hopi Mesas, but distribution was widespread throughout the southwest.

Creamy yellow to bright yellow; yellow predominates; over-fired specimens usually orange; surface and core do not contrast, except in over-fired specimens. (see Peters, "Sikyatki Polychrome, n.pag.)

Watery black or brown; dark brown, red. (Lanmon 47-48)

Cream to yellow, brownish, pinkish in some specimens (see Peters, "Sikyatki Polychrome, n.pag.)

Geometric (early and late), life forms (late); characterized by black and red and yellow (base); bowl interiors and jar exteriors always decorated, bowl exteriors usually decorated, jar rims sometimes painted if flaring.

Mineral: black (iron-manganese with iron-oxides); red (hematite, possibly limonite).

Fine quartz sand is rarely visible to the naked eye; occasionally reddish angular fragments; sand temper rarely visible without a hand lens either in cross-section or on vessel surfaces. (see Peters, "Sikyatki Polychrome, n.pag.)

Kechipawan Polychrome.Ca 1375-1475 (Lanmon 61)



(Lanmon 65)

Kechipawan, one of the ancestral Zuni villages, no longer occupied

Black glaze outlines with red fills (see D. Wilson, "Kechipawan Polychrome", no pg)

Matte red, black, and glaze paint

White slip

Bird-like figures, paired feathers, unedged red body, oblique caps (Lanmon 64) *miha*-patterns (see section 2.1.4)

Red mineral pigments

Temper is crushed sherd, and paste is white, cream, pink, or tan (see D. Wilson, "Kechipawan Polychrome", no pag)

Matsaki ca 1475-1680+		Hawikuh, Kechipawan, other A:shiwí village sites	Buff-colored pottery	Matte pigments –(Lanmon 92)	No designs painted on the red slip (vs. Hawikuh)	“Hopi-influenced designs: bird forms in bowls, geometrics in jars” (Lanmon 92)	Lead-oxide glaze. (Lanmon 91) There were a large variety of recipes of mineral paint, clay paste, and glaze (Mills, Revolt 89)	Temper is made of tiny particles and sometimes sand
Hawikuh Polychrome ca 1630-1680		A:shiwí village	Red slip on the top of the rim (Lanmon 92)	Return to a glaze-paint decoration (Lanmon 91) Designs are sometimes painted on the red slip. (Lanmon 92)	Red underbodies (for jars and bowls) Red slip on neck interiors of jars (Lanmon 92)	“Bird rare, but feather symbols are common, especially on jars.” (Lanmon 92)	Glaze material	Strong Hopi influence, decorations resemble Sityatki Polychrome – (Lanmon 91)
A:shiwí Polychrome ca 1700-1760		Puebloan, Cibola area	White slip	Solid red and black	Black (contours) and red (filling)	Small and precise geometric elements, including triangles, step triangles and squares, birds, animals, stair steps, and most commonly feather motifs, with most if not all of these designs commonly appearing on the same vessel (see D. Wilson, “A:shiwí Polychrome”, no pg)	Low iron pigments (Lanmon 109) matte-painted ceramics (Mills, Revolt 93)	Spanish influence: matte-painted ceramics, (Mills, Revolt 93) end of glaze paint technology due to the abandonment of lead mines (Pueblo Revolt) (Lanmon 107)
Kiapkwa Polychrome ca 1760-1860		Hopi/Zuni reservation area	White slip	Black and red	Red rim, black band	Separated panels, geometric forms, steps, and geometrician feather and rosette motifs geometric motifs of deer heart-lines, large rosettes, many variations of Rainbirds, and winged volutes. (see D. Wilson, “Zuni Polychrome”, no pg)	Mineral pigments	

Zuni Polychrome ca 1840-1920



(Lanmon 143)

Hopi/Zuni reservation area

White slip

Black and red

Black neckbands inside the jar

geometric motifs of deer heartlines, large rosettes, many variations of Rainbirds, and winged volutes. Sometimes the motifs are separated in panels.

N/C. pigments

Mineral

patina

Zuni Contemporary work ca 1920 onward



(Noreen Simplicio, Zuni contemporary, 2019. My picture)

Zuni Pueblo

White slip

Black and various shades of red

Peach color, bisque, of white slip

Contemporary motifs: deer-in-his-house, Rainbirds, frogs, feathers, divided into panels, rosettes, clouds or mountains, steps, and terrace.

Chemical or natural pigments, depending on the piece and the family

Figure 39: Evolution of Zuni pottery from Heshotauthla to Contemporary

I just... I love my frogs, they're just... When you look at them, they're just joy. That's part of being an artist. You know, it has a lot of mindset kind of thing, you know, like when you're sad, you don't want to put that energy in your work. You have to have this right sense of mind to create because you're bringing it to life. And it's gotta have a good life. (My transcription)

For Simplicio, frogs bring happiness, just as rain does on dry lands such as those surrounding the Zuni reservation. Frogs around the Zuni reservation are primarily of the *genus rana* species, such as the *Rana catesbeiana*, the *Rana chiricahuensis*, and the *Rana pipiens*, and their physical appearance is characterized by prominent green coloring. Some more brown-tinged New Mexican species such as *the Rana berlandieri* or the *Rana blairi* with their black-spotted patterns may correspond more closely to Simplicio's depiction, but their skin colors are still nearer to dark green than red. This leads us to believe that Simplicio chooses to paint her frogs in warm reddish tones to fit the traditional Zuni color palette. Figure 40 shows Simplicio's characteristic frogs sculpted on a pale peach-colored friendship pot, which does not exactly follow the black-and-



Figure 40: Noreen Simplicio, friendship pot with sculptural frog appliqués, November 2019 (my photo)

red-on-white style so typical of Zuni pottery. Nevertheless, these three colors are present in the frog themselves, and this style of pot with its endearing design has become so popular that it is now used as a standard in current Zuni pottery work.

This example shows how important it is to understand Zuni trends and colors; what causes the appearance of a style so different from the paintings found in kivas or on canvas? Figurative motifs such as the deer-in-his-house, frogs, or Rainbirds are all related to Zuni ceremonial life. However, contrary to traditional painting and carving, which are always related to supernatural beings and scenes of the *Chimi'yanokona pename*, pottery motifs are closer to Zuni daily life. Simplicio explains her fascination with the deer-in-his-house design, one of the most commonly depicted motifs:

...[Y]ou'll identify that it's a Zuni pot. Because of the rosette design and the deer [in his house]. The deer also is another one of our designs that if you know, it's significant of Zuni [...]. So to us, the deer is a very secret symbol, a secret animal because a long time ago that was kind of like the only source of meat that was available. And so, the men, a long time ago, there were only men hunters, but in this day and age, there are women hunters which are kind of like a taboo, a bad thing for women, if you go out hunting because we are the ones that are bear children. You don't wanna be hunting if you're a person that brings life. You know, so it's kind of a bad omen to be a woman hunter. It's kinda like for the men only, that's what our ancestors and our elders always talk to us about because of that reasoning that we bear children. Anyway—so when the men go out hunting for them to be successful, women would paint the deer whether on pottery or anywhere else where we might create art. They paint the deer with the heartline, meaning the breath of life. And usually, sometimes on my deer, I would leave the tip of the mouth kind of open so that there's always breath coming in and breath going out all right. [...]. So when the menfolk bring home the deer, it is brought into the house because they say when they're successful in their hunts, it's almost as if our ancestors are coming home to visit in animal form. So that's why before the animal actually is brought into the house, the women go out and make a trail of cornmeal leading to the house [...] and then it's dressed, there's clothing that's put on the deer as a symbol, whether it's a man or a woman, as a symbol saying that our ancestors are people that have passed out here to visit. They treat it with a lot of respect. So that's basically it for me, as someone using the deer symbol. (My transcription)

Since the deer motif refers to life, to hunting, and thus to the survival of the tribe, a deer-in-his-house motif painted on a vessel, with a black body and a bright red lifeline, its mouth open to let in the breath of life, allows the observer to identify it as Zuni. Figure 42 shows that while the motif has evolved since the 1930s, the deer becoming curvier and more detailed with the addition of the fluffy tail and branching antlers, the selected colors have not changed at all. The motif is still depicted using the black-and-red-on-white color scheme that has anchored the image within Zuni identity. The contrast between the black body and the red arrow invites the observer's eyes to focus on the heartline. Simplicio explains that water—or feathers, depending on the interpretation—is still represented in the stylized form of the black and red curved designs framing the deer.



Figure 41: Evolution of deer-in-his-house symbol; Tsiayuditsa, Water Jar, circa 1935 (left), unknown artist, Water Jar, end of the 20th century (middle), Simplicio, Water Jar, 2019 (right). (Courtesy of the Heard Museum and Noreen Simplicio, my photos)

Figures 38 and 39 reveal that the shades of red used in pottery vary from dark orange to dark red. There are two explanations for this: the first one goes back to the fact that there are as many color formulas in the tribe as there are families. For instance, the Nahohai family partly benefits from Randy Nahohai's leftover pigments which they still use, and partly from other tribes' pigments exchanged during their travels. Milford Nahohai, Randy Nahohai's brother, reported that he had investigated pigments from other tribes and countries and

brought back new material, such as slip he got during his travels in Australia. “Some tribes didn’t want to share!” he confides. Potters also trade ingredients and pigments within the village. To illustrate this point, Milford adds an anecdote about Randy and his relationship with other potters: “So one day Randy used this yellow clay on a pot and polished it with a stone twice to make it shiny. And there was this fellow potter who went and asked him: where did you find that clay? And Randy answered: It’s yours (my transcription)!” The family has continued Randy’s work of finding new materials to improve or complement traditional ones, a process which will be discussed in section 2.2.1.

Another reason for color tone variation is that firing pottery is always a gamble. Jaycee Nahohai brings up the issue that once fired, color tones do change, so potters have to work with some degree of uncertainty concerning the final effect, because “[y]ou never know what color you’ll get before it’s fired.” The Keshi website also discusses this hazardous aspect of colors, advertising the variability of color tone as a feature of a ceramicist’s style: “Some elect to minimize mishaps by using an electric kiln rather than outdoor pit-firing. Others, such as young multi-dimensional artist Alan Lasiloo, experiment with such variables as firing techniques and clay types to produce a unique appearance.”⁵⁵ Because an artist can never really accurately imagine the final appearance of the artwork until it is fully fired, many accidents occur. For instance, Milford confides that he once tried a blue turquoise-based pigment that turned black after it was fired. Colors in pottery, while close in appearance, are not completely reliable even when using the same formula. The pigments can produce one shade or another depending on the temperature of the fire, among other things. However,

⁵⁵ See the website on *Keshi, the Zuni Connexion* available at <https://keshi.com/pages/zuni-pottery> last consulted on 11.25.2019.

the intended colors are still perceived as black-and-red-on-white, even if the exact shade of the fired pottery can vary within the color spectrum.

The previous paragraphs have identified the color combinations of blackish-and-reddish-on-whitish as the characteristic Zuni pottery color scheme. Now we will discuss how the Zuni pottery palette was influenced by trade with the neighboring tribes, especially the Hopi. Trade between other Pueblo tribes from the Pueblo I period (750 to 900) onwards, and more intensively during the Pueblo II period (AD 900 to AD 1150) enabled the Zuni to diversify their palette and style. Up until the 20th century, the Hopi and the Zuni both often used similar contrasting color patterns until specific ceramic styles became the new standard of their respective tribal arts, as discussed in the first chapter of Lanmon and Harlow's book. From the early 1300s to 1800s, Hopi Indians often took take refuge at Zuni when suffering from drought periods or smallpox epidemics:

When the Hopi were at Zuni for extended periods, Zuni potters undoubtedly saw and learned techniques of potting and styles of decorating from their guests. Similarly, refugee Hopi potters undoubtedly learned and adopted Zuni pottery-making and pottery-decorating techniques and styles. (31-32)

Hawikuh, one of the pre-contact Zuni settlements, was a key trading location as the first settled village established in the ancestral Southwest where Pueblo tribes sold their pottery to both Plains Indians and Navajos (43). This means that Zuni-style pottery spread throughout the entire Southwest. Lanmon and Harlow write:

For example, fragments of several Heshotauthla Polychromes pottery vessels [one of the oldest ancestral black-on-orange/tan/red styles] from Zuni dating between 1300 and 1400 were excavated at Pecos Pueblo and nearby ruins [more than 300km east of Hawikuh], in addition to fragments of Hopi-area Jeddito black-on-yellow and Sikyatki Polychrome dating from the 1400s and 1500s. (43)



Figure 42: Corrugated pot, the late Jim Ostler's collection (my photo). Found by the Nahohais at an ancestral site

Trends in pottery circulated between tribes and never entirely disappeared, and designs on vessels were often copied from shards the Zuni and their neighboring tribes found and collected. The Zuni believe that these fragments possess the souls of their ancestors; they themselves were inspired by Ancestral Pueblo designs and thus continued the circulation of motifs. Zuni pottery colors scheme corresponds to an archetype, and for the artists, using the same colors ensures the immediate recognition of the “made in Zuni” trademark for their purchasers. The ability to identify Zuni work in mere seconds is an asset in the Native American art market, as will be seen in section 2.1 and 2.2. This is one of the reasons colors have remained stable through time, even though the commercial pigments many artists currently use offer them infinite color options.

The importance of Zuni ceramics and the question of defining identity are much-discussed topics in the field of anthropology. In a 2021 recorded conference, Southwestern ceramics specialist Barbara Mills explores how Zuni

potters have reinforced community identity through their chosen medium, giving two definitions of identity:

I like to think about it [identity] in terms of these two aspects. The first one really has to do with the fact that identity occurs at multiple scales: a lot of the time we see ethnic identity together, but that is not the only way we can think about identity [...], instead we have to think about one person's place and all their connection to other people. [...]. So those scales can be gender, can be residence, they can be language, they can be descent, but all of these have some sort of impact on how people think about themselves and how they interact with other people. [...]. So, it is like thinking about a person within a social network. We also have to consider the second part of anthropological definitions of identity. And that it's mutable, that it's changing, that it adjusts itself, even from day to day, even from hour to hour, depending on social context. Certainly, it changes when there are major transformations in societies. ("Clay as Canvas," my transcription)

Mills argues that identity "occurs at multiple scales" and thus depends on one's connection with other people. This shows that identity is not only ethnic; colors in ceramics create an archetypal Zuni palette but there are various and numerous other factors to take into account, such as the family's approach, how the artists learned to master the art of pottery, or the message they want to transmit through their artwork. Jaycee Nahohai's approach to pottery, for instance, is highly influenced by his family's. However, his work simultaneously demonstrates a moderated approach to tradition which deviates from most of the aforementioned color codes in pottery (see section 2.2.1 for more details).

A further point is that identity is mutable; it changes, it evolves with time, and is subject to many influences; it is never stable. The colors that reflect identity also bear witness to change and allow an overview of the artists' identity, but only at one specific point in time. This is why colors are changing, and the archetypal colors of today's Zuni pottery may not be the archetypal colors of tomorrow. As traditional colors evolve and change, any attempt to study colors will also need to trace these changes.

The exceptional color scheme perpetuated in traditional pottery demonstrates the complexity of Zuni colors as visual imprints referencing Zuni identity. Colors are deeply intertwined with Zuni ceremonial and utilitarian life, just as the traditional account of the *Chimik'yanakona pename* has sustained tribal beliefs for centuries. Zuni people hold onto these colors and give them the status of “traditional” as a constant reminder of a piece of Zuni history and a past they long to recover. However, if the colors used in Zuni pottery are inherently Zuni and portray fragments of Zuni's visual identity, this correlation is only valid at a given point in time since color usage inevitably follows the ever-evolving identity of the tribe and must be seen as a process, not a fixed system. This notion leads us back to why Zuni art exploits color as a marketing strategy. For Zuni artists as well as non-Zuni traders, colors can be a label of production, a brand that showcases the tribe's identity, singularity, and tradition at a given point in time. However, the categorization of colors as “traditional” may be problematic, as it carries sensitive tribal connotations. The concept of “tradition” in and of itself is vast, and therefore the notion of “traditional color” needs to be further studied and defined within the context of this dissertation before moving on to analyze the evolutions occurring in other traditional Zuni artforms.

2. Tradition in Evolution

2.1 Principles of Tradition and Modernization

2.1.1 What is Tradition? An Expanding Ancestral Savoir-Faire

Since the beginning of this dissertation, the term "traditional" has been used regularly; artists use it to describe the colors of their works, and the Zuni in general use it to talk about their approach to colors. The notion of "traditional" color is grounded in Zuni oral history and the sacred system of six colors derived from the positions of the sun. What exactly is tradition though? Is it the act of repeating the same colors over and over again? Is it respecting an ancestral color code? Where can we draw the line between tradition and modernity? Many definitions of the concept exist, and the present section will explore some of them in order to select the most appropriate definition to use for the rest of this dissertation.

The etymology of the word offers a first definition.⁵⁶ In the late 14th century, "tradition" referred to a "statement, belief, or practice handed down from generation to generation," based on the Old French *tradicion* "transmission, presentation, handing over," which originates from Latin *traditionem* "a teaching, instruction," and "a saying handed down from former times." It is a noun of action originating from the past participle stem of *trader*, "to deliver, hand over," from *trans-* "over" (see *trans-*) + *dare* "to give." The original Latin meaning is to hand over or to betray, while the early French and English meanings carry the notion of "a long-established custom." The notion is of customs, ways, beliefs, doctrines, etc. "handed down" from one generation to the next. If we correlate this etymology

⁵⁶ See <https://www.etymonline.com/word/tradition> as a reference for the definitions used in this section.

with colors, we can say that traditional colors must be a "belief" of "former times" "given over" or "delivered" and "taught" from "generation to generation."

Most of the time, the term "traditional Native American Art" evokes certain preconceptions for the non-expert reader. The word "traditional" is often accompanied by the expectation of handcrafting to produce authentic "Indian-made" items. This is seen in generic books such as Brendan January's *Native American Art & Culture* (2005), which states that "Modern Pueblo jewelry artists follow old tradition but use new methods to produce artworks (26)." The book does actually not give precise information as to what they classify as traditional or new methods, thus inviting the reader to imagine that the "traditional" technique used in making jewelry would probably consist of using manual tools rather than electric ones for silversmithing and lapidary work.

In her book *Indian-Made*, Erika Marie Bsumek studies Navajo culture in the marketplace. She reveals that authors and scholars of the past century wanted to preserve what was referred to as "primitive" tradition:

Anthropologists and regional promoter Edgar Hewitt; authors Mar Austin, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Ruth Bunzel, Elizabeth De Huff, and D.H. Lawrence; artist John Sloan; and many others in the southwestern intelligentsia advocated the preservation of indigenous production methods to save 'primitive' cultures. (36-37)

From the mid-20th century onward, the term "traditional" is often used to replace "primitive." One of the most renowned color theorists, Kandinsky, talks about Picasso's work by comparing the artist's colors with "Negro art, meaning a primitive art whose oriental coloration is associated with their decline."⁵⁷ Kandinsky thus implies a clear division between the "primitive" orient, with its perceived naïve approach to color gradation, and the "superior" occident, i.e., the

⁵⁷ My translation from the original text: "Il doit l'aboutissement de ses recherches à l'art nègre, c'est-à-dire un art primitif qui a la coloration orientale des peuples arrivés à leur déclin." (94)

color wheel system; "oriental" (meaning "primitive") color usage is seen as less sophisticated than the European system. This attitude is well-described by Said's argument on *Orientalism*:

Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. (7)

The promotion of what was formerly referred to as "primitive art" to "art premier" in French, or "ethnographic art" in English, points to a very particular categorization of art. First, there are the European colors, which are "ours," and second, the Zuni ones, thought of as "those." The scholar William Rubin, who explored the issue of using the term "primitive" and of Western points of view on tribal art in his introduction to the 2005 volume on *The Anthropology of Art* concludes:

For the bourgeois public of the nineteenth century, however, if not for the art lovers of the twentieth, the adjective 'primitive' certainly had a pejorative meaning. Indeed, that public considered any culture outside of Europe or any art outside the parameters of Beaux-Arts and salon styles – which meant all non-Western and some Western art – inherently inferior. (132)

This entails a hierarchy of arts according to which "Traditional Native American Art would fall under the allegedly less sophisticated umbrella of "art premier;" hence the connotations which are attached to handmade tribal crafts with their generations-old color systems. The term "traditional" is never used to describe the Western system of colors as a whole, as the current European equivalent to the "traditional colors" handed down by the Zuni is the color wheel. It is thus necessary to scrutinize the origins of the "sophisticated" European color system colors with which the tribal one is being compared.

The current Western classification of color stems from the European Renaissance and its revolutionary use of color in painting. One of the pioneers of color theory was Leonardo Da Vinci, whose innovative color concepts influenced a great number of artists. In his *Treatise on Painting*, he first insists on the distinction between color and shape: "Painting is divided into two principal parts. The first is the figure; that is, the line which distinguishes the forms of bodies and their component parts. The second is the color contained within those limits (2)." The Da Vincian separation of "color" and "figure" (shape) paved the way for the field of color studies, as color was able to be studied on its own. Secondly, the artist tackled new concepts concerning color and aesthetics, such as contrast between dark and light and the ever-influential complementary colors, which will be further discussed in section 2.2.4. His hypotheses spread worldwide and gave birth to a notion of colors that has transcended the boundaries of time and artistic movements, resulting in these ideas being used from the Renaissance to the present day to talk about the most abstract forms of color, and complementary and contrasting colors in particular.

The second influential figure in establishing the European color system was Newton, with his famous 1704 *Opticks* detailing his experiments on light with the prism. By projecting white light through a prism, the scientist concluded that white light could be divided into the seven colors of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, and indigo, and that white light is a combination of all the colors in the color spectrum. Newton then started experimenting with mixing two rays of colored light together to create secondary compounds of colors. The conclusion of his various experimentations was the invention of his famous chromatic circle. Newton's empirical experiments are still today considered to be

an elementary study on colors, although the scientist's second publication, the *Principia*, went on to link colors to the sacred (Maitte 97). The scientific nature of Newton's experiments, supported by many other specialists' works on colors since then, made it possible for artists as well as scientists to perceive the European color wheel not as merely traditional, but as cast-iron truth. This same perception of science backing up the color wheel in contrast to the heavily symbolic Zuni "beliefs" associated with colors served as a justification for considering "those" as "traditional," with the added connotation of primitiveness. This dissertation, however, aims to counteract the established Eurocentric perceptions of tradition in opposition to sophistication, and redefine the concept of tradition from the Zuni point of view in order to establish the criteria we will use to refer to colors as traditional or untraditional.

Applying the term "traditional" in the classification of colors implies that there is a division between what is traditional color and what is not, and that there is an opposition between "traditional colors" and all the other colors. We shall discuss the most used antonyms to understand this opposition better. The Zuni often use the English word "exotic" in opposition to traditional. For instance,



Figure 43: Jaycee Nahohai, *Feminine Owl*, 2019 (my photo)

Jaycee Nahohai considers his owls to be exotic because the colors he uses are "different," and the shape more identifiably feminine (see figure 43):

So that's why I call it exotic. Yeah, it's different too. These are going to be exotics, especially the color definition... It's different, that's the main key. So you can tell this looks like a female too. So it's more petite in the facial area. That's what I like about the different [style]... More...more, more rounder [sic]. It looks like a female. (My transcription)

Jaycee's exotic owls are a striped pastel purple and orange with stippled linear brown spots, similar to the variegated patterns of a clownfish. If we consider the notion of "exotic", from the greek *exōtikos*, or "foreign", in contrast to the traditional or "familiar", meaning domestic, close to one's own domain, the blending together of these colors does indeed give the object a compelling "exotic" look, since the "familiar" Zuni colors in pottery do not usually include purplish colors, as was seen in the previous subchapter. When Jaycee tries out new colors, familiar neither to Zuni (whose ceramic color codes are black and red on white/orange) nor to him, his attitude manifests a first important notion attached to tradition: it is something one feels personally familiar with and places in opposition to the "exotic."

A second notion concerning traditionalism is found in exhibition and museum vocabulary, where "traditional" colors are opposed to "contemporary" colors. The extraordinary exhibition catalog entitled *Changing Hands: Art without Reservation 1*, edited by David Revere McFadden and Ellen Napiura Taubman, indexes "contemporary artists'" works. The book presents photos of the Craft Museum's collections, introducing different artists and styles to portray current trends in Native American art. The title of the book alone, "Without Reservation," already implies that contemporary Native American art breaks free from defined boundaries, while "traditional" art is "within reservation." To use McFadden and

Taubman's words, contemporary artists "push the boundaries" (15-16), further implying that "traditions" are boundaries not to be crossed. These boundaries are "reservations," the mental, cultural and physical perimeters of "tradition;" the play on words is also interesting in conjunction with the use of the word "contemporary" to indicate freedom from boundaries. Indian reservations may have been partially intended as enclaves where native tribes would be permitted to carry on with their traditional lifestyle to some extent. However, the reality of this is rather different, due to the simultaneous connotations of racial segregation, negation of ancestral tribal land rights, and outside pressure on natives to integrate Euro-American lifestyles and economies. Tradition within reservations implies keeping it within certain boundaries, creating at the same time havens for tradition and marginalized spaces that isolate tribes from the rest of society. Crossing over these boundaries means crossing over cultural differences to be integrated as an equal member of society, in essence becoming a contemporary person to replace the myth of the vanishing Indian.⁵⁸

McFadden and Taubman say of "contemporary" art that "each [artist] in his or her own way both acknowledges those traditions and transcends them (15)." Contemporary art therefore "transcends" tradition by crossing over the preestablished boundaries. The editors also use words such as "innovation" or "experiment" as antonyms of tradition. This implies that traditional colors are seen as less imaginative or less creative, and trap the artist into exclusively using well-established patterns, an idea which leads us to our second notion attached to traditional colors: that the culturally-specific patterns display a certain stability

⁵⁸ The concept of art as a way to protest against the US-imposed frontiers will be further studied in section 2.2.4 with the Zuni Map Art Project.

over time. Contrary to Jaycee Nahohai's exotic approach, "traditional" color patterns are repetitions of the same patterns that have been used for centuries.

A third notion of tradition is emphasized by McFadden, who explains that "contemporary" involves the "creation of new and nonhistorical forms" (16), meaning that the use of contemporary colors is a departure from historical color use, while traditional colors are grounded in history or oral history in the case of the Zuni. The *a`witen`itiwan* colors and the myths linking each of the Beast Gods to a color correspond to such criteria. Each color originated in the *Chimik'yanakona pename*, and has been transmitted from generation to generation. They are part of this retelling of history and have evolved with it.

The fourth notion comes from the antonym "nontraditional" to describe colors which Oster and Rodee refer to as "difficult to place within the usual classification of jewelry (Ostler & Rodee, *Silversmith* 106)." "Traditional" colors are thus classifiable in opposition to "nontraditional" colors. We have studied how the Zuni *a`witen`itiwan* system creates a classification of colors in a hierarchy from yellow (the big brother) to black (the little brother of all colors), as well as a categorization into earthly (*a`witen*) and otherworldly (*itiwan*) colors. These are thus "traditional" colors. On the contrary, pieces of jewelry displaying purple or pink colors are not part of this traditional color system, and are thus "nontraditional."⁵⁹

The preceding four paragraphs can be summed up in the following rules by which to classify traditional colors:

1. Colors must be familiar, shared within a family, a community. One must feel an affiliation with colors.

⁵⁹ There are exceptions when purple and pink come to replace respectively blue and red in traditional jewelry. These exceptions within contemporary/nontraditional colors will be further studied in section 2.3.4

2. Colors must be contained within culturally-specific boundaries, which lead to the reproduction of colored patterns within these cultural boundaries.
3. Colors must be "historical:" "traditional" colors are multiple generations old and are transmitted from generation to generation.
4. Colors must be easily classifiable in a color system, with identifiable models.

These rules show how related to a culture's identity colors are and how they grow with the culture. The first rule shows that tradition can differ within a family or for each individual with different influences. For example, Eliza McFeely, the author of the aforementioned *Zuni and the American Imagination*, shared in an email exchange: "There are people in Zuni who are working hard on the problem of maintaining traditions while avoiding getting stuck in the past. They are also trying to balance their reliance on tourists with a desire to protect their traditions."⁶⁰ This search for balance in maintaining tradition without getting stuck shows how, with regard to traditional colors linked to the generations-old past, there is also a need to move forward, to create some distance from the past. Barbara Mill's theory on Zuni identity studied in section 1.3.4 adds to this notion: tradition, like identity, is "mutable," "changing," "adjusts itself, even from day to day, even from hour to hour, depending on social context."⁶¹ This means that what we call "traditional colors" is a survey of colors that is bound to evolve through time in conjunction with the dynamic evolution of tradition and identity.

This leads us to yet a fifth criteria: traditional colors must change with time and evolve with a culture's identity. In other words, what are labeled as traditional colors in studies such as this one are socially accepted color trends and patterns *at this point in time*; they might be more or less in continual use for long periods of history, but they will gradually evolve with cultural changes and individual

⁶⁰ Eliza McFeely, email exchange, 2018.

⁶¹ Mill's discussion is a recording of her conference, available on YouTube. For more details, see bibliography.

innovations. The "traditional" colors accepted by most people as typically Zuni today might not be the same tomorrow. Each artist may have a different level of tradition according to his family, clan, or personal interpretation. When it comes to the viewpoint of the artists themselves, there seem to be as many perceptions of traditional colors as there are individuals.

One significant item is still missing in this list: the Zuni artistic savoir-faire with regard to color usage. Zuni "traditional colors" are handled and touched during their manufacture and application in the creation of art, and each artform presents its own variation on traditional colors inasmuch as it depends on different types of pigments, originating from different sources. Indeed, it is impossible to approach color as part of a mix of ingredients, such as in the case of painting, in the same way as it is treated when choosing a colored stone to carve a fetish. This leads to the establishment of a sixth notion, that colors must be handled, touched, operated, and linked to Zuni savoir-faire.

The ensemble of these rules or notions shows us that we must scrutinize each artform from the past onward, always looking towards the future in a trajectory ranging from the most traditional, the oldest and most accepted color code, to the most contemporary, the more recent and potentially controversial color code. In the context of this dissertation, the notion of "traditional" will focus on and refer to the colors accepted by the majority of Zuni people at the time of writing, as though looking at a snapshot of colors taken at the precise time they were studied. This is not done with the intention of passing a condescending judgment on colors, as scholars did in the past by cataloging the tribes as "primitive." To the contrary, following Barbara Mill's notion of changing identity, we will make it an goal to observe how tradition is changing and how colors bear witness to these changes.

From this point onward, we will turn our attention to the movable, evolving aspect of tradition. The next sections will therefore focus on the evolution of color in each artform. We will retrace the main lines of artistic evolution in color usage in order to better understand the growing impact of the Western world on the colors of the tribe, and we will see how the fine line between tradition and modernity will be repeatedly questioned, testifying of the impact of non-tribal cultural influences on the Zuni aesthetic.

2.1.2 From Natural to Industrial Pigments: Working Faster to Sell More?

Chapter 1 provided an inventory of the traditional Zuni color system which is applied in various existing artforms. However, the Zuni's artistic culture is also their livelihood; as we have seen, Zuni art has become one of the main sources of income for the tribe, and about half of the population lives from their sales. According to the Zuni Mainstreet Program's 2014 report, about "80% of local families are involved in the manufacturing or commercialization of arts and crafts (Montoya 62)." The significant financial stakes placed on Zuni art are also evoked by Jaycee Nahohai:

Sometimes they are, you know, do kind of comparisons to say like, wow, why is it so much for this person, as opposed to this person who you could do it for this much too. So, there's always that conflict of how much a person is getting paid. And sometimes that's where you can lose your business out to, because the person doesn't have the information or the background of not knowing what time it takes to go and put it into a piece. (My transcription)

An artist's notoriety depends on how many of his or her pieces are sold. This means that being able to work faster to produce more pieces, by different means such as pigments that dry faster, is one way to anchor the artist's name in the competitive art market. However, traditional Zuni art takes time, and the market doesn't wait, which is an issue for artists.

Financial urgency and a competitive marketplace have had a visible impact on Zuni colors. It is clear that in order to have a sufficient monthly income to cover their living expenses, artists need to sell a certain quota, which isn't possible when working under the time constraints associated with traditional methods. Because of this, some artists have worked out strategies to sell more easily and be more efficient in the elaboration of their traditional art, specifically by abandoning the use of traditional handmade paints in favor of ready-made

paints in order to produce their art more quickly and easily. However, in uncovering the changes that have taken place in the tribe's color usage and materials, this section will also show that these changes is far from being purely commercially driven.

Some of the oldest traces of Zuni painting are found adorning kiva walls. Studying kiva painting is important in understanding the art of painting on canvas that stemmed from it. In his 1975 *Kiva Art of the Anasazi*, Franck Hibben listed the composition of paints found in Pottery Mound, a late prehistoric village on the bank of the Rio Puerco which was most likely occupied between 1350 and 1500:

The range of colors found on the kiva walls of Pottery Mound included black [carbon, charcoal, coal], white [silicious clay or/and kaolin], gray [mix of white and black particles], yellow [goethite or limonite ($\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot n \text{H}_2\text{O}$) or clay or sandstone stained with this material, or uranium oxide (UO_2)], blue [two distinct pigments: copper carbonate (CuCO_3) or azurite ($2\text{CuCO}_3 \cdot \text{Cu}[\text{OH}]_2$) or greenish blue made with powdered turquoise (copper phosphate)], [blue gray, carbon with silver white siliceous material of gypsum clay] green [copper and carbonate identified as malachite ($\text{CuCO}_3 \cdot \text{Cu}[\text{OH}]_2$)], red [red iron oxide of mineral hematite (Fe_2O_3) or from clay or sandstone containing hematite], salmon [variant of the pinks and oranges], pink [mix of red iron-oxide and white clay; the color might have been red in origin], orange [mix of red and yellow iron-oxide and white clay], vermilion [mix of red ochre with clay or siliceous mineral], brown [burned iron-oxide, or iron-oxide tones down with carbon particles], purple [clay mixed with red iron-oxide], lavender, and maroon [iron-oxides mixed or derived from colored clay]. (Hibben 24)

Watson Smith provides further information on the mineral content of these colors:

Pigments were mostly minerals readily available in the vicinity, producing various shades of yellow, orange and red, all from iron oxides; pink and vermilion from mixtures of red ochre and white or gray clay; brown from red ochre mixed with fine particles of charcoal; maroon from red ochre combined with a mineral containing manganese; blue, occasionally from azurite, but much more commonly from a mixture of charcoal and white clay, which surprisingly gave the optical effect of dull gray-blue; green, which was rare, from malachite or sometimes from yellow iron oxide mixed with charcoal. (Smith 40)

We can see that some variations in color were present, but the composition of the paint remained identical. Except for black and green, the pigments were entirely of mineral origin. The range of colors included black, white, grey, yellow, blue, green, pink/red, orange, vermilion, brown-purple and lavender. Comparing this to pottery material, many similarities can be found concerning black, red and white pigments. However, as painting is not fired, the resulting colors were more likely to remain stable.

These naturally-available pigments provided enough paint components to produce variations of the six sacred colors for rituals and adorn kiva walls and clan ceremonial chambers. Though the range of color was substantial, kiva walls reveal that contrast between the colors was scarce. Moreover, mineral bases were mixed with animal oil, water or saliva to produce paint, which means they deteriorated quickly. Traditional paint made with natural pigments presented inconsistent results depending on the opacity and concentration of pigments added to other ingredients. A specific paint was made for each desired color. Once spread over a surface, the pigments create a flat, mono-chrome effect, with little possibility for gradation due to the opacity of the pigment, so to create another shade, even one relatively close in color, another paint mixture had to be created. However, the manufacturing of natural pigments is time-consuming. Zuni people first went on solitary or group pilgrimages to collect the precious minerals. Then the raw material needed to be processed to remove unwanted pebbles and dirt before being mixed with the right amount of a binding agent, such as saliva.

A radical change is observed in the middle of the 20th century, originating from the influence of commercialized Western material, which granted access to ready-made paints. At this time, gouache became accessible in Zuni, as well as

the first canvases. The appearance of oil painting in the late 70s is an event to be studied on its own as it revolutionized Zuni painting and marked a clear deviation from the use of traditional mineral paint. This period also marks the introduction within tribal artistic practice of Western color wheel theory with its primary and secondary colors. By the 90s, oil painting on flat surfaces had almost entirely replaced natural paint, with the exception of ceremonial painting.



Figure 44: Zuni Old Mission, 2019 (my photo)

In his 1998 book *Two Zuni Artists*, Keith Cunningham explains that "[p]reviously unknown media, such as oil painting, are also being used contemporaneously to re-create traditional sacred or private images for sale. Paintings on canvas have become a major part of this art scene (5)." Cunningham then insists that this transition centers on "a production of inanimate objects for sale." This seems debatable, however, as other than ceremonial painting, production of paintings was limited and the artwork was usually kept within the tribe rather than being intended for sale. The best-known examples of Zuni oil-painting are Alex Seowtewa's murals on the walls of the tribe's church at the Old Mission (see figure 44), built by the Zuni in 1629 under Franciscan surveillance in order to convert the tribe to Catholicism. The walls of the mission church, Our Lady of Guadalupe, are now lined with kachina paintings that Seowtewa began

painting in the 1970s. In an interview published in the *Los Angeles Times* published in 1991, we read:

Seowtewa, 58, who attends Mass, sees no contradiction when he takes part in Zuni rites, believing Christian teachings are embodied in the traditional religion. It's a matter, he says, of keeping his Indian and non-Indian sides 'in balance.' 'I know it's not displeasing to my own people,' he says. As for the church, he recalls how the Pope, during his 1987 visit to the Southwest, urged native peoples to preserve their languages and cultures. The 50-foot-long murals are also a powerful medium for transmitting tribal lore to future generations. 'This project is actually the preservation of my Zuni identity,' Seowtewa says. (Haederle, n.pag.)

With this ambitious project, Alex Seowtewa reconciled his Catholic education and Zuni beliefs in one awe-inspiring masterpiece. During an interview conducted in November 2029, his son Kenneth Seowtewa, explained his father's process as follows: Alex started by painting the winter solstice on the cold north wall of the church. The first kachina painted was *Shalako*, who comes every year during the biggest annual celebration, held in late November or early December, approaching the time of the winter solstice. His coming signals the culmination of Zuni religious dance events during the year. Seowtewa then added other important winter solstice kachinas, guided by *Shalako*. Opposite of the winter solstice kachinas, he portrayed kachinas associated with spring, fall and summer. The painted kachinas, landscape and people were all brought to life by layers of oil paint, forgoing the traditional natural paint usually used to decorate kiva walls. The reason for this choice was mostly the ambitious scale of the project. Painting the 50-foot-long murals was a challenge on its own, and unlike natural paint, which is difficult to use on porous walls, the fluid texture of oil paint allowed the painter to cover more ground. Concocting such a massive amount of natural paint for the wall's surface would also have been an impossible challenge. And though to this day the frescoes are threatened with deterioration due to water infiltration

in the church, the use of oil paint has guaranteed a better conservation of the colors' intensity over time.

Oil paint and acrylics have come to replace natural paints almost entirely over the past fifteen years, a development that has gone hand in hand with the increasing market for Zuni paintings on canvas. This ultra-rapid change can be traced to the start of the Map Art Project initiated by Jim Enote in 2006, which introduced acrylic paint to the current generation of painters, an event that will be discussed in more detail in sections 2.2.4 and 2.3.3. The many canvases created by different artists included in Enote's project include works approaching surrealism in style, or alternating realism, impressionism and abstraction, and making use of the Western color system. For instance, the use of gradation to create perspective is observed, as well as the technique of mixing primary colors together in acrylics or oil to create custom shades. The Zuni painter Elroy Natachu Jr. explains in an interview concerning his part in the Map Art project that oil and especially acrylic painting are new phenomena within the tribe, and that his 2010 painting for the project represented his third try at using this kind of paint, showing just how recent and novel it was. In Enote's catalog of the exhibition, Natachu Jr. explains his work on the painting entitled *Tanner, Red Wall Cavern, E:node Bridge and Vasey's Paradise*:

I recently started painting in my senior year [at Zuni High School]. I had no more classes to be put into, and I'd been fighting to go into the art program for all three years... and finally they let me in on the fourth... year. From that point on I'd never had any experience in any other medium, so this painting would be maybe my third painting... It's acrylic. I wouldn't have had enough time to use oil paints, for it takes too long to dry... [but] I prefer oil. Oil paints have a tendency to blend easier and they have more vibrant colors... (Enote 77-78, original typography)

This reveals that for him, natural pigments did not even enter into the equation anymore; the painter's choice was to use either oil or acrylics. The purpose of this Map Art project, which had no commercial value, was to teach the younger generation about Zuni culture, illustrating scenes of the Creation Myth and Zuni pilgrimage to the Middle Place. Acrylics simply allowed the painters to work faster, with a shortened drying period.

Following the interview cited above, Elroy Natachu Jr. has taken a liking to acrylic and nowadays paints almost exclusively in this medium. I was able to interview him during my visit to the ARTZ center in 2019, and he talked about his recent kachina paintings for sale and the influence that the first generation of kachina painters such as Alex Seowtewa or Duane Dishta had on his work. Concerning his own kachina paintings, he said:

Yes, this is all done with acrylics. That's why a lot of people are surprised that the acrylics that I use are like ceramical [sic], they're not really high-end quality acrylics. The main reasoning for that is that the instructor who taught at the University had his theory: you can create beauty from practically nothing. (My transcription)

For the painter, using low-quality acrylics is a challenge, a response to his instructor who "broke us down and then built us from the ground up."

Acrylic paint has become increasingly important in the tribe, so much so that it has even replaced natural paint in the coloring of the sacred kachina masks. Roediger's 1941 study revealed some of the pigments and materials then in use to color the masks: the pink of the mudheads⁶² masks were from the pinkish clay of the Sacred Lake, and copper was used for blues and greens. The

⁶² According to the Zuni oral history, the head *Koyemshi* (or "Mudhead Clown" in English) fathered nine children with his sister. Racked with guilt, he beat himself then rolled in the mud until his whole head was coated. His children were born with a similar appearance. As they are born from an incestuous relationship, they cannot become kachinas. However, they perform important duties within Zuni society and act as spokespersons for the other kachinas. The mudheads can be curers, messengers, disciplinarians, and jokers.

yellows were made of red ochre or oxide of iron, found in certain cliffs or mounds and mined by the Zuni to produce a color of remarkable purity. Black was made from both iron and magnesium, producing two main recipes: the first from an ore (pyrolusite, hydrated form of manganese), which was also mined, and was used primarily on prayer sticks and masks; the second was made of chimney soot and was used especially for the eyes of a mask, with the addition of egg yolk to make it glossy. Carbonized corncobs were also known to be ground up in order to produce the precious paint for masks, since "[a]t Zuñi, they are found in the ancient ruins and carefully preserved for this purpose (96-9)." Natural paint could be concocted from wild seeds and plants that were also used for food, such as piñon nuts, acorns, juniper berries, yucca fruit, and various sorts of cacti. "Certain plants and herbs still provide flavoring, and from others are obtained colors and adhesive gum used for dyeing materials and decorating masks (17)."

The Zuni traditionally manufactured mask paints using natural materials and ritual processes. However, one of my contacts revealed in November 2019 that acrylic is now used to color the masks because of its brighter hues:

You know, we just use our acrylic, acrylic. Acrylic. Yeah, so some of us are much more familiar with the vivid colors that come. You know, it all depends. Yeah, you can come up with different colors of you know, but no, that's what we use. No, but before, it was just, you know, what we would gather here, you know, kachinas were kind of thorough looking. But as time evolves, you know, we have, oh, this much color, better blue than this purple, you know, to start using our acrylic now.
(My transcription)

For instance, blue gum paint, or Santa Monica blue, used to be the standard for decorating masks (Roediger, 15, 95-96) but has now been replaced by "vivid" blue acrylic paint. Gone are the colors made from rocks and clay. This means that the brighter tones of acrylics have been so well received in the tribe that they have quickly replaced centuries of sacred natural paint tradition.

While the enthusiasm for acrylics' aesthetic properties is real, another reason for their rise is their cost in comparison with oil paints. Painter Keith Edaakie, who also participated in the Map Art project along with Elroy Natachu Jr., is sincerely fond of acrylics, and would not change to another medium. In 2019, he explained, however, that his material choice was also due to practicality, habits, and the cost of production:

Once, well I tried oils just several times, but... I don't know, it wasn't for me, or maybe it was just the quality of the oils wasn't [much] because I didn't want to spend so much, because the oils are really expensive. That's also a real concern. I wanted to try it but I didn't want to spend like 20, 30 [dollars] on the tube of paint that I might not end up using frequently, and so I bought like a basic starter kit at Walmart I think, and, you know, the pigments weren't really too great. I mean, I was able to do certain things, but I guess it just didn't work really well for me too, whereas... Like, I guess I'm just so used to working with acrylics. (My transcription)

The relative expense of oil paints has caused artists such as Kandis Quam, Elroy Natachu Jr.'s apprentice, to start working directly with acrylics. Quam is one of the youngest painters of the tribe, and Natachu Jr. explains that he "taught [her] to paint four years ago" (in the summer of 2014). As her mentor, he "ran her through the same process; she was also influenced by the way [he] used [his] color theory and [he] explained to her the difference, where [he] got it, where [he] got the inspiration from." While oil paintings are still found on the Zuni art market, they are becoming rarer and rarer because painting exclusively in oil would just not be financially viable for most Zuni artists. The use of acrylics in painting has thus been assimilated as the norm by the current generation of painters to the point that nowadays, most of the paintings that are being sold are painted with ready-made acrylic paints.

With access to big box stores like Walmart, as previously mentioned by Edaakie, artists were also given access to new color materials. They can buy

paint and stock it for a long time, taking advantage of the diversity of existing brands and formats. The closest art supply stores are located in Gallup, north of Zuni, and they provide access to other new color media which further broaden artists' techniques. For instance, Edaakie has been enjoying spray-painting in the recent years:

Eventually, I ended up watching a guy from Mexico and he was a spray paint artist and he created these really cool pieces of work using spray paint and I really got inspired by that and...that evening I told my spouse 'let's go to Home Depot' and she was like 'why' and [I answered] 'let's just go.' And so we went and took some spray paint and then we went to Home Depot and we got there. And then she's all 'why are we here?' 'I'm getting spray paint' 'what do you need this spray paint for' and so after several days, I was practicing and I started creating almost a similar type of work that he did, but kind of created to my style and what fit my vision as far as art, and so I created spray paint art. (My transcription)



Figure 45: Keith Edaakie, *Summer Messengers*, mixed media (acrylics, spray paint on vinyl stencil), 2019 (my photo)

The easy access to large stores like Home Depot was a game-changer for Edaakie in developing his new spray paint skills. One of his spray-paintings entitled *Summer Messengers* depicts two birds (see figure 45), a blue jay and a Bullock's oriole, both of which are the messengers of summer to the tribe. Edaakie tells their stories: "When we had our Zuni River flowing through our community constantly, you know, there's all sorts of birds that would be around because there was water; and so these two were regarded as the highest of those birds that were around here." He explained his painting process in the same 2019 interview: using stencils and quick brushstrokes, he painted the two birds, and aimed at creating a kind of "cosmic [...] outer space" atmosphere with spray paint in the background. He then went "with the flow" of the creation process, "not really thinking," like automatic painting. "All of these little scribble lines in it, it's a little bit like graffiti work so I guess, you know, it goes well with the spray paint." He has mastered the multimedia approach so well that it only took him 30 minutes to make the whole painting.

Yeah, you see that Rainbird design with the pottery and then the other bird design here [showing the pottery motifs in the background] with the pottery and just kind of representing both. It's like a multimedia kind of canvas, you know, try to, yeah, different art forms represented in one two-dimensional painting which is interesting, right? Because that's the thing. I also did a multitude of different types of art. I did pottery, I did weaving, dancing, those weaving designs there [on the background] ... I did jewelry... Everything I just wanted to include in this little painting. (My transcription)

There is pride in acquiring new skillsets, in mixing techniques and media, and creating intricate designs with bright glossy colors that would never have been possible with natural paint. The access to new material has allowed the Zuni artists to refine their art, to experiment with new techniques, which, while effectively attracting more customers, mostly fill them with artistic pride. Painters

do not forget the ritualistic art and duties of clansmen, yet all of their non-ceremonial art is made using ready-made paint, whose intensity and diversity of color cannot be compared with that of traditional organic and mineral paint. In this way, artists can tell the traditional stories of their culture through the exploitation of modern color media.

Another example of the shift from traditional natural materials to nontraditional industrial ones can be found in Zuni pottery. In section 1.3.4, we discussed how Zuni pottery colors were made from natural pigments and minerals for generation upon generation. Color formulas relied on substances of mineral or vegetal origins, such as dark brown to orange ochres, beeweed, manganese, hematite, or iron-rich stones collected from around the reservation, purchased, or traded, and then mixed during prayer rituals to create the desired color. In her 2005 edition of *Couleurs*, French color specialist Anne Varichon touches on the origins of such pigments. For ochres, she says that they are “clays colored by iron oxides. The term ochre (from the greek “okhrâ” [ὄχρα], the eggs’ color) has been traditionally reserved for clay pigments[.]”⁶³ Hematite is also often used as a finely ground powder. It is composed of red iron-oxides (146), which



Figure 46: Manganese with inlaid turquoise (courtesy of the Turquoise Museum, my photo)

⁶³ My translation of the original text: “Les ocres et les terres dont il va être question dans cet ouvrage peuvent se définir comme des argiles colorées par des oxydes de fer. Le terme ocre (du grec « okhrâ », couleur de l’œuf) a été réservé traditionnellement aux argiles colorant en jaune et en rouge, le mot terre désignant les argiles colorant en brun, en noir ou en vert.” (76)

cause the range of color to vary from red to dark purple. These two pigments are also used in kiva wall paintings.

While the prevalent use of black carbon paint on clay for ceramics originates from the limited choice of available pigments that could hold up during firing, the combination of black, red and white is currently still the preference in traditional Zuni pottery motifs. K. R. Adams, J.D. Steward, and S. J. Baldwin's 2002 study, "Pottery Paint and Other Uses of Rocky Mountain Beeweed (*Cleome Serrulata* Pursh) in the Southwestern United States: Ethnographic Data, Archaeological Record, and Elemental Composition," published in *Kiva*, argues that in New Mexico, and especially Zuni territory, there is a proliferation of beeweed used as a pigment. The Zuni remove the wood from the *a'pilalu* or *ado:we* (Zuni terms for the beeweed plant, Adams 344) and "boi[it] until thick and dry for pottery paint (347)." The color of the resulting decoction is produced by the "iron-rich components" (353) in the plant, which create the Zuni's favorite organic red-to-black paints for pottery. Manganese, a silvery metal often found in combination with iron, also produces a dark mineral pigment and is abundant in local soil and clay deposits (see Varichon, 144,146, 254).

Color recipes vary from family to family and depend on the quality of the mineral, and experimentation with the quantities of pigment, water and binding agents can lead to utter failures or nice surprises, a phenomenon that artists see as a stimulating challenge. For instance, it is known that the proportion of binding agent to pigment changes the hue and intensity of the color; Jaycee Nahohai tries to find ways of making the clay absorb more pigment so that the colors are deeper and longer-lasting. The procedure reveals the difficulty with which other pigments properly adhere to the clay, hence the perpetuity of the traditional black and red

paint on a white background for which the Zuni are so famous. The difficulties encountered and the uncertain outcome of the piece – since the color’s definitive appearance is only revealed after being fired and polished, and the result depends on the color formula, the firing temperature and the color of the polishing stone – are all part of the traditional creation process and contribute to the pride of the artist in each successful piece. As Jaycee’s grandmother Josephine Nahohai said: “Stress is not good: energy transfers in what you’re making, if that pot wants to live or not, if not it just doesn’t want to be shaped. It’s not meant to be.”

Some artists such as Jaycee Nahohai intentionally gamble with this uncertainty, as well as experimenting with color in order to create their own style. Jaycee and his family are very strict about the manufacture of colors for pottery; traditional color is made of natural pigments, otherwise it is not considered traditional. He stated in 2019 that “contrary to other potters who use commercial paint, we only use the area’s clay and natural pigments.” From his statement, two suppositions can be made: the first is that some families use pre-processed clay, and the second is that some other potters use bought pigments or glazes. This would seem to support the hypothesis that some artists, in the aim of producing more pieces more quickly, forego the time-consuming traditional ritual of harvesting or collecting components, grinding pigments, and offering prayers to thank the Earth for their gifts.

To investigate this further, another Zuni potter was interviewed, who for purposes of anonymity will be referred to as N. N. describes Zuni potters as traditional potters who aim to carry on the tradition of the tribe. When asked if he himself only uses natural pigments, his first answer was that “[e]verything is all

like natural pigments that we collect in the mountains” before reconsidering: “It’s all natural pigments. I actually do both! I use natural and contemporary and mix, I experiment [with] things a lot! I mean, you know, as an artist, creative ability allows you to be creative in many different ways.” N. points at some of his work and calls it “contemporary [...b]ecause it is not handmade,” explaining the difference:

Those [other] pieces here are all hand built. You can tell like, you know, with the contemporary style piece it’s too perfect as opposed to something like this. If you stand here it’s going to get some slight imperfections. So sometimes, it’s like that too. So those are the kinds of things that you look out for, that too perfect edges and it’s too perfectly squared. (My transcription)

This comment makes it clear that the artist elevates the status of hand-built pottery pieces by describing contemporary pieces as “too perfect” and “too perfectly squared.” However, the artist’s explanation shows non-reluctance, if not desire, to build on tradition and use the novel materials now accessible to the tribe to create something authentic as well as innovative. The colors used may not all be natural; each potter has his personal vision of tradition. For N., a vessel is Zuni when the motifs are traditional, such as the Rainbird, which represents a stylized bird with spiral wings, deer-in-his-house, and rosette to name a few of the most typical examples, and with red-and-black-on-white color tones prevailing. The prayers forgone during the making of the paint are renewed during the kneading and pounding of the clay, and rarely does the artist use commercial paint. He also seldom uses the so-called “contemporary style pieces” (pre-fabricated pots that one can then decorate with natural or commercial pigments).

Yet according to Jaycee Nahohai’s criteria, such a style would not be deemed traditional, because the color media used are not natural pigments. To settle this argument, let us study another “nontraditional” project. Potter Noreen

Simplicio has worked for the ZYEP (Zuni Youth Enrichment Project) for a long time. In one of their projects, she was asked to paint two giant water jars with the school children, which would connect to the drainage system to collect water for their community gardens:

So, I started working with the kids a lot. ZYEP, they found what I was doing and they contracted me to work to some accounts. So, I've been working for them off and on for like about a good ten years ever since they had their first summer camp for kids. I really enjoyed it and I continued to do that. My latest project was the big pot we did with the kids. [...] it's six by five feet. (My transcription)



Figure 47: Noreen Simplicio, ZYEP Water Jars (courtesy of the ZYEP)

The purpose of this project, as for most of ZYEP projects, is to make young people aware of Zuni art and tradition. The water jar follows the color scheme expected in a Zuni pot, from the black deer-in-his-house with a red heartline to the hachured black cloud/mountain symbol, the red birds, and red and black fireflies, as well as the organization of the sections on the jar, separated with thick black lines. The medium used is commercial exterior paint, not made from collected natural pigments prepared with prayers. Even farther removed from tradition, the paint contains chemical elements, which enable it to literally weather storms while maintaining its glossy hue for a long time. Zuni has an extremely arid climate most of the year, and while rain is rare, the sun can impact color longevity. Commercial exterior paint contains flexible resins that allow it to withstand UV

rays and abrupt changes in temperature, and maintain its appearance as the surface of the pot expands and contracts. Exterior paint also contains additives that help prevent fading and resist tannin staining. All in all, it is the antithesis of traditional Zuni paint! However, the very nature of the project, designed to teach children Zuni traditional art and designs using the correct colors and motifs, means that for the tribal leaders who support the ZYEP project, the correct color scheme and the longevity of the object are more important than using traditional color components.

Amidst this radical division between natural and industrial approaches is the work of another painter, Ermalinda Pooacha-Eli, who represents the middle ground in the debate. In her 2011 landscape painting of Mesa Verde commissioned for the Map Art project, the artist uses acrylics mixed with minerals collected from the cultural landscape she was commissioned to paint:

I'm gonna ahead and include some ... the clay and the sand and the plants—incorporated into my painting itself. The clay is from Mesa Verde itself. We were allowed to... take a few things. So... I went in and uprooted some potato plants and tomatillos. And the clay...!

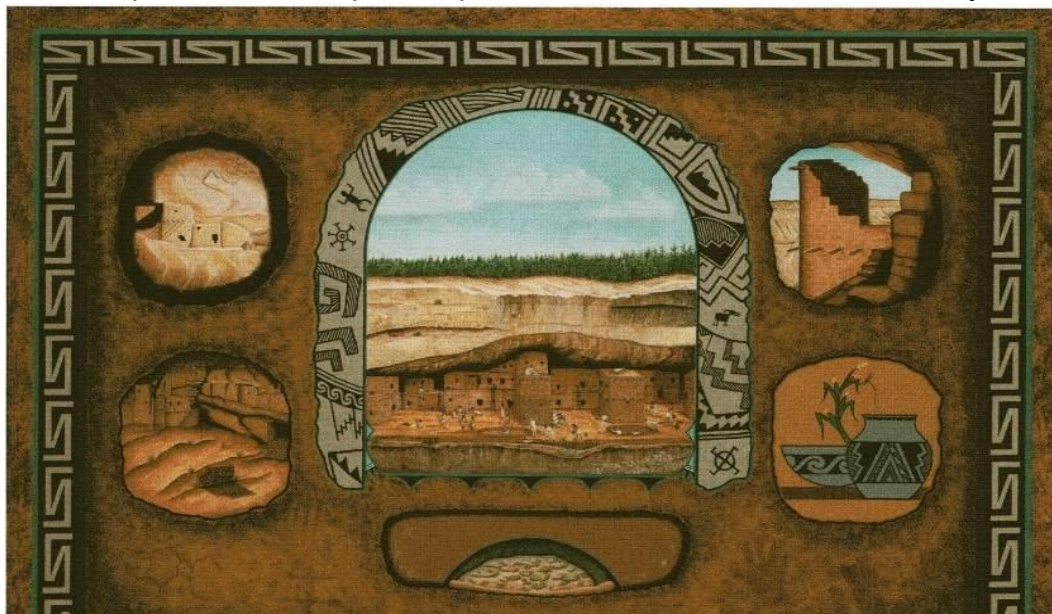


Figure 48: Ermalina Pooacha-Eli, Mesas Verde, acrylic with mineral pigments and water collected from Mesa Verde, 2010 (Enote 82)

pounded it out and sifted it, and then made my paint mixture out of it—the clay itself—and put it on the canvas. (Enote 83-84, original typography)

Her work makes use of natural pigments, such as clay and plants, according to the long tradition of making mineral paint, but then mixes the pigments with acrylics in order to obtain brighter colors and protect the color of the paint, as acrylics age better. This means that the acrylic material has been assimilated, in the linguistic sense of the term of having first been borrowed and then adapted and recontextualized to become Zuni through this convenient mix of acrylics with traditional mineral paint. Thus, acrylics are no longer a foreign material anymore and mark a new beginning in Zuni art with the start of a new tradition that blends together old and new techniques as well as historic Native and reappropriated non-Native American color styles and media. This also heralds the beginning of a new artistic and artistic era, one in which the Zuni history and cultural landscape will surpass previously imposed boundaries.

After observing many examples of modern-day painting and pottery, we find that whether the material matters more or less than the final appearance of an artwork depends on the artist. Contrary to initial assumptions, we quickly discover that in painting, the pressure to commercialize has little influence on the media used; for example, the main reasons for the trend towards acrylic paint can be found in its accessible pricing, brighter hues, long-lasting color, and ability to dry quickly, but without any particular consideration given to commercial production and viability. What makes a work of art "traditionally Zuni" is above all how it looks and how it is made, coupled with the will of the artist. To be traditional, a Zuni work must tell the story of the tribe and must also contribute to the education of the young generation, helping Zuni people to learn about their

culture. What is identified as Zuni is always a mix of images belonging to the tribe's past, such as Creation Myth scenes or deer-in-his-house motifs, with modern techniques, media, and styles. However, this definition doesn't mean that the work of artists like Jaycee Nahohai work is narrow-mindedly traditional; although he always uses natural paint, he rarely respects the "traditional" black-and-red-on-white color scheme that is the norm in Zuni pottery. His experimentation with colors and images is what makes him stand out from the crowd; yet, as we will shortly see, innovations like those that Jaycee brings to traditional pottery are likely the first steps towards the establishment of new traditions in Zuni art.

2.1.3 Digital Colors: Updating Tradition with Western Tools

In the last decades, the Zuni have equipped themselves with the latest smartphones and functioning computers with Internet access. Their most widely used means of communication is Facebook, which provides them a virtual showcase for their work and their artistic know-how, and their feeds are filled with photos of their art. The rise of digital culture has also had a significant impact on color usage and art within the tribe in general. New artistic movements have been born, which involve printing traditional designs on objects like mugs or t-shirts that have become very popular throughout the tribe. The creation of digital art, which appeared in the tribe about ten years ago, has accelerated at an incredible rate due to the COVID 19 health crisis, during which the tribe has been confronted with the abandonment of business partners such as art galleries and connoisseurs who usually offer them a venue for selling their artistic creations.

Facing destitution, the Zuni were pushed to reinvent themselves. In a short Facebook chat in April 2021, Jaycee Nahohai confided that he was struggling with financial issues, as his trusty commercial partners, on whom he had previously been able to depend for a steady income, were forced to close and had since gone practically radio silent. He stated that he “ha[s]n’t heard from [his trading partners] at all since last year [2020]. And one of the main outlets is sharing around [the] pics [of his art], waiting for me to tell the public [he] ha[s] the owls [and goods] [he is] working on up for grabs.” The potter spoke of his difficulties in reorienting himself towards digital tools and his soft spot for digital



Figure 49: Jaycee's cap, posted on Facebook on June 2021 (courtesy of Jaycee Nahohai)

art that helped him overcome his struggles. Jaycee trained himself until he mastered a design software that now allows him to reproduce the traditional designs that he has already applied to his ceramics. His procedure is as follows: he begins by drawing pottery designs on a graphic tablet and then imports them into a graphics software program, allowing him to reuse them later for other artistic pieces. He then decides what type of printing best suits the type of object he wants to create and then sends his orders through a print-on-demand service for t-shirts and caps, such as the snapback model featured in figure 49. He advertises his printed designs on Facebook and sells his creations within the tribe, and the printing service allows him to directly ship the goods to his customers after printing.

The example above illustrates the well-known pottery designs such as the Rainbird and the subdued cloud/mountain terrace motif behind the Rainbird. For this 2D design, Jaycee opted for a sober, sophisticated color scheme that still retains a hint of the warm reddish-brown and yellowish tones representative of the tribe's identity and the surrounding landscape. On the side of the cap, Jaycee stuck to the sober black and white color scheme for his *Shiwistyle Entertainment* brand, using geometrically stylized feathers and triangular rain motif. With the

combined motifs and style of the cap, he displays both his identity as a Zuni artist and his passion for DJ-ing, which is also his second profession; the spiral of the Rainbird mirrors the disc on the right, and the two are linked by his DJ stage name “Baliztic,” with the letters effectively bridging the gap between his two identities as a potter and a musical artist. This artistic versatility further helps him to acquire and retain customers, as he can use the same Facebook account and the same merchandise to promote both his musical events and his visual art.

The artist’s approach to color is much different in a printed design than it is in painting or pottery. He has no control over the chemical color composition in this process because the ink used on the fabric is selected by the printing service and will only roughly approximate the original colors used in the design. Color goes from being a hands-on process from start to finish to being a virtual, digital medium represented by pixels on the screen that are only made haptic through the printing process. Can we then still think of this style of art as traditional? Although the patterns used in the printing are well known within the artistic and cultural landscape of the tribe, it is obviously impossible to respect the traditional ritualistic approach to color in this context. And yet we cannot question that the design itself is fundamentally Zuni. Furthermore, in breaking away from the tribe’s ritualistic approach to color, digital art provides tribe members with a colorful emblem that they can wear proudly to display their identity as Native Americans.

Another example can be found in Jaycee’s shirts. In the design of the first t-shirt in figure 50, we can immediately recognize the symbol of the Zuni Sunface and the four traditional earthly colors studied in section 1.3.1: white, blue, red, and yellow. However, we can also notice several differences, such as the



Figure 50: Jaycee Nahohai, T-shirts, designed then sold via Facebook, May 2021 (courtesy of Jaycee Nahohai).

presence of purple, a color not representative of the tribe, and the use of much lighter tones than we find in traditional representations. However, the Surface alone is so fundamentally Zuni that this t-shirt is immediately recognizable as a Zuni creation. While there is much debate within the tribe concerning the inclusion of “exotic” colors on ceramics and fetish carvings, in more recent, digitally designed artwork, even the most traditional pottery symbols do not adhere to the

traditional color schemes. Nevertheless, this design is very popular in the tribe and has earned Jaycee a flood of compliments from tribe members of every generation.

The second t-shirt in figure 50 represents something like an artist's seal. Here we recognize Jaycee's Japanese influence in the symbol of the rising sun behind the elegant white crane. The colors are also Japanese; the use of black and red in particular is reminiscent of Japanese calligraphy. The well-known tribal mandalas in the lower-left corner also recall the stamps that Japanese calligraphy artists use to sign their work. Should this t-shirt design therefore be considered less Zuni than that of the Surface? Here, the tribal motifs are half-hidden in the grayish tones of the background and require more effort from the observer to notice them. However, it is precisely in the subtly contrasting black and gray background that the traditional geometric pottery designs which lend the shirt its Zuni character can be found. The absence of traditional Zuni coloring further complicates the categorization of the t-shirt, and the overall design looks Japanese, despite the background of Zuni pottery motifs. But the sober grey-on-black motif still recalls the ancient Tularosa black-on-white style (A.D. 1200-1325), which remains traditional as far as pottery is concerned.

The artist himself presents all the t-shirts without distinction as Zuni, which shows that for Jaycee Nahohai, any form of art created by himself *is* Zuni. From this, we can conclude that in the medium of digital art, another definition of 'traditional' is needed. Unlike in traditional pottery where the very materials used are ritualized, digital art must meet other criteria to be considered traditional from the artist's point of view. First, it must be created by a Zuni artist. This is also the case for traditional Zuni art in general: there is no traditional art without a native

artist. Second, the art piece must display tribally-specific motifs or designs, usually originating in pottery and carving. Third, the colors must refer in some way to traditional Zuni art, whether it is pottery, fetish carving, or lapidary work.

Jaycee can sell these newly traditional T-shirts for between 40 and 48 dollars each, depending on the size, which provides him with another source of income. Facebook has quickly become an essential platform for Jaycee and other Zuni artists who want to exhibit and sell their art to the world. Through it, they can showcase their talents and create a network of connoisseurs, partners, and loyal customers who contribute to building the artistic presence necessary in order to make a name for themselves in a competitive world. However, this opening to the world doesn't stop with Facebook or the use of design software and online printing services. On a larger scale, the Internet makes it possible to create whole websites to facilitate communication and sales. For instance, the official tribal ARTZ cooperative website offers an interesting mix of merchandise for sale and cultural information about the tribe. The Zuni tribe promotes its culture through art and colors, featuring interviews, photographs and quotes of each artist which provide a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the human being responsible for creating each art object. The digital representations of each fetish shown on the site are thus humanized; the artist's story adds a personal dimension to the 2D photo, making the virtual object seem more tangible. This way, a collector can feel he is buying a piece of Zuni culture and not just any commodity. The ARTZ website also displays a series of framed printed copies of original works which can be shipped to customers. Paintings by artists such as Elroy Natachu Jr., his apprentice Kandis Quam, and Lander Chavez are reproduced and sold, as well as poster versions that are inexpensive and easy to ship, making them affordable

even for customers with lower budgets. The painting is first digitized and can then be printed infinitely in various formats, a method which allows the tribe to present a larger range of prices for customers, since art novices and tourists will be more likely to buy an inexpensive postcard as a souvenir than a full-size, framed painting.

On its Facebook page, EdaakieART advertises puzzle versions of Keith Edaakie's paintings, pink and blue earrings with printed designs, can holders, money clips, and magnets with digital motifs and trendy seasonal messages, such as "We ♥ Daddy" for Father's Day (see figure 51). Again, the paintings and designs are first digitized, then printed in different formats to allow them to reach a wider customer base, including children who now can afford them as gifts for their parents, and vice versa. The digital image can be printed on a variety of utilitarian goods such as mugs and cups to be sold as souvenirs. In this way, original traditional designs and colors are transformed through merchandising.

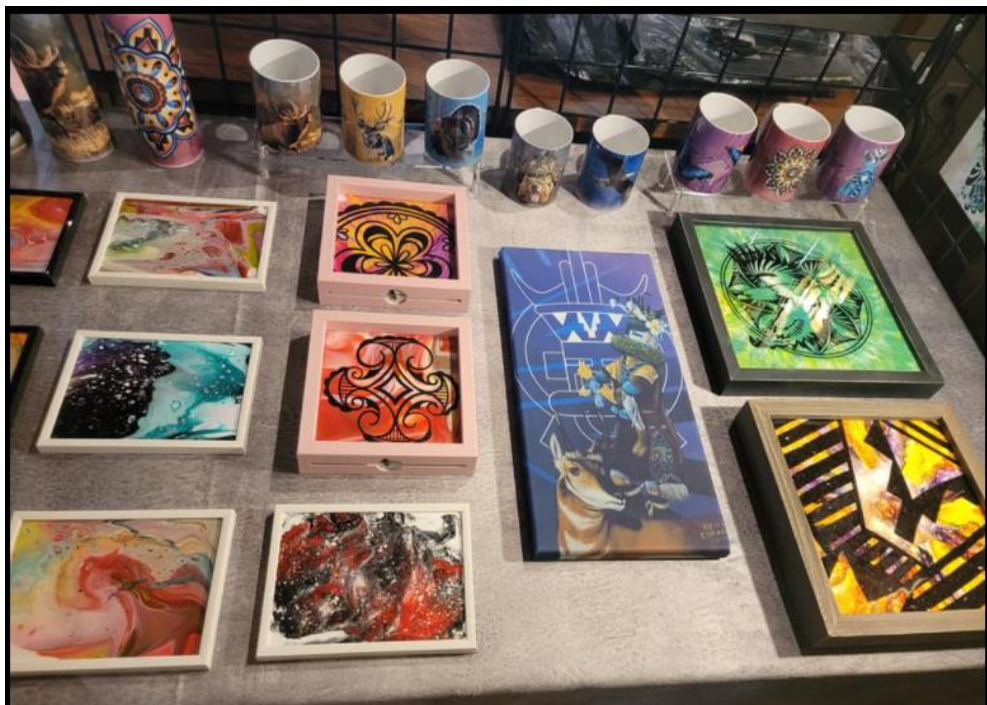


Figure 51: Edaakie's booth for the heritage festival, Northern Arizona Museum, on April 2021 (courtesy of Keith Edaakie and Leanne Lee)

Other platforms like YouTube have allowed artists to reinvent themselves in ways which have greatly affected their style and their approach to color. Keith Edaakie mentioned during my interview with him in 2019 that he watched many tutorials on YouTube, as well as shows on Netflix to refine his style. When asked about how his style has changed during the past decade, he answered:

I know, that's what everyone was saying and, you know, some of my paintings, I did do a lot of this landscape type stuff. But well, the clouds [showing one of his earliest paintings] are... Yeah, just needs refining it a little bit more. And I think a lot of it is watching different artists and how they do it. I remember for several years I was really grateful with Netflix because they have the Bob Ross series [*The Joy of Painting*]. On there, he worked with oils but a lot of the techniques that he uses work really well with me with acrylic paint. I usually use YouTube, it is actually great to be connected and to be able to share the techniques with other artists. (My transcription)

The Bob Ross series was an iconic American painting show that aired from January 11, 1983, to May 17, 1994, created by and featuring legendary painter Bob Ross, who instructed his viewers on landscape painting techniques using oils. Looking to videos for tips and inspiration to improve his art, Edaakie followed Ross's step-by-step tips to refine his style in acrylics. He commented on one of his paintings depicting a scene from the emergence myth:

So yeah, the mountains back here, it is basically how he does it with oils. But since they use acrylic [...] the texture is really fluffy. So that was his style too with the brush that he uses and just creating those instead of painting every single little leaf on there. The effect is really great with the water, yeah, so that was, yeah, that's a lot of like I said, progression and, you know, always trying different things. (My transcription)

The painting in figure 52 is an example of how Edaakie transposes Ross's technique into acrylics. In the tutorials, he learned how to use white acrylic color to create a soft-looking, see-through mist. A similar technique is applied to the leaves of the evergreen, in the central right-hand zone of the painting. Instead of painting each leaf, the artist used soft dabs of the brush, similar to Jaycee's



Figure 52: Keith Edaakie, Birth of the Bear and Dear clan, acrylic on canvas, 2019 (my photo) Exhibited by the ARTZ cooperative.

stippling technique, in different colors from black to dark green to yellowish-light green in order to create depth and give the plant its “fluffy” look, to use the artist’s exact term.

The Internet and content platforms such as Netflix have allowed artists to build bridges between traditional methods and Western styles and techniques, without even having to communicate in person. This is how artists absorb the advice and methods provided by the digital age, by taking techniques recorded and demonstrated online and giving them a living application in their own traditionally-grounded work. In parallel, the Internet has opened up a line of communication between the tribe and the entire English-speaking world, to form communities of artists who help each other. Artists can now benefit from forums to ask questions when they want to use colors to create specific effects. Edaakie says:

If there is a way that I want to try to do something, the Internet would have been a really good helpful tool. There are some artists that ask the same type of question and so when I start typing in my question it already automatically fills in the rest of it. It's all right, somebody already asked that question. (My transcription)

This allows Edaakie to easily access the techniques of artists around the world.

It's one way to train as an artist, to polish one's skills and become more and more versatile.

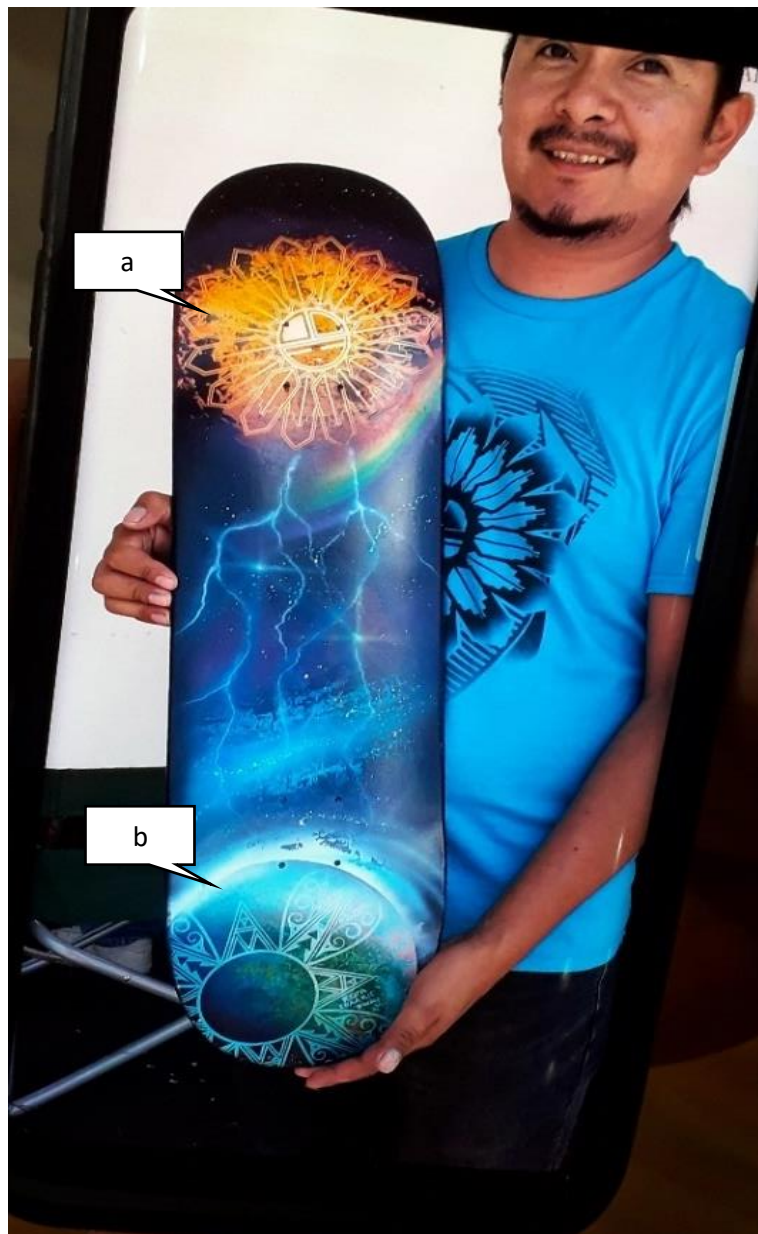


Figure 53: Keith Edaakie showing his skateboard representing the Creation Myth created for the indigenous market, using a stencil technique for the most intricate mandala designs (courtesy of Keith Edaakie, 2019).

Finally, digital or virtual art is also made haptic through the use of traditional techniques. The artist affirmed that the Zuni are always thinking about “innovative ways of creating art” (my transcription), and in the most recent years, acrylic artists have jumped on the bandwagon of using digital tools to create hybrid works. For example, one of the unique art trends in the tribe is the creation of skateboards adorned with tribal motifs, as illustrated by Keith Edaakie’s work in figure 53. On his skateboard, he represents a simplified depiction of the Creation Myth in a graphic design created on a computer. Edaakie explained his version of this scene of the myth to me as follows:

You can kind of make out the warrior figures right there [pointing at the stars...], these are the two stars represented [there]. The stars were actually sent by the Sun [a] [...], his bolt that was made out of a rainbow, and his arrows were lightning, and so facing those two stars on the arrow and shooting them down to Mother Earth. (My transcription)



Figure 54: Close-up of Edaakie's Sunface design. Note the purple and yellow in the background, underneath the stenciled Sunface motif

Once again, the Zuni artist paints traditional scenes of the Creation Myth while looking for ways to use colors to create something “traditionally innovative.” He is “just thinking of different innovative ways of creating or finding different substrates to paint on.” To make both the Sun Father and Water Spider in this type of graphic rendering, Edaakie equipped himself with a cutting tool, which allows him to print and

reuse computer-generated design stencils in various artforms from acrylic painting to t-shirt design. He was inspired to try the technique by video tutorials posted on Youtube by a Hispanic artist. He printed the Sunface (a) and Mother

Earth (b) designs he usually uses for his T-shirts and made stencils of them, then stuck the stencils on the skateboard and spray-painted them.

Basically, I spray-painted it, yellow, right in the middle, with a whole bunch of paint on it, and then the orange, then the red and a little bit of purple around it [see figure 53]. And then what I did is, I spray-painted the whole thing black, so covered it in black, and then take a newspaper, and then I put it around the board, then when I filled it out, that what created those textures. [see figure 54] [...]



Figure 55: Zoom on Edaakie's coffee tin technique, with the curved colors. See also the pieces of newspaper, and dripping technique for the stars.

[...] you can kind of see that texture around the edges where they were the newspaper peeled off and left some of the black and show some of the colors from there. And once it's dry, I added some more colors, and then the purple, the black. And then the stars [on figure 55] is basically dipping my fingers in white spray paint and just flicking it like that to create those little stars all along there, and the same way with this here, the blue and then the white, and spray-painted in black using the newspaper and then peeling off the black paint. [...] This was made the same way just different colors, you can see orange, the blues, the greens, and then the yellow just kind of painted on there and using the newspaper to show the colors. [...] Basically what I did is take a lid from a coffee can, and then I placed it as a stencil, and then I was able to create that round kind of shape here and create basically those little things. [...] Those are stencils, big

stickers put on top and then spray-painted. (My transcription)

For this skateboard, he chose classic Western colors, such as white to reddish-yellow for the sun, and blue-to-green tones for the earth and the water spider. Here, it is not the colors themselves that are digital, but the absence of colors revealed underneath the digital stencil which gives the colors their shape. While the stenciled lines of the Sunface and Water Spider are not actually colored, the shapes take on definite yellow and blue coloring through their juxtaposition with the spray paint. Edaakie uses digital technology to create a contrast between the neat graphic designs of the stencils and the saturated colors of the spray paint, a

considerable departure from the classic acrylic works of the tribe one generation prior:

Myself, with Elroy and Kandis,⁶⁴ we've also painted on skateboards. Oh, so yeah, I painted a skateboard for the Indian market [...] It's interchangeable because you can see on my Sunface design shirt. It's the same Sunface that I use, so you can pick up something that you created and then kind of mix and match as we go along. Like I said with that plot cutter that I have on my computer was able to cut out this stencil that I used to paint onto the board, [...] so instead of hand painting the design on there, I was able to use the big giant sticker basically to spray paint on there and it was, you know, trying to use, basically, whatever.

The interchangeable designs made with digital tools coupled with acrylics and spray paint show how technology is being put to the service of tradition, its tools assimilated to reinvent traditional art. The six traditional colors do not even need to be exhibited anymore. Now the pride of the artist lies in a growing range of skills developed around both style and color. The new and currently growing tradition of digital art or the use of digital tools as part of artistic creation is grounded in the acquisition of a diversity of approaches, techniques, skills and graphic designs, borrowed from other cultures and then assimilated within the repertory of Zuni motifs through their juxtaposition on the "canvas." Tradition is thus recreated through the rendering of traditional scenes in an updated medium, substrate, and style.

Faced with the financial uncertainties of the health crisis, artists have been inspired by digital markets and have begun developing digital art as a medium for a new type of traditional art, with the appearance of new approaches to color based on the development of technology and innovation within the tribe. The notion of tradition is necessarily evolving with this use of technology, and it must

⁶⁴ Elroy Natachu Jr. and Kandis Quam are both Zuni traditional modernist painters and ARTZ associates. One of their many modern touches to tradition discussed in section 2.1.2.

be made clear that this evolution does not indicate a denial of Zuni tradition; on the contrary, it is leading toward a new sense of tradition that is in tune with the preoccupations of the current day, the survival of the tribe, and the renewal of Zuni culture, which is not in the process of disappearing, but rather in the midst of an important transitional phase.

2.1.4 Transposing Traditional and Ceremonial Clothing into Current Trends

As we saw in the previous section, the Zuni have begun to transpose their traditional colors and designs onto clothing. The t-shirts and caps designed by Jaycee Nahohai make use of the tribe's symbols — pottery motifs, clan symbols, and petroglyphs — all images that represent their culture. There is a manifest desire to use clothing as a display of Zuni identity. Tribe members can indicate their belongingness to their clan, their community, and their culture by proudly wearing symbols and colors on their chests, similarly to how they would display these elements via the traditional Zuni garments they wear exclusively during festivities and dances. To understand the importance and study the current trends of colors in Zuni textile, we will first focus on the colors of the traditional garments worn by male and female dancers and a quick overview of the kilts and capes of kachina dancers. From there, we will examine their influence on contemporary, everyday clothing trends. Out of respect for an agreement with the Tribal Council, the symbolism of the kachina colors will not be studied; this section will focus on non-esoteric elements in the costumes of dancers and kachina impersonators, and no ceremonial photos will be shown.

Studies on Ancestral Pueblo period fabrics show that the Zuni's predecessors were already quite skilled in incorporating color into their clothing. From the moment the Zuni had the means to dye fabric, they did so, and have since experimented with many combinations. In her 1957 article entitled "The Cultivation and Weaving of Cotton in the Prehistoric Southwestern United States," Kate Peck Kent notes that:

[...] eight colors may be distinguished. These are in order of frequency of use: brown (90); red (75); black (50); blue-gray (12); yellow (10); dark blue green (3) green (2); and dark blue-black (2). The numbers

are approximate, as they do not include the many examples of dyed thread. They do indicate, however, the relative importance of the colors. (479)

She adds that the blacks, browns and reds are frequent because they were found in a popular style of the time made with intricately woven pieces of fabrics called “Anasazi stripe twill,” a style with three alternating, colored vertical bands. Kent’s work confirms that Zuni ancestors were already fond of colors and had experimented with many aesthetically pleasing combinations, although according to her list of weft colors combinations for tapestries below, white, brown, and black remain the fundamental colors:

white [cotton]—brown—red
white [cotton]—black—red
white [cotton]—brown—blue-gray
white [cotton]—black—blue-gray
white [cotton]—brown—yellow
white [cotton]—black—yellow
white [cotton]—brown—black
white [cotton]—yellows (?)—blue (479, my additions in brackets)

Although Kent explains that exact dye compositions are unknown, research on kiva painting as well as ceramic painting from the Ancestral Pueblo period reveals relatively consistent use of the same pigments. Kent’s hypothesis is that the red dyes were derived from red hematite or iron oxides, yellow from ochre, and blue/green from copper sulphate. It is possible that the black and brown colors



Figure 56: Kaolin with turquoise inlay (courtesy of the Turquoise Museum, my photo)

were derived from the same pigment, such as manganese whose shade varies from black to brown with green/blue/purple highlights. Accompanying the basic black or brown were either red, blue-gray, yellow, or black. The ever-present white is the natural color of the cotton, sometimes made whiter with chalk or kaolin. Since the Ancestral Pueblo period, white cotton has been used to provide a pleasing contrast with other thread colors, as well as embroidered (and brocaded) patterns (512). This underlines the Ancestral Pueblo tendency to associate colors with a contrasting, plain-colored fabric.

Zuni ceremonial attire has been thoroughly analyzed in the works of three different women scholars published between the early 1900s to the 1940s: first Stevenson, followed by Bunzel, and finally Roediger. They reveal that in the 1400s, a century before contact with the Spanish, clothing was rather different compared with the tri-colored textiles and many possible combinations of pigments in use during the Ancestral Pueblo period. Most Zuni men's dresses were made of woven cotton, tanned deerskin and yucca fibers (Roediger 17),. Roediger explains that "It is a well-known fact that cotton is the hardest of all fibers to dye. Specimens of native dyed cotton are rare and the colors are always drab or faded (102)." It is probably the unavailability of natural pigments that would hold properly when used to dye cotton fabrics that reduced the color scheme to white. This means that the color scheme for fabrics was reduced to white (cotton), tan/beige (deer skin), and grey (yucca fiber). To add color, the plain-colored apparel was then decorated with bright feathers, such as macaw or eagle feathers. This use of many-colored feathers shows the Zuni's collective desire to incorporate color in their clothing even before they developed reliable and long-lasting dyes in bright colors.

In the 1500s, the Spanish introduced wool to the Zuni, and it replaced the use of animal skins, feathers, and cotton textiles for many garments. Nevertheless, the Zuni kept using cotton garments for ceremonies; cotton was perceived as being more precious, since it was more challenging to find, with only small quantities available for harvest until it was later cultivated on a larger scale (52). However, the arrival of easily dyeable wool did allow the Zuni to experiment with more colors, as wool absorbs and keeps color better than cotton fibers. From this material, the Zuni created the traditional manta in the early 1800s, a black woolen garment made from commercially carded wool woven in a diagonal twill and embroidered with a hill and vale design. Stevenson describes the manta as an often-worn over-garment, a sort of “gown [...] of black diagonal cloth, woven in one piece, embroidered at top and bottom in a dark blue (*Zuñi Indians* 370).” The richer hues of the manta were a novelty after the previously worn greys and beiges, making it a very popular textile garment, and the Zuni produced many dark fabrics with blue embroidery in the 1850s.

The arrival of commercial textiles marks an important change in Zuni apparel. In her 2000 article “Perpetuating Ritual Textile Traditions: A Pueblo Example,” Laurie D. Webster claims that the period of time between the late 1800s and early 1900s also marked the availability in the Pueblo area of “commercial cotton string, cotton batting, and bales of raw cotton (390).” These commercial products were embraced, as they made production easier, and a resurgence in Zuni weaving followed. A variety of dyes was subsequently developed. Indigo in particular was so popular that the Zuni invested in an impressive trading network to obtain the dye and was even imported some of it

all the way from Mexico (Roediger 102-5). Elroy Natachu Jr. explains an ancestral Zuni indigo process that was used to dye fibers:

And that's what a lot of people are surprised about is that our ancestors actually had trade routes that range from the coast of California to the very tip of Mexico. Because indigo can only survive in South America, so from there, the indigo for dyes was harvested from various parts of Mexico because they would actually be grown in the jungle-like atmospheres like in South America. They're very short. They're about the size of a finger inlay. And then from there, they would use a year of fermentation process that would actually cause a chemical reaction and that's when indigo pigments would occur. And you can see that a lot in all public textiles that use indigo because of association to water and its resemblance to that coloration a very deep ocean-like water. (My transcription)

However, Roediger observed that since 1880, commercial aniline dyes have taken the place of native, vegetal coloring. The deep blue "ocean-like water" shade of indigo is still imitated to create the lovely embroideries that color contemporary traditional Zuni dresses, though components that are less complicated to obtain have replaced indigo dye.

Starting with the woolen and cotton garments described by Stevenson and Cushing in their late 19th-century studies, there was a steady transition towards many-colored textiles. In the early 1900s, the Zuni wore white cotton or calico shirts untucked over loose cotton trousers, and moccasins dyed red probably with either ochre, hematite or iron oxides (Stevenson, *Zuñi Indians* 369-71). During the same period, they also started borrowing new methods of dyeing developed by their main rivals, the Navajo. They used the leaves, stems, and roots of plants and shrubs, piñon gum, and a mordant of juniper ashes to make the color last. This allowed them to produce black, dark red, green, various yellows, and an indigo-like color created with other plants.

Zuni fashion up to the late 1990s still relied on similar fabrics, such as the manta discussed above. Leighton describes the outfit worn by more conservative

women in the 1990s, consisting of a black and indigo manta made from two pieces of heavy woolen cloth. The front and back pieces of the garment were held together with a binding of red and green yarn. Next, a white apron called a *pittone* was placed over the manta. The final touches were white buckskin moccasins and leg wrappings, reserved for rituals and galas (Roediger 8). This traditional outfit demonstrates the tribe's attachment to wearing various colors, with the introduction of indigo-colored mantas. Similarly, the Zuni continued to wear whitened textiles decorated with intricate embroidery to provide color contrast; the mastery of some reliable materials, such as white kaolin, has been part of the tribe's savoir-faire for centuries. Roediger describes another traditional cotton ceremonial dress whitened with kaolin or other white clays that appeared in the 1900s. This plain-woven garment was decorated with a broad band of colored embroidery at the top and bottom (125). Embroidery was done in black and deep green, contrasting nicely with the white cotton material. This type of formal dress, coupled with an embroidered version of the black manta, includes the following articles according to Roediger:

Moccasins: Red (deer skin-stained)
Kilts: Indigo (wool/cotton-dyed)
Belts: Red— Green and black (seldom: blue)
Mantas: Black (wool-dyed)—blue (embroidery)
Miha: White (cotton-raw)—Green and black (embroidery) + many colored embroideries (yellow, blue, red and black)

Although the Zuni today use pre-dyed commercial fibers, the color code has not changed. The last two garments—manta and miha—are still a part of the ceremonial dress worn by dancers today, showing that for such formal occasions, the fundamental textile colors are still white and black, with red and green or black and green embroidery. To better understand the similarities and differences in current clothing practices, we will study the dresses worn by the Cellicion dance

group, who kindly gave me permission to use pictures I took of two of their dances during a 2019 performance. The Olla Maiden and Buffalo dance is one of the most popular cultural performances at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque. In both pictures in figure 57, we can observe a two-toned dress embellished with geometrical patterns. The dress on the top left is called a miha, while the one on the bottom left is an example of the manta. Comparing Roediger's illustrations on the right with the pictures of the performance on the left, we can observe many similarities. The dominant color is either black, for the manta, or white, for the miha, and both the historic and modern white dresses are decorated with the same embroidered patterns at the bottom.

Since the late 18th century, the Hopi have been the principal suppliers of embroideries and woven textiles, trading them to the Zuni for turquoise, shell necklaces, and of course, money. Consequently, most Zuni participating in ceremonial gatherings today have forgotten the meanings of the colors and the hard work necessary to craft the fabrics they wear. Elroy Natachu Jr. is one of the last Zuni weavers and embroiderers active in the tribe today. In an effort to revive the art, he is currently teaching his young apprentice, Kandis Quam, how to weave. This traditional art had almost completely died out, so there is great pride to be found in perpetuating the tribal savoir-faire and Natachu Jr. often posts interpretations of symbolic motifs in his Facebook thread destined to be read by tribe members. Over the course of two interviews in November 2019, he explained that the traditional colors for the embroidery are green, red, and black:

[...S]o the primary colors used in a lot of textiles for the traditional aspect, you got reds, greens and blacks, but then the only time you

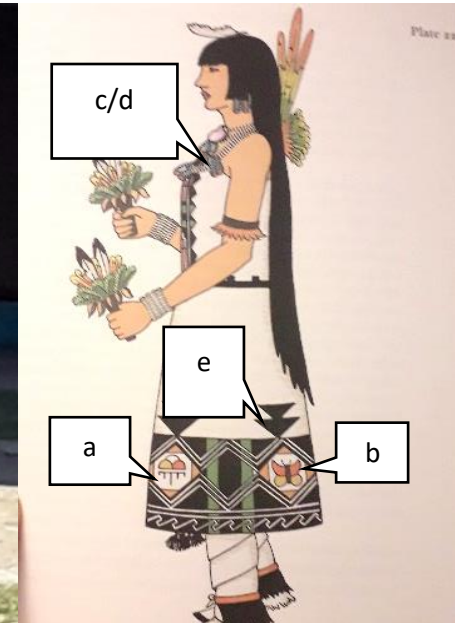


Figure 57: Buffalo and Olla Maiden dance, November 2019, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (my picture). Top right and bottom right, respectively: Plate 22, Women's costume, Buffalo Dance, San Ildefonso and Plate 21, Animal impersonation, Buffalo Dance (Roediger 133 et 137). Details: (a) Cloud Houses with raincloud symbol (b) Cloud Houses with butterfly symbol (c) Rolling clouds - no color (d) Heartline of the cape/dress - no color (e) Storm clouds - black (f) Traditional woven belt - red with touches of green and black (and sometimes blue)

see what are known as exotic colors are in the capes like the one that he's draped over his shoulder. And that one, [which is] what we call Mi Ha [white embroidered cape] or the embroidered capes or dresses. (My transcription)

The "exotic" colors he refers to are bright turquoise or bright yellows, the former being practically impossible to produce with locally-occurring natural dye components. The only part of the traditional miha that is known to make use of exotic colors and still be seen as traditional is this diamond-shaped space that portrays climatic and organic elements of nature:

That's where you see exotic colors like really bright yellows, turquoise [in the diamonds at the bottom (a)] ... And because of those, they're representing all of the colors that are in the world and all of the flowers that are derived from there, and there are oftentimes placed in what's known as 'Cloud Houses,' so for cloud houses they are predominantly plant life, also insects like dragonflies, butterflies those that are have an association with water or with, like, the harvest [such as the Sunface] and things like that because the bottom portion of that textile represents sort of the earth realm. (My transcription)

On June 6, 2019, Natachu Jr. posted a picture to his Facebook page of a white miha cape and gave complementary details about the miha embroidery. The diamonds at the bottom represent "Cloud Houses," which "contain various designs linked to moisture and germination." The designs within the "Cloud Houses" make use of "exotic" colors to portray colorful insects, vegetation, and water-bringing clouds; three different takes on the raincloud symbol are represented in detail (a). The main difference between Roediger's illustration and the 2019 picture is the shade of blue in the weaving, which was difficult to obtain in the 1940s. The 1940s variation of a butterfly in (c) was also popular for filling in the "Cloud Houses" space, as well as the dragonflies, which are much

appreciated by the Zuni due to their importance in the oral history of the Creation Myth.⁶⁵

Another cloud motif, the double-stacked downward-pointing black triangles in the photo of Olla maiden dancer and Roediger's illustration seen in figure 57 (e) make an interesting contrast with the white dress, representing "a [heavy storm] cloud formation [in the distance] that's found oftentimes along coastal areas [...] where there will be a cloud formation that causes a sinking action." This use of black to represent "the deep moisture of the earth" and coastal "storm clouds" confirms that it is a color traditionally associated with water in weaving.



Figure 58: Bottom part of Roediger's illustration of Shalako, with the "chevron pattern that represents water waves" emphasized in red (Roediger 49).

⁶⁵ In his 1972 translated legend of *The Boy Who Made the Dragonfly*, Tony Hillerman offers an English version of this episode from the Creation Myth. It is said that two children suffered from famine. The boy made a dragonfly out of cornstalks and grass to entertain his sister (28-30). He painted it with leftover ceremonial paint, using black for the eyes and painting the "spots that gives the butterfly wings their color" with red, yellow, and black pigments in stripes. The sister was filled with joy when she saw the creature and freed the dragonfly, asking the "being-which-flies-on-double-wings" to retrieve the yellow corn so they could be fed during winter (31). The dragonfly came to life and interceded for them with the Corn Maidens. In appreciation, the Corn Maidens provided sufficient food and made him a Ta'a'shi-wa-ni, one of the Corn Priests of Zuni (75). The creature's colors feature all the *a'witen/itiwan* colors, except for white, which is popular in ceremonial (and daily) designs.

Other parts of the miha are much less varied in color; dark green and black are the most represented tones. The alternation of black segments “represent the deep moisture of the earth,” and green segments represent “vegetation.” In an interview by Erin Ford for the *Grand Canyons News*, Natachu Jr. specified that the green vertical lines represent the male and the female willow that are always depicted in pairs (Ford, n.pag.) This representation of the willow can also be observed in Roediger’s illustration in figure 58. Emphasized in red is another recurrent pattern in the miha, what Natachu Jr. describes as a “repeating chevron pattern that represents water waves,” a motif of repeating, neatly stacked half-diamonds organized in one or two rows. The motif is created by letting the natural color of the textile show through between the green and black segments, giving the overall look of a white stencil within the traditional black and green colors. Here, the shape and its color has been dissociated; it is the surrounding colors that give definition to the shape. Natachu Jr. describes another traditional Zuni miha weaving pattern using this technique in part of his 2019 interview on the symbols depicted in the embroidery, with added information he provided on Facebook between brackets:

And the top portion, which is this part that you can see, it represents the [ripples on water, clouds formations and the] sky realm where you see the rolling clouds and then also this line represents [the soul of the embroidered cape/dress,] the heartline, similar to pottery where they have heartlines, textiles have those as well. (My transcription)

These bicolor green/black patterns have been frequently used in dancers’ costumes since the 1940s, and the geometric rolling clouds are a popular motif in pottery, too. The stencil-like technique of leaving them white in the weaving gives added context to Keith Edaakie’s technique of using vinyl stencils under

spray paint in his skateboard decoration discussed in section 2.1.3 (see figure 53); both pieces rely on the absence of color of color to delineate the motif.

Other than the red and green embroideries of the miha, garments in more



Figure 59: Olla maidens in the 40s, drawn by Roediger (Roediger 5). The predominantly red belt creates an aesthetic contrast with the dark manta draped over one shoulder.

subdued tones are elegantly assorted with brightly colored accessories. As available dye colors are currently much brighter, the Zuni enjoy using woolen fabrics on which patterns are created through masterful weaving techniques. Red, another of the traditional colors that Natachu Jr. mentions as among the “primary” weaving colors, is used for large woven belts and sashes, such as the buffalo dancer’s “red woven belt which held the kilt in place (Roediger 187).” The belt’s colors in the 1940s were virtually the same:

The most prevalent color scheme is composed of a wide center of red broken by black designs and edged with two stripes of green which in turn are bordered by two narrow black lines. Other combinations show a red center with white designs, a black and red stripe, and a final line of white on each side; or a red center with white patterns, and a stripe of blue-green, one of ultramarine followed by one of red, and the final edging of white. The

patterns are manifold geometric forms made up of small triangles and with lines repeated in different in varying combinations. (187-188)

Red is the dominant color in most belts (see figure 59), with edges of various other colors (green/blue and black usually), as in the current Olla maiden's dress. When this type of belt is worn with a manta, its colors are highlighted by the contrasting black color of the woolen cape.

Natachu Jr. explains his own weaving technique, which can be seen illustrated in his *Hetsululu* kachina painting and reveals a significant departure in the modern use of color compared to traditional woven fabrics:

And also, with the textiles, you can see all of the detail from the diamond twill patterning to the diagonal twill patterning. And that's a similar type of patterning that you can see in the loom that is set up in front. It's starting out as a tie diagonal, and then it'll go into a sort of a diagonal twill. But originally, the traditional coloration is a deep indigo with a sort of very dark brown coloration. (My transcription)

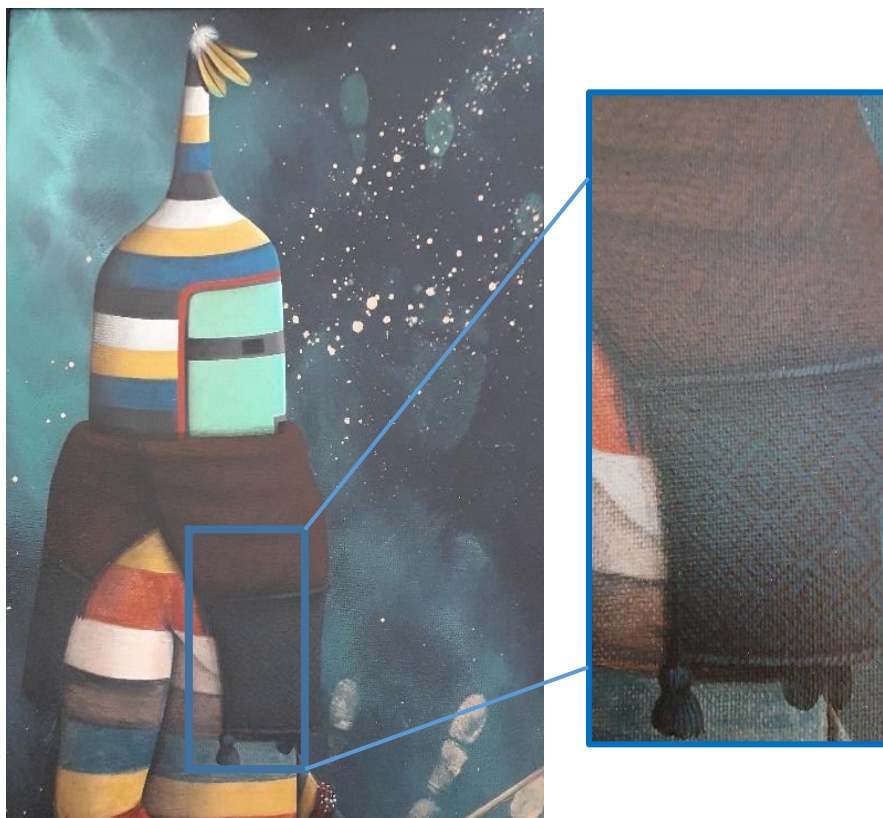
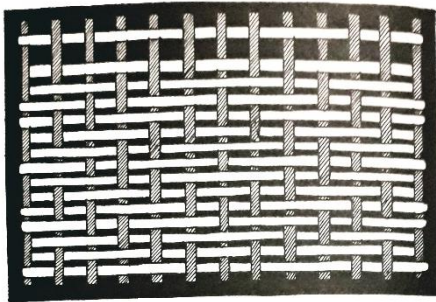
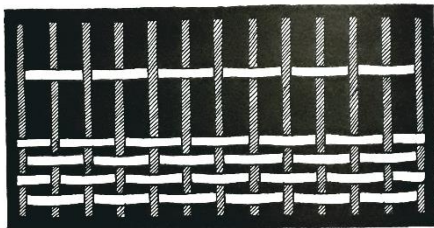


Figure 60: Left: Elroy Natachu Jr., *Hetsululu* Kachina, acrylic on canvas, 2019 (my photo). Right: detail of the diagonal twills in traditional dark indigo and brown colors.

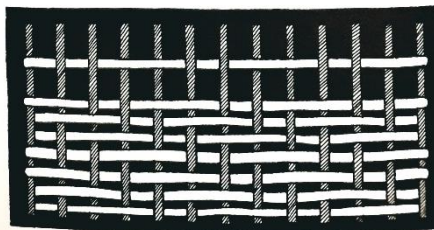
Natachu Jr.'s painting represents the original shades of the organically or minerally dyed yucca or cotton fibers, as opposed to current fiber colors, which make use of more vivid colors due to the shift away from natural dyes. This highlights the significant change brought about in Zuni apparel with the access to commercial dyes.



Diamond twill



Plain weave



Diagonal twill

Figure 61: Weaving techniques (Roediger 58)

Zuni clothes play with woven techniques to create patterns from uniformly dyed yarns. For instance, to create the dual-toned pattern in the Hestululu painting, the artisan would need to combine diamond twill and diagonal twill techniques to create dotted rectangles (Kent 511). As Roediger describes, contrary to the classic plain weave, the twill technique consists of building up the diamond-shaped pattern by alternating vertical and horizontal zig-zag weaves. In terms of color, diagonal twill creates dual color patterns in which the second color is only visible at a close distance. The diamond and

diagonal twill designs are created by the warp yarn, and the weft yarn creates more of a background fill color, though it is perceived as the dominant color of the fabric.

The aesthetic of solid-colored fabrics ornamented with discrete motifs has also been adopted by the Zuni in their non-ceremonial garments. One of the most



Figure 62: From left to right: Jeff Shetima and his totem fetish, dark grey monochrome shirt, Jaycee Nahohai sanding pearls made of clay, black short-sleeved dress shirt on black shirt with a colorful logo, November 2019 (my photos)

striking features of Zuni clothing, in general, is the sober approach to colors in their daily outfits. Men usually favor oversized, monochrome dark-colored or white shirts, with possibly a few hints of color in a logo or printed design. Keith Edaakie says that black is a trend, explaining that “[...] black is pretty easy because a lot of people like black and it goes with everything.” In *People of the Middle Place. A Study on the Zuni Indians*, published 1966, Dorothea Leighton and John Adair discuss a preference for this monochromatic approach already in place at the time, explaining that men favored “Levi’s and work shirts (8).” Today, women wear trendier, brighter colors, such as purple and pink, although generally monochromatic shirts featuring a tribal design are the most popular, as the sales of Jaycee Nahohai’s printed items attest.

From the designs produced for shirts, a variety of other tribal accessories such as caps and mugs have been created. They more or less follow the same patterns, with a few exceptions. The two caps in figure 63, for example, feature a design well known to the tribe, representing the macaw clan, *Mula:kwe*. The colorful design stands out against a sober black background. The red version of



Figure 63: Jaycee Nahohai's caps, sold via Facebook in spring 2021 (courtesy of Jaycee Nahohai). On the top left corner is the Kechipawan Polychrome that inspired the model, pictured in Lanmon's *The Pottery of Zuni Pueblo* (Lanmon 60)

the parrot is a classic motif portraying the red parrot or scarlet macaw (Munson 15) that brings rain from the south (and is thus associated with the sacred red *a'witen/itiwan* color). Lanmon and Harlow's study includes pictures of the Kechipawan Polychrome model of a "stylized macaw on a textile-covered perch" ca. 1375-1475 (61), from which Jaycee Nahohai got his inspiration. He reproduced the original red body of the bird exactly, while inverting the black and white segments. The blue-green color again refers to vegetation, identical to the color of the sacred dance kilts worn by impersonators of the rain-makers (Stevenson, *Plants* 2). As usual for *animalier* ceramic art, the bird is complemented with weaving patterns; the triangular perch features motifs dating to the Kechipawan period, such as the interlocking key pattern on the left side

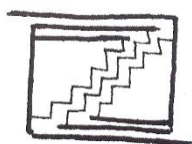


Figure 64: Interlocking key pattern (Lanmon 62)

(see figure 64). Jaycee referenced the colors of the bird with identical touches of color on the visor, top button, and eyelets.

The artist has promoted these items with the hashtags *#ParrotClan* and *#ZuniClanSeries*, and the diversity and bright representative colors of the bird on both versions have become a good selling point, quickly appealing to the macaw clan. Modern clothing displaying clan membership motifs and colors is an important visual symbol of belonging, corresponding in many ways to the European tradition of heraldry. John Gage calls medieval heraldry “visible tokens of kinship” (81), and argues that it developed a “language of blazon.” For Pastoureau, blazons are visual emblem codes that contain the kin and clan systems. According to him, European emblems from the Middle Ages still influence today’s visual color codes, in flags, business logos, football jerseys, etc. (*Héraldique* 8). Though Zuni clan images are quite different from heraldry, with its connotations of chivalry and the knightly visual imagination, Pastoureau’s concepts of “identity, kinship, pictures” and “symbols” are useful for our understanding and show similarities to the way in which Zuni clan membership communicates kinship through the identification of the mother and father’s clans, and the attribution of certain roles and responsibilities for each clan, which further serves to define identity. Thus, clan visuals can be seen as Zuni emblematic blazons.

In Zuni blazons, colors contribute to the creation of easily recognizable symbols. As in heraldic blazons, the colors are not just hues, but also living colored objects, such as the Golden Eagle of the clan of the same name, or the evergreen oak of the *Dalupts’i:kwe*. The coyote clan also refers to fur, since members of the coyote clan are responsible for tribal hunts. This means that clan effigies and colors are hereditary symbols employed to distinguish individuals, armies, institutions, and other groups. They have developed into many different

emblematic blazons, blending traditional designs with innovative and modern ones. For example, some of EdaakieArt's T-shirts sold at the visitor center a couple of years ago represent the birth of the first two clans: the deer and the bear, each of them represented by one of the *Ahayu:ta* twins. Analyzing the colors of the T-shirt logo, which reproduces the clan's emblematic blazon, we can uncover hidden symbolism. On the first T-shirt, Edaakie designed the *Ahayu:ta* twins with a yellow/blue color code, which corresponds to continuity of life according to the Zuni notion of complementary color pairings (see section 1.3.1). The second T-shirt, to the left, is an emblematic blazon of both the *Yadokkya* (Sun clan) and the extinct *A'bo'ya* (Sky clan.) Contrary to other clans, the Sunface gathers the clans together, as it symbolizes all the colors of all the clans, deities, and Beast Gods. The Rainbird is painted on the background in a pottery design as a nod to the rain-bringers and the responsibilities of the rain priests and many other secret societies; rain being the main preoccupation of the Zuni before they had access to running water.

The combination of monochrome colors and pottery or weaving patterns and symbols found on t-shirts and caps is similar to most traditional garments. The Zuni usually celebrate their union with the supernatural through dances, prayers and chants, and tribal dancers wear traditional black or white outfits during ceremonies, which are woven and embroidered with colorful symbols and decorations by few select members of the tribe or by Hopi traders. Similar styles are also developed by Natachu Jr. who combines his interest in weaving and embroidery with the Zuni's favorite monochromatic fashion look to produce colorful traditional patterns printed or embroidered on the everyday clothes that they love to wear. This usually takes the form of a solid black or white item



Figure 65: Elroy Natachu Jr., gold miha patterns, metallic gold vinyl on black shirt, 2019 (courtesy of ARTZ Gallery).

decorated with Zuni embroidery (diamond and diagonal twill patterns) or pottery designs (varieties of cloud symbols.) The influence of ceremonial dress on everyday clothing is even more apparent in the miha-patterned shirts sold by artisans like Natachu Jr., depicted in figure 65, and described on the ARTZ website as follows:

Design Description: The image is based on a Pueblo Embroidered Miha (embroidered white cape), depicting moisture-based image [sic] (i.e., massive storm clouds, rising/falling clouds, sky symbology, etc.). Butterflies depicted in flight are a representation of messengers to the spirit world.

Design Pattern Material: Metallic Gold Vinyl

Shirt Material 100% Cotton Soft Style (Gilden) (Natachu, “Miha with Butterflies” no pag)

Natachu Jr.’s increasingly numerous weaving achievements displayed by the ARTZ cooperative elicit the interest of tribe members in this ancestral space. He hopes in this way to revive interest among future generations and to teach them the practices that are part of the Zuni identity. The colors in the embroideries

have special meaning, and sacred colors are treated very different in weaving than in other artforms. Weavers like Natachu Jr. bind together the past with the present by using unique modern forms and blending traditional colors with other more surprising elements. For example, in figure 65, we can see the traditional black of the miha retained in the black base color of the t-shirt, while the traditional green embroidery is replaced by the gold vinyl. We can also see the classic designs found in the “cloud houses” such as the typically multicolored dragonfly or the a *’witen/’itiwan* colored Surface. The replacement of the traditional color code with the use metallic gold provides a surprising and eye-catching contrast while retaining a certain aura of sophistication. The traditional colors are no longer visible, but are imagined and hinted at through their association with the patterns, as will be further studied in section 3.3.1.

The shift from manta to t-shirt is fairly recent, and even so, the current trend is to wear printed versions of similar designs to those found on traditional clothing. Traditional embroidery patterns still prevail, featuring the geometric forms that have been used to embellish textiles since the Ancestral Pueblo period. This allows the tribe to wear comfortable ready-made clothes that are still identifiably Zuni, and to make a distinction between ceremonial dress and daily attire. As the Zuni sense of fashion seeks out striking combinations of colors, this



Figure 66: Keith Edaakie, T-shirts, 2019 (my photo) Available in ARTZ,

also means that not every color is symbolic, even when it comes to their use in traditional ancestral arts, and this is undoubtedly the most significant change in the color choices of the tribe since the 20th century. Scholars have always wanted to see the sacred and magic in some purely aesthetic choices. But why does Natachu Jr. use gold vinyl? Because the contrast is pleasing, and the shininess of gold quickly catches the eye, as well as the artist's personal fondness for this color, as we will see further in section 2.3.3. Why make an indigo-colored manta? For the aesthetic pleasure of using a brighter color than in the black version. A tourist asked one of the Olla dancers who performed at the IPCC in 2019 why her cape was purple; these "exotic" colors seemed to disturb the viewer who had expected to see traditional colors. She answered him that it was simply her favorite color! This is why many combinations of colors can be found in Zuni shops; clothing designers notice contemporary trends, and color their wares accordingly.

However, these "exotic" colors are not void of signification. In October 2018, to show their support for Breast Cancer Awareness month, Keith Edaakie and Leanne Lee, owners of EdaakieART, printed a limited series of "Breast Cancer Awareness shirts" (see figure 67), using the exotic pink color to replace the original turquoise blue color of their deer shirt design. The pink version is printed on a dark shirt, with or without the pink ribbon symbolizing the fight against



Figure 67: Keith Edaakie, pink shirts for Breast Cancer Awareness month (courtesy of Keith Edaakie)

breast cancer. In this way the artists perpetuate their tradition of wearing symbolic colors, but this time to support a contemporary cause. Many Zuni people followed the trend and included a touch of pink on their clothes during that period.

The historical assimilation of foreign colors such as Mexican indigo, or the Hopi-influenced black-and-green-on-white miha, followed by the Euro-American contact that brought the Zuni industrial fibers and dyes, has caused many changes in the textiles and colors used in Zuni clothing over the last two centuries. Nevertheless, the core practices of traditional Zuni clothing decoration, meaning the association of colorful geometric patterns and pleasing color combinations and contrasts, are still in use today, and the tribe's traditional patterns are perpetuated using both the historically traditional as well as new, contemporary colors. Whether the choice is aesthetic, esoteric, or made out of solidarity for a cause, color in Zuni clothing is always significant. In the embroidered miha, the traditional greens and blacks symbolizing nature and water anchor the cloth in the Zuni cultural landscape. However, today the Zuni wear more and more "exotically" colored clothes in bright purple, pink, blue, and more, showing us that Zuni clothing colors now reflect individual personalities and the causes that are important to them, while also displaying identity markers such as their belongingness to clans, not only in ceremonies but in everyday life as well.

2.1.5 The Explosion of Color in Ceremonial Accessories: Shields, Tablita, and Feathers

Though the use of color symbolism is more rigidly observed in ceremonial accessories, these complements to ceremonial garments demonstrate a similar color evolution, with significant changes in the materials used and styles of the symbolic motifs, as well as a slow integration of new colors that were not included in the original *a'witen/itiwan* color system. Just as they enliven and embellish their relatively sober daily outfits with touches of color, the Zuni also give great importance to the role and signification of colorful accessories in clothing decoration. There are similarities in the traditional dress of different Pueblo tribes, like the weaving patterns found on the miha shared between the Zuni and the Hopi. However, each tribe distinguishes itself in the design of other accessories, such as moccasins, paraphernalia, and regalia. Some of the most important changes involve painted moccasins, the colorful selections of feathers cherished by the tribe, and the design of ceremonial accessories such as back shields and *tablita*.

In order to study the changes in moccasin decoration, we will first briefly retrace moccasin color history. In her analysis of Zuni clothing, Matilda Coxe Stevenson observed two basic types of moccasins: the first is for the men, made "of deerskin; well-tanned, and colored reddish-brown, or occasionally black; they have rawhide soles, and are fastened on the outer side with silver buttons (*Zuñi Indians* 370);" the second is for the women, which are "white moccasins with polished black soles (371)." This was still the most common style in the 1940s, with brown deerskin for men and white deerskin for women (Roediger 127). However, from about 1915 onward, access to leather dyes and paints made it easier to transform moccasins into a colorful accessory. Ceremonial moccasins

display sacred colors in a constantly evolving variety of patterns. In her 1916 *Notes on Zuñi*, Elsie Clews Parsons noted the turquoise and orange theme for the male dancers' moccasins during the five day-long *Hilili* dance (221). In 1941, Roediger noticed significant changes in dance moccasins "with turquoise blue paint covering the body of the footgear, the cuff, and added pieces in front being stained red or yellow. The sole is black and highly polished (127-28)." Both the red-orange with turquoise and the blue-red-yellow-black combination on white-colored moccasins show how the application of a *witen* colors has transformed plain footwear into a fashionable accessory to be proudly worn for Shalako and other celebrations.

During my November 2019 visit, I was lucky to see many moccasins as the Zuni prepared for Shalako. Contrary to masks, which the Zuni strip and redecorate for each celebration, decorated moccasins are kept and used for other dances. The younger generation prefers personalized decoration, so the artist

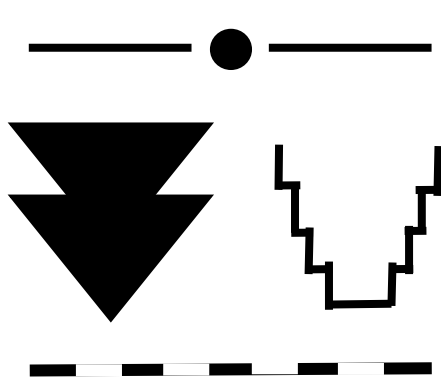


Figure 68: Top: heartline symbol; left: black storm cloud symbol or "thunderclouds"; right: reversed terrace symbol; bottom: black and white Milky Way symbol (my graphics)

customizes them according to clan membership. After the artist fulfills his responsibility of painting the moccasins, the owner must to take proper care of them. Most of the colors on the moccasins are used to tell a story. They may portray elements of the sky, such as black and white line represents the Milky Way (see Wright,

Kachina of the Zuñi 54, and at the bottom of figure 68), terraced storm clouds, reversed terrace symbol, etc. A black band interrupted by a dot may represent a heartline symbol, similar to those decorating the neck of a pottery vessel. The

four *a'witen* colors are dominant in the design, and all six *a'witen/itiwan* colors, yellow, blue, red, white, multicolor and black, are depicted to add to the story on the moccasins and may refer to deities, directions, their kiva colors, elements of nature related to their clans, etc. This also shows how the acrylic paint with which the moccasins are decorated allows the artist to express creativity with longer-lasting colors, transforming the moccasin into a symbolic and aesthetic accessory to be displayed during many dances and ceremonies.⁶⁶



Figure 69: To the left, Käkäli (Eagle kachina) Hilili winter dance (Bunzel, Zuñi Kachinas, 1066) and to the right, Eagle kachina of the Hopi (Roediger, 149, Plate 24)

The same principles have been applied to ceremonial regalia and other accessories, which used to depend predominantly on the natural color of the animal hide from which they were made, and are now colorful pieces since the Zuni have taken advantage of easier access to paint and dyes to decorate them with the six sacred colors. To better understand this evolution, we can compare

⁶⁶ The 21st century marks the beginning of a clear division between everyday and ceremonial footwear; currently, well-known brands of commercial sneakers have replaced moccasins for daily wear.

different illustrations of an eagle costume from over the last century in figures 69 and 70.



Figure 70: To the left, the Eagle Kachina Clemhoktoni (Wright 111) and to the right, Eagle dance, IPCC, November 2019 (my photo)

The eagle dance is very popular within the tribe. The joyful impersonation of the bird is as impressive as the costume decorated with eagle feathers. This tradition presumably comes from the Hopi *Hilili* winter dance, which has taken root in many other tribes. According to legend, a visiting Hopi introduced the eagle kachina to the Zuni tribe during visits in 1910 and 1912 (Wright, *Kachina of the Zuñi* 112). The Zuni have since assimilated the dance in their own way in an unmasked variation, which can therefore be performed in public. In 1917, Parsons observed the Zuni version of the *Hilili* dance and described the standard turquoise-and-white or white, red, green and black dance kilt (Parsons, *Dance* 186). A decade later, Bunzel described a similar costume as a “white kilt with a band of blue, embroidered sash, blue moccasins” (see figure 69). The illustration of the eagle kachina by Duane Dishta in Wright's 1985 *Kachina of the Zuñi* in figure 70 (left) also portrays a blue and white kilt ornamented by a rectangle yellow and black rain symbol. Finally, for the eagle dance performed at the IPCC in November 2019 (see figure 70 right), the dancer wore a similar blue kilt with white bands. The dominant blue and white colors of the kilt seem to be stable

from the past century onward; the color blue is an important reference to the blue sky, the realm of the bird.

"The eagle is the chief of the birds, and so he wears the shield on his back," Bunzel informs us (*Katcina*, 1066-7); the shield on the dancer's back is of the same blue color and is edged with a red hair-like material. Bunzel and Roediger describe it respectively as a "shield of buckskin painted blue and bordered with a fringe of red hair" (*Zuñi Katcina*, 1066-7) and a "long, flat plaque or shield of buckskin edged in red horsehair" (Roediger 194-195), although the natural fiber fringe has since been replaced by synthetic hair in contemporary dance costumes. The shield portrays the multicolored *a'witen/itiwan* colors of the sky, with red and blue as the dominant tones. However, we can note changes in the shield's contemporary design. The red zigzag pattern that originally framed the shield in Bunzel's illustrations has disappeared, while the two black lines that ran across the center of the shield have been replaced by the black and white Milky Way symbol, framed by red, yellow, and black lines representing the Sun (see



Figure 71: Black and white Milky Way pattern, framed by red, yellow lines and white bands (my graphic).

figure 71). The most striking difference in the modern design is the addition of the Sunface on the shield. The eagle is an animal of the sky and a son of the Sun, roaming beneath its warmth and protection; the symbol is even more fitting as the *K'yak'yali* eagle clan is logically associated with the multicolored direction, along with the *Yadokkya*, the sun clan and the *A'bo'ya*, the sky clan (now extinct).

Parsons explains that shields such as these are the armor of supernatural beings related to the sky. She describes a similar shield used for a dance performance impersonating the *Ahayu:ta* twins: on their backs were shields or plaques decorated with two turquoise panels divided by yellow and black lines and white rectangular patterns on top of the upper panel and at the bottom of the lower one. Around the plaque was a fringe of red yarn. This description indicates that the *Ahayu:ta* twins, sons of the Sun, carry the same paraphernalia as the eagle dancers. The twin's shields present some slight differences, but it is still evident that the colors applied to ceremonial accessories are related to the sacred *a`witen/`itiwan* color system.



Figure 72: From left to right, illustration of a *tablita* (Fewkes 26-28); Tablet headdress worn by the Zuni Corn maidens (Roediger 67), IPCC Dowa:Kwe (corn clan) Dance Group, Zuni Pueblo in 2021 (courtesy of the IPCC).

This connection to the *a'witen/itiwan* colors explains why, though contemporary models make use of the brighter colors associated with modern acrylic paint, regalia and ceremonial paraphernalia rarely deviate too far from their original, traditional decorations. This can be seen in the costumes of the Corn Maiden dancers as well. The peculiarity of this dance comes from the fact that it is performed exclusively by male impersonators of the Corn Maiden, a female supernatural being. It is an easily recognizable dance because the dancers hold corn husks in their hands and wear a tablet-shaped headdress, or *tablita*, three versions of which we can see pictured in figure 72, from the oldest to the most recent. Donned by the dancers every four years to welcome back the Corn Maidens, the *tablita* is part of the ceremonial paraphernalia referring to the sky; its terrace-shaped top seems to imply that its wearer has his head literally in the clouds. The 1891 and 1940s versions pictured here are made of wood and deerskin. In (a), we can see designs that Roediger describes as "small, geometric wooden forms of the various directional colors [yellow, blue, red and white terrace-shaped cut-outs] ...set on the bandeau where the cross strips intersect (157)." On the most recent version in (c), we can see that this four-color set has

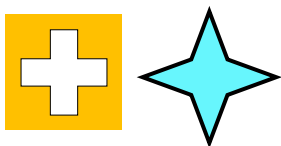


Figure 73: *Ahayu:ta* twins symbols, the morning and evening stars (my graphics)

been replaced by a painted terrace symbol on the left side of the Rainbow Man. The Zuni included a primeval blue Sunface surrounded by the various colors of the sky in the middle of the antique *tablitas* (b), which is absent in the 2021 version. In the earlier examples, the *Ahayu:ta* twins were represented by white crosses symbolizing their white color in the night (figure 73 left), which in the modern rendering is replaced by six four-pointed stars (figure 73 right) below the Rainbow Man. The twins are represented as the morning and evening

stars in copies made from the two main styles. The first star is black with a yellow border, while the second has a blue border (see close-up in (d)). These colors refer to their yearly positions: yellow for the northeast, and blue for the southwest. The six stars together also stand for the six members of the tribal council (corresponding to the six directions), as illustrated on the Zuni Great Seal (see section 1.1.4).

In Roediger's *tablita* illustration, a white crescent represents the moon, while Fewkes' illustration and the photo of the *Dowa:Kwe* dancer's *tablita* show the black and white Milky Way symbol; the Rainbow Man is represented with horizontal lines of color in Roediger's version, as well as more figuratively in the

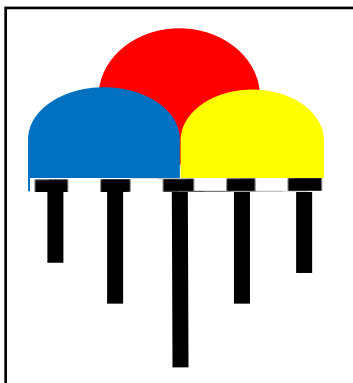


Figure 74: Raincloud symbol (my graphic)

2021 *Dowa:Kwe* costume. On the *tablita* worn by the *Dowa:Kwe* dancer, the most notable addition is the raincloud motif (see figure 74) appearing on the Rainbow Man's right side and on either side of the big blue star at the center of the headdress. This colored raincloud symbol always refers to the Sun father and the many colors of his realm, and seems to replace the Sunface in this role.

Although the modern headdress design is curvier and features subtler shapes in lighter tones, the colors used still represent the ancestral elemental symbols. However, unlike the shield decoration, whose fundamental colors have not changed, Fewkes reveals already in 1891 that *tablita* colors were not completely rigid. For instance, the exact same design was reproduced on the back of Fewkes' *tablita* but with a different color scheme: blue replaces the red parts of the *tablita*, and yellow and white replace the blue and red parts (26-8).

This shows us that in the tablet headdress, the essential criteria is to represent all the colors, regardless of their positioning, and that despite the mainly symbolic function of colors in ceremonial contexts, the *tablita* manages to harmoniously link both symbolic and aesthetic qualities.

The colors of the feathers that decorate ceremonial paraphernalia follow a distinct symbolic color code that deviates from those previously seen. As far as ceremonial accessories are concerned, feathers have long been associated with the most salient sacred color symbolism. On the *tablitas* we can see two raised feathers in the older examples, which are replaced by synthetic white down in the 2021 costume. The "downy white feather" symbolizes life itself since the feather is seen as the tangible representation of the breath of life (76). For the Zuni, the color white, when it is not associated with the east, generally symbolizes life (and, as we have seen, healing powers); Fewkes specifies that "[t]he Zuni name for cotton is 'down,' and down [...] is the sacred feather of life, the breath of the supernatural. It symbolizes the clouds and snow and is often stuck on the horsehair beards in place of eagle down (88)." Thus, in keeping with the significance of the harvest ceremony, the synthetic down that replaces the white feathers is meant to breathe life into corn, demonstrating that the natural material used in the past can be replaced as long as the color and texture of the new material still correspond to the appropriate symbols.

Besides white featherdown, eagle feathers are the most used decoration on dance regalia. In 2019, a musician accompanying the Cellicion dancers at the IPCC explained that eagle feathers are for protection. Their rather dark colors and variegated white, brown, and black hues are often mixed with more colorful

feathers. Bunzel's early example of the eagle kachina dancer already shows a mix of eagle feathers with bright red hawk and turkey feathers:

On his arms, he has wings made by sewing feathers to a strip of corn husk [...] At the top are two upright tail feathers of the eagle attached to a disk of turkey feathers and four red hawk feathers. At the bottom, four more red hawk feathers and a fan of tail feathers of the eagle. (*Katcina*, 1066-7)

It has long been customary for the Zuni to combine the colors and symbols of the feathers. Intermingling eagle, turkey, red hawk, and other feathers also stems from the aesthetic desire to create contrast by combining darker colors with bright colors. This use of contrast is also apparent in Roediger's description:

Around the crown is a green yucca fillet tied in front, and from the top wave long, downy white eagle feathers and red and yellow parrot feathers. At the back, two tall black and white eagle feathers stand upright from a great pompon of small black and white feathers, which is a part of the full and beautiful collar of like material. (194-5)

The Zuni sometimes replace or combine the reddish hawk feathers with bright red, blue, and green parrot feathers. This color mix is still common, as seen in figure 75 in the photo of a *Dowa:kwe* dancer in 2021, whose headdress is made of eagle and parrot feathers as well as tiny black crow feathers.⁶⁷



Figure 75: Feathered Headdress, *Dowa:kwe* dance group, 2021 (courtesy of the IPCC)

⁶⁷ Roediger describes crow feathers as a bad omen. However, she might have mixed up Hopi and Zuni belief. Her take on crow feathers as a reference to witchcraft and as omens of misfortune that the kachina wear to scare the children (75) does not fit Zuni beliefs, because the crow is the Zuni's guide and their representative in the realm of the Sun Father. She also claims that owl

For the Zuni, the combination of crow and parrot feathers is meaningful and symbolic, as it refers to a scene of the Creation Myth, illustrated on the canvas below. Consolidating the details given in accounts by Milford Nahohai, Keith Edaakie and Shaun Latone, the oral history goes as follows: during their migration, the *Ahayu:ta* twins presented two eggs to the Zuni ancestors. The first was the brilliant color of turquoise; the second was of a neutral, bland color, a “plain egg”. They asked the Zuni to choose one of the two, explaining that what comes out of the egg will guide them to their promised land, the Middle Place. The Zuni chose the most colorful egg,⁶⁸ while the second group took the remaining plain egg. From the colored egg emerged a crow, which became a totem of the Zuni. From the other egg hatched a magnificent parrot with scarlet feathers. The two groups thus separated. The Zuni followed the crow in search of their promised land, and this second group headed south across the border of Mexico.

Roscoe explains that this choice is not due to the color and that there is no moral concerning greed in this story. Instead, he says that it is the notion of “choosing” that matters, as making choices is the first step in ego construction:

In psychological terms, the desirable qualities symbolized by the macaw egg are split off from the undesirable qualities of the crow egg—the unconscious with its lack of differentiation and its unholy conjunctions with its lack of good and evil. Two forms of personality result—ego or conscious identity, represented by the ideal of k’okshi, and the unconscious, all that is not chosen, the ‘lost brother’. (156)

feathers are a bad omen, although we will see in section 2.2.1 that the Zuni see owls as the equivalent of an alarm system, watching over the houses during the night and keeping homes safe from looters. The Zuni consider the owl as a protective deity, just like the eagle, and its fine two-toned feathers are also aesthetically pleasing and so are often used as adornment during ceremonial dances.

⁶⁸ Some oral versions describe the egg as turquoise, others say it was full of colors.

This “ideal of k’okshi” is the ideal Zuni person, which is to “be good, be obedient, be attractive (21).” Choosing the egg is therefore part of the construction of the ideal Zuni self, contrary to the “lost brother.” Because of their choice, the Crow People continued to the Middle Place while the Macaw People were lost, as they did not built self-identity. Given that the Zuni themselves tell the tale while laughing and joking at their own attraction to beautiful things, just like the crow they identify with who is known for its attraction to bright shiny objects, Roscoe’s



Figure 76: Keith Edaakie, *Separation from the Ancestors*, acrylic on canvas, 2019. ARTZ Gallery, Zuni (NM).

theory seem correct. However, it also reveals a longing for the unconscious, the lost brother, the one they have lost touch with. This loss more than metaphorical; the lost brother is real to the Zuni, and the separation is a fragment of their history that they long to piece back together. They even look for their other halves, as Keith Edaakie suggests:

What was really interesting, and I guess also validating to us too, is while we were working at the Substance Abuse Counseling Center, we were over here at our local museum, and we just got done talking about the migration and how people travel from place to place. And then, I don't know where, there was some visitors that came in and there was an elderly lady, she was from the museum of Northern Arizona. She was asking about our migration, if we knew what our migration story was and how it went, so we're telling her, you know, we just actually got done talking about it and she asked us about this particular part. Like "what do you know about the people after they separated" and so, we told them about the two different eggs and how those eggs were chosen, and how our people chose the crow and came to Zuni. And then, she looked at us and then she told us "well, it was our people that chose the parrot clan" and that was our people that headed down south. And so, she was telling us that all our stories are the same except once we get to this point where we separate, and then it's different. We have our own stories and we have our own way of telling these things, but she was telling us, you know, "our people were the ones that chose the parrot egg or were given the parrot" so it was like, just like, with that same thing is like, really validating that you know, this random person coming out of Mexico, Central America, just telling us that they have the same stories, they have the same ideas. (My transcription)

This meeting with the Mexican Indian woman lends accuracy to or at least calls into question the purely metaphorical nature of the Creation Myth that many young Zuni people see as only a fable. The Zuni also see the tale itself as historical proof of their inherited love of turquoise and colorful materials to replace the duller shades they associate with the distant past. This means that the mix of crow and parrot feathers on the dancer's headdress aims to reunite the two separated tribes as well as expressing a typically Zuni aesthetic sensibility.

These examples bring to light the clear differences between ceremonial colors and commercial colors. With regard to ceremonial objects, the Zuni still favor the heavily symbolic *a'witen/itiwan* colors for painted decorations. However, even if the base colors remain the same, they accept new materials, such as the replacement of natural fibers with synthetic hair and down, as long as the colors and textures correspond to the symbolic elements of the costume and are aesthetically pleasing. They have also replaced natural paint with bright acrylics, which facilitates the creation of modern designs such as those found on the *tablita*. Through these changes, we can trace the evolution in the way colors are used. While the colors used on some accessories remain frozen as much in space as in time, with unchanged meanings and symbols, other paraphernalia innovates with new styles while still using the same symbolic colors. Finally, we have also remarked upon Zuni's aesthetic preference for bright colors, which have quickly replaced the duller colors of natural fibers as soon as these brighter color materials were available. The "Crow People's" preference for turquoise and other bright colors has had an impact on other traditional Zuni artforms as well, and, spurred on by a growing admiration of the Western public, has greatly contributed to the rapid evolution in color styles and media over the past century.

2.2 Color Palette Evolution in the Principal Zuni Artforms

2.2.1 Experimental Pottery Colors: Enriching tradition with the Nahohais

The previous sections have shown us that the Zuni tradition is evolving and that once-strict color codes have become more flexible within the tribe (though this might not be apparent to non-Native art purchasers who may still confuse traditional art and primitive art—an issue we have discussed in the first chapter). It is clear that in any form of art, tradition has evolved, whether through technology (such as the use of electric Dremels and polishing tools for fetish carvings) and access to different materials (types of paint and gemstones for jewelry making and fetishes). But there is clearly a desire to adapt the old tradition and bring it up to date while capturing the interest and informing the new generation of the past, and to make the artist proud of his personal technique while portraying traditional visuals. In short, tradition nowadays seeks to bring forward the ancestral culture so that it is compatible with the modern world.

We have seen in section 1.3.4 that pottery, one of the most popular Zuni artforms, seems particularly rooted in unchanging color codes. Paul Elmore, the director of the Shiprock gallery in Santa Fe and a specialist in Southwestern pottery, explains:

Zuni pottery has been static; the paint, motifs, design did not move for centuries, especially in Zuni as they were far from main railroad stations and markets. In Acoma, demands went much higher than supply, thus pre-made pottery with commercial colors are now used on common basics. In Zuni, they favor shape over traditional material; the exact same visual but with commercial material and technique. (Personal interview, 2019)

The standard “visuals” are what are known as Zuni polychromes, a reddish clay coated with white to off-white kaolin, on which are painted reddish and black motifs. Contrary to Acoma pottery with its bold blue colors combined with a bright warm reddish palette, Zuni ceramic colors are so fixed that they have been used

to classify Southwestern ceramic work for centuries, with the establishment of traditional color schemes such as black-on-white, black-on-red, and black- or white-on-red wares. Traditional motifs such as the *deer-in-his-house*, the red bird, the Rainbird, the Spanish rosette/medallion, the terrace symbol, or depictions of sacred animals such as the frog must also appear on pottery in order for it to be considered traditional Zuni ware.

Despite the apparent adherence to tradition, the term *renaissance* concerning Zuni pottery was used by Will Roscoe in 1997 in a fascinating article on the Zuni berdache We'wha⁶⁹ ("*We'wha and Klah*" 95). According to Roscoe, this renaissance in pottery corresponds to a renewal of the tribe's interest in the artform during the 20th century. The notion of a renaissance was for Roscoe a way to save a type of art that was in risk of dying out by passing it on to the new generation, literally bringing back to life a soon-dead tradition.

The current poster child of modern Zuni pottery is Jaycee Nahohai. A quick look at Jaycee's work reveals a strong wish to go against the traditional Zuni color codes. Contrary to his grandmother, Josephine, he does not follow the black-and-red-on-white color scheme to decorate his pottery owls. As the son of Randy Nahohai, an artistic genius who mastered all the Zuni artforms, Jaycee keeps to traditional media and rituals in the making his vessels, such as offering prayers to thank Mother Earth when harvesting components, and he only uses natural pigments in his work, even if he does sometimes have to buy some mineral

⁶⁹ We'wha is the most famous Zuni berdache or *Ihamana*, an alternative third gender. Born with a male body, they are considered neither man nor woman, but dress as a woman and do women's work, without bearing children. They also are in charge of raising the family's children. We'wha became famous through Matilda Coxe Stevenson's publication. Though first perplexed by We'wha, Stevenson became close friend with the non-binary tribesmember, and concluded that We'wha was essentially a woman. (see Roscoe, *The Zuni Man-Woman* 21-22)

components such as ochres off the Internet. However, he has departed from using the standard colors that make traditional Zuni wares so recognizable.

The Nahohai family as a whole is well-known for their quest for knowledge concerning the artistic past of the tribe; they have investigated Zuni pottery designs and updated old motifs and colors. Edward Chappel worked with the Nahohai family and other potter families for years before he published his tremendous opus on Zuni pottery. Jaycee and Milford explained that Chappel was welcome in their house; Jaycee was only a child at the time, but both he and Milford still remember how Chappel asked to be part of the Nahohais' daily life. He recorded their conversations for his study and was thus able to understand the conception of each design with incredible accuracy. Together, Chappel and



Figure 77: Josephine Nahohai, Owl (my photo)
Jaycee Nahohai's private collection.

Randy Nahohai investigated old Zuni patterns in a continuation of Josephine Nahohai's pioneering quest for knowledge of traditional pottery. The Nahohai family wanted to give a second life to Zuni pottery's lost designs and unchanging contrasting color combinations. They collected ancestral vessels and shards, climbing up to the old villages such as the one on *Dowa Yalanne*, Corn Mountain, the flat-topped mesa closest to Zuni village on which the Zuni took refuge during the Spanish reign.

Chappel talks about Jaycee grandmother with great nostalgia. According to him, Josephine Nahohai (1912–2006) was:

[...] a central figure in the story of contemporary Zuni pottery because of the connective role she played in sustaining and transmitting cultural tradition despite coming to the work at middle age with modest artistic interest. ("Part iii" n.pag.)

Josephine Nahohai investigated old designs and formulas and passed on her savoir-faire to her family. She was famous for her expressive owls (see figure 77), which became an increasingly popular shape after 1940 when traditional Zuni jars ceased to be as attractive to foreigners. According to Chappel, "[o]wl figures, *mujuqi* or *mu-hu-kwi*, increasingly replaced olla [large water jars that women used to carry on their heads to bring water back to the village] as the purchasable product most publicly associated with Zuni potters." Josephine's work became so popular that it was partly responsible for the renewal of interest in Zuni pottery mentioned above. Her owls display a range of different colors: first there is the white slip, a liquefied clay slurry which is the monochromatic base layer applied uniformly over the vessel. The ratio of water and clay is not fixed, so there is always the possibility of the slip cracking during firing. Josephine Nahohai, like most Zuni ceramists, used white kaolin, concerning which Varichon specifies that "[it] is a soft rock of white color found in many deposits in all the continents. It's a pigment that gives an intense matt effect."⁷⁰ Josephine used to apply two layers of kaolin slip "with a rabbit fur or a rag." Chappel says that "[a] good vein of the white clay her family uses is now exposed by a road cut near Village of the Great Kivas, but Josephine preferred a source near Cubero, a Laguna village she could visit en route to Albuquerque or Acoma ("Josephine and Nat Nahohai" n.pag.)."

⁷⁰ My translation of the original text: "Le Kaolin est une roche tendre de couleur blanche que l'on trouve dans de nombreux gisements sur tous les continents. C'est un pigment qui donne un effet mat prononcé." (46)

She then applied different shades of red, from dark red for the beak to a lighter shade, closer to orange, for the body. Finally, the darker brownish-black is applied to outline the feathers. Her owl follows the ancestral Zuni color codes for pottery: red and black are usually used to decorate the vessel over the white background color.



Figure 78: Jaycee Nahohai, recent work, April 2021 (courtesy of Jaycee Nahohai)

Contrary to other ceramic artists such as his grandmother, Jaycee Nahohai does not work according to traditional color schemes but rather takes great care to avoid falling into routines of color repetition so that each piece is unique and represents his creative, experimental approach. During an interview in November 2019, he said:

After that, I just started developing [...and] exploring different techniques. And, that's kind of more or less how I started with just being more wild and creative with how I was trying to kind of come up

with a concrete concept of what I could do, or, you know, it was just the exploration of how to go about painting. (My transcription)

For his owls, which are the most popular of his works, Jaycee started with Josephine Nahohai's shape and colors, then slightly reshaped the body to make it more dynamic (such as positioning the wing so the owl looks like it's getting ready to fly). His use of color stands out in a market where all Zuni wares tend towards a similar appearance. He is "explor[ing] with a "wild and creative"

approach and does not let criticism stop him from becoming more inventive.



Figure 79: Jaycee Nahohai, first generation of brown (my photo)

According to Jaycee and his uncle, Milford Nahohai, colors need to be investigated and part of the artistic process is finding and mixing pigments. Just like his ancestors, Jaycee experiments with the natural materials available to him to find the best color tones. He is thereby perpetuating both family and tribal traditions of handcrafted pottery painting while using natural colors as a tool in an evolving artform. Jaycee takes pride in his color recipes and experimentations, and in November

2019 he divulged to me some of his most ambitious challenges. After



Figure 80: Jaycee Nahohai, Big Owl, November 2019 (my photos) A work in progress

experimenting with the ground-up remains of black pigment, he added some clay to give it a purplish color, and created what he named the “first generation of brown” (see figure 79). Then he added more Zuni clay, and the result was a new warm brown slip. He further experimented by adding kaolin together with Zuni clay. A final dark brown shade, which is one of his favorite colors to use, is made possible through a combination of kaolin and hematite with black manganese to darken the colors. For the big owl shown in figure 80, Jaycee applied several layers of different paints; he explained that the black color is a mix of mineral and vegetal pigments. He copied Josephine Nahohai’s trick of mixing dark pigments with the Rocky Mountain beeweed that she called “spinach” (Chappel, “Josephine and Nat Nahohai” n.pag.). This makes the uniform application of the paint easier.



Figure 81: From left to right: Jaycee's pale blue owl and his experimentation with adding some red pigments to create purple (my photos).

Another long experiment was conducted to create a pale blue paint, as pictured in figure 81 (left). The artist explained that this hue was especially difficult to create, but was finally achieved by mixing turquoise pigments with kaolin as a

binding agent. Depending on the paint, Jaycee uses either jasper or kaolin as a binding agent; for the potter, kaolin is an excellent binder, giving the paint a creamier texture and making the colors brighter, since adding more or less kaolin is a way to adjust the hue.

In 2019, he experimented with combining natural materials with red pigments to create a shade of purple. The recipe changes for every owl, as Jaycee is always taking risks and working with different color formulas. One of his signature slips is made with mica, which produces a very refined mineral slip that is usually polished to a high sheen and low-fired. Mica crystals are composed of aluminum silicate and potassium and are easily split into extremely thin elastic plates, which makes them practical to gather. Jaycee explained that mica gives a sparkly sheen to the pottery, and most of his owls take advantage of this eye-catching effect.

Some of his slips contain more resin, which makes them more like glazes. As we have seen in section 1.3.4, the initial color of the glaze evolves during the firing process. As Jaycee's recipes themselves continually change, and because he is using natural pigments, he never quite knows how the shade will come out before firing the vessel, so the final result is always a gamble. For instance, he has created a yellow ochre slip that becomes orange when fired; the different



Figure 82: Jaycee Nahohai, yellow ochre, ranging from orange to peach beige when fired

hues from tan to peach, that yellow ochre can produce after firing are seen in figure 82. This variability explains how even when using similar color compounds Zuni pottery never quite reproduces the exact same shades of color.



Figure 83: From left to right: Hematite powder which becomes dark when fired, manganese, and mica (my photos)

Jaycee presented to me some of the material with which he works, such as the sandy-colored hematite powder that becomes dark when it is fired, as does the rich brown of manganese. Each of his pigment recipes is unique and cannot be reproduced; he specified that once a batch is used up, it is nearly impossible to achieve the exact same color. So he recycles the remains, adds the same ingredients in proportion, and hopes for similar effects. He usually adds in different elements to give a unique color profile to each piece. For instance, he can use mica as just a slip alone or as a color wash. Each mineral comes with its own technique. Applying mica with a sponge claw will leave the mineral behind on the painted parts; the mica becomes visible once it is burnished. Some additions can be made to adjust the shade of the color, such as mixing in Zuni red ochre to make a lighter brown. Contrary to standardized commercial pigments, the result of such a mix is not completely certain, and the ingredients do not always allow the potter to blend according to the color wheel.

Experimenting with colors is complex, and some vegetal-based paints can even rub off after firing.



Figure 84: Jaycee Nahohai, Matsaki Inspired Ceramic, showing experimentation with yellow pigments (courtesy of Jaycee Nahohai).

Jaycee is particularly proud of his grey color, produced by mixing manganese and kaolin with mica. He has also used natural pigments such as beeweed, manganese, hematite, and ironstone on large flat pots, as well as mustard seed and resin, ground on a matate (grinding stone) with mica to make a fine powder before adding black manganese. The bright yellow he used in the pot in figure 84 is the result of yet another experiment, combining yellow ochre with other yellow pigments. This pot was inspired by Matsaki⁷¹ designs, adapting the motif of the Rainbird.

To create his pottery owls, Jaycee goes through several steps of clay preparation, shaping, and then decorating his work using a cathartic approach that mingles bold expressive strokes with meticulous detail work and stippling

⁷¹ As we have seen in section 1.3.4, Matsaki polychrome was produced from circa 1475 AD until the 1680s, at the time of the Pueblo Revolt. Typical designs represent stylized bird forms with abstract wings such as the one in figure 84, and other motifs such as circular forms, dots, semicircles, parallel lines, and squares.

technique. First, the family digs up the clay at Pia Mesa (Josephine Nahohai used to use clay from Dowa Yalanne, but the quality was not as good enough). Once they have dug up the rocky clay, they moisten it, then process it to remove impurities such as small rocks or dirt that could cause the vessel to crack during the firing process. When the clay is malleable, they add the temper, a material usually composed of the finely ground fragments of previously cracked or broken pottery which is combined with the clay in order to further prevent cracking during firing. Jaycee then starts shaping to the clay using the coil method to build the owls from the bottom up. He uses grit to place the tail and wings. Then he lets the whole piece dry and fires it a first time. Afterwards, he sands it, applies the slip, and polishes or burnishes it with a stone. After the piece dries, he can finally start painting the designs. He applies the paint in layers until he achieves the shade he wants. He then adds in the details and decorations, from the background to the foreground.

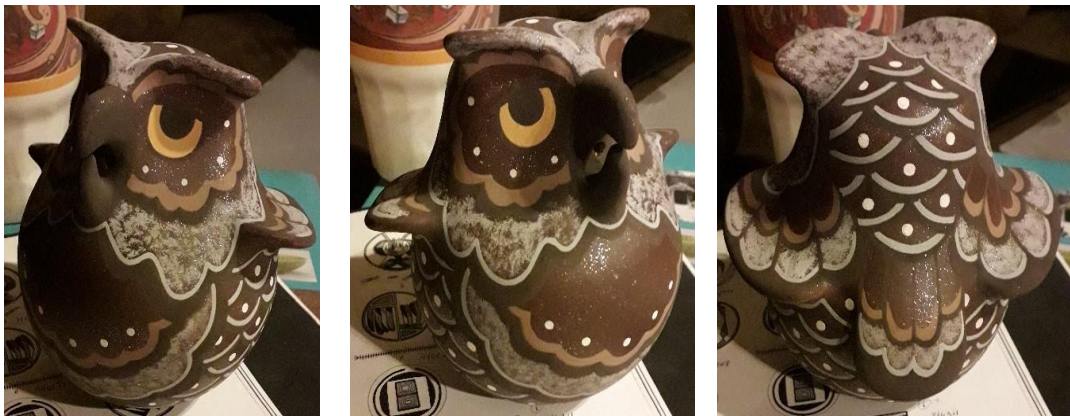


Figure 85: A typical example of Jaycee's owl, featuring one of his generation of browns and white stippling technique. November 2019 (my photo).

One of his preferred painting techniques is stippling (see figure 85), which consists in using a well-broken in brush to apply color in soft touches to create a fluffy looking texture in a lighter color (often white for Jaycee). Once the color is saturated enough, he fires the piece one last time, then goes over it with a

polishing stone. He also uses other techniques such as one he refers to as “whitewashing,” which consists of smearing the slip or paint all over the pot, then rubbing off the color in spots to provide texture. He uses thick, bold lines for the feathers, aiming to make the lines as symmetrical as possible, a style whose influence he attributes to his mother, Rowena Him.

Jaycee’s art pays respect to his family’s work while the colors he is using aim at creating something that is very much his own. His experimental take on colors has become his signature (as we will see in section 2.3), causing him to stand out as a contemporary Zuni artist. Unlike Noreen Simplicio's work, his owls are not immediately identifiable as a traditional tribal work because the color code applied for several centuries is no longer present.

Although the shape of his pieces is familiar to Zuni potters, the colors camouflage the Zuni nature of the artwork. However, the artist strongly opposes the idea that his work could be seen as completely contemporary. According to him, certain key criteria make his art fundamentally traditional:

firstly, he uses clay from the reservation, carefully pounded and processed just as it was by his



Figure 86: Jaycee Nahohai, Dragonfly Pendant, whitewashed technique on ceramic, 2019 (my photo)

grandmother. Secondly, he uses only natural pigments and minerals, and thirdly, he works with the form of the owl, which is a reference to tribal history. During a Zoom conference as part of the international *Colors and Cultures* conference in April 2021, Jaycee explained why he picked the owl out of all the traditional Zuni animals:

The owl is more of a late model alarm system for our houses! They were used to warn off looters. Uh, you know, they were looters coming

about or it was a warning sign to those that were, you know about to get [...] any of the harvests that were coming. I mean, it would go and warn them off. That was like our enemies, the Apache and the Navajos. The other thing too is that when you see certain owls, [...] those are called the storyteller owls and they're going to remind us, like, what stories are mostly basically on... The stories that is where we come from, our values [...]. But other than that, I think just personally for the owls, I took a liking to how they were coming out and so it's been a challenge to go and do something different. (My transcription)

The owls are protectors, beloved by the tribe, and their creation presents an artistic challenge. Jaycee's owls tell a story that is partly Zuni and partly his own, due to the expressive colors and shapes of each piece.

Jaycee renews the medium of pottery with an innovative approach that remains linked to his traditional background. He does not deviate from certain self-imposed rules, but his novel techniques are also greatly influenced by the colors and materials he brings back from his travels outside the tribe, and his extraordinary work is the result of close international cooperation, as he stands for a dynamic approach to Indian art and is open to influencing and being influenced by art from other countries. For example, after a trip to Japan in 2007, he brought back a certain greenish glaze which he still uses. Glaze is often applied to containers such as water jars that are meant to hold liquid in order to



Figure 87: Jaycee Nahohai's experimental pigments, November 2019

make them impermeable, but is also used for just for decoration. It lends solidity to the surface of the vessel solid, smoothens out the porous texture of the clay, and, depending on the recipe, can provide a nice shine, thanks to its vitreous components that fuse with the surface of the vessel once they are applied in a uniform layer over the bisqueware and refired. Jaycee says that this type of Japanese glaze may have initially had a place in Zuni, quoting Chappell and Nancy Yaw Devis' *The Zuni Enigma* and their theory on common Japanese and Zuni origins:

But if you go a little bit further back, that's when you start seeing the usage of the green, the green slip that came out of nowhere. And maybe... You're not, you know, that's just due to the fact that maybe that's when we started exploring, going to the Pacific to, you know, gather water from there for the medicine men that go there. Maybe that's why they have seen the Japanese come about back over. Who knows about that part of it. But we're, that's one of the things that is asked, like: Where did that slip come from? The slip, the paint? Where did that come from? You know, there's a good period in the Zuni pottery where that slip, that paint was being used. And there were, to a degree, it was a real dark green to real light, like lime or fluorescent, even to that point, but it died out after, I think, the Pueblo Revolt, just disappeared. Yeah. And Chapell has data. I think that's about the same time, after that technique died. (My transcription)

Jaycee's assimilation of new techniques is manifested in his work through the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity, a harmonious blend of ancestral savoir-faire and a mastery of the art of molding clay with a strong wish to modernize Zuni tradition by experimenting with colors and color materials. His willingness to travel and learn from other cultures sets an example for his fellow Zuni artists, and lends his own work and that of his family a highly influential status within the tribe.

Concerning the Nahohai family's quest to investigate old designs and record Zuni art in order to bring Zuni art up to date within the tribe, Chappell says:

Zunis in particular, have kept their pottery tradition alive through an era in which minority cultures worldwide have responded to radical change. Cultural survival, then, is a dynamic rather than static process. Beginning late in the last century, Randy Nahohai and other Zuni artists increasingly worked to reestablish and enrich the tradition within a community that has chosen to maintain a distinctive and complex web of practices and beliefs, especially spiritual ones. (Chappel, "Making Choices" n.pag.)



Figure 88: Jaycee Nahohai, working in his home, November 2019 (my photo).

The Nahohai family wishes to investigate the past in order to “enrich” tradition, giving it a full rebirth, or better, a renaissance, born out of the collaboration of Zuni and other cultures of the world in order to build upon the existing artform in a “dynamic process.” The difference between the Nahohais and other families of traditional artists is that in their search for renewal, they do not hide their attraction to difference and their interest in the other cultures of the world, which are at their service to create a new tradition that raises interest around Zuni colors. There is no frozen tradition in their culture, but rather one that is constantly moving and adapting, and the Nahohai case study shows them to be pioneers in renewing tribal tradition in an attractive and unexpected way. The new and ever-changing approach to tradition carried out by the Nahohai family opens up tribal art to the outside world in order to diversify old techniques and materials while simultaneously marking out a place for itself as a singularity within the community.

2.2.2 Silversmithing and Lapidary Art: The Evolution of A Color Scheme

As we previously discussed, the Zunis identify themselves as having a penchant for beautiful shiny things, just like their traditional animal guide, the crow (see section 2.1.5). The tribe attaches great importance to embellishing their generally somber-colored outfits with decorative elements, jewelry, and ornaments in varied colors to proudly display their origins and differentiate themselves from Westerners. Zuni ceremonial dancers demonstrate that there is no limit to the amount of jewelry they can wear during ceremonies; in 1994, Ostler and Rodee interviewed a Zuni woman getting ready for a ceremony who exclaimed that the more jewels there are, the better (Ostler, *Silversmith* 68). Jewelry is as much a way to show off as a traditional offering, and turquoise, coral, and traditional jet are particularly fashionable. This section will explore the different stages of change in silver jewelry-making techniques, from the most traditional examples to post-modern pieces whose color schemes and styles follow target-oriented customer trends, signaling the dawn of a new era in the Zuni lapidary color palette.

Though Zuni's mastery of lapidary work dates back to the Ancestral Pueblo period, the creation of jewelry was rare during this period, and it was not until the rise of Zuni silversmithing in 1917, spurred on by contact with Western traders, that the stones could be set in durable silver, causing the artform to rapidly flourish and meet with such success that it subsequently evolved according to the demand from Western customers. The jewels shaped by the Ancestral Pueblo people were slightly irregular and rugged, but the quality of the workmanship is impressive when considering that they painstakingly crafted each piece with rudimentary hand tools. While the techniques were polished through time, very

little change is visible in colors. Records indicate that native jewelry from this time period was not excessively colorful; early examples primarily make use of turquoise, bone, and wood, showing that generations of Native American people from the Ancestral Pueblo to the modern day have sought out turquoise for its beautiful variegated hues. The relatively non-friable nature of the stone made it the perfect material for Ancestral Pueblo craftsmanship; the Pueblo III period (AD 1150 to AD 1350) marks the appearance of the first inlaid turquoise pieces (Ostler, *Silversmith* 55, also see Lowry 78) as well as some beadwork, whereas the Pueblo IV (AD 1350 to AD 1600) took turquoise arts one step further with the invention of mosaic patterns, which were combined with the Zuni's already finely developed stone-cutting skills to create beautiful and imposing pieces (Ostler, *Silversmith* 57).

The ancestral enthusiasm for turquoise was fundamental in the explosion of Zuni silversmithing in the late 19th century, when, through increased interactions with other tribes, they adopted new techniques in order to further enhance the stone. Zuni silversmiths not only learned from the Navajo, they also bought silversmithing material from the Navajos as well as using Navajo tools such as the *La:niyahdi*, tongs and pincers, in the forging of the silver (60) and the creation of pieces with embossed geometrical or figural (for example, floral) designs. Because of this connection, Zuni silversmithing and lapidary work came to highly resemble that of the Navajo, with silver as a setting for turquoise stones in various shapes. The durability of the metal allowed the Zuni to work with setting colored stones in silver jewelry to create aesthetically pleasing color combinations, and this period also marks the first experimentations with mineral

and organic gems of other colors such as coral, which became one of the Zuni's most appreciated materials to work with.

Commercialization of Zuni jewelry dates to about 1917, once enough Zuni had been trained and had sufficiently broadened their range of silversmithing skills. On account of the already flourishing Navajo jewelry market, the Zuni at first created turquoise/coral/silver pieces exclusively for tribal use rather than for sale. However, the development of their craft soon drew the interest of the West, especially that of American trader and businessman Charles Garrett Wallace. According to Paul Elmore, director of the Shiprock Gallery in Santa Fe, the popularity of Zuni craftsmanship is entirely due to C. G. Wallace's trading post at Zuni, which made Pueblo art famous (Elmore, my transcription).⁷² Wallace's promotion of the tribe's growing silversmithing talent subsequently led to the establishment of a supply and demand market which greatly impacted the development of Puebloan arts and crafts. In his *Zuni. A Village of Silversmiths*, Rodee says:

When the trader C. G. Wallace set up business in the Pueblo in 1917, he said there were only five Zuni silversmiths there. He soon employed local Navajos to set Zuni-cut stones. For a number of years, Zunis glued the sets of cut stones to cardboard backings and sold them to traders, who in turn passed the premounted sets on to Navajo silversmiths. The trade worked both ways, with silver backs made for sale to the Zunis, and this arrangement proved to be profitable for both groups. (65)

⁷² It is important to note that the current generation of Zuni silversmiths disagree with this account. In 2019, a Zuni silversmith who wished to remain anonymous told me that in his opinion, Wallace was a boaster, and the people who wrote countless articles about Wallace's achievements with Zuni and Navajo silversmiths only ever considered his point of view. Wallace is portrayed as the father of Zuni silversmithing and jewelry in general, but the Zuni had already mastered both lapidary work and silversmithing before his intervention. Also, the account of there being only five silversmiths at Zuni prior to Wallace's arrival is contested, though there is too little record to comment this part. What Wallace did influence in particular were the forms used—to attract Western customers—and the rhythm of work, pushing Zuni jewelry to become a massively produced artform.



Figure 89: From left to right: Andrea Lonjose Shirley, Wolf kachina, channel inlay (Ostler 88) and unknown artist, Rainbow Man, mosaic inlay (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo)

The trader established the first versions of a tribal production chain, and advertised Zuni silversmithing to the Western world through his trading center, with its ability to ship goods by railroad from Gallup. The subsequent supply chain system significantly impacted the style of silverworking, as it led the Zuni and Navajo to work closely together. The Navajo influence can be seen in the thick, imposing features, which are at the origins of two of the most popular Zuni styles of the time, channel inlay and mosaic inlay (see figure 89). Both styles consist in incorporating colored stones which are cut and polished until they are thin and flat, but the difference lies in the way the stones are set: in the channel inlay style, the stones are separated by silver and glued on with epoxy, whereas in mosaic inlay, silver does not separate the stones, and each color needs to be cut precisely to fit with the other pieces. Mosaic inlay is often used to portray Zuni deities and kachinas, while channel inlay is usually used in two designs in particular, the Rainbow Man and the Knife Wing⁷³ (the latter in figure 90 is also

⁷³ In Ostler's study of Zuni jewelry, Zuni silversmith Linda Hustito, daughter of Wheeler Alonzo Hustito, the creator of both of these iconic designs, explains that the Knife Wing is a mythological being who "sweeps down from the sky and carries off beautiful Zuni girls (88)." Likewise, the



Figure 90: Alfonso Hustito, Knife Wing, ca. 1990 (Ostler 88) Channel inlay

often portrayed in the "Cloud Houses" space on traditional robes and kilts; see section 2.1.4). These two motifs were so popular that they became the Wallace trading post's most featured products.

Despite the strong Navajo influence, the Zuni quickly developed their own approach to silversmithing by incorporating colors, such as the red coral that they already used in fetish carving and other offerings, and the turquoise monopoly that ruled Zuni lapidary art started to share the space with other color combinations. Though it was who Wallace pushed the Rainbow Man and the Knife Wing designs to be mass-produced, the color aesthetics were developed by Zuni lapidary artists. The Zuni kept their favorite combination of turquoise and coral and added on new color materials to their palette with the use of jet or onyx (black) and mother-of-pearl (white/yellow). Since the start of its success in 1917, the color combination of blue/red/black and off-white to white with multicolored reflections has become the standard for Zuni traditional jewelry, as these materials provide the best representation of the *a'witen/itiwan* colors reunited in a multicolor ensemble.

Rainbow Man also belongs to the multicolored realm sky, and is associated with the rain and the otherworldly *itiwan* multicolor direction.



Figure 92: Alice and Dan Quam, cluster work (Sei Non Figural 75)

Wallace's trading post and partnership also facilitated access to turquoise and other materials, which further increased the development of silver work. After WWI, the Zuni economy became increasingly dependent on trade and silversmithing; Leighton explains that "Between 1925 and 1945, jewelry and curio handcraft developed into a major source of Zuni revenue,

estimated as high as 65 per cent of the total cash income of the pueblo by the end of the 1940s (26)." The Zuni were encouraged to abandon other time-consuming artforms such as pottery for the benefit of silversmithing and lapidary work, which more easily garnered income and visibility for Zuni artists, and style after new style was produced as a result. Sei described the turquoise cluster style (see figure 91) as "pearl-shaped turquoise or coral cabochons [*id. est.* a well sanded and polished stone] set in the flower-head pattern (Sei, *Non Figural* 62)." The success of this style inspired other related ones, such as the *petit point*



Figure 91: Zuni "needle point" pattern, courtesy of the Heard Museum (my photo)

pattern, a more sophisticated form of the cluster style in which the Zuni grind, sand, and polish tiny pieces of turquoise into small teardrops and round shapes, which are arranged in a flower pattern (Ostler, *Silversmith* 81). The second is the "needle point" technique (see figure 92). Contrary to the "petit point" (see figure 93), "needle point" turquoises have two pointy ends (Sei, *Non Figural* 108). Edmond Ladd, a



Figure 93: Unknown artist., Petit Point Cluster Belt (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo) On the right is a detail from the same belt. The round pieces of turquoise are known as the snake eye style.

specialist in Zuni economy, described in this style in 1979:

'Needle point' is a distinctive Zuni style in which bits of turquoise no larger than two by four centimeters are cut and mounted in various patterns. The most distinctive Zuni jewelry is that formed by the inlay method. (...) The inlay style is produced by cutting and piercing together in various forms and patterns shell, coral, jet (a black turquoise), and turquoise. These are then mounted in silver. (496)

The Zunis' love for showy pieces of turquoise and coral—red coral could be used to replace turquoises or in combination with it—has also caused them to be used for the pins that fasten along the side of the traditional black manta (Sei, *Non Figural* 29), as well as on ceremonial bolos, brooches, belts, buckles, and so on (see 29-61). The pleasing contrast of turquoise blue and coral red used together led to a succession of new styles showcasing the Zuni's new silversmithing skills from the 1930s onward.

The growing popularity of Zuni silver work encouraged artists to adopt a more marketing-oriented approach, with the multiplication of new color styles that would attract Western customers. Artists seized the occasion to increase their popularity in the successive creation of new turquoise/coral styles such as the "nugget," "snake-eye," and "overlaid inlay" patterns. The nugget design in figure 94, created in the late 1930s by Dan Simplicio, consists of setting larger, polished



Figure 94: From left to right: Dan Simplicio, Nugget-Work. Turquoise and coral on silver; unknown artist, Turquoise matrix and coral (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo)

chunks of turquoise and coral on silver, without much alteration to the stones' original shapes, as opposed to the minutely shaped stones in the needle point design. During this period, artists also developed the snake-eye style, which consists of arranging small, round cabochons shaped like pearls to create symmetrical lines or circles mounted on silver (Sei, *Non Figural* 113-119). These styles both remained popular afterwards, and the next generation of silversmiths worked with modernized versions of them.

In 1996, Robert Leekya, son of the previously mentioned Deyuse Leekya, said:

Although Navajos use precut stones, [the Zuni] are proud of the fact that they cut their own stone and use only the best quality Sleeping Beauty turquoise that has not been treated in any way, even with plastic backings. [...] Leekya family work only uses a small piece of tissue paper as backing because they feel plastic changes the color. (Ostler, *Silversmith* 71-2)

The first observation we can make from Leekya's statement is a desire to move away from Navajo art, highlighting the differences between the Navajo and Zuni approaches by referencing notions of *savoir-faire* (like the use of tissue vs. plastic backing) and the purity of the materials and colors. For example, the use of an epoxy or plastic backing, a technique developed in the 50s, will heighten the stone's durability, provide a flat base for the stone, and increase the profit as the "carat yield by pond will increase (162-3)." The Leekya family creates a more fragile yet more valuable product with their tissue technique which relies on pure, no-cheat lapidary work, and it is the very notion of this expertise that serves as a way for them to promote their work.

The second important element is directly related to the quality of the stones themselves. Leekya's statement references the fact that in the late 90s, turquoise from the Sleeping Beauty mine in Arizona was among the most popular at Zuni

and throughout the rest of America (252-3). During my visit in 2019, I met Laguna-Zuni artist Robert Deutsawe Jr., one of the regularly exhibiting artists at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, who first learned silversmithing and then moved on to lapidary work, becoming a carver. He selects turquoise stones from merchants who price the material according to its rarity, and since Sleeping Beauty turquoise has become quite expensive due to the closure of the mine in 2012, collectors hope to get their hands on rare pieces in silverwork. Ranging from sky-blue to robin's egg blue, this vein of turquoise was very pure with few or sometimes no copper veins tarnishing the color. Sleeping Beauty turquoise also ranks five out of six on the Mohs scale of hardness, which means it does not scratch or break easily, so lapidary workers are less likely to crack it during the carving process, and buyers can be sure that their jewelry will not be easily damaged. To obtain Sleeping Beauty turquoise, artists need to hunt down and trade for the stones at markets or private sales advertised by word of mouth. What makes this turquoise so valuable is its rarity, distinguished by the color variations as well as the purity of its color once cut, and the artist's challenge is to put Zuni skills to the service of the stone and determine how to best showcase the rare turquoise, which is as popular among Western customers as tribe members. Artists have therefore assimilated notions of the stone's value and purity into their marketing approach, which in turn has influenced their methods and the choice of material they work with.

Though the Zuni seek out high-quality material and have experimented with a variety of styles, the jewelry color palette rarely varies from the original blue-white-black-red-on-silver combinations, with a general preference given to turquoise blue. However, difficulty in obtaining some of the more traditional



Figure 95: Dennis Edaakie, Overlaid Inlay Belt, coral, turquoise, seashells and jet (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo)

materials has encouraged some artists to develop an aesthetic that focuses more on using touches of turquoise color rather than larger, expensive stones, and they have started replacing large turquoises with miscellaneous smaller pieces. We can observe this in one of the best-known Zuni styles from the 70s, the overlaid inlay (see figure 95).⁷⁴ The Zuni turned to this new artistic trend for necessity's sake, as it was more and more difficult to get their hands on big, high-quality chunks of turquoise. Keith Edaakie describes a massive piece of jewelry he painted on a canvas as "old style jewelry that we don't really see a lot, which is this big cluster chunk kind of bracelets, that turquoise. Because right now it's really difficult to get real big pieces of turquoise now, a lot of them are just these tiny pieces (my transcription)." The overlaid inlay technique allows the artist to work with smaller pieces of turquoise or even to discretely replace turquoise with another material. The variety of stones the Zuni use can be seen in the symbolic Knife Wing and Rainbow Man designs, with turquoise, mother-of-pearl, coral, jet and onyx. However, in the case of the overlaid inlay, the material used is less

⁷⁴ The Zuni share this style with the Hopi, evidence of increasing inter-connected styles and bilateral influences between the two tribes.

important than the color of the designs, and thus stones other than turquoise may be substituted.

The Zuni attribute the development of this technique within the tribe to Jacob Hallo, although it was his nephew Dennis Edaakie who unintentionally put the fashionable style on the art market map when he won a first-place ribbon with it at the 1970 Gallup Ceremonial. Edaakie's new style gave life to birds, bears, wolves, fish, deer, elk, dogs, with the inlaid stones selected according to the colors needed for the design, not for the precious material itself, and he often replaced turquoise with variscite, faustite, and other blue stones. This technique allowed the artists to shine in the growing art market by producing less expensive items that would still respect the original aesthetic color-scheme identifiable as Zuni.

The variety of trends that succeeded one another over the last century have inspired contemporary color schemes and styles, and today artists tend to use both traditional stones and new ones. Raylan Edaakie, Keith Edaakie's father, is a Zuni lapidary worker, who, along with his wife Patty, learned from watching their parents create traditional Zuni Pueblo jewelry designs such as the Knife Wing and the Rainbow Man. They have designed unique and distinctive wearable art in the form of necklaces, earrings, and bracelets that are much more discreet than typical old-style heirlooms like those made in the nugget style. They usually incorporate inlaid Corn Maiden and Sunface motifs into every piece, as these are their two trademark designs. In a chance meeting at the ARZ coop in November 2019, Raylan Edaakie explained to me that in lapidary work, the current traditional stones are turquoise, coral, and mother of pearl, and formerly onyx, but artists now mostly use jet for its better malleability. There are certain other recommendations as well; for example, it is preferable to use onyx on its

own, while jet can be used in a mix of colors due to its similar texture to coral, turquoise and mother of pearl. Onyx is too hard in texture compared with other stones so it stands out, breaking the color harmony. This shows how generations of Zuni artists have learned from the experience of their elders in adapting the traditional gemstone palette to current trends and to the economic needs of the tribe.

Paradoxically, the market's current demands push artists to produce in a way that is nothing like traditional turquoise work. Native American jewelry is trendy in the Southwest, and the most renowned boutiques sell complete sets of well-crafted necklaces with "traditional" branding to attract tourists. At Zuni, most of the vendors at the Pueblo Trading Post and the All Tribes Trading Post are originally from the Middle East, which further provokes the annoyance of Zuni artists faced with these lower-priced businesses that attract more customers. This encroaching competition pushes artists to distinguish themselves from the characteristic blue, red, white and black jewelry color scheme now marketed to tourists. Moreover, customers have responded favorably to the introduction of various "exotically" colored gemstones. This is why Raylan Edaaki's wife, Patty, and Robert Deutsawe Jr. have adapted to the market by working with increasingly different materials. Patty Edaakie works with colors she loves, such as the bright orange spiny oyster on her Sunface symbol, which provides a different color tones than coral with lovely gradations from red to orange. Similarly, the couple uses serpentine as an alternative to the blue of turquoise, which displays gradations of sparkly hues ranging from dark to light green. Artists have also begun working with more difficult materials; two of Deutsawe Jr.'s trademark colors are even potentially quite harmful to use. He uses malachite and

chrysocolla, the cutting of which produces extremely toxic dust that should not be inhaled, ingested, or left in contact with the skin, as well as bumblebee marble, which contains a high quantity of arsenic. He usually buys polished malachite and bumblebee marble from other experts and carefully works the materials into his pieces. While he also sells traditional pieces, the risks involved in working with these new materials have become a selling point, which, coupled with the bright and colorful tones of bumblebee marble and malachite, attract the attention of tourists more than the repetitively familiar colors of typical tribal art.

Finally, some bolder artists have simply abandoned the traditional color scheme altogether, moving on from the past's attachment to turquoise and ceremonial designs in order to create new works and make a name for themselves internationally. These daring artists are responsible for the most recent and innovative uses of colors in Zuni-made jewelry. The Poblano family in particular has come to represent one of the most extreme approaches to color in the Zuni artistic landscape. Veronica Nastacio Poblano is one of the first artists who used her traditional lapidary skills to create fashionable jewelry with non-Native American themes. She started her experimentations by using traditional



Figure 96: Veronica Poblano, Disney Bracelet, ca.1990 (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo)

stones, such as turquoise, mother-of-pearl, jet and coral, to color Disney characters (see figure 96); her Disney series is one of the most famous Zuni-produced works. However, while Poblano produced



Figure 97: Dylan Poblano, Architectural Bracelet, ca.2000 (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo) Typical example of a Poblano architectural piece.

many Mickey rings, bracelets and necklaces for a short period in her youth, she went on to take her experimentation further, often choosing purposefully nontraditional colors to create geometric pieces using colorful stones such as purple sugilite, as seen in the necklace in figure 98 (right).

Her innovation inspired the younger generation, including her own son, Dylan Poblano. Of all the contemporary Zuni artists, he is the most famous for breaking with convention when it comes to color. His early work focused on original pieces of turquoise, such as the spider web matrix turquoise which he used to cut in a rectangular shape and inlay on a ring. His appreciation for uniquely colored stones pushes him to select the rarest matrices, such as the spiderweb or the eggshell matrix, "formations [that] occur when the host rock forms an evenly placed pattern within the turquoise formation (Lowry 194)," and create the effect of veins or dry, cracked earth to the turquoise piece. Dylan Poblano studied jewelry at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and is highly influenced by Parisian fashion, creating post-modern, architectural pieces, like the one shown in figure 97, that flout expectations (see Cirillo, 2013-2015). Gone are the traditional mosaics; the only tribal techniques left from his apprenticeship with his mother are the quality of the sanding and polishing, and

the inlay work he integrates into his compositions. His chic pieces mix media and geometrical designs linked to techno-culture, and he has worked with "unusual stones as well as contemporary material" such as rainbow obsidian, sugilite, turquoise, opal, Orville Jack faustite, and any other semi-precious stone that creates a harmonious and original look when set on gold and silver (Pardue, 159). One of his outstanding pieces is a planetary series, as seen in the sun ring and the necklace in figure 98 (left) representing the solar system; Poblano created the sun with "several small spots of color...accomplished by inlaying diverse stones into the obsidian (Pardue 159)."



Figure 98: To the left, Dylan Poblano, Solar System, Museum (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo), to the right, Veronica Darquise Poblano, Necklace, sterling silver neckwear with inlay of Kingman turquoise, fox turquoise, Orville jack faustite, black pen shell and sugilite, ca. 2000 (courtesy of the Heard Museum) The pendant is black jade.

The young artist is a pioneer in the creation of a contemporary look for Zuni jewelry, breaking traditional codes and replacing them with a more innovative approach to color. Of course, Dylan Poblano's approach is

controversial, and most of his work is not seen as “Zuni” by other tribe members or by potential clients, but the traditional grounding of his technique and his filiation have earned him a place amongst contemporary Zuni artists. In parallel, he has made a name for himself in the field of American contemporary art without the usual Zuni label that too often associates “tribal art” with the connotations of primitivism discussed in section 1.2. His example encourages the younger generation to step off the beaten track and find artistic freedom in the exploration of color schemes and styles that have no label other than their own.

The classic combinations of blue-on-silver, red-on-silver, and blue-red-white/yellow-and-black-on-silver, with turquoise, red coral, mother-of-pearl/shell and onyx/jet as the standard materials forms the color palette for traditional Zuni jewelry. The complex changes that have occurred in the tribe’s use of this color scheme have been driven both by increasing pressure to compete in the art market and by the creative power of artists who wished to try something new. On the one hand, jewelry colors have remained very traditional for more than a century, with styles borrowed and adapted from other tribes, such as the Navajos (silverwork) and the Hopi (overlaid inlay.) On the other hand, recent bolder approaches dare to break color codes by using new stones and styles that transcend the traditional notion of Zuni jewelry, a paradoxical evolution that has been made possible by the easy access to certain materials as well as the growing rarity of others. Contrary to other artforms, especially fetish carving, which will be explored next section, colorful jewelry is an artform used for both ceremonial and commercial purposes, and both the traditional and innovative uses of color have attracted outside attention, opening up the Zuni jewelry market

to the rest of the world and providing a space for artist to play with the boundaries between tradition and modernity in the search for a more personal style.

2.2.3 Fetish Carving: Using Color to Create Trendy Exportable Art

In section 1.2.3, we discussed the six sacred directional colors as the focal colors in fetish carving. This section will study the shift away from traditional sacred colors by tracing the evolution of fetish carving trends from their origins in achromatic petroglyph designs to the sacred fetish and then to the commercial fetish, the production of the latter resulting from the increase in commercial exchange and an increasingly more color-fixated customer base, which some Zuni see as having put an end to traditional fetish carving. This commercialization of nontraditionally colored fetishes raises questions concerning the notion of sacredness as understood by the tribe and by those who purchase these pieces.

To better understand what traditional fetish carving is, we must investigate the origins of the artform that can be gleaned from oral history and engravings around the reservation. The Ancestral Pueblo immortalized the mountain lion, the “yellow” Beast God of the north, in petroglyphs (drawings carved on rocks, that we will discuss in section 3.2.3) at different sites from Ribbon Falls to Zuni village.



Figure 99: Middle Place petroglyph found in the village of the Great Kivas, northeast of Zuni, November 17, 2019 (my photo)

One of the most important petroglyph sites, located at Mesa Verde, portrays the Zuni pilgrimage to the Middle Place. The Middle Place petroglyph usually takes the form of a pecked spiral. Shaun Latone, a former archeologist turned tourist guide for the Zuni Visitor Center, is currently completing his knowledge of Zuni history based on Zuni legends passed down from reliable elders. According to him, even just one design can tell a story. During a

November 2019 tour of the Village of the Great Kivas, located northeast of Zuni,

he pointed out one of the Middle Place petroglyphs and explained its signification: the spiral form is an image of the Zuni migration, a long and sinuous journey from the place of emergence to their home at the center of the symbol, Zuni village, *i.e.*, the Middle Place. According to Jaycee and Milford Nahohai, the symbol also represents "movement, cumulus clouds coming to the village" (my transcription). On a spiritual level, it illustrates the journey of the Zuni until they settled in their identity as the *A:shivi*, the rites of passage they underwent to earn a place to call home. We can extract several metaphors from this spiral symbol: from Milford and Jaycee Nahohai's explanation, the PEOPLE ARE (RAIN)CLOUDS metaphor become evident; the Zuni were carried by the wind, moved around like clouds until they settled. This idea can be completed not only with the metaphor MIDDLE PLACE IS MIGRATION TO HOME, but also HOME IS JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE.

In figure 100, we can see the spiral symbols in the center top of the fresco (A) representing the place of emergence, Ribbon Falls; the green line added to the figure traces the journey from here to another spiral symbol in the bottom left of the fresco (B) which may either represent the Middle Place that was yet to be found at this point in their pilgrimage, or the site at Mesa Verde. The rest of the petroglyphs shows how the different clans split, such as the mountain clan represented in (C), which seems to be going off another way. This illustration of the mountain lion carved on the sandstone shows the profile of a four-legged

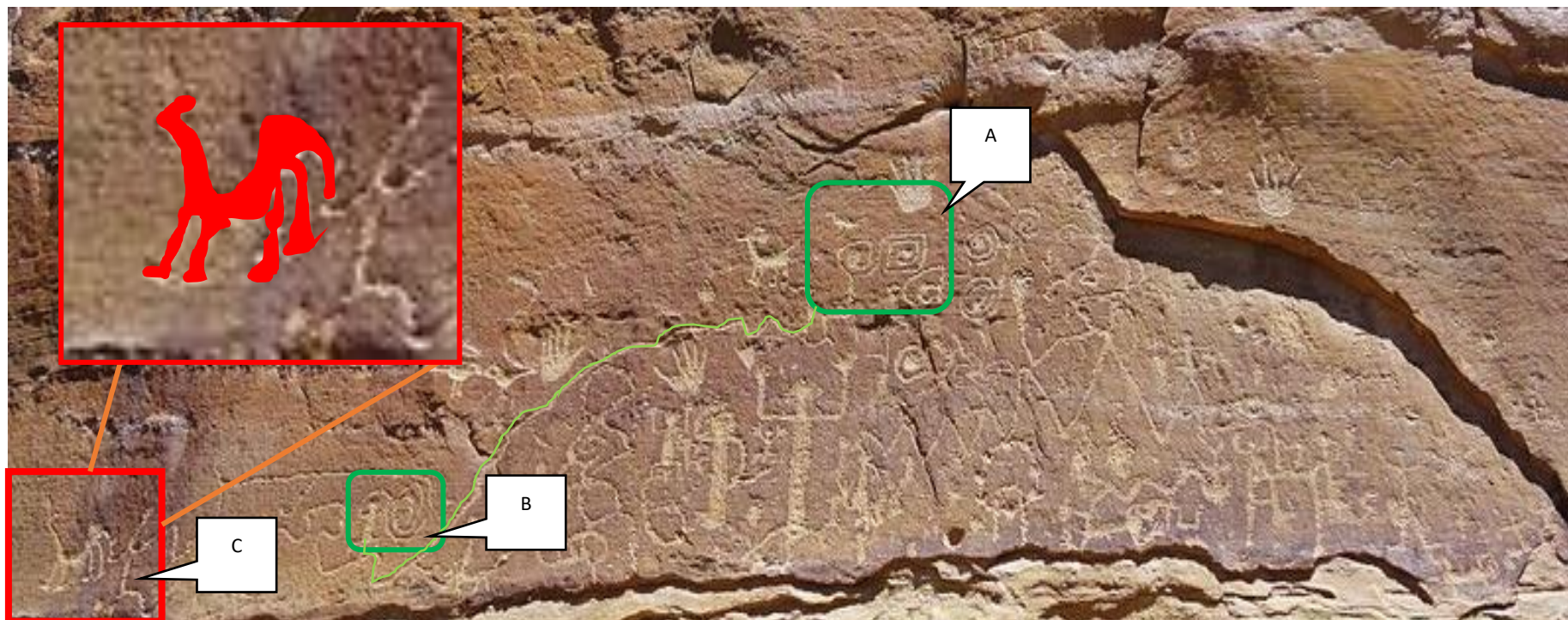


Figure 100: Petroglyph Point, Mesa Verde, near Pruce Tree House, 2015 (Creative Commons licence CC-BY-NC-SA, author: Rationalobserver). The green line is added to show the link between the place of the emergence and Mesa Verde or the Middle Place, and the red outline presents a closeup of the mountain lion

animal with a concave back, a tail and a long neck. The perspective of the engraved beast is in facing profile, showing simultaneously the profile of the head, neck, body, and tail of the animal, whereas the front legs are more or less seen from the front. This stylistic approach, similar to Cubism, can also be seen in the design of the earliest fetishes.

We have seen in section 1.2.3 how Zuni fetish carvers create fetishes from stones which already have a shape *and color* close to that of the animal; that is to say that the sculptor's role is almost to just touch up the stone chosen for both its color and shape so that its natural resemblance with the animal is further revealed, without fundamentally changing the original shape of the stone; this approach results in the rougher aesthetic of ceremonial objects. The commercialization of fetishes from 1960 onward brought with it a more varied



Figure 101: Cushing's illustration of a Zuni six directional set: on top is the yellow mountain lion, below is the multicolored eagle, to the left is the blue bear, to its right is the white wolf, beneath is the black mole and at the bottom is the red badger (Cushing, Zuni Fetishes cover)

color palette for fetishes destined to be sold outside the tribe. Zuni sculptors started to choose different colors for stones and artists have continued to experiment since then.

In order to analyze the changes that have occurred in fetish color variety, we first need to take stock of what colors were used before more recent trends affected color choices.

The precontact Zuni's available range of stone colors was mostly limited to what they could find around

their settlement or trade with the Hopi. They organized pilgrimages to obtain rarer material, such as the coral they used as offerings. Cushing’s study of ceremonial prey animal fetishes allows us to construct the following chart detailing the most observed stones during his stay between 1879 and 1884:

	Yellow	Blue	Red	White	Multicolor	Black
Mountain Lion	yellow limestone	azurite or carbonate copper	<i>no examples available</i>	white limestone	fibrous aragonite	gypsum or white limestone (painted with black pigments)
Coyote	white limestone stained yellow)	white limestone (stained blue)	calcite (painted red)	compact white limestone	aragonite	limestone or yellowish-gray marble (painted black)
Wild Cat	yellow limestone (painted almost black with blood)	Basaltic clay of grayish-blue	gypsum or yellow limestone	compact white limestone	basaltic clay painted black	basaltic rock
Wolf	yellow claystone	bluish-gray sandstone (stained red then blue)	siliceous limestone (painted red)	white limestone	fine-grained sandstone	<i>no examples available</i>
Eagle	white limestone (painted with yellow ochre)	white limestone (stained green)	fine-grained red sandstone	white limestone	yellow limestone	calcite (stained lustrous black)
Mole				fine white limestone (stained)		

Figure 102: Fetish stones chart, Cushing’s period (Cushing 24-35)

This chart allows us to draw the conclusion that up to the 1880s, the Zuni used specific stones for specific colors. They mostly used yellow limestone, sometimes painted or stained, for the Beast Gods of the north (yellow color), and white limestone for the animal-deities of the east (white color), while for other Beast Gods, they alternated between different materials, carving Beast Gods of the west (blue color) with either limestone or sandstone that they stained blue, or basaltic clay, azurite or carbonate copper. Similarly, they carved the Beast Gods of the south (red color) out of either limestone or sandstone, sometimes stained red, or other minerals such as gypsum and calcite. For the two otherworldly colors of the supernatural realms, multicolor and black, we can see that the Zuni often used aragonite for the multicolor Beast Gods, and otherwise followed no specific

pattern, using minerals such as sandstone, limestone, basaltic clay, gypsum and calcite, painted or not depending on the substance's natural coloring.⁷⁵



Figure 103: Unknown artist, Frog Fetish with sculpted “raised effect” inlay (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photos).

Post-contact importation and trade changed the stakes, especially with the establishment of traders and trading posts in the area. The transition to a cash economy played a significant role in the rapid development of fetish carving, allowing pieces to be produced in mass. At this point, fetishes were definitely

⁷⁵ One of the most popular stones of the current century, turquoise, was relatively absent from animalier carvings. During an interview in 2019, the director of the Shiprock gallery Paul Elmore told me that turquoise fetishes and offering bowls did not exist prior to the commercial exploitation of turquoise in the 1920s (personal interview). This might seem to suggest that the Zuni had little access to turquoise until the mineral became of interest to the Western world and was thus mined and available in large quantities. Elmore also explained that once turquoise became rare, the Zuni learned to work with other materials of lower quality. However, Elmore's information is somewhat contradicted by the discovery of the archeological sites at Chaco Canyon at Pueblo Bonito, where scientists discovered 56,000 pieces of turquoise during George Pepper's 1890 excavation, and another close to Fajada Butter, where they discovered thousands of pieces of turquoise and fragmented beads dating from A.D. 900 to the early 1000s (see Ostler, Silversmith 53). The Zuni clearly had their own network for obtaining turquoise, but probably not in sufficient quantities to create carved objects larger than beads.

being created for sale rather than for ceremonial use. In his 1998 *Two Zuni Artists*, Keith Cunningham explains that “Commercial carving became more common in the period from 1960 to 1985 (19).” About thirty carvers were active and making money out of fetishes during this period, and by the late 1980s, contemporary artists had taken up the torch. The first remarkable change can be seen in the new techniques used. In a 1985 talk about an exhibition produced by the Anthropology Teaching Museum and the Silver Lining Gallery, Theodore Frisbie said that “The most recent innovation within the technique is sculpturing individual inlays in order to produce a raised effect, rather than producing a totally flat surface (4).” This technique was transferred over from lapidary arts used in jewelry since 1932 to start the trend of spotted fetishes, still popular today. The second change is in the multiplicity of polished colored stones used in inlay, with or without a raised effect. Rodee and Ostler in 1995 and McManis in 1998 detailed some of the numerous stones used for animal-deities. By combining information from the two studies together, we can produce the following chart of stones used in the period from 1960 to 1985 when the Zuni started commercializing fetishes:

	Yellow	Blue	Red	White	Multicolor	Black
Mountain Lion	Mexican onyx	<i>no examples available</i>	dolomite	serpentine	Picasso marble	jet
Bear/Coyote	Hickory, other types of wood , dolomite, orange alabaster, jasper, tagua nut , Mexican onyx	Jade, azurite/malachite, angelite, turquoise, variscite	Pipestone, dolomite, Picasso marble (limestone), red serpentine marble	Alabaster, tufa stone (limestone), antler	Serpentine, siltstone, dolomite, pipestone, mother of pearl	Black marble, jet
Badger/ Wild Cat	dolomite	Picasso marble	Pipestone, catlinite	White onyx	Dolomite, Picasso marble (limestone)	<i>no examples available</i>
Wolf	sandstone	Picasso marble (limestone)	Orange alabaster	Alabaster, ivory or bleached animal bones	fine-grained sandstone	Black marble

Eagle	dolomite	Fluorite, serpentine, turquoise	dolomite	<i>no examples available</i>	Picasso marble (limestone), serpentine	<i>no examples available</i>
Mole	Picasso marble (limestone)	Picasso marble	amber	<i>no examples available</i>	Picasso marble (limestone)	Black marble, jet

Figure 104: Fetish stone chart, late 20th to early 21st century (sources: McManis 12-23, Rodee, Carvers 25-16)

The chart shows how the variety of stones available to fetish carvers has evolved relative to the previous chart. The first observation we can make is that, except for the rare fetishes made of sandstone and limestone (tufa stone & Picasso marble), the Zuni have replaced the locally-collected stones they used up until the period of Cushing's study with traded stones, such as angelite and fluorite, or mined stones, such as alabaster and turquoise. The second observation is that minerals are no longer used exclusively, and organic materials (in bold in the chart) such as antler, tagua nuts, ivory, and mother of pearl have been included. Finally, we observe that the most popular stones used during this period to carve animals in six directional sets were dolomite, Picasso marble and Mexican onyx for yellow, red and multicolor, and black marble and jet for black. Blue is a particular case, with a different variety for each piece, as will be seen later on in this section.

Six directional fetish sets display bright colors and finely detailed shapes; the variety of carving materials now available allowed artists to choose a stone that naturally corresponding to the desired shade of the animal so there was no need to paint or stain it. According to Rodee and Ostler in 1995, the new popular stones were the following:

The most popular and least expensive of the stones used now are *South Dakota pipestones* [reddish] or *catlinite* [brownish red with matrix], *jet*, and *serpentine* [variegated green] in its various colors. *Turquoise*, although a staple for jewelry work, is used mostly for decorative touches on the carvings. *Ivory* is a recent and popular material, but because of the laws regulating the importation of elephant ivory, most of the material is now bought from the Inuit who

mine *fossilized walrus ivory* from old middens. Because ivory is expensive, many artists buy *animal bone* from local butchers and bleach it to resemble the more valuable material. [...] *Antlers* are, of course, still very popular and are sold commercially for carvers' use. [...] *Malachite* [variegated green] is another new material [.] *Lapis lazuli* is another popular jewelry stone being used in carving. (*Carvers* 45-46, my emphasis)

The Zuni traded with other tribes, such as the Inuit, and made a deal with the Apache for permission to collect serpentine along the Gila River. Another way to get their hands on material was to purchase it by the ounce or pound from a trading post in Zuni, Gallup or Albuquerque. Finally, they also still collected some local stones. The trade network was "sophisticated" (*Carvers* 45-46), with dealers organizing buying trips to the Far East to find novel and exotic stones and shells (*Carvers* 44-46). Dealers in raw material came to Zuni from China with turquoise, and from Afghanistan or Germany with lapis (see Ostler, *Silversmith* 45). In 1998, McManis made a list of new stones available at Zuni Pueblo:

Today, artists can choose from many unusual rocks and minerals from around the world. *Sugilite* [dark blue/black-striped], *lapis lazuli*, *amber*, *angelite* [greenish-gray], *charoite* [purple], *opal* [multicolored], *jade* [dark green], *rhodochrosite* [bright pink], and a wide array of marbles, dolomites, and onyxes have expanded the carving selection. In the past, materials were either found locally or supplied by a few regional traders. Now stone merchants frequently introduce new stones by a few regional traders. (71, my emphasis)

The new stones labeled "miscellaneous" by McManis (54) also included sodalite (dark blue), lepidolite (light purple), and aventurine (aquamarine). Rodee's and McManis' studies also revealed that a wider range of materials corresponding to the *a'witen/itiwan* colors was available, such as turquoise, sugilite, lapis lazuli, and sodalite for blue, pipestones, catlinite, and amber for red, ivory for white and opal for multicolor.

In addition, the Zuni used this new variety of stones to carve figurines of animals that were not related to the six directions. These included animals from either tribal lore, such as the frog, the owl, the *Kolowisi* water serpent, or ones that were common in the Zuni's everyday life, such as the butterfly, the duck, the goat, etc. Rodee explains that "green serpentine naturally suggests lizards, turtles, frogs and snakes." Some shades such as purple and pink that had not previously been used for fetishes at Zuni also appeared. The Zuni relied on the original colors of the available stones, since natural paint, though frequently used in the past to adjust color, did not allow a wide range of hues and quickly faded away. The introduction of charoite and other purple stones during the 90s made carvings in this color easier to produce.

Nowadays, easy access to almost any material allows the fetish market to flourish. A carver can either go to a trading post, such as the one directly on the reservation at Zuni, or order specific stones online. EBay has become a reliable way to find interesting material for carver families as well as novices who wish to train in the art, since the site allows artists to bid on rare stones. Another way to obtain interesting material is via private channels; a customer might commission an artist to carve an animal from a stone he has purchased. We can also observe a brand-new phenomenon with the arrival of unique, fragile stones that crack easily, and whose mastery gives the artist a certain pride. One of the most prized pieces on display at the Zuni Fetish Museum in Albuquerque is a carving by Jeff Shetima entitled *The Coyote Family* (figure 105), created from raw Sonora Sunrise stone. Shetima's process started with a large chunk of Sonora stone which he shaped into the three attached coyotes, all in one stone piece. He incorporated the animals into the stone's raw shape without altering it too much,

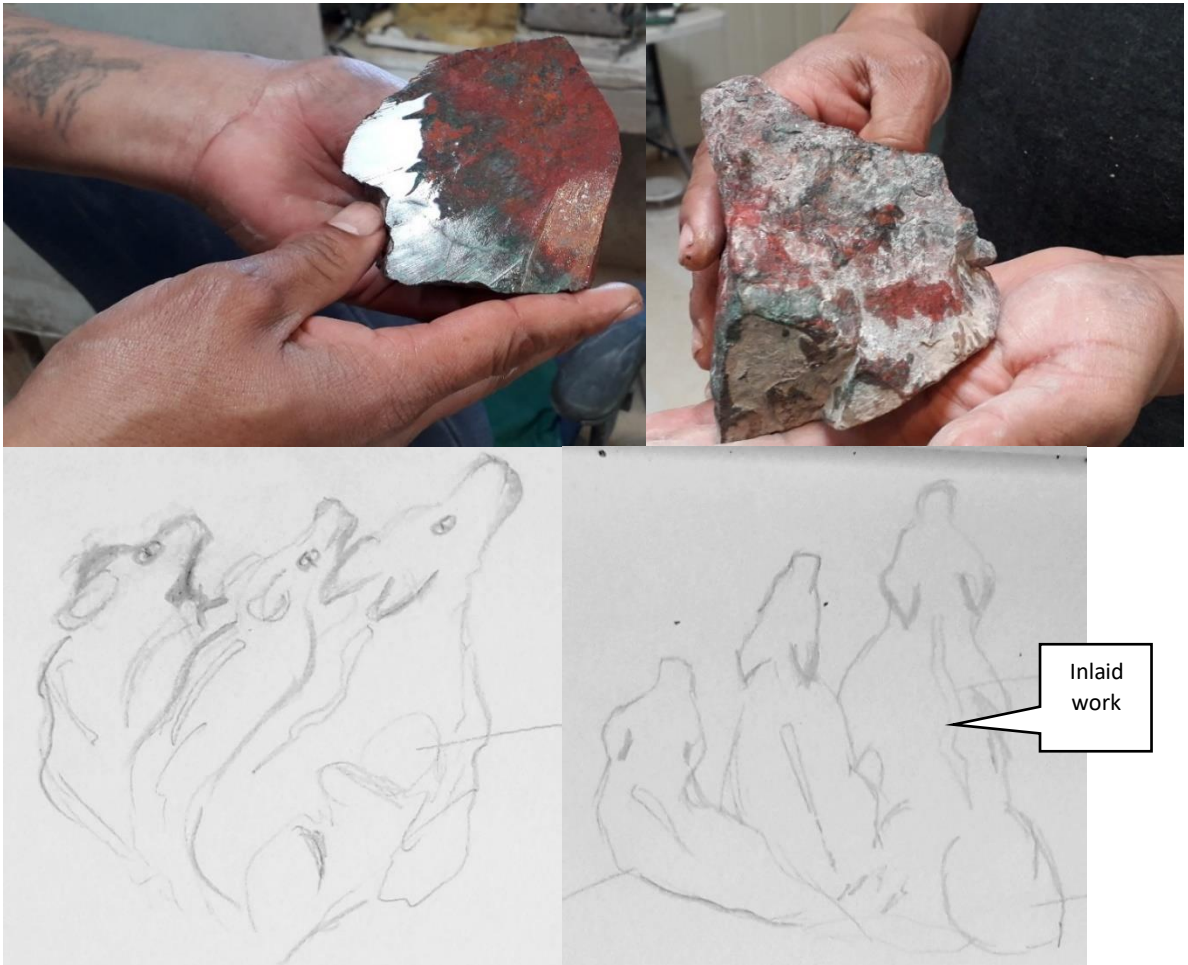


Figure 105: Top: Jeff Shetima, Sonora Sunrise stone, cut and raw (2019, my photos). Bottom: Rough sketch of the Coyote Family by Shetima, Sonora Sunrise stone, 1997,

enhancing its natural imperfections. Then, he carefully cut fragments of coral, turquoise, and jet into tiny regular pieces of the same size that he meticulously inlaid into three coyote's backs in order to highlight their spines, using the mosaic inlay technique. The bellies of the coyotes are not shaped in any way, the thick bluish-green chrysocolla is left raw.⁷⁶ Shetima explains that working with this stone was a challenge:

Yeah, this stone is made of copper, which gives it a blue color. It's a tough stone, very dense! It's hard to work with because the stone is so dense, it sparks when I work it on the machine. The stone was found in Mexico and in Arizona, but the mine closed, and it became expensive. Yeah, so, Kent McManis, the one that actually introduced

⁷⁶ As per request of the Zuni Fetish Museum (Albuquerque), no pictures of the finished artwork can be displayed.

me to the stone, the Sonora stone, he actually gave it to me to create some work for him out of that material. After that, I really enjoyed that material. I started by searching to find and purchase material of my own. It was pretty tough, but you know I kind of got lucky in finding some of it, especially on eBay! (My transcription)

In addition to the pride he gets from having mastered working such a difficult stone, the unique color of the artwork draws the attention of the Fetish Museum's public, which has further increased Shetima's notoriety.



Figure 106: Jeff Shetima, Six Directions Totem, Picasso marble, work in progress, 2019 (my photo).

After carving the stone commissioned by Kent McManis for display during the opening of his Fetish Museum, Shetima has kept on working with Sonora Sunrise and has created an entire series in this medium. The pressure to find original colors pushes his creativity one step further, and he also invents innovative totems of the six colored directional Beast Gods:

Yeah, the bear will have blue stone, the badger will have, you know, red stones, there's the coyote and the wolf have a, you know, like white stone eyes or could be with white stone, and so forth. Like the Mountain Lion yellow, and the eagle might be like opal because it, you know, has this different type of color variations that could be like a multicolored type. I think I'm the only artist who's done an actual six direction of totem It is what I call them, where the animals are stacked on top of each other [...] Yeah, so it's stacked up with the eagle being on top, the mole being at the bottom. So, the eagle is on top, then the mountain lion below, below the eagle and the mountain lion it's the bear, the badger, below the badger is the coyote, the wolf and below the wolf as the mole. (my transcription)

His totem of the six Beast Gods in figure 106 was still in progress and had yet to be polished, but the Picasso marble, one of Shetima's favorite materials, will reveal black, red, and yellow tones of the striped material, and the artist also planned to inlay the sacred six colors into the animal deities to facilitate their identification.

Artists have also turned to materials other than stone to catch potential customers' attention with previously unseen experimentations, like Brian Yatsattie, who works with recycled material such as "bowlorite" and "surfite," two types of resin used in finishing bowling balls and surfboards. Once the resin is cool, it becomes hard enough to carve and polish like a stone. He also uses "fordite," equally known as "Detroit agate" or "Motor agate," which is formed by the built-up layers of automotive enamel paint slag on the tracks and skids used for spray-painting cars, and that has been heated numerous times and then left



Figure 107: Fetishes made by Brian Yatsattie, 2019 (Courtesy of Keshi. *The Zuni connection, my photos*). From top left to bottom right: Bowling ball resin, car paint slag, surfboard resin.

to harden before being cut and polished.⁷⁷ The ancestral art of stonework is absent in such pieces, yet there is no denying the curiosity provoked by this approach. The colors first lead viewers to question the material used and thereby discover the technique behind the artistry, inciting them to learn about the individual artist's skills and aesthetic. Not only are the bold striped colors attention-grabbing, they are also indicative of the innovation taking place within the tribe, where the creative process is ever-changing but with colors always at its heart.

Throughout these processes, artists have seen their color palette diversify and grow, especially to fit within the commercial spectrum of Zuni fetishes, as "purchasers [frequently non-Native Westerners] of fetishes generally prefer more exotic and colored stones (McManis 54)." This is still the case, as can be seen in

⁷⁷ Currently, companies understand the potential value of these waste products and save them to be turned into jewelry... or Zuni fetishes.

the colorful examples of fetishes in figure 108. Departing from the blocky, monochromatic, "old-style" fetishes of Cushing's period, artists now work with trendy materials, incorporating transparency or unique colors that make the animal stand out when on display. The Zuni, like other tribes, look for commercial outlets for their art, even though in some cases this causes tribal artists to renounce the sacred significance of their works. For this reason, it is currently possible to find fetishes made of all different materials in shops; there are glass fetishes, plastic fetishes, wooden fetishes, and fetishes in any other type of material that can be used to showcase unique colors. However, contrary to the impression given by most shops and trading centers, such fetishes are not sacred; the fashionable fetishes that are sold to westerners are desacralized "art-

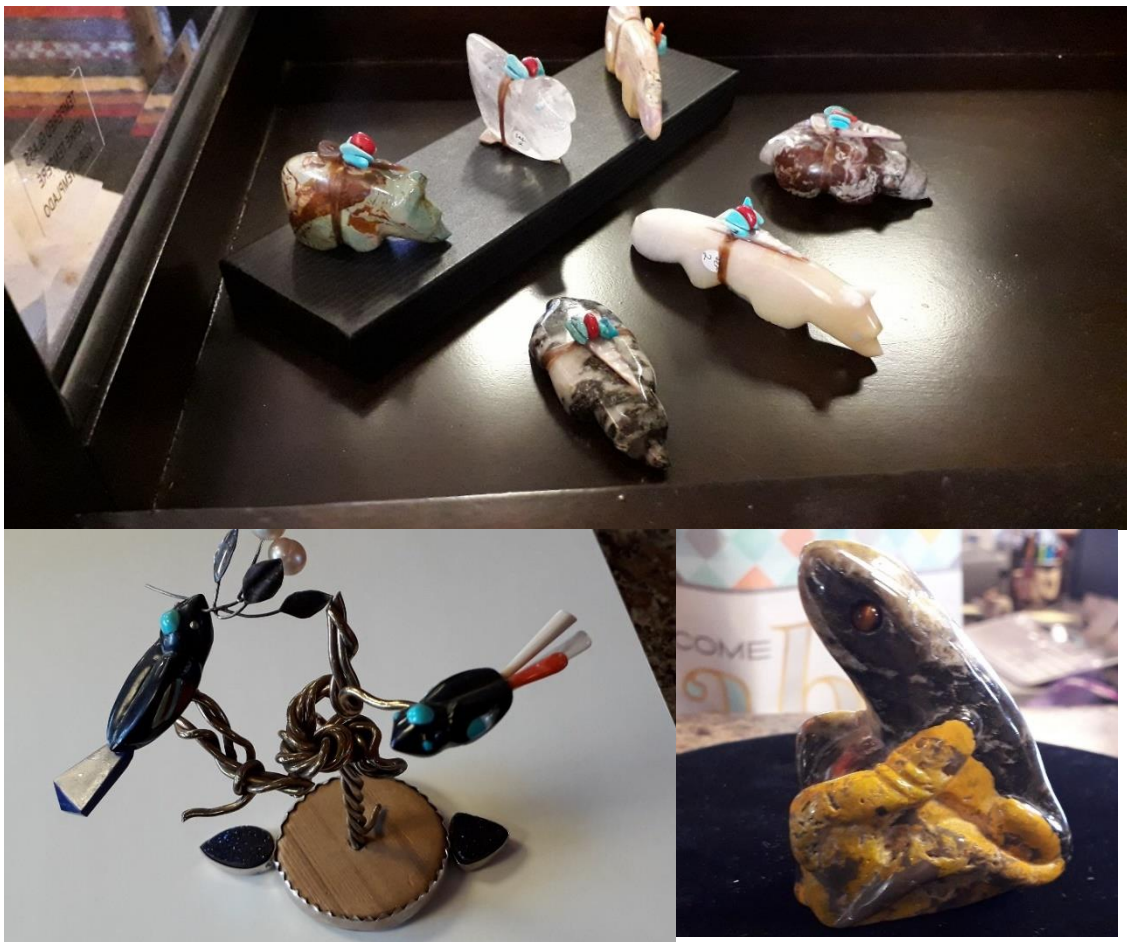


Figure 108: Zuni fetishes, 2019 (courtesy of the Wright Gallery, Albuquerque, my photo)

objects (McManis 5).” In order to be sacred, a fetish must follow different steps in order to become a protector of the Zuni. Shetima explains that there is a ceremony during which a shaman must bless the fetishes:

Yeah, well, fetishes that are very important, we take those to the grave. So, you know, if I were to want a fetish blessed then there's a process that happens. During the winter months, it's the only time that really fetishes are being given life by ceremony, and it happens only during winter time through one of our medicine societies, where you have to commit to sacrifice your time, you have to feast, there's a lot of different steps that you have to do before your finished carving is to be blessed. And once that happens, you keep that fetish to your grave. And those are, those are not for sale. So, if someone ever says 'yeah, this fetish carving is blessed by a shaman from Zuni.' Nah! Unless you're Frank Hamilton Cushing [laughing]. (My transcription)

When the Zuni find a rock in an animal shape that can be used as a fetish without carving, the fetish is seen as more powerful. These are the one that are buried with them when they die. The traditional object serves a ceremonial purpose, and its value is acknowledged in this way. Contrary to blessed fetishes, Cunningham denotes commercial fetishes under the term “unsanctified,” and insists that the purpose of these carvings is to ensure an artist’s income (Cunningham 16). He interviews a Zuni carver who says that “In Zuni belief, there’s a lot of different stories to fetishes and how they evolved, but for my part, I am just liking for cash (24).” Through his interviews, Cunningham tells the story of the tribe’s struggles in the late 20th century. Artists’ styles became necessarily more and more realistic in order to be sold at a higher price. Similarly, they needed to use exotic stones to attract the customer’s attention. While fetish carving ensures a stable income, it is also a source of agitation; it can be quite

frustrating for artists to see traders sometimes send their hard work overseas just to make money out of it (22-4).⁷⁸

The new colors of the non-tribal world are not associated with the sacred six directions and are therefore rejected by some Native Americans. Andrew Thomas is one of the Navajo specialists of the former Shumakolowa boutique renamed the Indian Pueblo Store in Albuquerque. When asked about the use of non-directional colors such as pink in fetishes, he answers that "[Zuni] colors are of the six directions. Only earthen colors, but all of this stuff [pointing at fetishes] is not okay. Someone has to say it (my transcription)." Some of the more conservative Native Americans do indeed frown upon the use of "exotic" colors in fetishes. However, even these nontraditionally-colored fetishes can still be "sacred" to the artist that created them. Shetima said:

It's very interesting when you see a raw rock, and you visualize an animal spirit or an animal within the stones, and you bring it out, and it almost becomes realistic. That's fascinating sometimes. Some come naturally, but some take a lot of thought processes. (My transcription)

Shetima suggests that though the colors may no longer be symbolic or magical, the "animal spirit" is still very present during the creative process to make the piece "come alive." This is in line with the description Ostler and Rodee give of fetishes as "[...] an object, natural or man-made, in which a spirit is thought to reside and which can be used to effect either good or evil (*Carvers* 15)." The spirit

⁷⁸ This commercialization leads to further ambiguity, as the customers are not necessarily informed that their fetish has not been blessed. The Keshi cooperative in Albuquerque even gives each customer buying a fetish a small bag of traditionally ground and colored corn, with instructions on feeding the figurine frequently, when many other boutiques do not even talk about the custom of fetish feeding traditionally practiced by the Zuni. This could be interpreted as Keshi using Zuni ceremonial knowledge to attract customers, once again leading the customers to think of their purchase as a piece of Zuni magic. However, the compassionate and respectful way the shopkeepers talk about Zuni artists indicates that for them, Zuni artists are cherished partners and that they rather aim at raising awareness about traditional practices in hopes that the customers value the artwork even more.

of the animal is always at the service of the artist and in communication with him, showing that even with the use of “exotic” colors, the artform is still traditional inasmuch as the final appearance of the object depends on the good will of the spirits and the artist’s communication with the spirit of the fetish.

Does that mean that there are only potentially "sacred" fetishes, even those made with “exotic” colors that are commercially driven? Contrary to Thomas’ traditionalist conviction that “exotic” colors are “not okay,” some other Native Americans welcome these new colors as having an aesthetic power that transcends the traditional notion of the sacred, implying that traditional sacred color associations are no longer strictly essential to their spirituality. In 1997, Alice Homer, daughter of the artist Leekya, one of the most well-known traditional lapidary artists at Zuni, explained that she “[...] made carvings that could be taken to the appropriate priest by the buyer and made into a fetish. Thus, it is how the stone is used that makes the difference between a carving and a fetish (Rodee, *Carvers* 29).” Milford Nahohai also confirms this when he tells me that what is sold is not a fetish but an art object that could become a fetish if adequately blessed. This suggests that tribe members actually make fetishes of different colors and go through the ritual to make them sacred, regardless of the object’s deviation from traditional *a’witen/’itiwan* colors.

The evolution of the fetish carving palette has thus traveled from its beginnings in the six basic directional colors, made of colored or stained limestone, basaltic clay, azurite, or sandstone, gypsum calcite, and aragonite, through various stages of growth and transformation until the six sacred colors seem to disappear amidst the increasing variety of interestingly colored media. In fetish carving, as in the lapidary arts used in jewelry, the evolution of color

media has also caused the notion of tradition itself to evolve with time. New “exotic” colors are attractive and contribute to making this type of art very popular with foreign clients, ensuring artists who create in varied colors an important monthly income. Through commercialization, the color of fetishes has become aesthetic rather than symbolic, and the shape of the fetish has taken on more symbolic and inspirational importance, which in turn has allowed a larger range of colors the potential to become “sacred” through the ritual blessing process. The tradition of fetish carving and the colors it employs have thus evolved to correspond with contemporary Zuni life and aesthetics within today’s commercially-oriented society.

2.2.4 Painting Colors: Adopting Shading, Nuance and Perspective

We will end this exploration of artforms with a look at the evolution of color media and techniques in painting. In the late Ancestral Pueblo period, we observe that colors seem to progressively move from aesthetic to symbolic, in particular with the first traces of the directional colors linked to representations of corn. Simultaneously, as more reliable pigments were created, the range of colors grew until an impressive palette was at the Ancestral Pueblo people's disposal. The early half of the 20th century marks another striking change: the introduction of paper and canvas painting, from which the first generation of Zuni painters arose. From flat swaths of paint in stark colors without gradation, the Zuni have developed a blend of symbolism and representative art, and have transitioned to a subtler approach with nuanced tones, a change made possible once again by the access to new materials and the influence of Western art techniques, as well as tribal artists' own creativity.

We saw in section 2.1.2 that the Zuni originally painted on walls, the most important examples of which are old kiva wall paintings that already display an impressive range of colors. Archeologists have managed to recover many more or less intact examples.⁷⁹ In "Pigments and Paints in the Archeological Record," Marit K. Munson provides an exhaustive list of kiva painting colors from the early Ancestral Pueblo period to the Pueblo IV period (see Munson 26-44). During the Basketmaker (500 B.C. to A.D. 750), black, white and brown are the most used colors on kiva walls. The Ancestral Pueblo people painted with yellow limonite,

⁷⁹ Kiva mural painting was an ephemeral art; once the ceremony was over, the Ancestral Pueblo people washed the wall (W. Smith 41). This means that there is little evidence left of this artform from the prehistoric period.

red hematite, malachite and azurite (blue,) white calcite (chalk) and black manganese, which coincide with pottery pigments and those sometimes used on fetishes around Cushing's period and shows that many pigments for paint have long been present amongst Pueblo people. Stylistically during these periods, the paint was uniformly applied on kiva walls, with no apparent intention of creating gradation.

Other colors were extremely rare, such as the pink observed in Woodchuck Cave in Tsegi Canyon (AZ). Many pigments have disappeared but traces from around the Pueblo III period (AD 1150 to AD 1350) have been found in Lizard Man Village (Sinagua Pueblo, AZ), as well as from the Pueblo IV (AD 1350 to AD

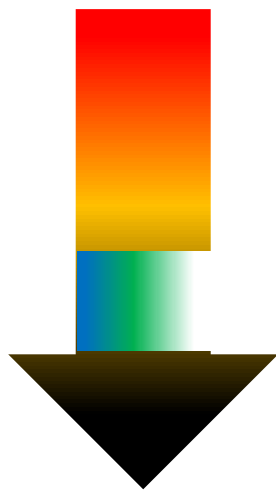


Figure 109: Diagram of the most used to the least used pigments between 500 BC - AD 1600): red, yellow, white/green/blue, and black

1600) in *Awat'ovi* (Hopi territory). Pinks and grays were relatively rare, except for the purplish/greenish-black of manganese. In the Hawikku period (1630 A.D. - 1700 A.D.), the Ancestral Pueblo people used purple and orange for the first time.

From the Basketmaker period through Pueblo IV, the most common pigment was red, found in 27 archeological sites, followed by yellow, found in 22 archeological sites, while blue, green and white appear to have been applied in about 19 archeological sites and black (both matte and sparkly) in about 11 sites (30-1). This indicates that the *a'witen/itiwan* colors were the easiest to produce, providing an explanation for their popularity in the limited range of available pigments that seems to have made it difficult to obtain other hues from the beginning of the archeological record.

Munson comments that there was a great variety of white pigments present at Chaco Canyon, one of the most influential ancestral pueblo sites inhabited from the 9th to the 13th century, because "white minerals were versatile, with uses including slipping pottery, whitewashing walls, whitening textiles, and painting objects (31)."⁸⁰ The versatility of white materials made them particularly precious to the Ancestral Pueblo people, so finding new recipes was an important challenge that pushed them to create many different whites. Through such challenges, the Ancestral Pueblo people gradually perfected their color palette with the addition of many other colors that persisted for centuries.

There is no solid evidence to indicate that the use of color in the early Ancestral Pueblo period was anything other than aesthetic. However, striking changes appear from the Pueblo IV period onward, in which we can observe a symbolic shift in color use. Schaafsma explains the progressive nature of this shift: white seems to have been used aesthetically for contrast, but yellow was symbolically used to represent all the flowers in the world, the sacred corn pollen, summer and the "growing season (Schaafsma 74)." Directional and symbolic colors appeared for the first time with corn representations; the Ancestral Pueblo people illustrated a pyramid of four-colored corn in Room 3, Layer 9 of the Awat'ovi site (Schaafsma 79-80). According to Schaafsma, "the graphic depiction of one set of images may trigger a whole set of associations, beyond what is

⁸⁰ The Ancestral Pueblo groups had various techniques for applying paint, some of which are close to today's techniques. In their 2020 *Color in the Ancestral Pueblo Southwest*, Munson and Hays-Gilpin investigate the diverse painting techniques of Ancestral Pueblo people, such as a spitting technique, which consists in "blowing, spraying or spitting [copper-based pigments] onto a surface" to paint kachinas, moccasins and ceremonial paraphernalia. This technique also imitates the splatter of the rain to invoke rain and rain-related spirits (see Munson 18). Archeologist Polly Schaafsma describes the main techniques found in the Awat'ovi and Kawàka'a sites (Pueblo IV, AD 1350 - AD 1600) as "fingertips, spattering, outlining, and over-painting (Schaafsma 72)."

represented. In this case, color directional symbolism is inherent in the painting of the colored corn (Schaafsma 79).”

Watson Smith also investigated Zuni color meaning in kiva painting in his important study of murals, *When is a Kiva*.⁸¹ His observation of color symbolism in many ancestral kiva paintings led him to the following conclusion:

For example, yellow [...] stands for 'the waters around the world', an eldest sister, flowers, corn pollen, 'yellow breasted birds, butterflies, and all beautiful things', 'days of sunshine and rain without wind', and the rainbow. [...] blue is the second eldest sister at Zuñi [...]. Green [...] for grass [...]. Red [...] is red-breasted birds, the third eldest sister, and 'to make him feel well.' [...] white is the sun at Zuni [...]. Black [...] is the earth, the sky, and the youngest sister at Zuñi. [...] Mixed colors suggest [...] raindrops, blood, and 'all kinds of flowers for a fine summer.' Black and yellow together are the oriole at Zuñi, and red and yellow there are for 'all the beautiful things.' (Smith 126-127)⁸²



Figure 110: Ceremonial figure, Pottery Mound, Pueblo IV (Munson 71)

Munson describes one of the kiva murals at Pottery Mound (Pueblo IV, west of Los Lunas, NM) as a depiction of rain-bringing rites. She adds the following description: “The black and white emphasis in this painting is likely to pertain to rain cloud symbolism (70-1).” Her interpretation of the dominant black and white colors seems to line up with Smith's interpretation of them as

⁸¹ Though Smith warns that this classification could be an anachronism, as there is no official record of Ancestral Pueblo color symbolism, his classification of color meanings in the 1990s does seem to show that painting colors seem to have been symbolic for the people that painted them.

⁸² To focus more on the Zuni meaning of colors, I removed Smith's explanation of the Hopi meanings of colors, hence the ellipses.

symbolizing the sun and sky, which are rain-bringers in Zuni cosmology.

However, when I asked Kenneth Seowtewa about the significance of colors during a short interview in 2014, he revealed that Watson’s interpretation of color symbolism needed to be completed according to the current Zuni vision. Seowtewa said that “For us: yellow (north) is pollen. Blue (west) is water, red (south) is warmth. White (east) is light, multicolor (zenith) is beauty of nature and black (nadir) is the unknown (my transcription).” The chart in figure 111 compiles both Smith's observations and Seowtewa’s clarifications to give all known possible interpretations:

	Direction	Substance	Family member	Plants	Animal/ Insects	Feelings	Weather	Celestial Body
Yellow/ Orange	north	The water of the world	Eldest sister	Flowers, Corn pollen	Yellow-breasted bird, butterfly	All the beautiful things	Sunshine, Rains without wind, Rainbow	
Blue/ Green	west	Water	Second eldest sister	Grass				
Red	south	Warmth	Third eldest sister		Red-breasted bird	To make him feel well		
White	east	Light						Sun
Black	nadir	Earth	Youngest sister			Unknown		Sky
Multicolor	zenith					Beauty of Nature		

Figure 111: Compilation of the meanings of colors according to Watson and Seowtewa

By the time of the Kuaua painting at Pottery Mound (figure 110), the Ancestral Pueblo’s aesthetic use of color as a way to play with contrast is presumed to have made a transition to a more dominantly symbolic usage. This means that the current interpretation of the yellow mask on the figure may also refer to the "water of the world," the "eldest sister," "flowers and corn pollen," the "yellow-breasted bird and butterfly," "all the beautiful things," the "sunshine," rain without wind," or the "rainbow."

The transition from wall painting to canvas is fairly recent, dating from the installation of C.G. Wallace's trading post, which also coincides with the years during which Clara Gonzales worked as a teacher at the Zuni Day School. According to Jennifer McLerran, Gonzales' art assignments encouraged Zuni youth to:

[...] embrace a modern, realistic style of representation [...]. Gonzales urged her students to represent community members in contemporary dress engaged in the task of daily life and to eschew depictions of traditional dress, traditional ceremonial practice and other religious subjects. (Enote 14-5)

Her teaching influenced artists from the 1920s to the 1950s, after which other artists continued this style. Brothers Anthony and Theodore Edaakie were two of the few Zuni who originally began to work on canvas. Before they generalized painting on canvas, it was mostly confined to altar painting, sand-painting, and other ceremonial contexts (see Enote 13). In 2019, Keith Edaakie talked to me about the work of his grandfather, Anthony, also known as Tony Edaakie:

He did the De Anza hotel in Albuquerque. He's the one that painted those murals down at the basement and he's basically the reason why they're saving that whole place. But anyway. So, he was a painter too, so I wanted to create his work as far as his jewelry, and then what it represents as far as our tradition and culture, and to show what this continent represented. (My transcription)

In 1950-51, C.G. Wallace commissioned Edaakie to paint a mural of *Shalako* that inspired several generations of Zuni painters; his grandson now paints murals as well, such as the one over the threshold of the Zuni Fetish Museum in Albuquerque in figure 112. In the 1950s, the Zuni also made their first attempts at using gouache on canvas and paper before moving on to watercolors and oil painting in the 1970s. These media and teaching influences irrevocably changed

Zuni painting, giving rise to the inclusion of new colors and subjects throughout the latter half of the century.



Figure 112: Keith Edaakie, *Fetish Museum Threshold*, 2019 (courtesy of the Fetish Museum, my photo).

To better analyze the evolution of colors and techniques in painting, we must understand the impact and influence of teacher Clara Gonzales on representational paintings made by Zuni children starting in the 1930s. These students inspired and taught the second generation of tribal canvas painters in the 1970s, who in turn influenced and taught the third, contemporary generation of Zuni painters in the 2000s. In a dissertation published in 1992 by Laura E.

Smith, entitled *Zuni: Writing History and Picturing Place in Three Landscapes Paintings by Zuni Day School Students, 1930-1950* (made available by the Western Studies Library, UNM), the author studies paintings created by Zuni children under Gonzales' supervision. The first significant observation can be made with respect to the subjects the children paint. Previously, tribal art had been focused on the representation of deities only, but here, the kachinas and the Zuni iconography entirely disappear, and instead the young artists depict

landscapes in color. Smith describes one of the Zuni children's painting of a rocky landscape with mesas typical of Zunilands, using greens for plants and a majority of warm colors (brown, yellow and red) to depict the desert climate. She notes, "The naturalistic treatment of these scenes and the contemporary subject matter reflect the real world of the Zunis (32)." For example, the child represented the natural erosion caused by the flow of water over the landscape with a detailed range of browns. Concerning another painting, Smith explains that "(...) twelve-year-old Edmond Ladd naturalistically rendered the brown, naked earth of a desert region (30)." The children's paintings are among the first to realistically represent the Zuni's contemporary landscape. Unlike previous generations, these children were introduced to the medium of painting on paper or canvas early in life and received non-tribal instruction; it would seem that, consequently, their take on painting is of a less culturally-specific nature.

Describing the children's art, Smith says that "[a] sense of space is expressed not only through a receding landscape but also through a lighter treatment of pigment on the farthest situated hills," confirming that the Zuni children had begun to be trained in how to create depth with color gradation around this time; according to Smith, this new use of color and perspective shows a Western influence: "However, their artwork expresses a deliberate Western sensibility to space such as the use of one-point perspective and illusionism (37)." Smith then stresses the conflicts faced by this generation of artists; on the one hand, there was the growing influence of Western art, such as the use of gradation to create depth as taught by the children's teacher, while on the other hand, Western traders encourage "traditional paintings" with flat colors for commercial purposes, and some conservative Zuni also frowned upon Western

influence (meaning stylistic elements such as the introduction of perspective in painting). These children formed the first generation of artists to struggle with this duality between the potential for education and innovation, and the two-pronged pressure to create art that conformed to a specific notion of cultural identity: first, the pressure from the West to create bankable "Zuni" art for sale, pushing artists to keep painting kachinas with the argument that customers were not interested in representational landscape paintings; second, the pressure from the elders of the tribe, who deemed this type of landscape painting "not Zuni." The elders wanted to perpetuate the existing Zuni approach, whereas the younger generation intended to create something new.

Some of the children Gonzales trained became renowned painters who in turn inspired generations to come. The Southwest Studies Library of the University of New Mexico granted access to an old video file in their archives of a documentary entitled "A:shiwi A:wan: belonging to the Zuni: Eight contemporary Zuni Painters," originally broadcast on the TV program *Colores!*. The A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center recorded rare and precious interviews from their 1994 exhibition of the same name. The eight participating artists, Phil Hughte, Chris Natachu, Alex Seowtewa, Filbert Bowannie, Ronnie Cachini, Duane Dishta, Eldred Sanchez, and Patrick Sanchez, all represent the second generation of Zuni painters. They explain a shift in the 1990s from exclusively painting kachina iconography to landscape painting. The narrator of the video, Phil Hughte (1954-1997), was himself a painter and cartoonist, famous for his cartoons of Frank Cushing's stay at Zuni (see section 3.2.2). According to the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, he started painting when he was seven, then later received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Northern Arizona University. In the



Figure 113: Phil Hughte, *Flight of Eagles*, 1998 (my photo) Albuquerque IPCC mural portraying a Zuni Eagle Dancer with a bald eagle circling over it

documentary, he explains, "Painting is the most difficult medium to make a living," because of how recent the medium is within the tribe, and because potential customers view it as "untraditional." According to Hughte, the fact that there were so few painters meant that they received practically no exposure, saying that "to make a living, you need recognition and training in an art studio, and to do that,

you have to go outside (Hughte, *Colores!* N.pag.)."⁸³ He then talks about the first generation of painters at Zuni, including Theodore Edaakie, who depicted kachinas with a "style of work [that] is really traditional, this means there's no background, no sense of depth or perspective. Only limited colors and it was mostly just the kachina standing on the ground (Hughte, *Colores!* n.pag.)." The Zuni admire Theodore Edaakie's style for its pale colors with little nuance. His figures are set either on a dual-toned sky/earth background, or with no background color at all, sometimes just a grey puddle for the shadow of the kachina which emphasizes its role as the main subject. The shadows of the kachina follow the curves of its chest in dark grey lines; Edaakie used similar lines to represent shadows within the pleats of the kilts. He painted primarily with matte gouache in subtle color tones that provide an overall neat and uncluttered effect.

This older style highlights the major shift in color usage brought about by the second generation of painters in the 90s, who employed polychromatic background colors and color gradation to give the impression of depth and perspective. Hughte continues his narration with a comparison of Edaakie's style with the painters of his own generation, saying: "Now there's Duane Dishta, myself, and Alex Seowtewa. We three are the oldest of the modern painters. We use more color; more action in the figures' composition allows for more depths and perspective and overall, the painting is more detailed (*Colores!* n.pag.)." From the flat hues of Theodore Edaakie's generation, evocative of kiva painting, Hughte's generation created a new trend. They pay attention to details and perspective, creating shadows and gradations that make the kachina come alive.

⁸³ My transcription of his narration.

This generation of painters, including Duane Dishta and Alex Seowtewa, are the product of Gonzales' influence. Even if some Zuni disagreed with their approach, the artists painted ceremonial subjects such as kachinas and other iconography using Western techniques to create "volumetric forms (Enote 15)." They assimilated Gonzales' teaching to produce fluency and life through colors, contrary to the traditional approach to color in ceremonial painting, in which shading, depth and perspective are largely absent.

As the very name of the *Colores!* TV show would indicate, the paintings in the exhibition are designed to attract the public's attention through their use of color. Hughte explains that the spectator needs to move around to see the painting, to make an active observation, and enjoy the dynamic and expressive approach to colors in order to properly appreciate the works. This approach is indicative of Hughte's own overall style, as we can observe in his 1998 mural

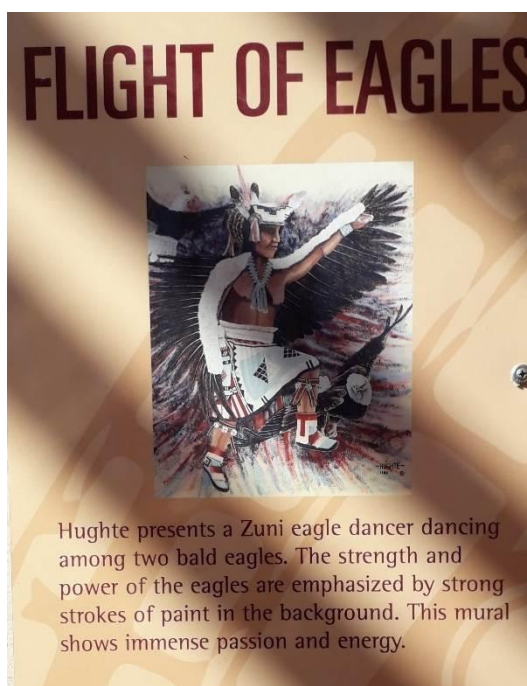


Figure 114: Description of Hughte's mural, IPCC (my photo)

painting for the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, which depicts an eagle dancer with a bald eagle circling over it (figures 113-114). Firstly, we can note the use of light and shadow, giving the impression of the sunlight reflected on the dancer's skin, which varies between dark brown and white highlights. There are fewer color gradations on the dancer's clothing, with some touches of gray in a linear pattern

on the dancer's pleated kilt to add depth and movement. The Indian Pueblo

Cultural Center's description of the mural emphasizes the "strength and power of the eagles [...] emphasized by strong strokes of paint in the background. This mural shows immense passion and energy (see figure 114)." To create this effect in the background, the painter opted for expressive and cathartic multicolor strokes of paint evocative of the otherworldly color of the zenith, letting the dancer take flight in this sacred direction. The use of multicolor is one of the two symbolic colors in the painting, along with the blue turquoise jewelry worn by the dancer as part of the traditional ceremonial costume. According to Roediger, turquoise jewelry "reflec[ts] the power and glory of the daytime sky from which comes life and beauty in the warmth of the purifying and nurturing sun and the repose of the rain-bringing and shadowing clouds (140)." The painted blue, red, black and white colors on the figure's deerskin moccasins are also a traditional combination (127-8), with a nod to the Zuni jewelry color scheme created with turquoise, coral, jet and mother of pearl. This use of bright and saturated colors also contributes to the comic-book-like style characteristic of Hughte's art.

Ronnie Cachini, another of the six major painters of the second generation, developed a somewhat different style. For the exhibition, he painted a kachina with a village scene behind it. The color used in the background of the village evokes Hughte's cartoon-like style in the blocky shapes of the people. The artist used a thick black outline that evoke Cloisonnism, as well as Ancestral Pueblo kiva painting. Cachini applies color gradations, such as light shading on the red clothing, which contrasts with the plain black and white elements and also creates some sense of light perspective; however, the gradations on the green roof and the beige ground are also extremely subtle, with very little contrast to create visible depth. Here is a clear example of a fully detailed background, anchoring

the kachina in a village scene, contrary to the "no background" and no "depth" work of the former generation. Although it depicts the sacred kachina, the art is primarily representative of a village scene during Shalako. The overall composition and the colorful background give the impression that the representational figures are moving and makes them appear alive. Cachini's use of bright colors lends the scene a joyful atmosphere, which affirms the intent of the artist to show the importance of the ceremony and the joy that come with Shalako, for which a full year of intense preparation is necessary leading up to these happy days of celebration.

Hughte's Eagle Dancer and Cachini's village scene display a use of color that, except for the colors of the sacred paraphernalia and costumes of the dancers, is largely representative rather than symbolic. With the arrival in the tribe of another representational artistic movement in the form of miniaturism, a third painter presented his alternative to traditional painting. Chris Natachu painted tiny



Figure 115: Ronnie Cachini, oil painting. Colores! 1994

detailed paintings without the aid of a magnifying glass, using "a unique style that's traditional in a way. It's nice and simple, and the colors work together (Hughte, *Colores!*).” Though he also represented kachinas in a style similar to Hughte and Cachini, the miniaturist aspect of Natachu’s work was innovative. The artist was inspired by pottery designs, as can be seen in the image in figure 116. He proceeded by laying out colors on rag paper, starting with a uniform beige background. Then he painted his subjects over the background with off-white paint; in figure 116, a handprint and an animal can be seen in white paint on the beige background (above the water jar), as well as the initial shape of the jar in white. Once the paint dried, he added dark brown contouring and darker shadows to make the jar appear in relief by smudging the color. This incredibly meticulous work is part of a series of miniature paintings representing pottery vessels, displaying how detail-oriented Zuni painting could become.



Figure 116: Chris Natachu, miniaturism painting style. *Colores!* 1994

The work of these three painters as described in the documentary sums up the significant changes that were occurring in tribal painting. The first is in the choice and treatment of the subject: instead of exclusively iconographic art illustrating kachinas and Zuni heroes, the artists began to paint village inhabitants in Shalako scenes and traditional objects representing Zuni culture, such as pottery jars. The second is in the coloring techniques, moving away from flat colors to use subtle gradation that provides more depth. The third major change is that colors were used to depict actual annual scenes, narrowing the gap between representation and reality. These three artists brought to life new styles and techniques and served as examples and mentors in teaching the following generation, paving the way for future innovative painting within the tribe; less than twenty years later, the Zuni had established a proprietary approach to landscape painting that satisfied both Western traders and conservative elders. Laura Smith says that "For many Native Americans, identity has been synonymous with land, not something separate from themselves that is a possession (13)." The eight painters exhibited in "Belonging to the Zuni" illustrated the Zuni village as well as scenes of places their ancestors inhabited or used during ceremonies that are not necessarily part of current Zunilands, suggesting that the artists intended to portray the cultural background of the Zuni within the paintings, and thus to "preserve tradition through painting (Hughte, *Colores!*)."

This idea is also at the heart of Jim Enote's ambitious Map Art project, initiated in 2006. In Enote and McLerran's catalog of the exhibition, Robert J. Breuning, director of the Museum of Northern Arizona, describes the concept of the Zuni Map Art project as the result of the Zuni's intention to reconnect with their spiritual and cultural landscape, going beyond the imposed physical frontiers

to include, for example, places of legend that are far away from the Zunilands' legal frontiers but still belong to Zuni history. Breuning specifies that "[o]ne of the explicit goals was to instill in the public an awareness of the Zuni traditional cultural landscape and their ongoing interest in their lands (Enote 3)."

The paintings in the project are therefore part of the Zuni quest to come to terms with their past and their identity in a world where certain physical boundaries have been imposed upon them. Jim Enote, former director of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center, explains that the tribe's territory has been "remapped" (4) by Euro-American powers which forced boundaries upon the tribe because of their own need to assert and control territory. The Zuni regard this as a distortion of Zuni history, since the legal maps do not take into account Zuni cultural and spiritual places. The Zuni have strong connections with sacred places as far away as the Grand Canyon, the San Francisco Peaks, or the Sangre de Cristo Mountains above Santa Fe. The tribe has explicitly recorded these places in legends, songs, prayers, and illustrated them on ceramics and stones. However, European settlers and the United States government gave these places new names and geographical boundaries, thus imposing Euro-American values and denying the Zuni's relationship to them. The Zuni Map Art project aims to reappropriate the tribe's territories through the "counter-map[pping]" (Lofden, n.pag.) of Euro-American boundaries, as well as better informing tribe members of their own history. The project represents both a quest for knowledge and a "continuous search for the essence of Zuni." The colors applied on the canvases created by participating artists serve as a record, just like petroglyphs did initially, yet with the difference that this record also grounds the cultural landscape as part

of Zuni history by laying it out on paper according to their own terms, similar to the way the West has recorded significant places and historical events in books.

To immortalize Zuni territories on the canvas, Jim Enote commissioned different artists— not only trained painters—to participate, and attributed a place related to their oral history to each of them. Some places were only available by airplane, so the project's budget was substantial and received financial support from the Museum of Arizona and foundations such as the Anneberg Foundation, the Christensen Fund, the Lannan Foundation and the National Geographic Society Expeditions Council. Curtis Quam, Enote's successor at the Zuni Museum and coordinator of the project, provided further details during an interview in 2019, explaining that they formed a team of about twelve people,⁸⁴ composed of experts, religious leaders, and teachers. People were interested, as the scope of the project was innovative for the Zuni tribe and for the Native Community in general and, according to Quam, extended way beyond the confines of the reservation. Quam admitted that the project was very challenging; the size of the canvases and the subjects represented were new, contrary to the kachina portraits artists had traditionally painted until then. He and Enote asked talented artists who mastered specific skills necessary to paint specific places. To ensure the quality of the work, the artists presented their sketches to an advisory committee after two weeks of work, which ensured they were on the right track. Once the sketches were approved, the artists could start painting. They intended to create both something new and something that belonged to the tribe, and also wanted to show off the Western-influenced skills Zuni painters had

⁸⁴ In Enote and McLerran's book, McLerran names this committee "ZCRAT" for "Zuni Cultural Research Advisory Team (see Enote 12)."

developed while simultaneously remaining close to the now-established Zuni painting tradition.

Mallery Quetawki is one of the two women who participated in the project and part of the first generation of female painters in the tribe. Quetawki obtained her B.S. in Biology with a minor in Art Studio from the University of New Mexico in 2009, and the influence of her studies is apparent in her approach to colors. On her canvas, she represented the area close to Ribbon Falls, the sacred place of emergence where women are forbidden to go, painting from pictures and stories the Zuni men told her. She says:

I'm still on a mission that I've been working on for a while about the idea of combining traditional and contemporary art together, just probably the number one hardest thing as a Native artist because there's the thin red line between the two. One side says 'Oh, it's too traditional,' and one side says 'It's not contemporary enough,' or 'It's too contemporary, it's not, it shouldn't be called Native art'... It's a boundary I'm trying to walk along or cross both sides and... a good research goal is to keep going, to expand myself, to try to get out there both to show ... the Zuni people that they understand my artwork and don't look at it just like 'Wow, okay... it's really artsy, but I don't get it.' And I don't want people to think about my art like that, and yet again, I don't want the contemporary world to say 'Oh it's too realistic... It's too safe.' (Enote 58)

Her comment about the "thin red line" between what the Zuni label as traditional and or contemporary shows how young painters struggle between the heavily imposed tradition of the tribe and their intention to experiment; Quetawki defines contemporary art as a risky, unsafe and less "realistic" art. In her introduction to the exhibition catalog, co-editor Jennifer McLerran refers to this current artistic movement as the "modern painting tradition (13)." This blend of traditional artwork with new trends to establish a "modern painting tradition" serves as a tool for at least the artistic reappropriation of ancestral lands and lost history.



Figure 117: Mallery Quetawki, Grand Canyon, acrylic on canvas, 2008. (Enote 56) 34x44

Figure 118: Cliff Palace in Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado, U.S. 2018 (photography Judson McCranie)

Now that the groundwork of the modern tradition has been laid, let us focus on understanding what exactly this new tradition is, relative to the "old tradition." Mallery Quetawki's painting is a pioneering example of the "modern painting tradition" that we can study in detail. Her Art Map painting (figure 117) represents the "place of emergence;" on the left side, at the waterfall's foot, the off-white underbellies of the earth lead up to the cane plant by which the Zuni climbed up to the surface. On the left is *Halona Itiwana*, the Middle Place, with the giant male water spider's heart dropping down over the center of Zuni village. Several figurative scenes of the migration myth and more recent Zuni history, such as the encounter with the Spanish, are symbolized by the orange half rosette symbol represented as a petroglyph to the left of the water spider. The first observation we can make about Quetawki's use of color is that similarly to Gonzales' students, the colors used for the landscape are relatively realistic; she accurately portrays the warm yellows, oranges and browns of the Grand Canyon's arid climate. The different tones she selects to recreate the sand provide texture to the ground, though there are little to no shadows at the foot of the mesas which simultaneously gives the painting a classic, two-dimensional "Zuni" look. Again, her tribal influence is apparent; in her interview for the project, she explains that:

I went to school [...] and took art classes, art history classes, and I got to see Matisse, Monet. For some reason, they didn't do much for me, but I'd still come back and think about 'Oh, I want to be like Duane Dishta.' I want to be like him, I want to be like Alex [Seowtewa] I want to have that... (Enote 59)

Both Dishta and A. Seowtewa were kachina painters who influenced this new generation of painters with their advice in addition to the latter's Western education at university. Thus, at first glance, the saturation of colors is reminiscent of Hughte's cartoonist style and Cachini's village scene, with limited

use of perspective. However, we can observe that Quetawki, contrary to Cachini, uses more shading and color gradation in her landscape, showing her Western influences. To create the colors of the sky, she lightens the blue with white to give the impression of transparent clouds, and she emphasizes the shadows around the cliff dwellings—a depiction of probably the most well-preserved Pueblo settlement in Mesa Verde, inhabited until the late 1190s—with bold dark browns. She paints Ribbon Falls with a translucent off-white texture that creates a misty look. She also incorporates petroglyphs, such as the JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE motif.⁸⁵ We can understand this as a way to illustrate the way the Zuni ancestors had previously illustrated their own journey in petroglyphs.

Though the artwork appears representative, with its realistic take on landscape colors, there are several esoteric figures hidden throughout the canvas. For instance, looking closely at the right side of the waterfall, the dark brown faces of the *Ahayu:ta* twins appear on the mesas, watching over the Zuni. Quetawki uses lighter shades against the darker brown of the cliffs to portray the natural erosion of the surface so that the faces look molded into the cliffs, becoming one with nature. On the top right corner, her way of presenting the Surface is also very dynamic; usually, this design is frontal but here she paints the Surface in profile, with an interesting use of shadows and perspective, such as the contour shading that emphasizes the spherical design, contrary to the two-dimensional versions derived from petroglyphs. Similarly, the gradation of color under the sun's eyes creates the effect of reflected light and shadow.

⁸⁵ Interestingly, she also represents pottery motifs that were never used in petroglyphs, like the Spanish medallion (rosette) and hachured terrace symbol, which evokes Chris Natachu's pottery-inspired miniaturist approach with tiny details in black.

Painters portray their attachment to Zuni values in different ways. Quetawki makes art of her own which she reconciles with her Zuni origins by borrowing techniques from her Zuni mentors and subtly adding figurative designs of heroes and other symbols within the landscape, while bypassing the symbolic color system which is usually crucial in kachina (and altar) painting. Other artists are equally as much open to bolder changes as they are attached to traditional painting. Elroy Natachu Jr. and Keith Edaakie's works for the Map Art project and their 2019 retrospective comments on their participation show how both painters are representative of the current artistic trends of today's generation. Elroy and Edaakie's paintings represent their Zuni ancestors' penchant for ingenuity and craftsmanship. Their style and color techniques are similar to Fauvism and Cloisonnism, with saturated colors enclosed by black lines like we can see in Gauguin's paintings. However, silversmithing, lapidary art and other crafts also influence their selection of vibrant colors. Elroy Natachu Jr. says:

[M]y mother and father are silversmiths. They make jewelry. And my sister, she makes... fabric dolls that depict... different dances [like the] Buffalo Dance... [M]y mother and my sisters... would check-in and give me different advice on how to maybe do the composition or make [my painting] look more realistic... I like to use more vibrant and bright colors. (Enote 79, original typography)

This influence is similar to Edaakie's approach, since he is also the heir of a family of artisans and is himself trained in the art of jewelry making. Moreover, most of the Zuni artists commissioned for the project are also silversmiths or fetish carvers, and the colors of Zuni jewelry and stone carving influence their palette. We can observe this in how Edaakie and Natachu Jr. both paint with high saturation, tempered with just subtle changes in tone to give more depth,

comparable to way the colors of stones in a fetish or a piece of jewelry present reflections and variations of light within one overall color.

One significant difference between the two artists is Natachu Jr.'s use of the sacred six colors to designate the four places he was commissioned to paint.

Yes, I was given four particular spots. And a lot of it is based around a sort of our migration, so we have the sacred colors, which are also indicators of Zuni in particular based on their color patterning. So



Figure 119: Elroy Natachu Jr., Tanner, Red Wall Cavern, E:node Bridge, and Vasey's Paradise, acrylic on canvas, 2010 (Enote 78) 48x40 in

yellow's for north, blue's for west, south this red and white is east but then also with the combination and all of these [for Zenith] and also with the black. Black is for the underworld, and when combining black, red, and all of these colors in the multicolored eared corn, that's what we call it, what's sometimes known as Zenith or the sky. (My transcription)

While Natachu Jr. ties his subject back to the traditional *a'witen/itiwan* colors, Edaakie forgoes sacred color symbolism in favor of a figurative approach, depicting the mountain lion in the white clouds. In Natachu Jr.'s painting, the boldness of the sacred colors in the four stars and the thick black and turquoise contours of the terrace symbols contrast with the more subtle and metaphorical approach in Edaakie's piece, in which the yellow north is represented not by the color, but by a mountain lion-shaped cloud.

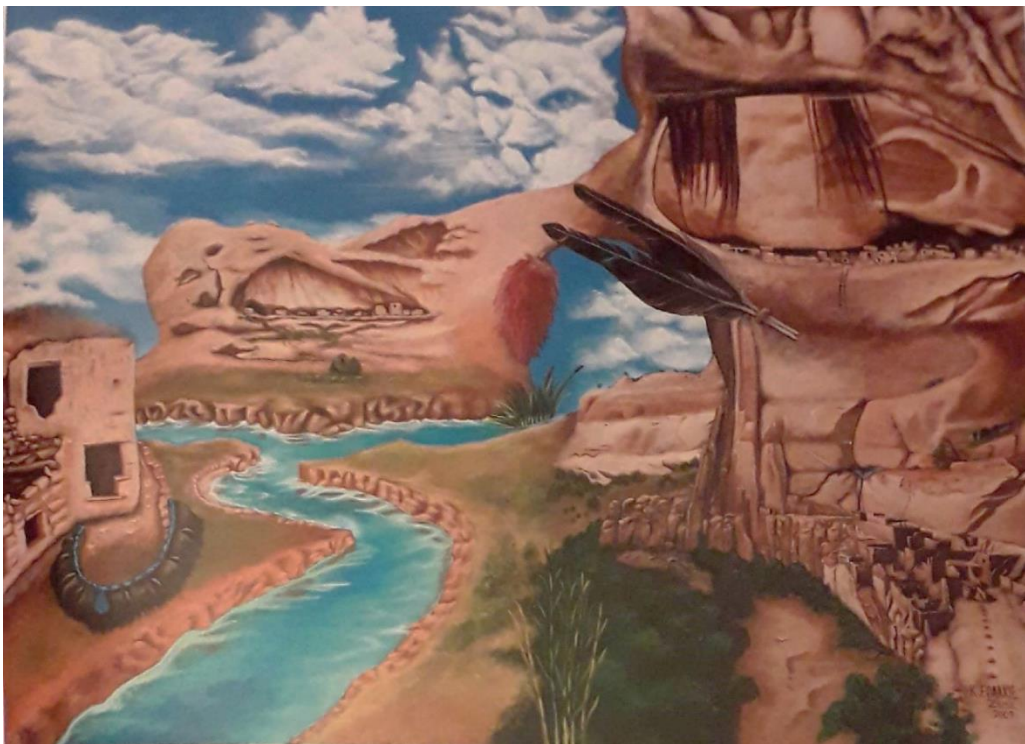


Figure 120: Keith Edaakie, *Bishla:shiwani A:wan Heshoda:we (Navajo National Monument)*, acrylic on canvas, 2009 (Enote 41) 30 x 40 in

During an interview in 2019, both artists reflected on what they could have done differently in their work; whereas Edaakie wanted for there to be more texture in his piece, Natachu Jr. would have wished for better composition and

higher contrast. The artist seemed to see the subtler contrasts between darker and lighter hues as a shortcoming, as opposed to a franker and bolder approach. When I ask him if he would change the colors to try to bring more contrast, he does not hesitate to answer:

I would make it more realistic [...] A lot of my lines at the time weren't as straight, but now I can make them very pristine and crisp and they would give it more dynamism because the way that I view it now is... The compositions are okay but they could be very much improved. Either in point of view or more shading and lighting in certain areas to give it more of that 3D effect to it. [...] Yeah, I would add a little bit more earth tones and a lot more contrast, that sort of movement aspect to it. (My transcription)⁸⁶

Edaakie, on the other hand, focused more on how he could create more texture by adding colors, such as in the clouds or the feathers:

You can see my... I guess you can see the improvement in my clouds. Less light here, yeah, I think it was more fuller and more... It captured the different shades and hues of the light because I know when I first started, it was just always, well, the way I saw it! I thought clouds were just white, so I'll just use white to paint it, but you know, like studying and learning and watching other people paint clouds... They add different hues like the yellows and the purple and the pinks and the different things to show the different values of the textures of the clouds. And so, here it was just basically just using white paint to paint in these clouds, but now, like I said, adding more color to it to give it that more fuller look. [...] Basically, as part of our migration route, those medicine fraternities are the ones that travel to the north and most likely travel to this area here, and so making that connection with the bear claw necklace and then the eagle feathers that they use along with the red eagle plume, that kind of distinguish the medicine fraternities. So again, that's my beginning stages of creating eagle plumes, it kind of looks like just a big red-orange type! But, yeah, that's probably one thing that I would change! (My transcription)

⁸⁶ I emphasized the artist's hesitant tone with ellipsis.

Duane Dishta and Alex Seowtewa were Natachu Jr. and Edaakie's mentors, as well as Quetawki's. This influence is even more apparent in the study of their more current artwork, such as Natachu Jr.'s kachina portraits and Edaakie's Creation Myth scenes. Natachu Jr. painted the *Hemokatsiki* kachina, the great-great-grandmother of the kachinas⁸⁷ (figure 121), an easily



Figure 121: Elroy Natachu Jr., *Hemokatsiki Kachina*, acrylic on canvas, 2018 (picture of a printed postcard, my photo). The yellow arrow shows the direction of the light.

recognizable anthropomorphic deity with her long, crooked chin and white face—common for female deities, like the Corn Maidens— with red spots and a wig of white goat hair (Bunzel, *Katcinas* 986). We can immediately notice the gradation of colors in the painting and see the direction of the bright cold light cast down on the kachina from the top right corner of the canvas (indicated by the yellow arrow in figure 121). This is emphasized by the well-placed shading along the nose and the jaw. The contrast between the dark blue background and the illuminated white foreground gives life to the anthropomorphic figure, and the darker colors outline the whimsical expression of the kachina. The composition makes it evident that the painter thought a lot about color composition and expressing light through the colors. He says:

And then my sketches are very crude and they're not as detailed. They're just sort of the groundwork for position, posture and trying to

⁸⁷ See Wright, *Kachinas of the Zuni* 56, and Bunzel, *Katcinas*, 986-8.

find out where to cast the hero where I'm supposed to, light and dark to make it look a little bit more realistic. (My transcription)

Natachu Jr.'s improved skills allow him to use colors to bring light to his kachinas. Edaakie often paints scenes of the Creation Myth, such as the one in figure 52 picturing the birth of the deer and bear clans, in which he uses his improved mimesis and observational skills to bring textures to life through the intricate water reflections created with a range of blue/green and lighter touches of colors to create ripples, or the transparent fog from which were born the *Ahayu:ta* twins, depicted as two totems.

The techniques of both artists reveal how they build up their work in different layers of paint, contrary to the flat monochromatic swaths of colors that used to be traditional. Natachu Jr. works with color combinations to create contrast and anchor the kachina in a dreamy atmosphere. He explains that "[s]ometimes there's a little bit [of] black and there's a little bit of light so I like how it kinda combines that dawn-esque coloration, like sunset kind of tone. But it also gives it more of a dreamscape quality (my transcription)." Edaakie also enjoys using layers of colors in his spray paint works. The painting in figure 122 represents his daughter, in a traditional miha dress (see section 2.1.4) wearing a silver and turquoise family heirloom necklace, a piece of jewelry transmitted from mothers to daughters. In the foreground, her figure and the water jar, shaped like a bear for Edaakie's bear clan, are highlighted by a dynamic background created using a masking technique with a combination of complementary colors. Warm, orange-to-yellow lines contrast with the purple and black background to form a part of the raincloud symbol that Edaakie especially likes to use in his graphic renderings. He describes his process below:



Figure 122: Keith Edaakie, *Olla Maiden*, spray paint on canvas, 2019 (my photo)

So that was actually done with spray paint, what I did is I spray-painted them red and orange and then the yellow, and then I used tape [...] I masked off the areas I wanted to stay clean, then I went back over with the white and the purple one, and the black around the edges, and then when I peeled the paint off or tape off, the covered areas is what stayed behind itself. (My transcription)

Both artists now use bolder and more vibrant colors than in their 2010 paintings for the Map Art project. Edaakie claims that

"[t]his is a lot of watching, observing other people and how

they do their crafts, picking up techniques from a lot of different places. [...] And then, you know, watching and observing and then trying it and then you know refining it to make it fit my style (my transcription)." He is constantly incorporating elements of other artists' techniques, regardless of their origins. Natachu Jr.'s inspiration came also from his education at the University of New Mexico. He said during our interview that Western color theory influences his art, especially his love for complementary colors and the work of artists such as Van Gogh and Jackson Pollock, the latter's influence seen in the splatters of colors present in all of Natachu Jr.'s recent paintings. With the work of these two artists, Zuni iconography has gained a multicultural approach, mixing both Zuni and non-Native American art and techniques.

Blending, superposing, and applying layers of colors is one of the most significant deviations from kiva mural paintings, whose natural pigments could only handle minimal color mixing; blending mineral and organic paint often led to disastrous results as "[d]yes are complex organic compounds that impart color to other minerals by bonding chemically [...] (Munson 16)." Zuni artists adopted European techniques of using color gradations to create depth not in an attempt to imitate Western art, but rather to create a new form of Zuni art. This modern traditional art is not necessarily reliant on traditional cardinal colors but it still shares the space with the traditional colors, such as those found throughout Natachu Jr.'s work. As we can see in the purpose of the Map Art project, the Zuni first borrowed and then assimilated techniques and color media from Europeans, just as the Europeans once "borrowed" the Zuni's ancestral lands. Through this peaceful artistic process, the tribe declares its independence from Euro-American boundaries, a turning point in Zuni art.

The use of color in Zuni painting is representative of this liberating process. Colors take on added meaning as they are used in the shaping and remapping of the Zuni cultural landscape. They are the tool selected for the re-appropriation of the tribe's history and territory and are thus indicative of its artistic currents and modern identity. Through the examples in this section, we have seen how new painting techniques allow for a simultaneously traditional and multicultural approach to Zuni iconographic art, which is evolving to attract the younger generation and provide a venue in which to showcase their skills as modern traditional Zuni artists. Quetawki's "thin red line" is no longer an obstacle when the artist is painting excerpts of Zuni oral history, now that flexible notions of

tradition and traditional color are evolving with time and with the activity of a new generation of artists.

2.3 Integrating New Colors: Expressions of Individuality vs. Expressions of Community

2.3.1 Signature and Style in Fetish carving

Archetypal color systems such as the traditional *a'witen/itiwan* system and the black-and-red-on-white ceramic color scheme are representative of a cohesive Zuni community and sense of aesthetics. However, colors are also markers of change in a continually evolving tradition. Even amongst the Zuni themselves there is not always a consensus concerning the concept of traditional colors and the subsequent categorization of what is “Zuni” and what is too “exotic” to be Zuni, and many Zuni artists are torn between their sense of duty to the tribe and the preservation of its traditional heritage, and their wish for independence and individual recognition (which may be frowned upon by other tribe members). In the first chapters of this dissertation, we saw different ways in which Zuni colors are linked to the tribe’s cultural identity. To conclude our discussion of evolving Zuni artistic traditions, we will explore the link between an artist’s individual and cultural identity through the study of signature colors in carving, silversmith/lapidary work and painting, using both Zuni and Western colors and media. Then, the question of “what is Zuni” will be raised in conjunction with the addition and integration of so-called “exotic” colors in traditional Zuni artforms. Finally, we will conclude this chapter by mapping out the timeframes and distinguishing the specifically Zuni criteria of color assimilation.

We saw in section 2.2.3 that fetish carving has always been one of the most significantly colorful Zuni artforms. Most of the previous generations of Zuni carvers came from artisan families and carried on a family tradition that was also a major part of their identity. However, more and more artists are now moving

out of the Zuni comfort zone to experiment with new colors and integrate them into their own personal palette, and as a result, the formerly codified sacred object has now been opened up to a range of colors and materials that go beyond the sexpartite *a'witen/itiwan* color system of yellow, blue, red, white, multicolor, and black. In the first volume of McFadden's *Changing Hands: Art without Reservation*, Susan H. Totty explains:

The growth in the number of carvers has yielded a vast array of innovative carving styles. The use of materials more often associated with jewelry, such as lapis lazuli, sugulite, and opal, has heightened the visual impact and appeal of fetishes. [...]. The carvers who have been bold enough to experiment with new materials, techniques, or subjects have hastened contemporary fetish carving's evolution and are being accorded recognition as innovators. (162-63)

These innovators purposefully experiment with new colors and materials, as well as allowing the characteristics of the stone to guide them in the carving of nontraditional animals. Once artists encounter a new color material, they may themselves appreciate its unique beauty as well as evaluating its attractiveness for the customers, an important criterion for them, and then possibly adopt it as a signature material, using it as a form of personal artistic branding. This means that when certain distinctive uses of color, material, and style are observed



Figure 123: Jeff Shetima, Sonora Sunrise Bird Fetish, work in progress, 2019 (my photo).

together, they may immediately reveal an artist's identity to the market; as Totty states, "Fetish collectors can now look at carvings and immediately identify the individual artists who created them without relying on a signature or attribution (163)."

An excellent first example can be found in the work of Jeff Shetima, whose originality in both technique and color usage is demonstrated by his willingness to work with atypical materials. He also has his own personal vision of the animal, which generally produces more curvilinear fetishes with endearing cartoon-like faces, in combination with the traditional blocky or geometric "old style" of carving that dates back to Cushing's era. Shetima's introduction to Sonora Sunrise stone by Kent McManis and the popularity of his work in this medium was discussed in



Figure 124: Jeff Shetima, Buffalo Fetish, porous stone with turquoise, 2019 (my photo)

section 2.2.3; Shetima kept on using the material, as "for a while, this was a preferred medium for me," in particular because of the stone's unique coloring:

This is Sonora Sunrise. [It is] more of a brownish color. You kind of see what colors, they're [the fetishes] gonna come up. [...] this is in its raw form...When you look at it this way, [it] almost looks like an eagle...The eagle's head right there, and the wings [here]. So, it might become an eagle [...]. Sonora sunrise, it's just got a little bit more copper. You know, it's more green. [...]. Green, blue...Blue color...Probably more like the aluminum. The aluminum makes it a little bit more green. The copper makes it a little bit more blue. [...]. Yeah, the red. I think that is a mix of copper as well. (My transcription)

The blue-green and flame-like red colors combined within the stone are nothing like the colors of the stones found near the reservation, and its unique color along with the technical difficulty of working it caused Shetima's art to stand out in the competitive fetish market. Since the success of his challenging Sonora Sunrise series, he has been considered a famous master carver who brings out the beauty of raw materials by showcasing their unique color characteristics and by knowing when to make only minimal adjustments to the stone's natural form. These skills are further demonstrated in the bison fetish pictured below. The bison is not a Beast God, but is a Plains Indian animal, whose strength and power is nonetheless appreciated by Zuni artists. For his bison fetish, Shetima selected



Figure 125: Jeff Shetima, Six Beast Gods Totem, 2019 (my photo). Close-up of fine multicolor inlay work on the eagle's spine.

an atypical material, a rough bimaterial stone he found himself near the reservation containing distinct pieces of turquoise which he carefully polished and shaped into the horns, while keep the natural, rough-looking parts of the stone unpolished to depict the shaggy texture and robustness of the animal. This contrast between the imperfect natural stone and the smooth, polished turquoise horns evokes the strength of the animal and makes use of raw colors that correspond to the *a'witen/itiwan* color system.

Multiple signature elements serve to identify Shetima's work. There is the unique choice of Sonora Sunrise stone and other curiously colored stones that fit the traits of either Beast Gods or the more common animals he usually favors. In addition, he is also famous for his particularly detailed and colorful inlay work, with finely-worked, colorful heartlines and other embellishments, such as the inlaid spine such on the eagle totem in figure 125, which has become one of his signature decorations.

Experimentation with colors has also increased in the work of other artists who combine more original "flamboyant" color media with their own modern take on the "old style." Finding *the* signature material is therefore an important element in establishing the carver's artistic identity. Lena Boone's signature materials are gold and silver slag, a mixture of metal oxides and silicon dioxide (see Bazan 851-52) that are produced during the refinement of silver or gold from raw ore. Boone shapes the glassy, striped and brightly colored material in the curvier modern style, as can be seen in the bear fetish depicted in figure 126, which is sure to attract the eye and the interest of collectors. Boone is the only carver at Zuni with the water-cooled grinding equipment necessary for making fetishes from gold slag and glass, guaranteeing her a unique spot in the art market.



Figure 126: From left to right: Lena Boone, Bear Fetish, gold Slag, ca. 1990 (McFadden 138); and Esteban Najera, Skeleton with Cross and Griffin, fossilized ivory, 1996 & 1999 (McFadden 142).

Furthermore, contrary to Shetima's Sonora Sunrise stone, the colors of gold slag vary constantly, so even if her work makes use of the slightly curvier approach now standard in classic modern fetish carving, her signature use of the many-colored material allows her work to stand out.

Another current trend frees the artist of the old style completely by using a photo-realistic approach to carve new details and subjects that have nothing to do with Zuni lore. Artist Esteban Najera, who started his career in art as a jeweler and then began carving in the 1990s, carries over his interest in anatomy and mythology into his carvings of skeletons and fantasy creatures such as dragons. He has a love of minute detail and enjoys the challenge of creating miniature photo-realistic pieces out of fossilized ivory (McFadden 142). His approach to colors is reminiscent of Shetima's inasmuch as the challenge of understanding and mastering a new material comes first, and the actual choice of color is secondary. While his signature color seems rather bland in comparison with those of his peers, the bony off-white hues of the material perfectly correspond to his skeleton figurine and give an eerie look to his griffin, pictured above. This

represents a color revolution in fetish carving, since previously, colors have always been symbolic, and the material rarely matches the realistic color of the subject,⁸⁸ whereas in Najera's fossilized ivory skeleton sculptures, the color represents the reality of the carved subject, and the artist takes great pride in combining this realistic approach to color with an equally realistic approach to detail in his signature style.



Figure 127: Troy Sice, *Fetishes* (courtesy of Keshi, the Zuni connection, my picture) An archetype of cartoon-like interpretive style

Artists Troy Sice and Ray Tsalate also work with a bone-like material, elk antler, but with a very different approach to color, using black jet inlay to create outlines and then decorating the figurine with colored accents. They depict traditional subjects for Zuni fetishes, such as Corn Maidens, the six Beast Gods and common animals such as the owl and the duck. The Corn Maiden, shown top right in figure 127, is decorated with a thick necklace of inlaid lapis lazuli, turquoise, shells, coral and serpentine beads. Like Najera, they almost always use the same base material, but instead of focusing on the very color of the antler

⁸⁸ There are few exceptions, such as the yellowish fur of the mountain lion that inspires *Pò-shai-an-k'ia* to entrust the yellow color to this animal (see section 1.2.2). However, the colors of yellow mountain lion fetishes are still generally far from the tawny-beige fur of the real animal.

itself, they embellish it with the archetypal colors of jewelry – coral, sky-blue turquoise, jet, with the addition of lapis lazuli and serpentine – using the inlaid semi-precious stones to create cartoon-like features. For Sice and Tsalate, the antler functions as a blank canvas on which they can express themselves through colorful embellishment.

Opposing these innovative trends and atypical uses of color is the last style of fetish carving in which the signature depends on remaining wholly traditional, essentially ignoring the new unique and colorful trends. Traditionalists such as the Sheche family use only *a'witen/itiwan* colors and old-style forms. In their 1995 publication *Fetish Carvers of Zuni*, Ostler and Rodee, who interviewed the family, state that “The Sheches collect material along the Salt River in Arizona and use other traditional materials like alabaster, jet, and travertine. They do only traditional Zuni animals, that is, the hunters of the six directions (53),” meaning the Prey Gods, with the yellow mountain lion, blue coyote, red bobcat, multicolor falcon or ground owl, and black mole as detailed in section 1.3.2. McManis informs us of the Sheche family’s connection to the family of Theodore Kucate, famous for their traditionally-shaped carvings done in local stone as well as for their traditional dance troupe. The Kucate’s daughter Thelma married Aaron Sheche, and both of them carried on their fathers’ work, basing their creations on the century-old style documented in Cushing’s *Zuni Fetiches* and using some of his illustrations as models (McManis 87). Before Aaron Sheche passed away, he asked his family to keep on working in the old style of fetishes, and McManis writes, “Today the family’s style is very homogeneous. It seems difficult to tell one family member’s carving from another’s unless initials are on the bottom of the piece (87).” Their

uniform style and exclusive use of the *a'witen/itiwan* colors, as seen in the example of the multicolored eagle depicted in figure 128 carved out of a variegated marble with turquoise accents,⁸⁹ has become a family signature, ensuring the continuation of the traditional colors in Zuni fetish carving. This maintaining of a



Figure 128: Lorandina Sheche, Eagle Fetish, marble, 2021 (courtesy of Keshi).

family artistic signature as described in McManis' and Cunningham's studies represents a sense of filiation and family identity, in contrast to the more recent development of unique, individual artists' styles which invite unusual color materials into a more personalized palette, and

centers their identity as "artists of the Zuni tribe", which fills them with pride in perpetuating an ancestral tradition as "Zuni artists" creating old-style fetishes. The subtle difference is essential to the understanding of the notion of Zuni identity, as it reveals a recent desire on the part of contemporary artists to find themselves as individuals by embracing the different options that a hybrid Zuni/Westernized world has to offer.

⁸⁹ Interestingly, the decoration work is not fully inlaid on the eagle; the turquoise is glued onto the fetish. This does not follow the more modern technique of fully inlaid channel works that contemporary artists usually prefer.

2.3.2 Self-reflection in Lapidary Work and Silversmithing

In her 2018 *Picturing Identity*, specialist in Native American literature Hertha D. Sweet Wong gives us an idea of how color can act as a medium for identity in her analysis of both written and visual autobiographical works of Native American artists, connecting the visual and the verbal through the notions of "self-representation" and "self-narration," which she defines as follows:

A necessarily capacious category, visual autobiography encompasses a wide range of *self-representations*—glimpses into a moment of a life or self—and *self-narrations*—stories of a life or self developing over time. Like short stories, self-representations emphasize an epiphany or brief insight. Like novels, self-narration tends to offer or withhold a resolution. (2, original emphasis)

According to Wong, self-representations are like snapshots of a moment—fragments of a person, frozen in time—contrary to self-narration, which is always evolving and moving forward towards a more global picture of the self. We will be able to observe both notions in application in the following examples of Zuni jewelry arts. As in fetish carving, some lapidary workers and silversmiths distinguish themselves by choosing a nontraditional signature material, while others establish their artistic identity through adherence to tradition. In both cases, color use in Zuni

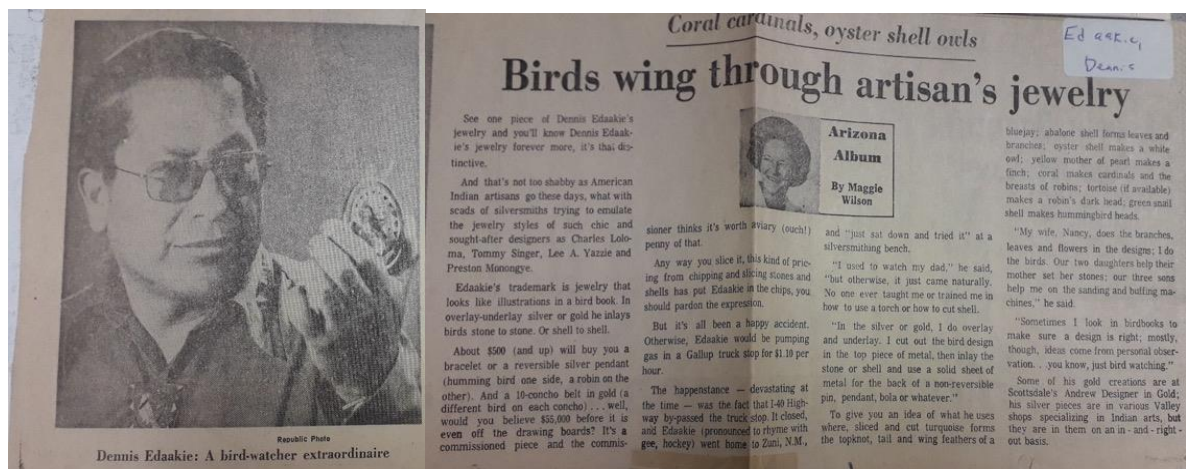


Figure 129: Maggie Wilson "Birds wing through artisan's jewelry" in Arizona Highways, August 1974 (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo)

jewelry often provides autobiographical information about the artist and serves as a marker of both his or her cultural and personal identity.

The archives of the Heard Museum (Phoenix, AZ) hold records of the Zuni who have worked with the museum and mention certain jewelry artists who "made

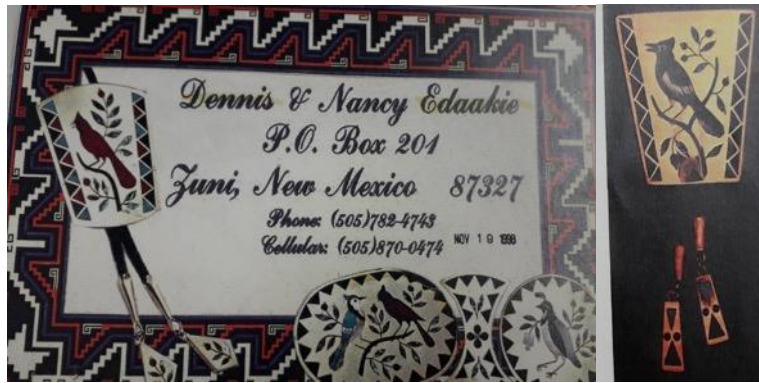


Figure 130: Dennis and Nancy Edaakie, 1998 business card (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my picture). On the card can be seen the overlaid inlay technique with gold and silver. To the right, a gold bolo tie.

a transition to gold but adapted designs they had previously made in silver" between the 1960s and 1970s.⁹⁰

These artists include the father of the overlaid inlay technique, Dennis

Edaakie, and his wife Nancy, who brought the use of gold as a new trend to the reservation by using it to replace silver in their overlaid inlay pieces. By 1974, they were producing 14-karat gold jewelry which, apart from the use of gold, followed the archetypal color system of Zuni lapidary work with traditional yellowish shells, blue turquoise, red coral, and white and multicolor mother-of-pearl or other shell material. In the August 1974 edition of *Arizona Highways*, the journalist Maggie Wilson starts her article: "See one piece of Dennis Edaakie's jewelry and you'll know Dennis Edaakie's jewelry forever more, it's that distinctive (n.pag.)." The couple's use of traditional stones set in gold was their distinctive signature, and Dennis Edaakie was protective of this technique as it was what distinguished him from other artists. Pioneering the use of such a refined material as gold in Native

⁹⁰ Courtesy of the Heard Museum's archives.

American art was an important self-narrative element of his individuality and his identity as an innovative artist within the Zuni tribe, and Ostler states that Edaakie was unhappy with other artists stealing his technique of using of gold in overlaid inlay, which became a new trend even refusing to participate at the Gallup Inter-Tribal Ceremonial afterwards because "he doesn't like to show there anymore since his work gets copied (Silversmiths 103) ."

A very different example demonstrates the self-narrative element that can be found in traditional polychrome silver jewelry with the personal story of Robert Deutsawe, Jr., whom I met during my visit to the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (see section 2.2.2). Deutsawe Jr. is both Laguna and Zuni and wanted to manifest both sides of his Pueblo roots in the color materials of his beaver bolo tie, the significance of which he took the time to carefully explain to me. The colors and shapes combined in the piece tell the story of his origins in both of his clans, his mother's, from the Laguna tribe, and his father's, from the Zuni, and represent the pinnacle of his carrier and savoir-faire. The six-month process started with the design; he chose the beaver as the symbol of his mother's clan, the most powerful of the Laguna clans. Once the beaver was cast, he added minute colored inlays in the archetypal colors—off-white shells, blue turquoise, red coral, and black jet—to represent his father's family, linking the beaver shape and the directional colors expressed by archetypal black-red-blue-and-white-on-silver to represent his identity as a Laguna/Zuni artist in a visually autobiographical way.

At a first glance, Deutsawe's beaver bolo might seem to fall under Wong's first category of self-representation: the piece portrays a snapshot of the artist's identity. However, we should consider the additional parameter of Deutsawe's signature techniques, the five-step tufa casting process and delicate inlay work

that set both his and his wife's work apart from that of other artists. He describes the different steps of the tufa casting process: first, he has to find a tufa stone of the desired size, which is then cut in half; he then rubs the two halves together to



Figure 131: Robert Deutsawe, Beaver Clan Bolo Tie, silver, coral, jet, mother of pearl, black leather, 2019 (my photo)

even out the surfaces on both sides so that they fit together perfectly. After that, he carves a cone-shaped sprue hole at the top so that he can pour in the silver, as well as other tiny holes to allow air to escape. He then carves the figure into tufa stone so that the negative space of the stone will form a mold; he chars the tufa stone with a torch and binds the two halves together with clamps before finally pouring the melted silver into the mold. Afterwards, he can remove the hardened silver from the mold and carefully sand the design in order to clean up and emphasize the animal's shape, while taking care not to remove the special texture created by the porous tufa.

Deutsawe's beaver bolo visually tells his story in a mix of cross-cultural savoir-faire and colors, capturing this important aspect of his identity as a son of both the Laguna and Zuni tribes; beyond this instance of self-representation, however, the complete process of conceptualization and savoir-faire involved in the artist's work speaks to his self-portrayal as a master lapidary and silversmith artist and as a partner in his wife's work, making the jewelry they create together effectively self-narrating. Wong's concepts therefore enable us to see that the use of color alone is a form of artistic self-representation, and that the combination of colors, shapes, and techniques is often a form of self-narration, a witness of the artist's life and development in progress. Zuni smiths and lapidary artists can employ codes that identify the jewelry as either "authentic Zuni work" with a *witen/itiwan* colors and also simultaneously create an unusual signature as a statement of personal identity and skill. The use and manipulation of color thus tells the story of their evolving identities both as Zuni people and as Zuni artists.

2.3.3 Painted Signature Colors: Asserting Individual Artistic Style

The medium of painting also offers Zuni artists many opportunities to express both cultural and individual artistic personalities, and for us to observe how they depict their stories as artists through the act of self-narration by blending family traditions or assimilated cross-cultural meanings of colors with their own innovative approaches. As with the previously discussed media, painting signatures may either depend on adhering to the traditional painting palette, with use of the *a'witen/itiwan* and other archetypal colors, or, to the contrary, straying from the archetypal palette and themes even to the extent that the colors themselves become the subject of the painting. The Zuni palette has expanded as a result of this process of artists playing with boundaries between the traditional and the exotic while developing original uses of what become their own signature colors.

Although not strictly a part of the Zuni painting artform, the pottery painting of Jaycee Nahohai is an important example of the self-narrative process; his autobiographical creations portray the history of the tribe and his family, as well as representing his own personality. As seen in section 2.2.1, Jaycee has embarked on a mission to enrich tradition with the innovative and experimental color combinations he develops to paint his signature owls. His use of color is totally unique within the domain of Zuni pottery decoration. However, his work also perpetuates a familial approach to art and craft production; the material he uses and the patterns and designs he experiments with are therefore half family heritage and half his own innovations. This creates a double self-narrative in his work, since his artistic identity is related both to the well-known Nahohai name, made famous

by his grandmother, parents, and uncles' work, and his very own innovative approach to traditional color media and forms. On the familial side, he has inherited the use of his grandmother's clay and his father's pigments; he also carries on the tradition of family co-creation, explaining that his mother works with him making the beads that decorate his owls:

But luckily, Mom was able to go and build these [...] I asked her to go, and you know, make the necklace for the big owl. So, she was able to make that, and I told her, 'You think you can go and sand them, sand the beads for me.' Then she had done that, and we had gone up to go visit her to get the beads from her. She goes, 'This is the most boring job ever, painting the beads one by one!' So, that's when I told her, 'now you know how I feel.' (my transcription)

Rowena Him's tediously-made beads are part of a long practice of intergenerational family work, corresponding to what Cunningham calls the "collective nature of Zuni art and artists," as the "Zuni artist is Everyman, and members of families often work together to produce their art (16)." In general, each member of the Nahohai family collaborates with the others and is engaged in investigating old patterns and techniques, as well as expanding and perfecting their palette with colors they borrow from other tribes and cultures, as discussed in section 2.2.1. This very process is part of the Nahohai family's artistic signature.



Figure 132: Rowena Him's beads, decorated by her son, Jaycee Nahohai. 2019 (my photo)

However, artists like Jaycee also grow into their own signature art, which in Jaycee's case has developed around using these familial and borrowed pigments to create new colors that he chooses for himself as part of a second, more individual signature. In this way, Jaycee's work adds to his entire family's investigation on former Zuni designs and is an example of the family's self-narrative artistic process as well as his own personal one.

Turning away from the self-representational work of the Nahohai to more classic painting on canvas, Daryl Shack Sr.'s painting, pictured in figure 133, is based on a signature combination of cartoon drawing styles, archetypal pottery colors, and impressionistic techniques with depictions of ordinary subject matter viewed from unusual angles (such as Zuni maidens viewed from the back in the example below), as well as contemporary color accents and visible brush strokes



Figure 133: Daryl Shack Sr., *Homeward Bound*, acrylic and enamel paint on canvas, 2019 (courtesy of Keshi. *The Zuni Connection*).

that give movement to the landscape. In his biography for the ARTZ coop website, he describes himself as a pop cartoonist, stating, “My paintings offer a unique and complementing cross between traditional images in the forefront and contemporary impressionistic backgrounds. Something New to PopArt (ARTZ website).” In the example figured above, Pueblo maidens are depicted returning home under the blessing of rain. The neon accents take a step towards abstraction that along with the collage effect of the cartoon-like maidens gives the painting its neo-PopArt vibe. We can see also Hughte and Cachini’s influences in Shack Sr.’s work, in the black outlines and the overall subject content and composition of black outlined Zuni in the foreground, and a village scene in its natural environment in the background (see section 2.2.4).

What makes Shack Sr.’s take on color distinctive are the subtle details in his cartoonishly painted background and the feminine figures in the foreground. The shapes of the buildings are defined by superposing neon turquoise blue and yellow, without which the background would be just a shapeless landscape of smeared browns. The flat bands of colors in the black-and-red-on-white uniform of the maidens evoke the archetypal color code of Zuni ancestral pottery. Not a single gradation is visible on the figures, making them appear almost as if they were drawn in felt pen instead of painted. Although Shack Sr.’s backgrounds provide the artist’s signature elements, it was his cartoon-like maidens that propelled his work to fame. He created a whole series with the exact same maiden figures in different landscapes that are sold in many successful trading centers, contributing to putting the previously relatively unknown category of Zuni painting into the spotlight. His composition and addition of dynamic elements such as the sharp downpour of rain

in this example also adds a crucial element of human perception and experience that the public relates to.

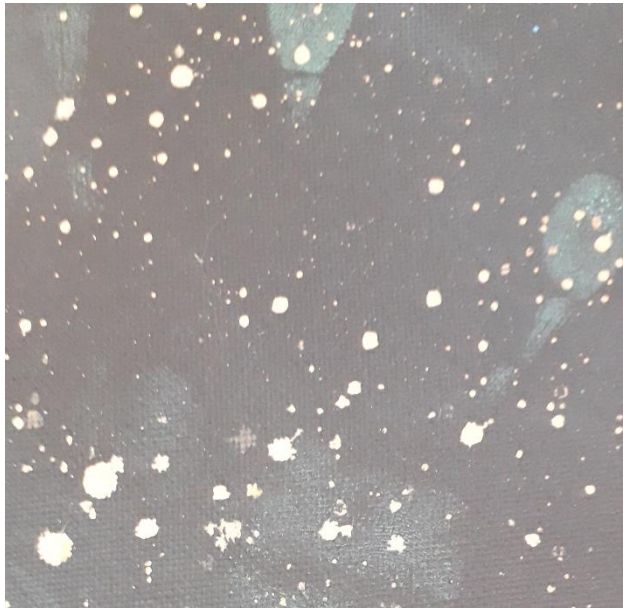


Figure 134: Elroy Natachu jr.'s gold splatter work, zoom on the background of his Hetsululu painting, 2019 (my photo)

A signature that centers around the use of one specific color and technique can be found in Elroy Natachu Jr.'s Pollock-influenced gold splatter. The gold drops can create the effect of rain falling sideways on the canvas, which is fitting as a background for the rain-bringing kachinas that are Natachu Jr.'s principal

subjects. The use of the gold color is also an original way to bring together Christian and Zuni beliefs, as the artist explains:

I kind of like to use the technique where a lot of religious iconographies and stuff like that in churches are often... have like gold leaf or something shiny to sort of designate the importance or the religiousness to that particular group. So, I do that same sort of treatment through these color-shifting paints that have that sheen and have that sort of wealth to it. (My transcription)

The fact that his signature gold reminds Natachu Jr. of church decorations and the status given to religious symbols can allow us to interpret it as a symbol of the artist's desire to bring the tribe together as Zuni people, as, although the Zuni's tribal religion remains dominant in the pueblo, some Zuni have converted to the different Christian faiths. Transferring over the Christian symbolism of gold to the kachina is a way to unify the various Christian affiliations of many modern Zuni with

tribal beliefs.⁹¹ At the same time, by decorating the kachina imagery in gold just like the decorations of Christian saints in many churches, he is putting tribal beliefs on the same exalted level as Christian ones. Adopted into the context of the *co'ya* (as multicolored, see section 1.3.3) kachina, portraying all colors and beauty in the world, this use of gold gives the Zuni pantheon the same status as the nation's other wealthy and thriving religions, and consolidates all the religions practiced in Zunilands. This is not just art as self-representation or a self-narration; as well as manifesting what he has learned from Western color theory and expressionist artists, Natachu Jr.'s signature innovation aims to send a message that will impact all his fellow Zuni and make sure the kachina are never forgotten by placing the traditional Zuni belief system on the same level as the expanding Euro-American religions.

Keith Edaakie's work displays some similarities in its modern take on Zuni kachina and the Creation Myth. The colors in Edaakie's paintings help to illustrate the tale of the Zuni migration. However, he also loves experimenting with colors and learning new techniques, such as the spray-painting examples previously discussed, which have contributed to establishing the color purple as his signature color. In his 2019 interview, Edaakie admitted that his only formal art education was acquired in high school, and that it consisted of just a basic introduction to different media, adding:

[...] color theories and color compositions and those types of things really weren't addressed there. So, a lot of it is just kind of, I guess, me picking up on what will look good together and placement of the objects that I want to paint, and sometimes it just kind of works out on its own because many times, it really does take some time and thought. (My transcription)

⁹¹ A similar observation can be made about his black and gold shirts seen in section 2.1.4, mixing Zuni embroidery patterns with golden vinyl.



Figure 135: Leanne Lee, paint pouring demonstrations, acrylic on canvas, April 2021 (courtesy of Leanne Lee and Keith Edaakie).



Figure 136: Keith Edaakie, paint pouring technique with acrylics and popsicle stick (courtesy of the Leanne Lee and Keith Edaakie). First, layering the paint, second, coating the popsicle stick with liquid glue, third, spreading the paint in a linear movement

In April 2021, Edaakie posted examples of an interesting new technique on Facebook that he calls "paint pouring," which consists of pouring generous amounts of different colors of paint in layers to obtain different effects. Edaakie and his partner Leanne Lee demonstrate their experiments with numerous ways to pour colors on different substrates in a Facebook video created for the heritage festival at the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff, using different tools and techniques such as layering paint in a small cup, or using a hairdryer, popsicle sticks coated with glue, or a tiny colander to create unique patterns in the layers of paint. The last technique creates what Leanne Lee calls "cells," tiny bubbles that expand when the paint dries and create shiny water-droplet patterns.

With this technique there is no figural shape except for the random color patterns created through pouring. After mastering the combined techniques of spray-painting and representative acrylic painting, paint pouring is a further example of how Edaakie approaches color experimentation by "thinking of different innovative ways of creating or finding different substrates to paint on (my transcription)." The playful use of color is at the core of his identity as a painter and speaks to a love of different color media that drives him to constantly add new skills to his already impressive portfolio.

Similar to Jaycee Nahohai's experimentations, the EdaakieART duo empirically tests out color combinations to create the desired effect, and, like the uncertainties inherent in firing ceramics, they cannot really control how the colors mix and blend to during the creation process. However, the materials and processes used are drastically different; commercial paint is more reliable than natural paint as the colors remain identical after drying and keep their shine. Most importantly, color itself, now entirely removed from figurative art, is the subject of

their work, and so their demonstrations are purely about applying and enhancing colors. However, neither the materials used nor the subjects painted are recognizably "Zuni;" instead, colors become the main character in an abstract story, making the duo pioneers of color abstraction within the tribe and establishing their identity as artists without the culturally-specific "Zuni" adjective that usually precedes their art. In their 1995 *Fetish Carvers of Zuni*, Ostler and Rodees state, "The marvel of the Zuni social system is its ability to absorb outside influences without changing (*Carvers* 35)," but the EdaakieART team contradicts this in their shift away from tradition to offer something entirely new to the market, taking pride in themselves as innovative artists.

The artists studied here present different color signatures, from the self-narrating blend of family and personal approaches, to the introduction of PopArt styles into Zuni representative painting, the exploitation of Western artistic influences in the transmission of a unifying message, and finally moving completely away from tribal expectations to portray an innovative contemporary artist's pure love of color and abstract technique. However, for all of these artists, colors are their brand, distinguishing them within the artistic community and the market. Even if the use of color has changed, these signature colors are socially inviolable; to copy the color-signature of another Zuni artist is unthinkable within the community, and would be the equivalent of stealing one's identity and artistic honor. Rodee comments, "This respect for style is a matter of artistic pride, a feeling that each artist owns his or her own creations, and a concern for not encroaching on another Zuni's livelihood (*Carvers* 48)." This shows just how deeply colors reflects the narration of the Zuni artist, even when he or she sheds the "Zuni" connotation by affirming his or her own personal approach to color.

Over these last three sections, we have seen how colors act as witnesses to the artist's life, evolution and commitments, and narrate his or her artistic journey, and how these narrative processes are related to the evolution of the palette with the development of new and personalized approaches. The adherence to or deviation from traditional colors in particular style has become a way to express artistic uniqueness within the larger community. However, each generation has its own version of what "traditional colors" are, and when a distinctive use of color makes one artist stand out, certain conflicts may arise. The following two sections will shed more light on how color is either assimilated or rejected within the Zuni tribe, further exploring the criteria that establish a color as "Zuni" or allow individual artists' styles and other subjective processes to directly impact the evolution and expansion of the traditional tribal palette.

2.3.4 Assimilating “Exotics:” Pink, Purple, and Silver in the Zuni Color Palette

There are three colors that stand out as not being included in the traditional *a’witen’itiwan* palette but that for different reasons and to differing extents have been assimilated into Zuni art: pink, purple and silver. There seems to be a discrepancy between Zuni concepts referring to the beauty of all colors seen in sections 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 and the conservatism of some Zuni who reject what are commonly referred to as “exotic” colors, such as pink and purple. However, this discrimination against specific colors depends on specific circumstances. Pink and purple are in fact sacred when found in the natural pigments used to paint the masks of the mudheads and the bodies of kachina dancers, but are more difficult to accept in other cases, such as when used in fetish carving. Contrary to this, silver, which is also not included within the *a’witen’itiwan* colors, was easily accepted and became appreciated in the context the now-traditional Zuni art of jewelry silversmithing. The study of traditional Zuni materials and archetypal color combinations will enable us to better understand what motivates the Zuni to welcome a color within their traditional palette or to reject it.

One of the core principals behind the Zuni perception of traditional colors is that it is more the very material of the medium and the variations of color naturally occurring within it that are traditional, rather than the absolute notion of the color itself. In this chapter, we have seen how Zuni people typically manipulate traditional color media in the context of tribal and family artisan enterprises and artistic practice since childhood. We have also seen in section 1.3.3, and will explore in detail in section 3.1.1, that the *Shiwi’ma* color terms such as *’?amitola-nne*, or “rainbow-colored,” refer to objects (the rainbow in this example) as the basis for

conceptualizing colors. Such color terms thus often refer to the archetypal material used in each artform and have sacred object-equivalents. It is therefore the very object-material that can be deemed traditional or exotic.

When I asked one painter about the general meaning of pink in the Zuni color system, he stated simply, “We use purple and pink in Zuni art. No special symbols are attached to it (personal interview).” Navajo artist Andrew Thomas expressed a stronger idea when he said that such colors are “not okay” (see section 2.2.3), a rejection made specifically with regard to the imported and therefore “exotic” color media used in commercial fetishes, as opposed to fetishes carved in the traditional six directional colors, using naturally-existing resources in the Zuni’s ancestral territory.

If it is a color material that is traditional rather than a precise color, this means that there will be a wide range of approximate shades that can be seen as traditional even though they may not exactly correspond to the same Anglophone color term. For instance, the Zuni categorize pinkish corn as *shilowakwa*, meaning



Figure 137: Red quartz, lapis earrings. C. G. Wallace collection (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo)

red/coral, since the pinkish hue is closest to red (and can potentially ripen to a darker red with the sun). Stevenson mentions the sacred corn of six colors the Zuni used to cultivate (see section 1.1.4), and specifies that the red corn ranges “from the deepest cardinal to the most delicate pink (*Zuñi Indians* 350).”

Pink can therefore be associated with the sacred corn species and the exact shade has little to no impact on the sacredness of the directional color.

The polylexemic nature of *Shiwi'ma* color terms must therefore be taken into account. The most common *Shiwi'ma* color term for red, *shilowakwa*, refers to the southern *a'witen* color *and* to the object "coral." This means that the range of colors that can be associated with both coral and the southern direction goes from white to pinkish-orange to pink to red. However, the commercialization of Zuni art and the increasing scarcity of coral has pushed artists to seek out other less expensive materials with relatively similar color schemes. In their 2007 article entitled "Pink-to-red Coral: A Guide to Determining Origin of Color," Christopher P. Smith, Shane F. McClure, Sally Eaton-Magaña, and David M. Kondo observe that the rare carotene in coral is what produces its natural red color, and that the supply of red coral is rapidly depleting because of environmental changes and ocean pollution (6). This has caused the price of non-treated natural red coral to skyrocket, so traders look for alternatives to bright red coral, such as paler-colored coral which can be bleached white and then dyed a bright red color (7). Traders frequently pass off treated coral as natural coral when they sell the "raw" material to lapidary artists and fetish carvers. As a result, various other materials and colors, including pink and orange, have replaced the expensive natural red coral. Lapidary artists also use paler coral in numerous jewelry items to approximate red. The earrings depicted in figure 137 use a very pale red quartz and with only tiny touches of darker red coral, making the dominant colors the lapis blue and the pinkish tone of the quartz as a substitute for the traditional coral red. As the color combination still is quite close to the archetypal combination for jewelry, the use of pink is not shocking, nor even very obvious. In this way, other warm colors within the reddish/pinkish spectrum have gradually replaced the traditional red coral, and

artists find new materials they like, which can even become their signature materials, as seen in the previous sections.⁹²

A consensus as to where red ends and pink begins is difficult to obtain. Zuni people accept pink as a traditional color only when it replaces red; otherwise, it is “exotic” and non-Zuni; but what makes it possible to assimilate one shade of pink while another is rejected? The explanation is potentially linked to the saturation and undertones of the hue in comparison with those naturally present in coral. Since certain pale pinks with warm undertones are similar to the paler variations of red coral, they are consequently easier to accept. However, more saturated pinks with cool undertones, like fuchsia and hot pink, are nowhere near as close to coral red, so these shades are not seen as traditional.

We can further understand the tendency towards acceptance or non-acceptance by examining the cognitive processes at work. For example, we best determine whether a vessel is a plate or a bowl by referring to the best examples, or prototypes, of the two. To belong to a category, an item must correspond to a certain number of criteria, such as size, content, and shape. From the moment the shape is between plate and bowl, other criteria are taken into account. For pink to be accepted as a substitute for traditional red, the criterion is often its visible relationship to other colors in traditional color combinations. This means that associations with “intruder” colors such as pink are more likely to be accepted within a archetypal scheme, but not on their own. For instance, we saw in section 2.2.2 that the Zuni archetypal colors for jewelry are the colors of turquoise/coral/jet and mother-of-pearl. If the coral were to be replaced by a pink stone, the archetypal

⁹² In this chapter, we discussed how the Internet and other external suppliers grant access to many new and different materials for Zuni artists. For instance, Patty, Raylan Edaakie’s wife and partner in lapidary work, favors spiny oyster shell over coral (see section 2.2.2).

palette would remain recognizable and so this well-combined pink stone would be considered as red. We can observe this type of substitution within color combinations in many other pieces, such as Daisy and LaVies Natewa's six-directional bear fetish set depicted below, with a pink rhodochrosite stone replacing the reddish sandstone, limonite or catlinite usually used for southern animals. As we can identify the presence of a stone on the red/pink spectrum in relationship to all the other symbolic fetish colors (white, yellow, turquoise/blue, black, and multicolor) it is perceived as fulfilling the symbolic role of red and can therefore be considered traditional.



Figure 138: Daisy and Lavies Natewa, Five Bears on a Warm White Marble Bear, 2021 (courtesy of Keshi. The Zuni Connection).

Similarly, in body paint, Roediger explains that pink paint is used chiefly for the mudheads (Zuni clowns) and other masked gods. Traditionally made with clay from the Sacred Lake mixed with saliva as a binding agent, this body paint can be seen as pink when worn by kachina dancers, mimicking the color of the mudheads' skin, but when the same clay is used to paint masks, it may be seen as red. Roediger also mentions other mixes of colors that create lighter reds, such as red

ochres or iron oxides that are present in certain cliff mounds on the reservation, which the Zuni mine, then grind on a stone and mix with water to use as paint either on masks or on bodies. If they want a lighter, pinkish color, they mix the reddish water with pink or white clay.

Kachina	Offerings	Jewelry		Fetish carving		Painting	Ceremonial dress	
Sacred pink clay	Corn	Pinkish coral	Pink stones	Pinkish stones from Zunilands, or as a part of a six directional set	Imported pink stones (fluorite, rodochrosite)	In backgrounds	On flowers	On monochrome fabrics
Seen as pink (body) or red (masks)	Seen as red and multicolor	Seen as red	With yellow, blue, black, white: seen as red Otherwise: exotic	Seen as red	Exotic, except when associated with a six directional set	Exotic	All colors in the world, refers to c'oya	Exotic

Figure 139: Assimilation of pink by artform

The second line of the chart above shows the status of pink for each artform. The pink (or reddish) clay paint of the kachina is particularly esteemed and significant; the Zuni cherish this material as one of the most sacred natural paints. In jewelry, if pink is surrounded by the other traditional colors, the eye recognizes that “pink equals red” in the archetypal color scheme. On ceremonial clothing, the Zuni may decorate their dresses with pink flowers in the cloud houses (see section 2.1.4). But as a monochrome fabric, pink is seen as exotic or is associated with special concepts and causes, such as pink as a symbol of the fight against breast cancer. This shows a clear division by which the traditionality of pink shades depends on the origins and context of the media and on their role in combination with other colors.

Roediger mentions another similar type of sacred paint that is important in Zuni ceremonial life; in addition to pink, the Zuni have made purple body paint for centuries, using the chewed stalks and husks of black corn in order to stain the body to impersonate the Salimobia of the west, or making a purple coloring from crushed barberries that was occasionally applied in patterns on the upper torso, arms, and legs (102-5). As in the case of the pink clay, the color materials used on

the kachinas are the most sacred and have powerful associations, and when the material itself is sacred, the exact shade is less important. The Zuni do not question the traditional nature of the purple sacred paint in the context of the kachina's coloring and decoration but accept the color as a sacred color/material, once again demonstrating that as far as kachina paint is concerned, the use of a traditional color material and process influences a color's assimilation in the kachina palette.

Just as pink can be accepted when it plays the part of red in a archetypal combination, there seems to be a higher tolerance for purple when it is visibly part of the otherworldly multicolor hue. Though Andrew Thomas states that pink and purple play no part in traditional Zuni fetish work, he tempers his remark when he clarifies that "Purple, well it's also the rainbow (my transcription)." Keith Edaakie seems to imply that purple (as well as pink) can be appreciated for its connection to the colors of the sky when he explains that clouds are not merely white, as one may imagine them, but that there are yellows, purples, and pinks reflected within the white texture of the clouds that a good painter should reproduce to make his/her art more realistic (see section 2.2.4).

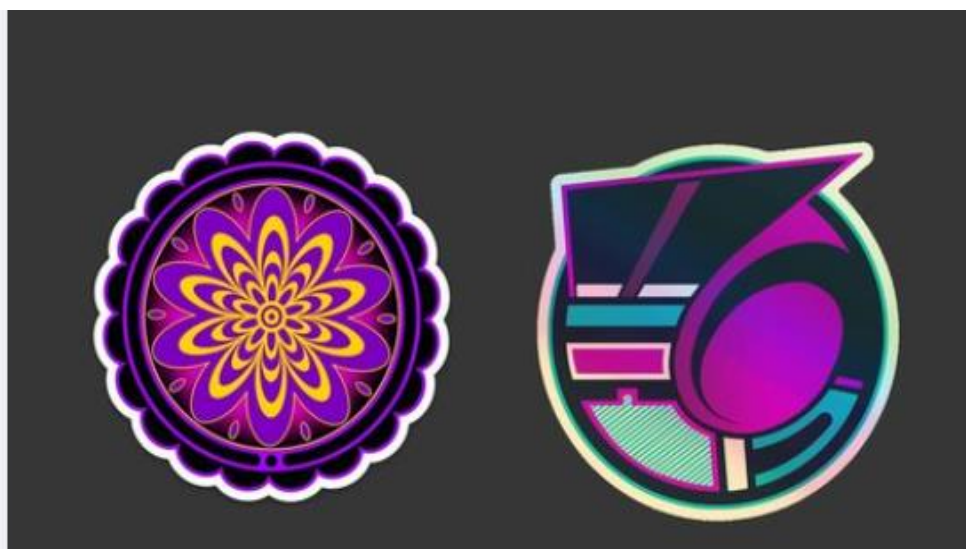


Figure 140: Jaycee Nahohai, multicolor pottery designs for stickers, 2021 (courtesy of Jaycee Nahohai). Purple and yellow mandala and purple and blue Rainbird design.

Aside from the authority and status given to traditional materials, symbols and associations, however, an artist's personal preferences and associations with a color must also be taken into account in certain cases. Some of Jaycee Nahohai's latest digital designs also use a multicolored pattern dominated by bright pink and purple. In this case, portraying the Zuni multicolor was not the artist's intention; Nahohai's use of purple in this series is related to his own personal appreciation of purple as a modern color and its associations with his job as a DJ, evoking of the purple neon lights at his parties. This is why he replaces the black-and-red-on-white archetypal color of the Rainbird design with a purple-blue-and-white-on-black color scheme.

Purple is loved by contemporary artists for the apparent novelty and richness of the color, and possibly for its contemporary cultural associations that transcend conservative tribal traditionalism. Keith Edaakie also enthusiastically states that "Purple's actually one of my favorite colors!" before going on to explain that "a lot of the things that I work with, there's definitely some kind of purple that's incorporated into the paintings (my transcription)." Edaakie's love for the color has spread throughout the village in the form of colorful t-shirts, of which he is one of the tribe's few designers. His individual appreciation of the color has contributed to a village-wide trend for purple fashion, especially among women. The shirts are available at the village convenience store and the ARTZ coop; this easy local access and exposure to the color parallels the facilitated access to purple stones such as charoite for fetishes and jewelry and brightly colored commercial oil and acrylic paints that occurred from the 1970s onward.

These tendencies suggest that if purple is a trendy color at Zuni, it is not so much due to its connection to the sky, but rather because of subjective color

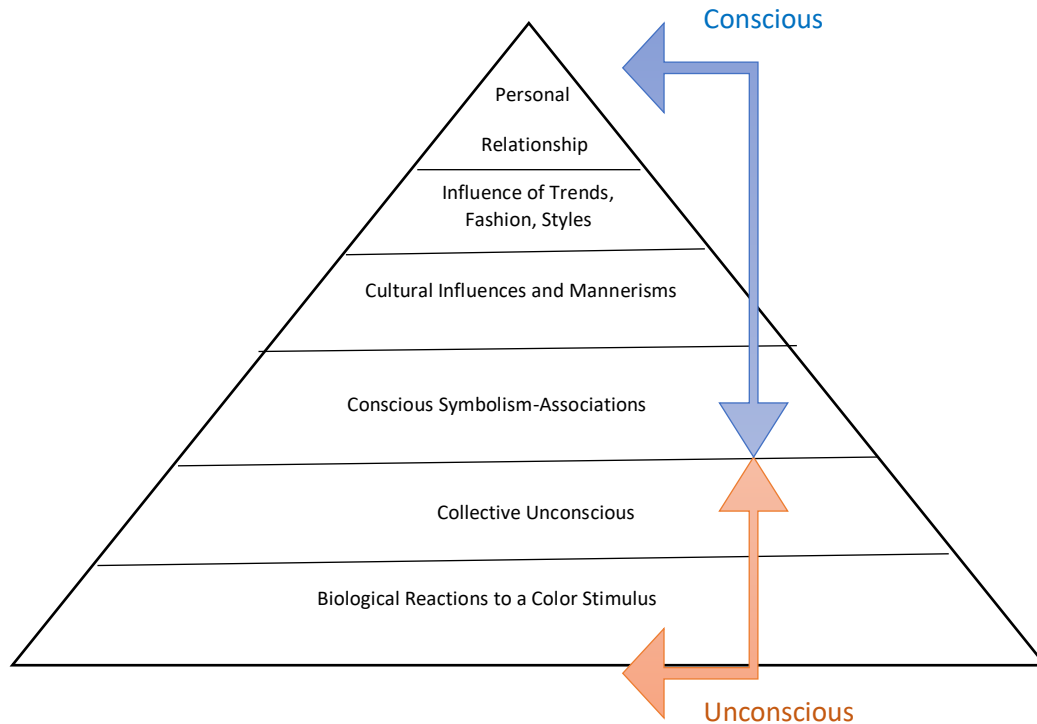


Figure 141: Environment and Human Response Pyramid (Mahnke 11)

preferences that can also make a specific color significant within the tribe; an example of this was seen in section 2.1.4 with the contemporary purple cape of the Cellicion Olla maiden, who chose it specifically as her personal favorite color. In his *Environment and Human Response*, color specialist Frank Mahnke aims to understand how environmental factors influence the perception of colors and create a memorable experience that can influence people to like or dislike a specific hue. He summarized his findings in a pyramid of “six interrelated and connected factors” at work in the human experience of color, reproduced in figure 141, in an effort to understand what causes a person to like a color, or a group of people to form a trend around a color. Mahnke describes the six stages of the pyramid from the top to bottom as follows:

1. Psychological Relationship: subjective likes and dislikes of an individual
2. Influence of Trends, Fashion, Styles: colors that reflect a time period, and have not yet entered the traditional color code/system

3. Conscious Symbolism: learned responses that are symbolic of the surrounding environment (green = nature, red = blood, etc.)
4. Collective Unconscious: influences of our culture and mannerisms, such as flag colors
5. Cultural Influences and Mannerisms: particular colors that are related to a country or location
6. Biological Reactions to a Color Stimulus: a neurocognitive reaction to colors, beyond our control

The purple preference among the Zuni is represented more towards the top of this pyramid, which is the most subjective; the color reflects a period in time when trends, fashion, and styles influence the Zuni, perhaps only temporarily. However, one could speculate that the color is somehow attractive even when deprived of any cultural symbolism and associations; this would theoretically relate to unconscious biological reactions to color stimulus (i.e., apparently instinctive reactions, beyond our control) that are much more difficult to understand.

Joe Hallock's undergraduate dissertation on color preference includes a 2003 study based on responses from 232 individuals aged 15 to 81 years old (with an average age of 30-34 years) from 22 countries; their indicated preferences are

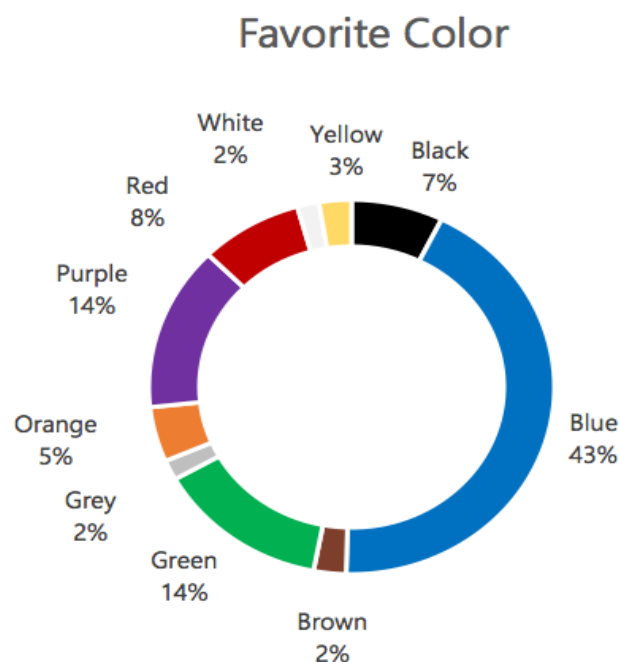


Figure 142: Joe Hallock, favorite color graph, 2003.

summarized on the graph in figure 142. This graph shows people's preference for purple (and green) as second only to blue, a pattern that matches client preferences for Zuni art as it becomes more and more commercialized, with a recent trend towards purple in commercialized fetishes, produced with chaoite and angelite in shades ranging from a bright transparent purple to paler greyish and blueish hues.

Zuni jewelry has also begun to make more and more use of purple stones, but the traditional jewelry color media provide us with another important example of the Zuni's unique mental color processes with regard to the color of silver. The Zuni have used silver and other metallic resources since the exchange with the Spanish began in the 16th century. Stevenson describes how they created jewelry and ornaments out of Mexican dollars, which the artisans favored for its purity:

With crude implements are manufactured elaborate ornaments for bridles, silver belts and buttons for men, and silver beads, bangles, and rings for women. The furnace, bellows, dyes—everything pertaining to the workshop of the silversmith[..]—are of home manufacture, except



Figure 143: Poblano, architectural approach to color (Rodee, *Silversmiths* 213-5)

the files and hammers, and these are carpenter's tools. (*Zuñi Indians* 377)

However, the Zuni's apprenticeship with the Navajo starting in 1917 boosted the already existing Zuni silversmithing practice with more advanced techniques and tools as well as easy access to material from C.G. Wallace, which standardized the practice and generated the famous Knife Wing and Rainbow Man designs. There is no question that, despite its widespread use as a setting for gemstones dating only to about 1917, silver was almost immediately and fully integrated as a traditional color media within the archetypal jewelry palette, and the current traditional artform now relies almost exclusively on silversmithing in combination with lapidary work.

This shows us that in reality, there is a historical precedent for silver attracting the Zuni with its brilliant shine, and its resistance also made it a perfect setting for polished turquoise cabochons and other colorful gemstones. The contrast of the metallic material enhances the original, traditional colors of the semi-precious stones the Zuni work with; however, silver was also beautiful on its own and still seen as traditionally Zuni even without the inclusion of gemstones in archetypal colors (turquoise-coral-mother-of-pearl-jet), as can be seen in examples of worked silver jewelry proudly worn during official ceremonies.

This wholesale acceptance and integration is curious, considering that other colors, even on commercialized and unsanctified art objects, like pink on Zuni fetishes, are not accepted as "traditional" when used on their own and not within the proper traditional color combination. Some Native Americans such as Andrew Thomas may reject pink as a traditional color because it has no symbolic associations, yet silver, which has no symbolism whatsoever, quickly joined the



Figure 144: Silverwork, probably Poblano family work (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo)

traditional archetypal palette. Perhaps the Zuni welcomed silver more easily because of its function as a background color surface, like a white canvas or the rock wall of a mesa or kiva; the artist's work in figure 144 employs achromatic lines beaten into the naturally colored surface, reminiscent of the process used to create ancestral petroglyphs. The use of silver as a background color also suits Zuni artists' inherent love of contrast, highlighting the beauty of the more colorful and symbolic turquoise-coral-jet-onyx/mother-of-pearl archetypal palette.

The study of pink, purple and silver in Zuni art is the study of the intricate relationship between color and material. The material used to produce a color is crucial for the Zuni, especially since colored objects are at the very origin of Zuni color terms as we will explore further in section 3.1.1, and certain materials are both cognitively and traditionally linked with certain colors. In the Zuni collective mind, pink and purple are thought to be non-symbolic and are thus difficult to accept in traditional artforms with ceremonial origins that depend on fixed symbolic color systems, contrary to silver which, though also non-symbolic, was quickly embraced despite its more recent introduction and lack of correspondence with the Ancestral Pueblo color palette. However, these otherwise "exotic" colors perfectly match with Zuni symbolism when used to represent red coral and multicolor, or when applied as ritual paint on mudheads and other kachina dancers. From the

standpoint of Western color terms, these colors would still be best categorized as pink or purple, but for the Zuni, in these contexts, rather than “pink” or “purple,” the colors are effectively identified more as “red” or “black/blue,” or as a facet of multicolor. The Zuni therefore tend to see pink and purple colors as exotic when they stand on their own, and as traditional in a particular context, especially when combined with other archetypal colors. Purple, pink and silver used in traditional combinations and made from traditional materials all seem to correspond to Mahnke’s domain of conscious symbolism: a learned response to the surrounding environment. However, the use of the color on its own may refer to the unconscious and personal reaction to color, explainable only by an individual Zuni’s affinity with a particular color, such as purple for Keith Edakkie. Thus, despite the strong influences of culture and environment, color affinity also seems to be as personal and subjective as it is culturally-specific, a notion which further highlights the role of individual artistic color use and signatures in shaping the cultural palette.

2.3.5 Colors Across Generations: “This is not Zuni!”

We have seen that the Zuni notions of tradition and the identity associated with tradition are ever-changing, and that there are clearly visible differences between traditional and contemporary approaches to colors. Zuni artists use colors to distinguish themselves from the crowd, usually for two main reasons. The first is for name recognition; unique usage of color attracts customers and is a key to acquiring and maintaining a faithful client base. Once a Zuni name becomes famous, monthly income is secured, both for the artist and his or her family, so there is also much competition between artists concerning who will set the bar financially for each artform. The second reason for using individual signature colors is to establish a personally significant style. Artists play and experiment with different colors and color media until they find a style they feel proud of and are excited to produce.

Most Zuni artists are open to change and only too glad to find new color materials to enhance their palette, but there is also a countercurrent of artists and Zuni people who are fighting against the change and the “exoticism” that comes with contemporary colors. It seems that the Euro-American gaze on Zuni culture has also forced a change in their practice towards a more secretive attitude to their color techniques, in order to avoid unwanted scrutiny and misrepresentation as well as plagiarism by other artists and tribes in order to maintain their place in the competitive Native art market. As in ceremonial life, the secrecy surrounding traditional art puts pressure on Zuni artists to not move too far away from the traditional palette, distinguishing themselves not through color innovation but by remaining traditionally “Zuni.” There must therefore be an identifiable division



Figure 145: Keith Edaakie, Superman vs. Batman skateboard, acrylic and vinyl stencils, 2020 (courtesy of Leanne Lee and Keith Edaakie)

between what is Zuni and what is not; a division which, more often than not, has as much to do with the materials that generate the colors as it does with the *a`witen/`itiwan* color system itself.

To better understand this point, let us start with an example of one of Keith Edaakie's fascinating artworks, pictured in figure 145. This decorated skateboard features a neon blue, yellow, and chartreuse pattern stenciled on a black background. The designs on both ends are three geometrically stylized feathers incorporating the terraced raincloud symbol. The Batman vs. Superman symbol in the center is surrounded by more realistically shaped thunderbolts, but the bat's wings are decorated with stylized Zuni pottery patterns, such as the Rainbird. The EdaakieART signature, a geometrical raincloud symbol, is barely recognizable as a shadowy tracing on the feathers and on the S of Superman. However, Keith Edaakie's spray-painting and vinyl stencil technique are unmistakable, especially with the mix of neon colors on the predominantly black background. This picture

was posted on EdaakieArt's Facebook thread in April 2020, with three hashtags: #madeinzuni, #edaakieart, and #superbatman. The juxtaposition of the "made in Zuni" and the artist's own "Edaakieart" labels is practically the equivalent of an "Authentic Native American Art" seal. The third hashtag, however, raises the question: is this artwork "Zuni?" Edaakie's artwork is typical of the kind that provokes differences of opinion within the tribe. On the one hand, the pottery designs, the Rainbird, mountains, Milky Way, and stylized feathers, clearly show a traditional Zuni influence that would meet with the consensus of the tribe. Keith Edaakie's personal background as a respected member of the tribe and a *Shiwi'ma* language teacher who paints traditionalist paintings of the Creation Myth that educate the younger generation is also a point in his favor. The artist's integration of the "superbatman" design within the Zuni pottery motifs seems to be Edaakie's way of claiming it as "Zuni." However, the use of flashy fluorescent yellow and cyan blue in the design could spark some debate; potentially, this artwork could be seen as "made in Zuni," but not as "Zuni art." This brings us back to the question of what exactly is "Zuni," and how are colors related to this definition?

Elroy Natachu Jr.'s iconographic art is a current standard for traditional Zuni painting. However, his take on esoteric subjects is modern, since the very way Natachu Jr. uses the colors on the canvas is modern. The first "traditional" Zuni paintings on canvas were exclusively of kachina, Zuni symbols such as the Sunface, and depictions of traditional pottery pieces, like we can see in Narren Bowannie's 1983 painting in figure 146. Innkeeper Roger Thomas and his late wife, Elaine Dodson Thomas, decorated their establishment, The Inn at Halona, to give it a "traditional Zuni" look, creating a sort of museum but without glass cases which allows visitors to admire the artwork closely, and this piece is one of the works on

display. The composition is sober, with three objects: a water jar, a white bear fetish with a red heartline and turquoise offerings, and the painted mask of a kachina. Bowannie perfectly reproduces the traditional archetypal colors in use at Zuni: the iconographic color code of the kachina, the red-and-black-on-white ceramic, and the *a'witen/itiwan* colors for the fetishes, which in this example is white, the most powerful color for the healing properties of the bear. Bowannie was a fetish carver himself, which explains the fetish reference, and this is the artist's only visible touch of individuality in the piece, in which even the background against which the objects are set reflects the geo-cultural landscape of blue-green sky and reddish Zuni earth.



Figure 146: Narren Bowannie, probably oil on canvas, 1983 (courtesy of Roger Thomas, my photo)

Perhaps the consensus on what makes paint colors “traditionally Zuni” revolves around whether or not they can be seen to perpetuate the hues that have been present in kivas for centuries. We saw in section 2.2.4 that when an Ancestral Pueblo person managed to create a new pigment, the tribe quickly assimilated that color, as witnessed by the proliferation of different white pigments in the Chaco

Canyon site, and the creation of new pigments has always been a matter of pride for the tribe. Even with a relatively narrow range of pigments, the ancestors of the Zuni have always made colorful artworks for their rituals, and a diversity of color in painting, which was originally rare and precious, is still highly esteemed. So maybe it is not so much the fluorescence of Edaakie's skateboard design colors that makes them unacceptable as "Zuni," but the difficulty in relating these colors with the any of the colors in the ancestral organic/mineral-based palette, the basic tones of which so many traditional artists reproduce with modern commercial paint.

From a more conservative tribal perspective, it would seem then that "Zuni" painting is kachina painting or Zuni iconography that makes use of the corresponding symbolic colors originating in kiva painting, although there is more leniency regarding the backgrounds of kachina paintings, and Natachu Jr.'s signature use of gold is well accepted as it is discreet and does not interfere with the kachina's sacred color. The next question is, who exactly defines art as "traditionally Zuni?" In their *Zuni. A Village of Silversmiths*, Ostler, Rodee, and Milford Nahohai offer some insight in their chapter entitled "Niches and Specialization." According to them, "Zuni society is a society of niches (*Silversmith* 32)," in which members occupy distinct positions. Some of them are the absolute master or "boss," who rule over their niche in their roles as specialized and knowledgeable people, and may take responsibility for the market for a particular category of product. This is the person young artists can consult with if they wish to work within the niche or improve their art in this particular style. The "bosses" of the niche have the power to decide what is and isn't traditional Zuni art. Thus, each artform has a small group of specialists willing to teach the younger generation, like a mentorship system. This can explain why the painter Hughte manifested

such a connection to Theodore Edaakie's work and compared his own with it in the documentary *Colores!* mentioned in section 2.2.4 or why many contemporary painters cite Alex Seowtewa or Duane Dishta as being their inspiration. In practice, these artists provided reference works as well as being simply inspirational; Alex Seowtewa's work, for example, is the reference for painting Zuni iconography, particularly his famous Old Mission kachina murals.

In all artforms, artists learn that there is a fine line between following the traditional path and establishing their own styles. In 1998, Cunningham interviewed the fetish carver Joseph R. Quam, who explained that every generation has its own definition of tradition:

I started by watching my uncle carve with his music playing and by listening to his stories. It just got me interested in following my own religion and keeping it going, and never let it go. They remind me of my prayer sticks. It's an ongoing thing. It's your religion, and it's what you were brought up with, so I just keep on doing it 'cause you can't let it fade away. (20)

The "religion" of creating art that he describes seems to consist of equal parts familial artistic practice and individual creative drive. However, some young artists struggle between the expectations of their preferred artform's niche and their wish to gain independence, even going so far as to give up on an artform in order to not confront the authority of the niche. Jaycee Nahohai, for example, seems to be torn between his desire to innovate and living up to what the tribe deems acceptable to label as Zuni art: "As much as I'd like to do kachina-based art... someone felt like I was selling out (my transcription)." For the artist, the kachina doll carving/painting niche restricts his art too much, and he preferred to settle in the pottery niche as an outlet for his desire to experiment, a medium with which he can also live up to

his family's highly placed name in the niche hierarchy, building on Randy Nahohai's legacy and reputation as an innovator.

Currently, Elroy Natachu Jr. has become one of the few mentors of the painting niche, and we have already mentioned how he is actively working to guide Kandis Quam—his cousin and one of the first female painters—on her artistic path. Natachu Jr. and Keith Edaakie are close, and Edaakie mentioned both Natachu Jr. and Quam when he talked about his quest to find an innovative substrate and new ways to paint. Edaakie and Natachu Jr. have become the current specialists in the contemporary painting niche. Though inspired by their own mentors, the two influential painters also absorb what the Western approach to colors and color media has to offer, as long as it can be put to the service of tribal heritage education or fits their creative style. Since their own mentors have now passed away, they are left free to determine the way the Zuni painting will continue to evolve, without the direct authoritative influence of a more established painter who might perhaps be less open to the West. This means that they can allow themselves the freedom to grow into their style and reshape traditional works to their taste. It also means that the previous generation of painters had already assimilated certain innovations, such as Hughte's use of gradation (see section 2.2.4). Similarly, in the past, a consensus was quickly reached concerning the use of acrylics since this medium allows the paint to dry faster and creates brighter colors, just as there had been a consensus to adopt the use of gouache, watercolor, and oils two generations prior.

The first graph below, entitled "Introduction of new hues in painting (kiva then canvases)," traces the composition of colors used in paint and categorizes the variety of colored paints for each period, using data found in Muson's *Color*

Introduction of new hues in painting (kiva, then canvases)

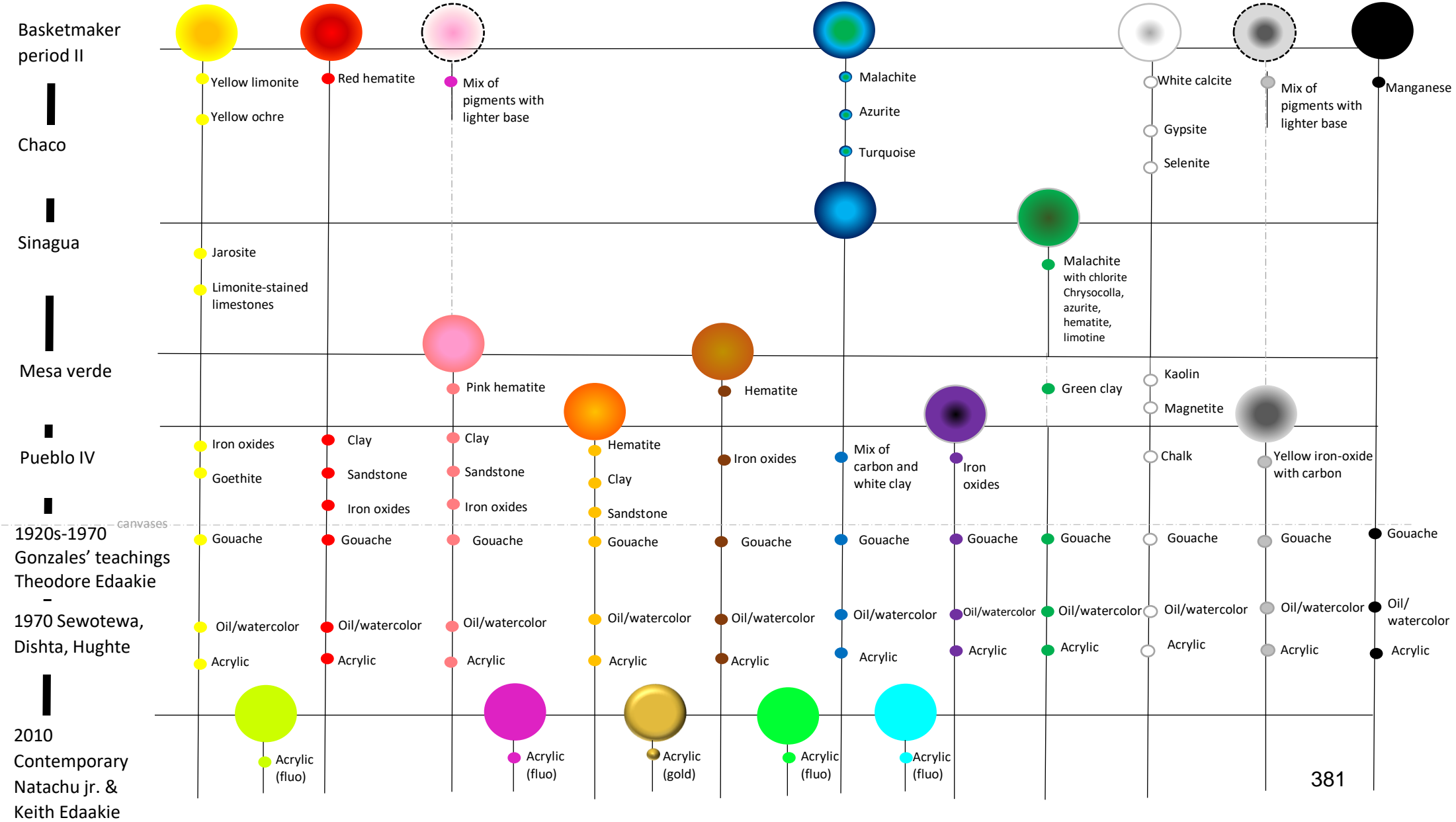
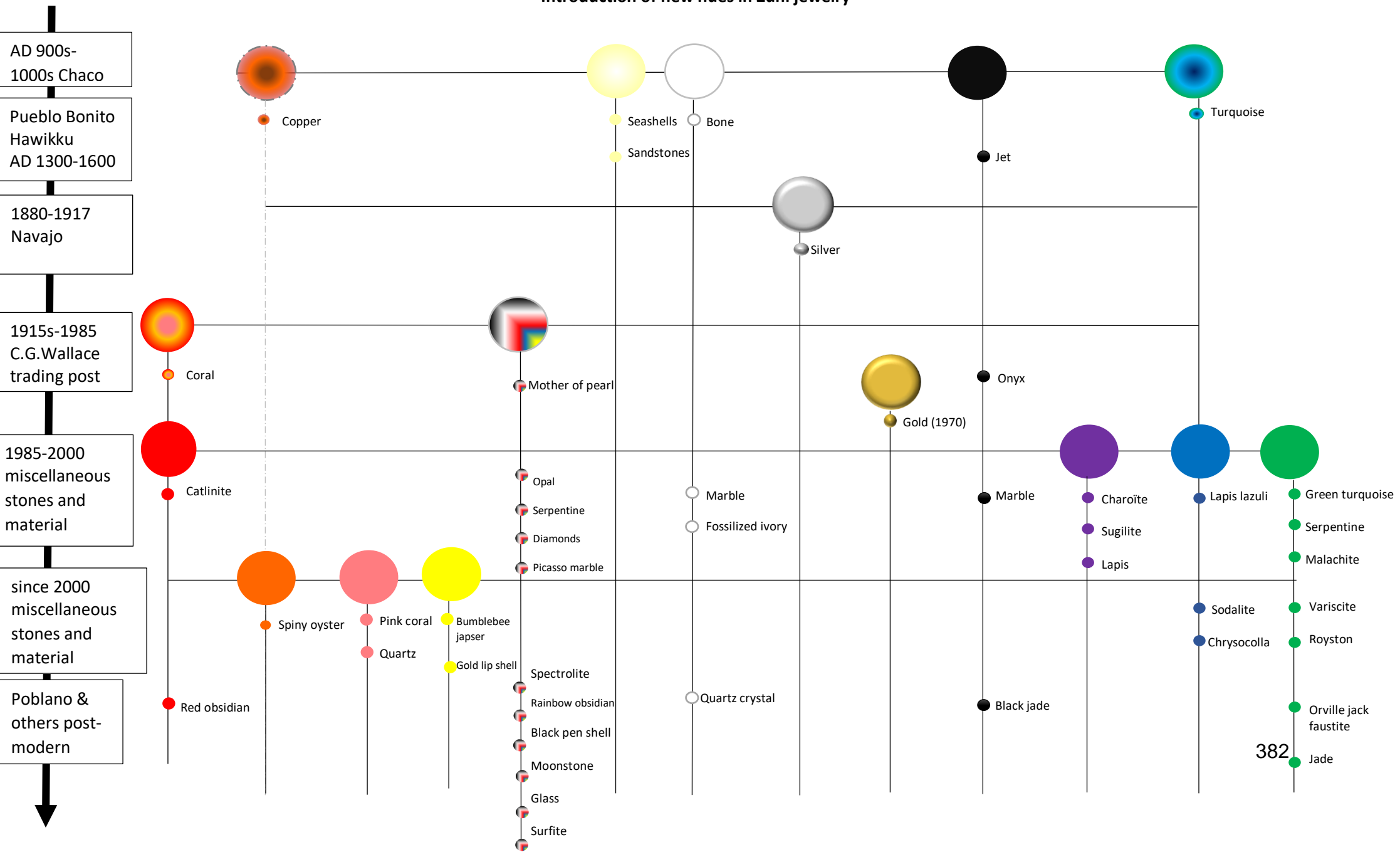
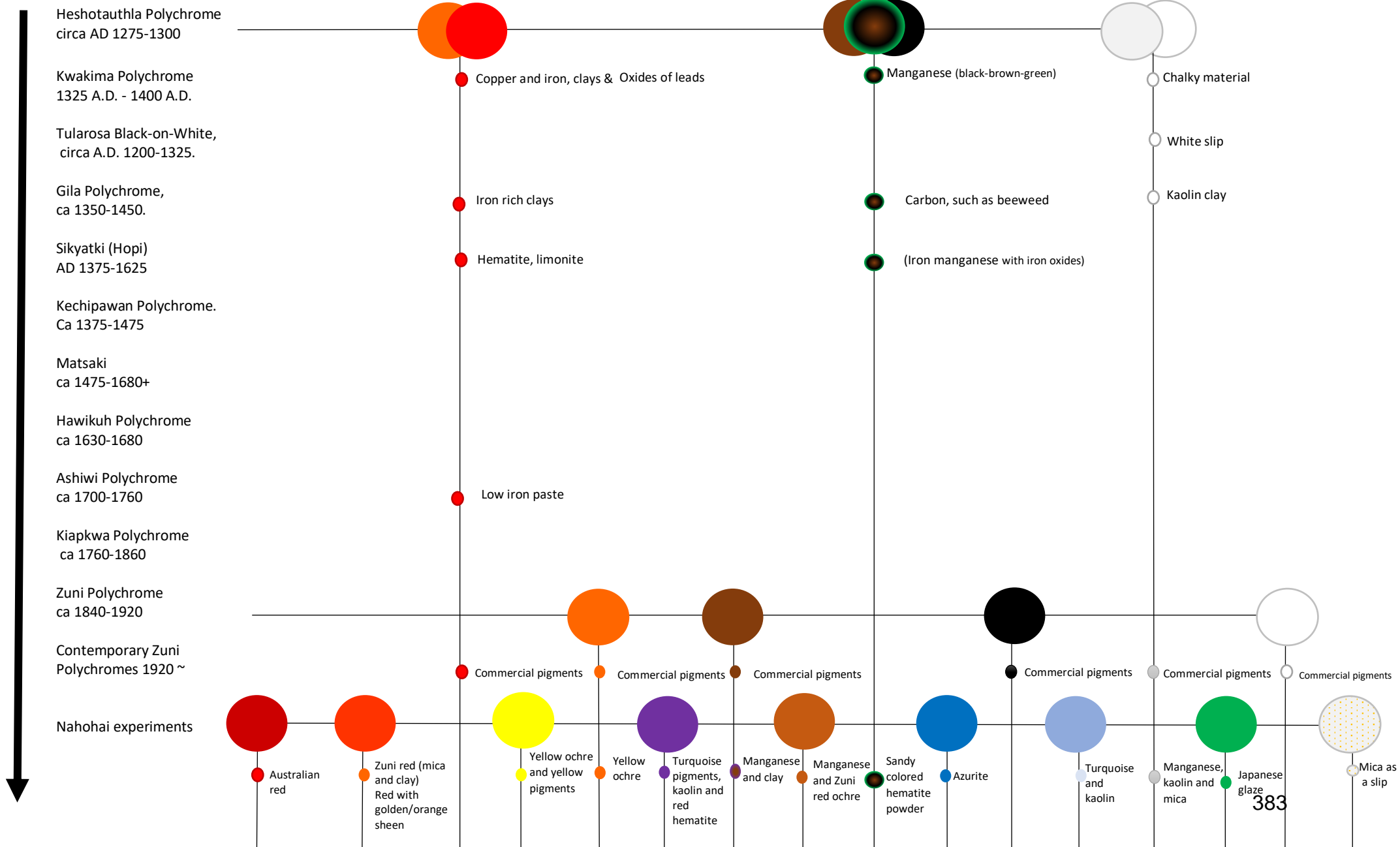


Figure 147: Introduction of new hues in Zuni artforms: painting, jewelry, pottery and fetish carving

Introduction of new hues in Zuni jewelry

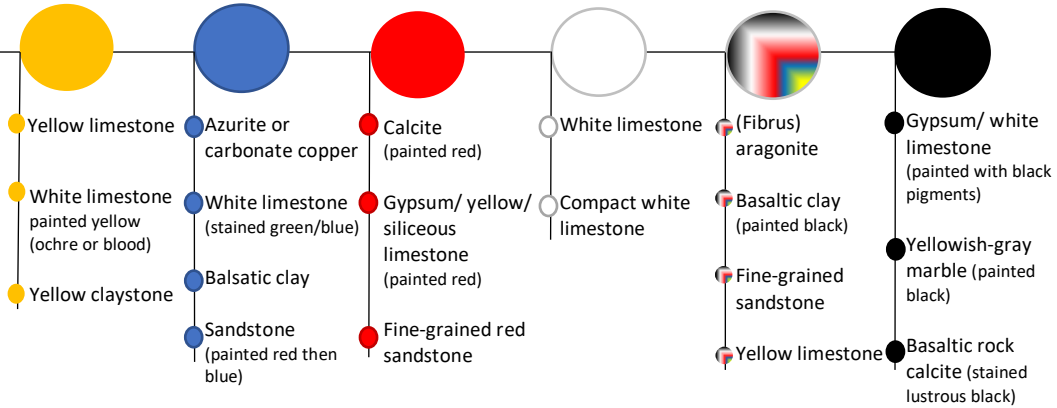


Introduction of new formulas and colors in pottery, from AD 1275-1300 to contemporary Zuni Polychromes & miscellaneous

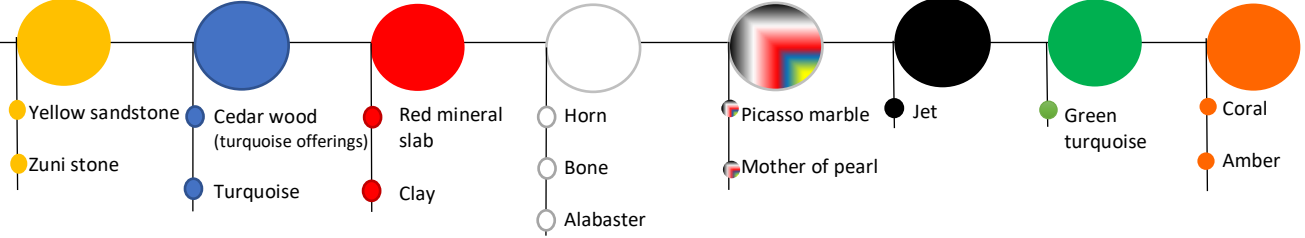


Introduction of new colored stones and fetish-carving media, from Cushing's era to the present day

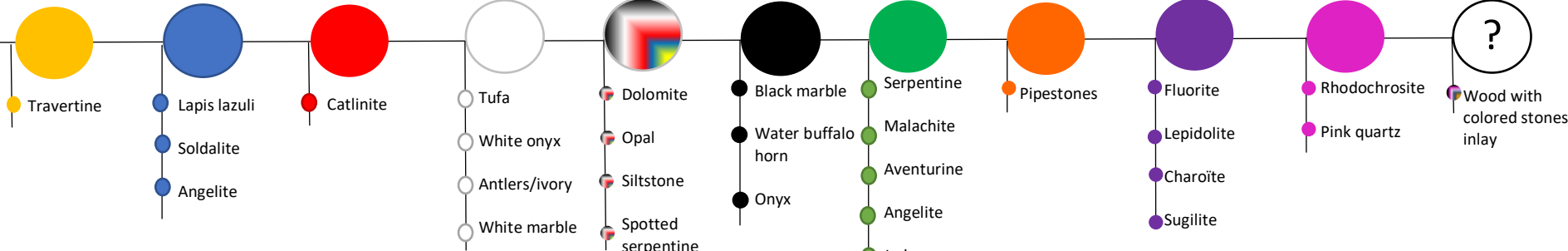
Cushing 1879-1884



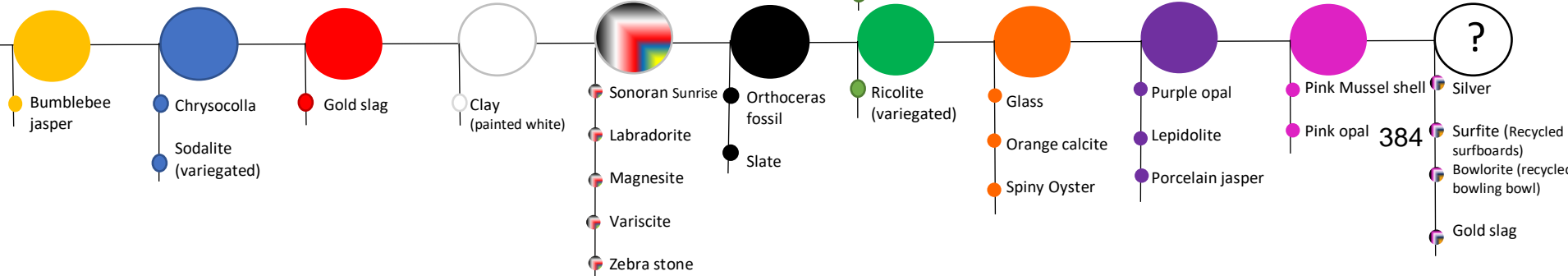
1960-1985 shift away from ceremonial carvings
Green and orange in Shiwi'ma/English



1985-2000 miscellaneous stones and material



2000~ miscellaneous stones and material



and the Ancestral Pueblo Southwest, Smith's *When is a Kiva*, Cushing and Stevenson's works, and various articles such as Coles' essay on kachina iconography on the Homol'ovi website, and Adams' article on paint made with beeweed in the Southwest. Contemporary additions were also made possible by observing the works of many painters dating from the 1930s to the present day. As we saw in section 2.2.4, the Ancestral Pueblo people painted all their sacred directional colors and also used pink or gray hues that appeared and disappeared, depending on the site and period. Looking at the chart below, we can see that there has always been an extensive range of hues for kiva painting from the Basketmaker II period (50-500) onward. The Ancestral Pueblo people mastered the *a'witen/itiwan* colors quite early on, and worked to create nuances from the Pueblo IV period (AD 1350 to AD 1600) onward, completing their palette's primary/secondary colors with the creation of orange and purple hues, while still being limited by the inherent capriciousness of natural pigments. Gouache made its apparition in the Pueblo by the 1920s with Gonzales' influence as a teacher at the Zuni daily school. This was a radical change, as it allowed painters to access an impressive range of colors and the possibility to mix paint without the uncertain or even undesirable consequences of doing so with natural pigments. This was also when the principles of the color wheel were introduced within the tribe. Without the limitations of natural pigments, budding Zuni artists could now mix primary colors to create secondary compounds. These combined changes resulted in the first generation of contemporary Zuni painters, who were able to work with infinite color blending possibilities instead of being restrained by the nature of traditional mineral or organic pigments.

Around the 1950s, kachina painters such as Theodore Edaakie produced the first commercialized canvases. However, the Native art market struggled to accept painting as a medium, since customers judged painting on canvas not “Native American enough,” *id.est.*, not representative of traditional artisanal craftsmanship, so painters also made jewelry and fetishes to earn an income. Traders did not promote Zuni painters as “Zuni artists” until the next generation of oil and watercolor painters appeared. These painters made themselves known by organizing exhibitions to promote their work, such as the *A:shiwí A:wan* exhibition overseen by Phil Hughte. The fluorescent hues that Keith Edaakie uses (as well as Jaycee Nahohai in his stickers) are a brand-new development, perhaps too new, and thus have a hard time being accepted within the framework of “traditional Zuni” art, which is still associated with the solemn, centuries-old tones historically used to illustrate Zuni iconography. This shows us that even today, to be considered traditional in the conventional sense, a Zuni artist must exercise restraint in color use. However, as Edaakie is now one of the bosses of the painting niche, he is in the process of establishing the next generation’s palette, which promises to be very vividly colorful!

Although the fluorescent colors of Edaakie’s “superbatman” skateboard leave some Zuni aghast, the skateboard overall creates less of a disturbance than Natachu Jr.’s kachina paintings. Some Zuni frown upon the kachina-based art market, for two main reasons. Firstly, the most conservative Zuni believe that the kachinas’ existence, colors, and shapes must remain a secret exclusive to the tribe. Many Western reports on Zuni Indians of the 19th century misjudged certain aspects of sacred and private ceremonies they observed as disgusting,

such as the ritual ingestion of bodily fluids;⁹³ this shaming attitude is one reason why the Zuni now feel that kachina are only to be shown to trustworthy people. Secondly, some Zuni feel that it is wrong to make money with depictions of sacred iconography, which in addition to the moral aspect can be linked to the fear of losing identity if the essentially ceremonial core of Zuni art were to be effaced. Because of this, some Zuni disapprove of Natachu Jr.'s work, which he intends as an important way to remember the lost kachina and their colors. But this is bound to change, as, like Edaakie, Natachu Jr.'s position at the top of the niche allows him to train the next generation, such as Kandis Quam, to join him in painting symbolic works in many different colors.

In the chart entitled "Introduction of new colored stones and fetish-carving media, from Cushing's era to the present day" we can see that fetish carving suffered the same fate as kachina painting. After Cushing and Stevenson's publications and their gifts of Zuni ceremonial objects to the Smithsonian institute, the Zuni became more and more reluctant to share knowledge about their fetishes with the West. Fetishes were exclusively private, sacrosanct objects and had to be adequately blessed. Starting from the *a`witen/`itiwan* color system, fetish carvings were painted in their respective color if the stone itself did not correspond to one of the six sacred hues. We saw in section 2.2.3 how the opening up of the Zuni fetish carving art market to the West in the 1940s also opened up avenues for the use of new color media. Artists started with relatively tame colors to avoid being accused of being too individualistic and greedy or

To quote a few, in his private notes taken in 1881, entitled *The Urine Danse of the Zuni Indians of New Mexico* Captain John Gregory Bourke, a guest of Cushing at Zuni village, described Zuni people as "filthy brutes" (5) for drinking urine; Matilda Coxe Stevenson also described what she referred to as "filthy practices" and "disgusting acts", meaning a private ritual involving excrements (*Zuñi Indians* 430).

materialistic; tribal opinion could have consequences as serious as artists being shunned and accused of witchcraft. However, just like when their ancestors discovered a new pigment, Zuni artists still gain immense pride from being the first to popularize a new color material. From 1985 onward, importation and trade networks were incredibly useful in finding new and original colors and materials. The Zuni became more and more interested in variegated, multicolor stones, and the contemporary market began to display fewer and fewer monochrome fetishes. Fetishes made with these types of stones can pass as “traditional Zuni” art because of the potential for the use of multicolor to correspond with the realm of the Sun Father. Nevertheless, the variety of “exotic” colors in imported stones are not all looked upon favorably, and the tendency of fetish makers, like painters, to branch out from using the ancestral colors exacerbates certain tensions within

the tribe.



Figure 148: Smokey Gchachu, Coral Necklace, with branches of coral and semi-transparent gemstones, ca. 1993 (Ostler 109).

Another interesting example to study in this respect is silversmithing and lapidary jewelry work. Before silver was introduced to the tribe, turquoise mosaics were already being made for centuries, showing a mastery of stonework as part of the ancestral savoir-faire. However, the traditional off-white/blue/red/black archetypal composition such as is used in the Knife Wing and Rainbow Man motifs, as well as all the styles of cluster work and overlaid inlay that followed, were

developed from the 1917s onward (see section 2.2.2). It is this fairly recently-developed style that is already the standard for what “traditional Zuni” jewelry is supposed to be. Jewelers who used silverwork to make a living quickly established a niche which then instructed the following generations of Zuni artists. The use of turquoise in Zuni jewelry is still the most popular choice in the previously mentioned patterns, and interestingly, there are many forms of variegated turquoise, with or without matrix, from all parts of America, China, and Afghanistan that are accepted as “Zuni” when used in jewelry; this further demonstrates how the attitude and priorities of the first generation of a new artform establish the notion of “traditional” within that creative domain.

Such a strong adherence to even a more recent artform means that the first generational niche still holds the creative authority within the tribe and leaves little place for new trends, which are immediately labeled as “contemporary.” For example, in the 1990s, artist Smokey Gchachu created a reversible needle point design with turquoise on one side and coral on the other (see Ostler *Silversmith* 109). Another of his creations combines snake eye (see section 2.2.2) styled semi-precious stones and new polished branches of coral, which he submitted to the 1993 Zuni Show at the Museum of Northern Arizona. This piece puzzled the judges because they thought it “didn’t look Zuni” (*Silversmith* 108), as it was not in a mosaic, cluster, petit, or needle point pattern. Instead, the artist used entire branches of coral, as well as transparent semi-precious stones.

These examples show why it is so hard for modern Zuni artists to experiment with colors. Many artists practice a sort of self-censorship in order to remain under the traditionalist umbrella, and continue to work as a family rather than as solo artists, such as the Sheche family carvers discussed in section 2.3.1

as well as most potters, as witnessed by the never-changing pottery colors and Jaycee Nahohai's trouble in having his work recognized as "traditional Zuni" despite his use of ritualistic, handmade, and naturally-pigmented pottery paint. The chart above shows that color experimentation in pottery has been nearly non-existent from AD 1275-1300 to the current day, with the very significant exception of Jaycee Nahohai's bold approach to colors and pigment formulas. Contrary to the diversity of pigments in kiva wall painting, ceramic work still displays a limited range of colors; except for some organic components such as yucca fruit or mustard seed (Chappel, "Josephine and Nat Nahohai" n.pag.) that are sometimes used as binding agents, most of the pigments are composed of manganese, clay, iron-rich stones, and ochres, along with white kaolin and several resin-based glazes (Huntly 45-47). Except for traces of ground turquoise used to cover offering bowls, the Zuni did not use blue or yellow pigments, and very few potters experimented with the blue *a'witen* color on ceramics before Randy Nahohai played around with some azurite paint that Milford Nahohai gave him (see Chappel, "Milford Nahohai" n.pag.). We can surmise that the archetypal colors for ceramics reflect the difficulty of making a blue slip that holds its color during firing. However, the arrival of commercial pigments has allowed better stability of the traditional hues during the firing process, which would have made it possible to overcome this difficulty. This shows that the availability of materials is not the only cause of Zuni ceramic colors remaining static; the potter's niche has followed strict rules to perpetuate identical designs to those used centuries prior, as we've seen in section 1.3.4.

So, does this ultimately mean that Zuni colors are the colors that respected "niche boss" specialists of each artform approve, or those validated by previous

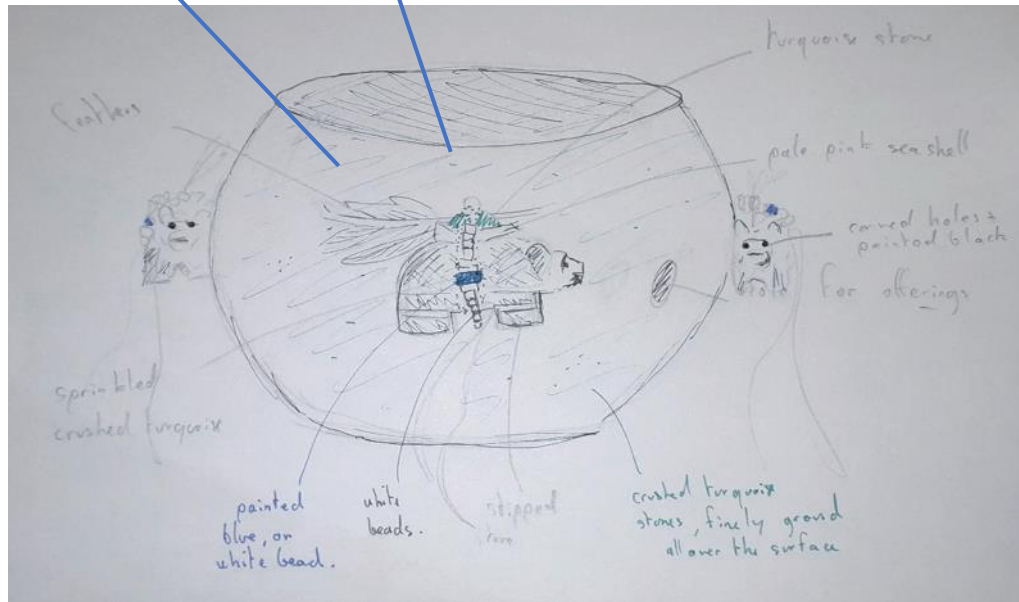


Figure 149: Composite sketch of an offering bowl (my sketch) See the crushed turquoise that is on the bowl's external surface

generations? The collection of charts figure 147 shows just how long it takes a new color to be officially integrated within the palette, after a process first of risky experimentation, then approval by the niche, then the tribe, then mastery by other artists. In painting, we have seen that Gonzales' students faced resistance to their use of perspective color gradation, which was seen as not "tribal" enough, and traders pressured them to create polychrome kachinas with little to no gradation of colors because, according to the latter, customers were not interested in representational landscape paintings, thus leaving many artists torn between painting the expected kachinas or experimenting with representational art using the new media at their disposal. The second generation, from the 1970s on, democratized the use of color gradation to create depth, and the current generation nowadays feels free to experiment even with florescent hues and

abstraction, which will probably be the new norm for the following generation, and so on. Similarly, for fetish carving and silversmithing, many Zuni initially disapproved of the new colors associated with commercially-imported materials in the 1980s, such as different kinds of lapis, fluorite, and rhodochrosite. But nowadays, artists are slowly integrating pink and purple into their carvings and pieces of jewelry. Though not approved by all, new colors are slowly accepted, in particular color combinations that can be seen to substitute red or blue on a similar spectrum, allowing pink, for example, to slowly integrate the palette in place of red. This process will probably follow a similar path as it does for painting, with these colors becoming entirely established in the palette for the next generation. The artform that is more difficult to predict is ceramics, since the first traces of palette change are only just starting with Jaycee Nahohai's work. Whether the next generation will refer to him as the new "niche boss" in his artistic field remains to be seen.⁹⁴

Each family and each generation has its own take on traditional colors, in which economic concerns and ethics also come into play; earning too much money with innovative work sold as "Zuni" is seen as a betrayal to the tribe, yet selling more is also the best way to be respected in the market and make one's name as a Zuni artist. This means that young artists who are eager to be part of

⁹⁴ Another logical successor might be Noreen Simplicio, who offers a tamer approach to innovation, with a strong wish to keep the archetypal colors intact even while accepting the rare use of "commercial" pigments (Nahohai & Phelps 87). As a "niche boss," she might influence towards less color combination experimentations, and more development and modernization of details in ancestral Zuni designs. Another famous ceramic artist is Anderson Peynetsa, mentioned by Jaycee as a reference, who presents bolder and contrasting archetypal colors with a black-and-red-on-white in a refined style, distinguished by his use of space with few borders or margins dividing up the different parts of the vessel. As a niche reference, he would possibly start a trend towards higher contrasts of natural pigments and the development of natural pigment recipes for brighter whites.

Zuni tradition have very little leverage when it comes to establishing their own style and portraying their own personality without straying too far from the established pattern. New trends are only accepted when the experimenting generation moves up to the status of niche boss. Until that happens, Zuni archetypal colors, with possibly only small variations, will continue to be the colors of the prior generation for each artform. It was relatively easy for Zuni painters to assimilate gouache and acrylics, since so many of the hues already existed in the ancestral painting palette, but the situation is much more difficult for other artforms, whose historical use of pigments keeps them on a tighter leash. However, the contemporary Zuni artists who are taking risks with colors never seen before in tribal artforms are pushing the tradition to evolve, and many of them will set the trends that will then become the next generation's traditions.

3. Communicating Zuni Culture and Identity In Color

3.1 Preserving Tradition Through Colors

3.1.1 From *Shiwi'ma* Color Terms to English Focal Colors

The Zuni use colors for both extra and intra-tribal communication, to convey information to each other and to the outside world, and above all to testify of changes in their culture, identity and worldview. Since colors change over time, they are malleable; whether they are painted on the canvas, carved in stone, or verbalized as part of the descriptive vocabulary, they follow the evolution of the tribe and bear witness to its transformations. Their history allows us to retrace the milestones and the stages of development that gave life to the tribe of artists today. In this chapter, we will investigate what individual or tribal messages artists can communicate through color, and how colors can be used to represent or transmit Zuni cultural identity. We will first study the effect of the English language on *Shiwi'ma* color terms and related color concepts, then we will focus on how leading Zuni artists use colors to either transmit tribal and cultural knowledge to the next generation, or censor and alter expressions of color to keep sacred and esoteric elements private. We will also further explore how the Zuni use colors to claim or reclaim designs and artforms as culturally belonging to and representing the tribe, and we will see how cross-cultural exchanges with the West have impacted the Zuni's very conception of colors and identity, which for them are inextricably intertwined.

Each of the artists discussed in this dissertation describes his or her work with passion and conviction, walking the observer through the intricate layers and codes concealed within the colors. This brings us to the question of how to use

language to talk about color: how does one verbally express what color is? Speaking about a color gives it clarity and boundaries; attributing a distinct name to a color is one way to categorize it, visualize it, guide the eye, and single it out from the countless other hues present in a work of art or in the world around us. In order to study the way in which the Zuni speak about colors, this section will first offer a historical overview of Zuni color terms and provide a critical view of certain existing linguistic theories, and then investigate how the shift towards the use of the English language impacts the Zuni culture and conception of colors.

Linguists have a long history of studying *Shiwi'ma* color terms, using the Zuni and other tribal languages to reflect on how color terms are linked with culturally-specific ways of thinking. These studies show us that trying to apply Western color classification theories to Zuni terms inevitably causes inaccuracies. Before studying the terms in the Zuni language, we will first look at the rules regarding color naming set out in *Basic Color Terms* in 1969 by pioneers in the field, Bret Berlin and Paul Kay, who categorized existing colors into basic color terms following five principles summed up in the following list, which can be seen as representative of current Western perception and naming of colors:

1. The color term must be monolexemic, meaning that it must refer to only one "pure" color, not a mix of colors; for instance, blue is a basic color term, not blue-green.
2. The color must be monomorphemic, that is to say, with no prefix or suffix that would modify the shade; for instance, blue, not bluish.
3. The color's signification must not be included under the umbrella of any other color term. For example, ruby is a type of red, so it cannot be a basic color term.
4. The color must not relate to an object. For instance, turquoise refers to the stone of the same color, so it cannot be a basic color term.
5. The color must be psychologically salient for the majority of the people speaking the language. For instance, "dad's red paint" is only salient for the son, thus cannot be a basic color term.

Berlin and Kay use these rules to classify 'black', 'white', 'red', 'green', 'yellow', 'blue', 'brown', 'orange', 'pink', 'purple', and 'grey' as basic English color terms. They end their list of criteria by naming examples from two groups of exceptions: color terms that come from another language, such as orange (FR) transferring over as orange (ENG), and colors that refer to the name of an associated object, such as gold, silver, and ash (8).

Let us now compare basic Anglophone color terms with their *Shiwi'ma* equivalents. Lenneberg and Brown were the first to study Zuni color terms, in their 1954 publication "A Study in Language and Cognition" in *Linguistic Society of America*. They note that in "[t]he Zuni color lexicon codes, the colors we call orange and yellow [are referred to] with a single term (461)." About forty years later in 1997, linguist John A. Lucy also pointed out: "Zuni speakers do not differentiate between the color 'orange' and 'yellow' but define a common lexical category *lhupz/inna* [or *ɭupts'inna*] referring to the two (335)." Lenneberg and Brown explain that codability, meaning the extent to which a population agrees on the use of a name for a given color, is responsible for the Zuni's lack of distinction between these colors:

Monolingual Zuni [subjects] in their recognition task frequently confused the orange and yellow colors in our stimulus set. Our English-speaking [subjects] never made this error. It is a distinction which is highly codable in English and highly uncodable in Zuni. (Brown 441)

This statement implies that the use of a certain language with a certain variety of color terms helps subjects to visualize a distinct color. The more color terms there are, the easier it is to differentiate between different shades.

This means that according to the data gathered in the 1950s, the Zuni orange/yellow color term *ɭupts'inna* could not be considered a basic color term

under Berlin and Kay's criteria because it does not follow their first rule: it is not monolexemic, as it is composed of several lexemes and contains both the notion of yellow and orange. In his 1965 *Zuñi Grammar*, Stanley Stewart Newman further affirms the non-monolexemic nature of *Shiwi'ma* color terms and shows that there is a similar issue with *Shiwi'ma* terms for blue. While some color terms, such as *fi'akwa*— "turquoise sky blue" (Walker 509)— and *fi'anna* —"navy blue" (Newman 64) seem monolexemic, these and many other words contain the verb *li*, which refers to both blue and green. For instance, in another term for blue, *akwali*, Newman explains that the verb *li* actually means "to become blue, green (48)." This term does not distinguish a separation between Zuni blue and green, or, more likely, it just allows for a wider range of shades on the color spectrum than the Western term and is thus categorized as non-monolexemic according to Western criteria. The word *akwali* also seems to violate most of Berlin and Kay's criteria:

1. It is not monolexemic, as it is composed of several lexemes and contains shades from blue to turquoise.
2. It is not monomorphemic, as suffixes such as *na-nne* can be added.
3. Its lexemes are also contained in terms for other shades, such as *fi'anna* or *fi'akwa*.
4. The color *akwali* refers to the azurite stone, hence it is related to an object.

Their fifth criterion, however, is met, as the term is psychologically salient for the majority of Zuni people.

In his article entitled "Crayola-fication," the writer, physicist, and science educator Aatish Bhatia explains the difference between tribal and Western classifications of colors when he offers a universal order of appearance of color terms.

You start with a black-and-white world of darks and lights. There are warm colors and cool colors, but no finer categories. Next, the reds and yellows

separate away from white. You can now have a color for fire or the fiery color of the sunset. There are tribes that have stopped here. Further down, blues and greens break away from black. Forests, skies, and oceans now come of their own in your visual vocabulary. Eventually, these colors separate further. First, red splits from yellow. And finally, blue from green. The forest unmingles from the sky. (Bhatia, n.pag.)

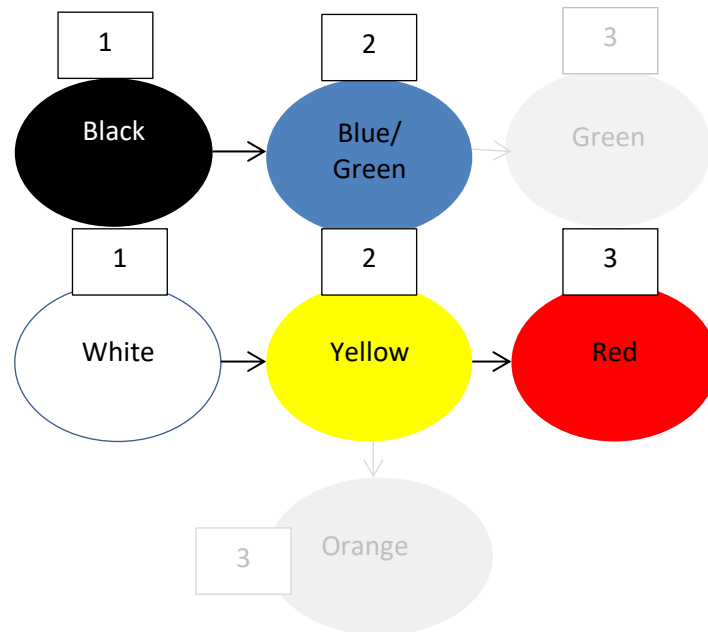


Figure 150: Order of Appearance of Color terms, Zuni ~1950

Using Bhatia’s argument, we can create the diagram in figure 150 to represent the Zuni lexical parameters of color up until around the 1950s. Judging by this system, the Zuni had yet to achieve the final part of this linguistic process in color classification and kept one single word expressing blue/green as a generic term, since both hues are closely related chromatically.

However, this does not mean that the Zuni did not actually visually distinguish between these different hues, contrary to what many linguists have implied. *Shiwi'ma* color terms are not static, but rather transition between different shades according to the ever-evolving states of colored objects, and thus challenge the more absolute Anglophone classification methods. In his 1997 *Language Diversity and Thought*, an essential reference concerning tribal color

term studies, Lucy even states that "[t]here is no general term for 'color' in Zuni (154)." The very concept of color is therefore radically different from Western usage as there is no cognitive linguistic domain for "color" as an abstract absolute; instead, in the *Shiwi'ma* language, culturally-specific notions of color are defined by terms for colored objects, leading the Zuni to use multiple lexical terms to name red, blue, or yellow. Lucy makes the following point:

Zuni has two lexemes expressing the literal notion of the color 'yellow.' Lexeme A would be used in contexts such as 'yellow shirt, yellow paint.' Lexeme B is employed in combinations such as 'yellow skin, yellow leaves'. The difference is not one of hue. Rather, lexeme A covers many shades of yellow, characterizing an object, while lexeme B refers only to an object that has become yellow (or a related hue, which might be translated by English 'pale' or 'rusty') as a result of ripening or aging...[S]uch a distinction... suggest[s] that an investigation of color terms must recognize that such terms may express discriminations other than those involved in the color spectrum. (335-6)

Applying this principle to other examples in Zuni language, we can make several observations: to start with, as Lucy notes concerning the term for yellow, *lupc,ina:*, the dynamic lexeme B, the verb *lupc[?]i* is not one of color; it is a changing state, "to yellow" or "turning yellow" when this "yellow" is the result of aging.⁹⁵ This verb *lupc[?]i* is present in other *Shiwi'ma* colors, such as the term *he*lupc[?]i-k^wa-n-ane*, the color of ceremonial clay. Let us decompose the term: the suffix *he** is the abbreviated form of *heli*, meaning clay or mud, which gives indications of the subtle tints and tones of the shade; *lupc[?]i* is yellow corn (see Newman 63), which gives the basic shade of the color. Basically, the suffix *heli* with the verb *lupc[?]i* expresses that amidst the yellows, this one turns to a color close to clay/mud. Similarly, in the term *k'ohakwa* ou *k[?]owak^wa* for white corn, the verb *ko[?]w^a* means

⁹⁵ Also comparable to the French verbs "jaunir," or, more suitable in this context, "brunir."

"to be or to become white (Newman 64)." In both color terms, the suffix *-k^wa* is etymologically related to the object-equivalent origins of the directional color system, which the Ancestral Pueblo people pictured with the six colored corn seen painted on kiva walls (see section 2.2.4). This also means that the color terms for yellow are object-derived since they refer to corn and clay, contradicting Berlin and Kay's rule 4. Newman specifies that the same lexeme B above (*lupc?i* for turning yellow) in the plural form, "oneyanne," means "pollen" or "corn meal," as well as referring to the color of rust. The ideas of "turning yellow" and "turning white" are therefore associated with the colors of corn, and the color itself is not described as an absolute, but exists as a comparison to the color of corn. Yellow is therefore "yellow corn-colored," or "clay or mud-colored," and white is "white corn-colored," in both cases always relative to an object. The lexeme A of the colors yellow and white characterizes the object while the lexeme B characterizes the way this object takes on or displays color.

In section 1.3.3, we mentioned Nancy P. Hickerson's explanation of the Zuni color term *?amitola-nne* for "rainbow-colored." In her 1975 article "Two Studies of Colors," she specifies:

Most of the nouns are names of colours: they are often translated (in L[enneberg] and R[oberts]) by referring to a species of plant, animal, etc...Examples: *shiqqamu-nne* 'maroon (like a cactus flower)', *?oneya-nne*, 'pale, yellowed (like corn pollen)', *?amitola-nne* rainbow-colored (like the rainbow)', *?alasa.nina-nne* 'reddish-brown (sorrel)', *o.lona. nne* 'gold color (like gold).' (322)

This observation shows how complex it is to find equivalent Western color terms for Zuni color-object-terms. Hickerson further explains how then Zuni use of particles comes into play in these terms; a noun associated with the particle for number, *nee*, with or without the suffix *na*, signifying "to be on the surface," gives

the characteristic of color to the noun; for instance, the noun, *?ashiwo*, which means algae or moss, signifies "moss green" when placed before *na-nee* (as in the word *?ashiwo-na-nee*). The plant "algae" or "moss" thus evokes the color in language. A more literal translation would be "the color of moss" (325) or "like moss." There is no use of an absolute lexical term for the color "green" here, only a system of equivalents. Contrary to the Western system that allows for the inclusion of an object name as a simile adjective in juxtaposition with the absolute notion of the color, such as in the term "blood red," the *Shiwi'ma* approach uses the simile object directly as a term for color via a certain grammatical form, which makes the strict literal equivalent closer to "moss-colored" rather than "moss green."

In his 1979 article "Zuni Semantic Categories," the linguist Williard Walker surmises that many other color terms function the same way. He says:

[...]the term $k^?e.k^{(w)}?ina$ "purple" offers little difficulty when one knows that the stem $k^?e-$ refers to cornstalks after the harvest, by which time they often take on a purplish cast, and that $k^{(w)}?ina$ is a word meaning 'black' or 'dark.' (509)

This adds another level to the complex composition of *Shiwi'ma* color terms, showing how, like the natural objects they often refer to, Zuni color terms are dynamic; each shade is a process, a state at a point in time, in transition from one hue to another. For example, the term $k^{(w)}?ina$, for dark/black denotes a specific hue of the color $k^?e$, meaning cornstalks after the harvest, to result in the notion of purple, $K^?e.k^{(w)}?ina$, "the darkened color of the cornstalks after the harvest." The most basic Zuni color term for purple thereby denotes transition towards a specific shade, that is, the evolving color of an object (a corn stalk) as it is cut and ages.

With an understanding of these linguistic specificities, we can propose a revision of Berlin and Kay's rules to describe how basic Zuni color terms function:

1. The color is polylexemic. That is to say, one color is composed of lexemes pertaining to one or several colors within a hue, with a wide range of shades to that hue.
2. The color is polymorphemic, which gives information about the hue. The morphemes might add the notion of "going towards a shade" with time, for instance.
3. The color's signification might also be included in another color term.
4. The color relates to an object of nature, usually culturally-specific and of particular importance (*i.e.*, corn)
5. The color must be psychologically salient for the majority of the people who speak the language.

The clear reversal of four out of five of the above rules suggests that some of the most authoritative linguists may have over-simplified the Zuni's complex language of color. There was never really a need for equivalent English basic color terms, as the Zuni have multiple other ways of expressing color in language, including references to the ever-changing state of an object in order to evoke a specific hue, such as in the example of purple being equated with the darkening of cornstalks after the harvest. Thus, Zuni color terms are simply not "basic," as we would understand the notion of "basic" in the Western sense.

However, all of this does not yet take into account the rapidity with which the *Shiwi'ma* language started to vanish from the late 20th century onward. Brown, Lennemon, and their peers who added to their work later on, did not study this transformation themselves. In Brown and Lennemon's linguistic tests, the English-speaking Zuni already showed traces of a change, as can be evidenced by Brown stating that "[i]nterestingly, bilingual Zunis who knew English fell between the monolingual Zuni and the native speaker of English in the frequency with which they made these errors (441)." This means that cross-cultural

exchanges were already influencing the codability that researchers in the 1950s assumed the Zuni to be lacking. The English-speaking Zuni also better understood the distinctions expressed in English terms because they better understood the instructions of the Anglophone researcher.

Walker Williard revealed the impact of communicating with the Anglophone community thirty years later in 1979, when Zuni color terms were already influenced by the English language:

[There was a] change in the color classifications as consequence of contacts with English speakers and with Anglo color categories. Thus monolingual Zunis use the term *lupc,ina* for colors that might be called 'yellow' or 'orange' by English speakers, while bilingual Zunis tend to approximate the English categories, using *lupc,ina* for 'yellow' and *ʔolencinanne* (apparently derived from the English term *orange*) for 'orange'. (509)

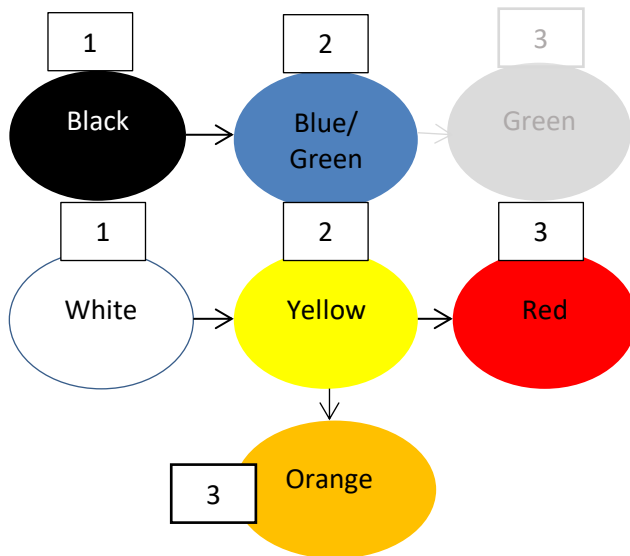


Figure 151: Order of Appearance of Color terms, Zuni (1970-1990s)

The term *ʔolencinanne* is a fascinating mix between phonetics /brɪndʒ/ or *ʔolenci* for "orange" and the suffix *na-nee*, meaning "the hue of," as previously explained by Hickerson. Thus, the Zuni officially assimilated the English color term "orange" into the *Shiwi'ma* language with the

addition of their suffix *na-nee* to form the new color term, *ʔolencinanne*, meaning the color "like (the Western notion of) orange." This also means that our Bhatia-based schema can be updated to express how the chronological process in the

Zuni classification of colors has moved forward, with the *Shiwi*-American term "like orange" being officially included in the 1970s.

What also pushed this change forward is the fact that from the 1990s onward, the Zuni basically underwent a crash course in the English language. The influx of a cash economy, daily exchanges with English speakers, and the introduction of Anglophone pop culture may well have played a role in this, but school reforms were the truly decisive factor. The U.S. government, which prohibited the use of Native languages in schools in 1877, started from the premise that the *Shiwi'ma* language was still predominant in homes and all tribal government, religious, social, and cultural interactions, despite the efforts of public schools, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and missionaries (see Dalton 7). In the 1990s, the National Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) implemented a school reform project for the Zuni Pueblo Public School District to teach "Standards" at school. In 1997, the University of California published a report on the project in which they explained Zuni's situation as follows:

Zuni students enter school as Zuni speakers (98%). In school, 96% of students are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). Instruction is in English, although the elementary schools employ bilingual classroom aides. The only use of Zuni language at middle or high school is when Native teachers volunteer explanations and translations in Zuni. In comparison to their peers in the state, Zuni students score much lower on standardized tests and achieve at lower academic levels. (Dalton 8)

This reform also arises from the fact that while the parents of Zuni children wanted their children to be integrated into Zuni cultural life, they also "want[ed] their children to survive and prosper in the dominant U.S. society as well (8)." For these

reasons, the CREDE effected seven standards that were to be put into action in classrooms:

- 1) In Native American classrooms, include modeling and demonstration.
- 2) In Native American classrooms, include student-directed activity.
- 3) Facilitate learning through joint productive activity among teachers and students.
- 4) Develop competence in the language and literacy of instruction throughout all instructional activities.
- 5) Contextualize teaching and curriculum in the experiences and skills of home and community.
- 6) Challenge students toward cognitive complexity.
- 7) Engage students through dialogue, especially the instructional conversation (Dalton 5)

The sociolinguistic approach of the English language was put forward via contextualization and more engaging classes. By the 2000s, the new generation of Zuni adults was perfectly bilingual, but painter Keith Edaakie explains that the Zuni have now completely reversed the situation and that *Shiwi'ma* is no longer mastered by the youth. Edaakie's own bilingual abilities allowed him to remain connected to his tribal roots, all the while benefiting from open communication with the outside world. He says:

[...] I always tell people that, you know, I'm really thankful and blessed to have been born in the time period that I was because what I see is, our generation is basically the last fluent speakers, because our community now speak English, speak a lot of English. When I was growing up, I was fortunate enough to learn our language first, and then we went into the school system is when we learned the English language. [...] Yeah, but now it's basically reversed the other way around where kids today learn English first, and then they learn the Zuni language within the school system. So, like I was saying, I was fortunate enough to be able to learn the language. I was fortunate enough to learn a lot of traditional upbringings growing up that a lot of what our younger generations don't have anymore. (My transcription)

Keith's father, Raylan, further confirmed that the English language has become the first language; the younger generation no longer speaks *Shiwi'ma* as a first language. This can place young Zuni in a conflicted position, as they are

torn between the pressure of tribal clan responsibilities they may no longer understand, and the Westernized lifestyle and cash economy that push them out of the Zunilands to earn a living. The new generation, which is preoccupied with what Raylan calls "electronics"—new technologies such as computers and phones that are frowned upon by some religious leaders—struggles to find balance between the two worlds. Consequently, religious leaders now tolerate the use of the English language in kivas, where it used to be prohibited, in order to keep the youth interested and involved in ceremonial life.

As the *Shiwi'ma* language itself has never assimilated a specific color term for green—thus never completing Bhatia's process of color categorization—the new generation reverts to using basic English color terms. The linguistic reversal process can also be seen in the adoption of English color notions and borrowed lexemes within the *Shiwi'ma* vocabulary. As English color terms are static, the young Zuni now use the same static vocabulary. For instance, there is no English color term for "turning yellow," or for the way corn husks turn purple, and so young Zuni who primarily use English basic color terms thus lose important Zuni cultural meanings. Since static English basic color terms cannot express the various rich dynamic hues that it is possible to distinguish in the *Shiwi'ma* language, this change could have fatal consequences on the preservation of a distinct Zuni worldview.

Data collected from interviews with six artists during about ten hours of recorded conversations in November 2019 allow us to establish some theories regarding the nature of Zuni color terms, which would, however, still require many more follow-up conversations with monolingual and bilingual Zuni to be confirmed. We will first define some sampling criteria in order to lay the

foundations for analyzing these terms; for our purposes, only color term adjectives or nouns that follow these criteria will be sampled:

1. Refers to a shade or a hue (dynamic or static) or an object equivalent (such as turquoise for the color of the turquoise stone).
2. Culturally-specific polychromatic color will be included (multicolor).
3. Culturally-specific objects that refer to a shade or a hue will be included.

Moreover, color-objects that refer to an ingredient, such as ochre to describe the shade, will be accepted as a color term, but only when they are used in reference to color, not to designate the physical material.

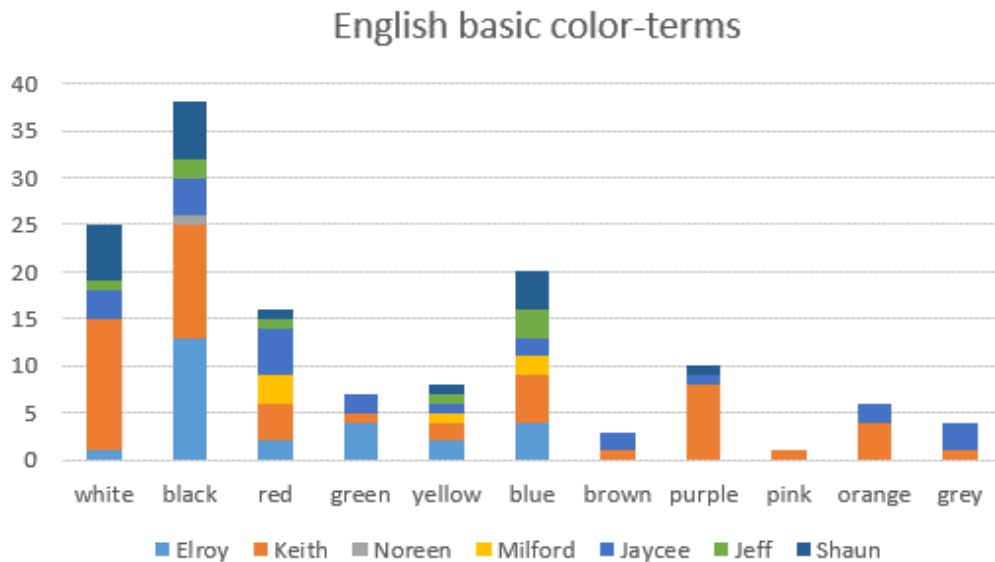


Figure 152: Basic color terms used during five interviews, out of 207 color terms spoken; the vertical axis shows the number of utterances per term per artist.

The graph in figure 152 shows that out of the 207 color terms spoken, 138 instances corresponded to the basic color terms in English as established by Berlin and Kay: white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange, and gray (see Berlin and Kay 2). Black and white were the most mentioned, closely followed by blue, then red, then yellow, showing the importance of the sacred six colors. Zuni whose first language was *Shiwimá* in particular, such as Milford Nahohai and Keith Edaakie, make use of basic color terms. This can be

explained by the self-translation process the Zuni go through, from their native *Shiwi'ma* language to English; it is much easier to translate *lupc²i*,— "turning yellow"— as just "yellow." On the contrary, Zuni whose first language was English, such as Jaycee Nahohai and Elroy Natachu Jr. and will turn to more precise versions of a term, such as "ochre."

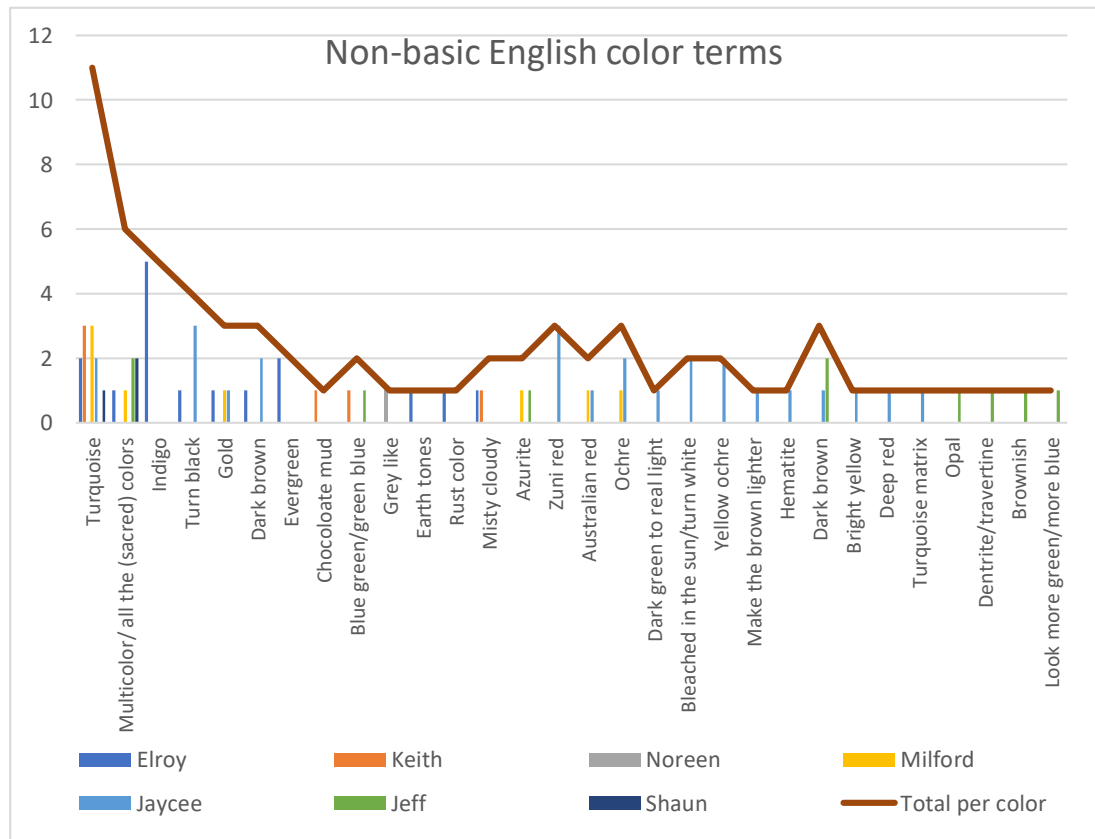


Figure 153: The 69 Non-basic color terms expressed during seven interviews, the vertical axis shows the precise term per artist

In her 2013 article entitled "Multilingual/Bilingual Color Naming/Categories," the linguist Nancy Alvarado observes the color terms of immigrants in the United States who were fluent in English as their second language. She says:

Studies comparing bilingual naming to monolingual naming show increased consensus of response among bilinguals, as well as a preference for use of more basic terms, perhaps reflecting a focus on what is shared across languages or perhaps a vocabulary loss affecting the less frequently used, more differentiated terms needed to describe subtleties of color. (1)

Though this study concerns immigrants, the Zuni are in a similar situation with regard to English language acquisition, since they have had to transition from their native *Shiwi'ma* to communicating in the dominant language of the country. According to Alvarado, using basic color terms may either be a "preference," driven by the fact that metaphorical shades such as the previous example of *k²e.k(w)²ina* ("the purple color of cornstalks husk after harvest") are challenging to translate into English during a conversation, or a "loss," due to their unease with the English language and lack of knowledge of more nuanced color vocabulary in the target language.

The data on basic color terms also tells us that 33% of the color terms mentioned were not those considered to be "basic." We will study some of the most significant examples here. Faithful to the characteristics of the *Shiwi'ma* language, many of the non-basic color terms are polylexemic, such as the various terms for "blue-green." Hence, "turquoise" (eleven occurrences) refers to these shades between blue and blue and green, and is spoken more than the basic color term "green" (seven times). The *Shiwi'ma* root *li* that means "to become blue-green" and encompasses the many shades ranging from blue to green, has been replaced by the Anglophone notions and terms for blue, turquoise, and green. This is further proven by expressions like "blue-green" and "green-blue," "more green," "more blue" or "azurite" that were spoken. The cultural affinity for expressing a range of color is still apparent, and so the English word "turquoise" has become a salient color term, as the Zuni and their ancestors have a long history with the turquoise stone, which has become emblematic of Zuni art and crafts.

The *Shiwi'ma* language's polymorphemic characteristic in color terms that are going "towards a shade" is also represented by terms spoken in English such as "brownish," as well as more dynamic expressions such as "white-washed," the equivalent of the verb *ko^ʔwa*—"to be or to become white"— and other more complex descriptions of evolutive hues such as "turn[ing] black/brown/white," or "dark green to real light [very light green]." Similarly, when speaking English, the Zuni still use a system of object equivalents, with "azurite" for blue, "opal" for multicolor, or "ochre" and "yellow ochre" to give the exact hue. This has even evolved further with a comparison to an approximate shade of an object or objects; for instance, Edaakie uses the term "chocolate mud" to describe the color of the water he had to cross during his journey for the Map Art project. He says:

It was really nice because, when we went, we've seen pictures of the Colorado River, especially when the little Colorado river when they open up their generating system. It brings in this really chocolate mud water, and then the rest of the way, the water is just brown, but we were fortunate that didn't happen, and it was really clear blue-green waters as we traveled along the river. (My transcription)

The system of object equivalents that is the core of the *Shiwi'ma* colors has been translated into an English version by the artist, showing how "a bilingual person who is assimilating to a new culture can make meaning-based choices based on one culture while using language-related naming behaviors typical of the other culture (Alvarado 2)." This is even more relevant in Edaakie's case, as he is part of the last generation of Zuni Indians that are perfectly bilingual.

The data also show that art media influence color terms. Painters use many basic English color terms, except for their signature colors, such as "Inca gold," the precise paint shade preferred by Natachu Jr. Depending on their subjects, they either use a *witen/itiwan* colors and other heavily symbolic color tones, such

as the object-related evergreen in kachina painting, or use a more descriptive vocabulary for scenes of the Creation Myth. Potters tend to refer to the shade of the main ingredient in the mixtures that create paint, such as ochre, and have a dynamic approach, as the color in pottery is dynamic (see sections 1.3.4 and 2.2.1.) For instance, brown that "turns dark" is one of the color processes caused by firing ceramics. Potters also seem to use some colors terms that are psychologically salient only within a private circle, such as the "Australian red" of the Nahohai family.⁹⁶ Finally, carvers use the stones' colors to describe hues, such as the "hematite" color. It would also seem probable that there is a generational gap in the use of different color terms, and that bilingual Zuni artists from the older generation, whose first language was *Shiwi'ma*, use more color terms referring to material, such as azurite and ochre; however, more research needs to be conducted in order to confirm this hypothesis. The next step would be to study color terms used by the youth who no longer know the root terms in the Zuni language at all. In 2007, the Smithsonian magazine published an article on the survival of Zuni ceremonies, in which the reversal of the language acquisition trend was highlighted:

To counter the English language heard in every home on radio and television (and in movies and in daily conversation), elderly Zuni join with Zuni teachers at the Head Start program at the elementary school to encourage children to speak the Zuni language. There are immersion Zuni language programs in the higher classes as well, and programs conducted in Zuni at the A:shiwí A:wán Museum and Heritage Center. And there is KSHI, the Zuni radio station. "Kesh shí. Lukkya shamle don a:wán hon dena: a:lashinna dap kya: kol dena:

⁹⁶ This particular red is Milford's favorite. About this particular pigment, Chappell states: He especially likes a bright red that a Koori potter and musician named Ken Martin gave to Milford in Queensland, Australia, which he now combines with a much softer red he collects from deposits on Pia Mesa. He used both, for example, on his 2013 reworking of the designs on Rowena Him's circa 1986 jar. The Australian red, he feels, resembles the strongest red he finds in clay adjacent to iron-bearing stone on Zuni land. ("Milford Nahohai", n.pag.)

denabekkowa ik'osh na:wa," intones Duane Chimoni, KSHI's general manager and part-time disc jockey. "Hello. On this morning's program we're going to hear some songs that used to be played in the past." The songs, however, aren't Zuni songs; they're Blondie's "Heart of Glass" and The Who's 'My Generation.' "We make our announcements in both English and Zuni," says Chimoni. 'If we only do Zuni, then we get lots of calls, people saying 'uh, sorry, my Zuni isn't that good, could you repeat that part about...."' But I like to think it helps, hearing us speak Zuni.' (Morell, n.pag.)

In 2019, the Edaakies (father and son) remarked during their interviews that the new generation no longer speaks *Shiwi'ma*, and teachers teach the Zuni language at school as a second language in order to avoid completely losing the cultural roots of the tribe. As a former language teacher himself, Keith Edaakie hopes to use his art to interest the youth, and has created color documentation and resources they can learn from:

And so, when I left the district, that was my thing, is that while somebody's gonna have to teach them and what resources are they going to use if there's none available because we do have a bilingual program. But a lot of the things, the resources that have our base, basic vocabulary words, it's not enough to express everything. There's really not much to [be able to] tell these types of stories or to do these types of teaching sessions that will be helpful. My thing is that, when I leave, I still want to help the kids, but how am I going to do that and so... That was my idea. My idea was to create these types of works, to create a resource for people to use, and so for every picture that I create, I definitely keep documentation for myself so even though a piece does sell, at least I have that documentation still, where I can share with people who are interested, people who want to use it. And so, yeah, that was my thought into doing this. (My transcription)

His paintings are one way to communicate with the youth; however, he is brutally realistic about the fact that the youth can no longer communicate such complex notions of color with their "basic" *Shiwi'ma* level. For instance, teachers propose exercises to children with *Shiwi'ma* color terms they have to match with the corresponding hue. These activities compel the youth to get familiar with the *Shiwi'ma* color terms in order to better understand their grandparents' language.



Figure 154: Exercise used to teach *Shiwi'ma* colors to the youth.

However, there is no explanation of the *Shiwi'ma* color-objects, such as corn, ochre, and azurite. The youth are translating their native English colors into *Shiwi'ma*, without the dynamic approach to naming colors which is part of the Zuni culture; for example, they know *shilowa* is red in English, but the origins of this shortened form of the noun *ashilowa:we*— meaning coral— are lost on them.

It would seem then that the use of Zuni color terms follows the same path as the use of traditional colors. The Zuni are trying to find a balance between their desire for cultural preservation, which now pushes bilingual Zuni to teach the *Shiwi'ma* language to the youth, and their desire to master and thrive in the modern world; how to communicate color universally other than in English? The English language allows artists to communicate with clients and guide them through the language of colors so they can properly communicate their artistic intentions and bring their use of color to life. From the 1990s onward, the English-speaking world has had a massive impact on the tribe's use language, to the point that the Zuni scarcely speak the language of colors in their tribal tongue any more at all. Yet artists are thriving, using the English language in a mirror fashion in order to express their artistic intentions and their identities as *A:shiwi*.

Shiwi'ma colors are powerful fragments of the Zuni's past history from before the imposition of Western society on their culture. This is why the Zuni hold onto and wish to transmit the importance of specifically Zuni colors to their children, be it through school programs or through the activities of artists who perpetuate the symbolic or archetypal uses of Zuni colors in certain artforms, both to claim certain color styles as culturally theirs, and to promote the traditional use of colors in way that appeals to the curiosity of the younger generations.

3.1.2 Copycat Colors as a Way to Teach the Younger Generation

We established and confirmed throughout chapter 2 that traditions and the notion of tradition are constantly evolving, and that they represent more of a process than a definition that is set in stone. But how can we recognize a Zuni article or art object if the colors are constantly changing, being interchanged, and generally unstable? We have seen that some artists, such as Jaycee Nahohai with his experimental approach, are reviving a tradition that the Zuni have largely forgotten: the practice of trade between tribes, which has metamorphosed into trade between people all over the world. In her study of the possible connections between the Zuni and the Japanese, Nancy Yaw Davis closely analyzes ancestral intertribal trade, and explains that in the mid-19th century, trade and expeditions were a part of Zuni way of life, as a means to obtain materials such as conch shells for ceremonies, abalone shells for jewelry, and macaw feathers from the west coast of Mexico for prayer sticks. She even talks about a macaw trade, with macaw skeletons found in an Ancestral Pueblo site as evidence of the birds apparently being kept in order to use their feathers on colored prayer sticks (48-9). Thus, Jaycee Nahohai seeking out international exchange to feed his revolutionary approach to color is a logical way of building on the trading practices of his Zuni ancestors.

In order to further his color experimentations, Jaycee Nahohai views the natural pigments his family trades with other tribes or other cultures as traditional (see section 2.2.1). In 2019, he claimed that he was against repetitive work. According to him, the Nahohai family does not work with the identical reproduction of colors. He says:

Some, I hate to say, like some of the things that are being repetitious or designs that are being used in the school [...] that plays a factor in how much of the designs are being used so much, that it's just oversaturated to a point where everything kind of looks the same, so there's just a copy of a copy. (My transcription)

Then, he moderates his statement: this is not a judgment emitted against artists in particular, repeating colors and designs just is “not for him.” The Nahohais turned down an opportunity to work for the Indian Pueblo Store, a lucrative gallery inside the IPCC, because the Zuni articles sold there often feature replicas of the same designs, as well as posters of paintings and rare Zuni pottery pieces, and books on Zuni jewels and ceramics.



Figure 155: "Authentic Native American Handcrafted/Designed" IPCC Seals (courtesy of the IPCC)

However, the sale of "guaranteed handcrafted art," especially the silversmithing and lapidary arts used in popular Surface pendants, for example, often entails repeating certain color codes to respect the label of authentic "Zuni" art. The Indian Pueblo Store takes a picture of a prototype of the art object and posts it on their website; online customers can buy with just a click, and have the product shipped directly to their homes. This process means that these talented artists have to repeatedly produce the exact same design, and thus endlessly

replicate the exact color organization with identically colored material to that shown on the website. Keith Edaakie, who was once set to follow in the footsteps of his parents, Raylan and Patty, walked me through the jewelry creation process:

So that was one of the hardest things. So, what I had to do, is my parents are silversmiths so they told me that, you know, I could do some of the orders that they got, but what they had me do is these little pendants or these little earrings that they create with Surface on them. But what they will do is they would get an order for like four dozen, of like forty pieces, so ninety-eight Surfaces. [...] So, it's just basically sitting there, creating the same thing over and over again, so there's no room for creativity. (My transcription)

On the one hand, partnerships with shops ensure regular income. On the other hand, they come with the inconvenient reality that creating jewelry for shops involves not only creating innovative designs but more often creating endless, unimaginative reproductions for bulk orders, a process that is inconceivable for artists like Jaycee Nahohai and Keith Edaakie who thirst after color experimentation.

Colors on pottery designs are much more difficult to reproduce by hand with absolute accuracy; it's easier for traders to print colors and designs on imported pieces. These mass-produced archetypal colors identify the art as "Zuni." For instance, one of the IPCC store's star products is a "pottery mug" printed with a rendition of the deer-in-his-house motif, which is certified as a "guaranteed authentic native American designed" with a seal from the Indian Cultural Pueblo Center. This design is taken from an original piece of handmade pottery, which is available for purchase at the IPCC but at a price justifiably destined for serious art collectors. The IPCC prints the same potter's design on ceramic mugs to create a more affordable and portable memento of the tribe, allowing any person the opportunity to at least enjoy the graphic aspect of the

design created by the artist, but this means that the commercially reproduced item transforms the artist's role from being a traditional potter to a creator of a serial graphic design. The website specifies that the mugs are designed by Pueblo artists from New Mexico and that they are printed in the USA on imported ceramics, with no further information on the country of importation. The easy color printing and low fabrication cost of the imported ceramics to create a "certified" art object seems somewhat at odds with the website's promotional presentation of the potter responsible for the original design; the printed piece is accompanied by information on Pueblo pottery, emphasizing that the creation process was done entirely by hand for thousands of years, as well as explaining the slip painting and firing process in an outdoor kiln.

This information is a marketing strategy, which lends a "by hand" or "handcrafted" appeal to what are essentially identically colored goods. The shop invites the client to imagine the handmade creation process, which adds to the design's aura of "authenticity." The unlimited mass-production of these objects is the main difference between them and Jaycee Nahohai's t-shirts, also printed with pottery-inspired designs (see section 2.1.3), since he works in limited edition batches with sales exclusively made via Facebook primarily to tribal clan members. Jaycee usually posts pictures of the creative process, including sketches, color trials, and pictures of the original designs that inspired him; this first-hand view of the artistic process is arguably more "authentic" than the shop's mug offer.

The IPCC store is able to reproduce printed products endlessly, selling copy after copy of merchandise with "authentic" Zuni colors and designs. On the one hand, these commercialized designs can be seen as reductive, compared with

the vast range of colors and shapes contemporary Zuni artists play with, as we have seen in chapter 2. On the other hand, the selected colors and designs best portray the archetypal colors and models of Zuni art as well as the design work of active Zuni artists, and therefore represent an effective way to sell and thus support Native art! The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center's mission is to support Pueblo Culture, the center organizes events and talks about Native Indian culture, and its board members are primarily from Pueblos such as the Jemez, Laguna, Ohkay Owingeh, and Santa Clara. There is a fine line between promoting iconic Zuni arts and crafts and reducing these arts to a few key examples of the Zuni approach to colors. Through merchandising, Zuni colors become a well-known brand, a way to attract customers who are looking for the "authenticity immediately" promoted on the website. However, this also compels artists to perpetuate the cycle and continue copying the same designs.

This is even more apparent in Zuni ceramic art. In the 1890s, the famous Hopi-Tewa potter Nampeyo (1859-1942), who lived in the village of Hano, eastern Arizona updated and modernized old Hopi designs, developing a style inspired by precontact Sikyatki Polychrome pottery (see section 1.3.4) with dynamic geometric designs such as hachuring and bird motifs in earth tones (Lanmon 127). According to Chappel, between 1905 and 1907 she worked demonstrating pottery making at Hopi House, a reproduction of a traditional Hopi pueblo at the Grand Canyon built by the Fred Harvey Company as a market for Native American crafts (Chappel, "Old and New Traditions: Pueblo Context" n.pag). Nampeyo inspired her granddaughters, and one of them, Daisy Hooee (1906-1998), traveled to Paris, studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and honed her marketing skills in order to teach the Zuni how to best sell their art and crafts. She



Figure 156: From left to right: Rachel Namingha Nampeyo, Bear Claw Motif Jar, ca. 1950 (courtesy of the Heard museum, my photo); Josephine, Randy, and Milford Nahohai, Jar, 1983 (photography by Craig Smith for Chapell, fig. 50).

and Nampeyo produced designs that have in turn heavily influenced current artists' use of both motifs and colors (see Cunningham 19). Daisy Hooee's marriage into the Zuni tribe introduced Nampeyo's style there as well. Hooee started a vocational development course in 1974 to educate artists in basic product marketing and pottery-making skills, with the aim of teaching Zuni people how to be competitive within the art market in order to survive in the current cash economy.

The similarities between Nampeyo and Hooee's work and that of contemporary traditional Zuni artists such as Noreen Simplicio cannot be denied. Simplicio's work, which is looked upon as "authentic" and traditionally Zuni, demonstrates the same colors and designs that Nampeyo adopted from precontact Sikyatki Polychrome pottery, as well as the revival of the Ancestral Pueblo bird motif.⁹⁷ Today's Rainbird motif blends Nampeyo's bear claw motif (see figure 156) with a curved bird head painted red over a geometric, black

⁹⁷ Though Simplicio's style, as many other contemporary Zuni potters, was also influenced by Acoma potter Jennie Laate. The latter married into Zuni and taught pottery classes in Zuni High School students in the late 1980s.

hachured body. To better explain the current approach and affinity for bird motifs, Noreen relates the design to Zuni history:

Now the birds, different kinds of birds, there's so many different styles in the birds. Why birds, you may think? Well, birds are very important, as well as all the animals. The birds are particularly important to us because the menfolk again go out hunting birds, and we use the bird feathers for prayers, things like different kinds of blessings that we ask for all the time. So, the bird feathers are really important. So, that's why we use the bird symbols. And there's all the fine lines that you see ... are symbols of rain. (My transcription)



Figure 157: *Bird-in-his-house*, ca. 1900 and *bird*, 2017 (courtesy of the Heard Museum and Noreen Simplicio, my photos)

The fine lines or hachures representing rain that decorate her pots and jars are also influenced by Nampeyo's style, as well as other rainbird designs such as the red bird-in-his-house design (see figure 157), or *kya-shima wot'tsa'nah* (Chappel, "Survival at Zuni", n.pag.). The current bestselling design in the Zuni style shows the same colors from the Kiapkwa period (1760-1840/1860) with square patterns and hachured lines. The bird motifs from this period are also what inspired Jaycee Nahohai's design for the caps we saw in section 2.1.4 (see figure 63). The repetition of such motifs shows that black-and-red-on-white designs are no longer seen as belonging to any other community than the Zuni, or maybe to a lesser extent, the Hopi. For the Zuni, to paint these motifs on pottery is to perpetuate

Zuni tradition; in this way, each ceramic piece immortalizes a fragment of the Zuni's past, just like a petroglyph carved on a rock face.



Figure 158: From left to right: Kiapkwa Polychrome, 1820-1840 (courtesy of the Heard Museum, photo by Craig Smith); Tsiayuditsa, Zuni Storage Jar, ca. 1900 (courtesy of the Heard Museum); Noreen Simplicio, Zuni Storage Jar, 2019 (my photo)

Traditional colors and designs embellish contemporary pottery, such as the black and red *hepakine* symbol, which originates from the Spanish medallion symbol, whose colors have not changed since the sixteenth century when it was first imported during the Spanish expedition. As can be seen in figure 158, the first rosette pictured here dates from 1820-1840, during the Kiapkwa Polychrome period. Kiapkwa artists painted the design with thick black outlines, and traces of red pigments show that parts of the motif were filled in with red. The second rosette was painted in the 1900s by the Zuni potter Tsiayuditsa (ca. 1871–1959). In 1940, Tsiayuditsa was one of the two Zuni potters listed in the U.S. Federal Census, as Zuni pottery had suffered from what Chappel calls “the twentieth-century bourgeoisification of Zuni pottery” (see Chappel, “Survival at Zuni” n.pag.) and Zuni jars were exposed in museums as art-from-the-past. Tsiayuditsa created large jars with beautiful designs like the one in figure 158. The colors are the same as in its Kiapkwa predecessor, though the red now surrounds the sunflower, and more space is left to create a nice white contrast. We can also observe how the potter introduced hatching around the tips of the petals. The

third and most recent rosette was created in 2019 by Noreen Simplicio, and uses a mix of both color patterns. The red color forms the background of the design, like on Tsiayuditsa's piece. However, a second red layer is added to color the center petals, and the hachures have been extended to fill in the outer petals.

Looking at the three designs, we can observe that Simplicio's work shows more intricacy in the design than the earlier versions of the rosette. Nevertheless, the colors are almost identical. This is because the black-and-red-on-white rosette plays such a significant role in Zuni pottery that including the motif in this color scheme immediately identifies a pot or ceramic object as "Zuni." This fact is confirmed by Simplicio's own explanation of the rosette symbol:

The rosette design is pretty much on [all] the traditional water jars. It's basically a symbol that, you know, kind of [makes you] recognize that it's a Zuni symbol. So, you'll see it, if you see pieces in the museums you'll see basically that design, whether it has a lot of petals in it or not. [...] Yeah, so a lot of that is, that's basically a symbol of when the Spaniards came into our village at one point in time [and] the medallions they wore. So, the women started painting that particular design on their pottery. So, some people say it's a sunflower. They call it a rosette design. Some people say it's a sunflower design. But it's basically doing, you know, like research. They said it's a pattern number. It's a design of a medallion symbol. [...] Yes, it's used pretty much. So that whole design, like I said, it would be... If you see it, if you know what Zuni designs are about, if you've seen it for so many years you'll identify that it's a Zuni. (My transcription)

Portraying the rosette on a piece of pottery is a signature that brands it as "traditionally Zuni," thus giving the piece a certain value and status. Simplicio's description of the bird and rosette motifs indicates their incorporation as traditional Zuni designs, motifs that belong to the tribe. The traditional coloring is also part of the archetypal model of the design, and is perpetuated by each generation. This reproduction of the archetypal black-and-red-on-white further brands the product as "Zuni."

This repetition of Zuni colors on traditional pots and jars can even lead to confusion between what is traditional and what is mass-produced. Noreen Simplicio is one of the artists that reproduce designs in these archetypal colors; her water jars are archetypal models of what a customer might expect of Zuni ceramics, and the uninformed viewer might not distinguish between Simplicio's work and "a copy of a copy." But does that mean that she is "mass-producing" her works? Is her art more commercial than artisanal? Elroy Natachu Jr., Simplicio's colleague at the ARTZ coop, describes her work as follows: "This is natural clay. You recognize the difference as it's peach-colored once burnt. The colors vary between peach and brown, depending on how the pigment reacts in the fire (my transcription)." This comment is a reference to the fact that Noreen digs her own clay at Pia Mesa. She says:

I love to clean my clay until it's really smooth and soft. I'm just a perfectionist. So, I have a technique that I use to really get my clay really smooth, and really it's just like I said. I think I always brag about our clay because it's the best clay ever. (My transcription)

She also "do[es] offerings when [she] go[es] to get clay but just like daily offerings. Like learning about why we need to make daily offerings (my transcription)." Her way of collecting and processing the clay, using natural minerals to paint her ceramics, and paying respect to the earth as part of her art anchors her work in Zuni tradition. The colors she uses are derived from various clays gathered from each pueblo's local sources, producing pottery colors that range from buff to earthy yellows, oranges, and reds, as well as black. Although her motifs drawn on the peach-colored clay might be repetitive, there is no denying her genuine commitment to Zuni art. For her, repeating the ancestral colors and designs is part of a tradition that she hopes to teach to the next generation. In his *Two Zuni*

Artists, Cunningham explains how Simplicio has perpetuated Zuni art after Josephine Nahohai: "In the 1990s, other teachers have offered formal classes through the Zuni school system. Noreen Simplicio had more than a hundred students in her 1990-91 classes at the Zuni public school (Cunningham 54)." Simplicio has been a teacher for decades and is also committed to the Zuni Youth Enrichment program, getting involved in many different projects to help educate the youth about Zuni customs. Working the clay and teaching what are seen as "traditional Zuni designs" are part of a quest to raise awareness among a younger generation that is pulled back and forth between their parent's traditional culture and a world more and more open to what Raylan Edaakie calls Western "electronics." Simplicio says:

So just really respecting the clay. Those are all part of my teachings. I try to instill those in the children, let them know. Belong to the clays because it's really special. They have feelings too, because when you're making something, it's moving, you're bringing it to life. So, I think by having that understanding and that concept and having respect, I think that's why a lot of my pieces are unique. Other artists cannot relate to what I do. (My transcription)

This comment brings to light the artist's own perception of her art as unique and why it cannot be mass-produced or even reproduced. Her work is the result of the assimilation of complex Zuni concepts, such as paying respect to spirits and the clay and teaching century-old designs to perpetuate and keep knowledge within the tribe. As a teacher, her strategy is to transmit ancestral tribal skills to a new generation. Her use of repeating traditional colors is not just a marketing ploy or a way to brand "Zuni" on the ceramics: it is a way of teaching the younger generations to understand and preserve their traditions.

An important example can be found in one of her most recent and ambitious projects, an eight-foot by eight-foot wall-mounted mixed-media mosaic,

in which she outlines the JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE spiral leading to a whole sculpted clay village scene. This center indicates the Middle Place, as "[t]he journey ends here (my transcription)," and she plans to fill the spiral with a mosaic of pottery fragments. However, she cannot legally collect the pottery fragments around the reservation:

So, when I decided to use the spiral symbol, I said, 'how am I gonna decorate it.' And so, when you go visit places like dwelling, sometimes you'll find pot shards indicating that we people live there. [...] So, I decided to use that as a way to decorate the spiral. And then somebody said, 'well are you gonna pick the pot shards from a dwelling' and I was like 'no' because it's illegal so and I don't want to go to jail! (My transcription)

She decided to get the school children involved in the work. Once she got clearance from the Zuni School District, she proposed to the children to paint designs in Zuni colors:

[...] I took slabs of clay, natural clay, I just rolled it out on a rolling clay, a rolling machine through slabs of clay and gave every individual kid a piece of clay. [...] I wanted a specific size, but I knew I worked with 750 children. Even though you tell them, you give them directions, you know not everybody's gonna follow directions. So, we had the children cut them out, and I was there at the school for like three weeks, and oh my god! [...] But they did really, really well, and they loved it! And they cut them, they put like all the natural colors on, some of them were able to design them, but we ran out of time. It was only three weeks. (My transcription)

The children created about 750 pieces of black-and-red-on-white deer-in-his-house, birds-in-his-house, rosettes, and many other motifs and patterns, using natural colors made of mineral and organic pigments. Simplicio then assembled them on her "mural" and continued her work by asking other artists to paint an effigy of their clan to be placed around the spiral. In November 2019, she still had a few steps left, such as drawing pottery patterns on the right and left sides of the spiral before installing the artwork on a wall. The finished piece lets viewers trace



Figure 159: Noreen Simplicio, Middle Place, transmedia (ceramics, carving, painting, etc.), 2019 (courtesy of Noreen Simplicio)

the journey of the Zuni through all the designs drawn by children and other participating artists, making it one of the first intergenerational transmedia works created with natural, but "massively reproduced" colors and paints. The colors tell the story of the tribe, representing the community through one of its most

famous artforms, pottery, and the work shows how repeating colors throughout the ages allows direct recognition of an identity rooted in culture.

The wide-scale reproduction of colors does not pertain to ceramic works only. Zuni kachina painting also demands precision in the arrangement of the colors on the masks, body paint, and paraphernalia. As will be discussed in the following section, Elroy Natachu Jr. works hard to be as precise as possible and accurately portray the colors of the lost kachinas. To both him and fellow painter Keith Edaakie, the colors represent Zuni culture, as well as being a tool to teach the younger and current generations who are losing their Zuni roots. He explains that painting the colors of the kachina with exactness is part of "active cultural preservation:"

Yes, that's what, throughout the entire history of Zuni kachina artists have always been scrutinized. But it's actually the main sort of active cultural preservation because a lot of times, community members who don't know the stories or aren't active in the Kiva societies and things like that, they don't know what certain things are supposed to mean and things like that. And oftentimes due to the advent of Google and things like that they can just look for pictures and faces that they see on pictures. And sometimes pictures aren't fully accurate. So, they're not talking about these subjects within the family that have access to wealth or knowledge. This is one form or one way that they can [...] start that oral history tradition. (My transcription)

The role of colors on the canvases is to unveil the truth and counter the "advent of Google" with its potential for misinformation. Nowadays, any person can create a website on Zuni culture and spread generic half-truths, or worse, completely false ideas about the culture. The artist uses his canvases to tell a true Zuni story, in the hopes of reinstating oral tradition in the tribe and keeping the interest of the youth.

We have already seen how the Map Art project, whose purpose was introduced in section 2.2.4, also aimed at teaching the youth about the Zuni past. However, the canvases are currently stored in the A:shiwí A:wán Museum and Heritage Center, out of sight. The current director Curtis Quam is working to find financing in order to make copies that can be exhibited. He told me that there are currently two problems with the Map Art exhibit: the first is a security issue, with two watercolor paintings that cannot be moved as they are too fragile and could be damaged. The second is the size of many of the canvases, which are just not practical to put up on the walls of most people's homes! So, he opted for posters; three posters have been made, with about seven thousand copies printed which community members can obtain free of charge, as well as being put up at Zuni schools and places of interest, such as religious leaders' offices.

Quam and Natachu Jr. are also working on smaller-scale reproductions to facilitate access to the imposing and fragile canvases. Natachu Jr. commented on the feasibility of such an approach, as he sells his paintings to Zuni people and non-Native American tourists alike. In order to teach other members of the tribe, he often organizes events where he displays replicas of his works. He explains this as follows:

We do set up events and things like that. We sell print and duplicate versions, so those people come around, and I always ask their parents if they're initiated or not before I can go into full detail into what certain things mean and things like that. So, once I get the okay, they can come and visit anytime they want and learn certain stories, the meanings, and things like that. It is sort of my way of giving back to the community. (My transcription)

Just like the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center's store and their printed mug, Curtis and Elroy hope to sell copies of works in the form of posters and postcards to

"give back to the community." The works are duplicated and printed in mass at a low cost for the worthy cause of disseminating knowledge within the tribe.

The never-ending reproduction of colors within the tribe may sound like a mass-marketing strategy to quickly sell the same or nearly the same art object repeatedly with no creative process behind the reproduction. However, repeating color codes also define the identity of a culture, so how can one identify a Zuni work other than by this repetition in color and design? How can one teach traditional art to the new generation without the ancestral color code, without perpetually recycling the culturally-specific colors that belong to the tribe and are a part of its history? We have previously seen examples of artists like Jayce Nahohai, who offers a revolutionary approach to color tones, but still retains the use of traditional ingredients and natural paint, while other artists promote the history of their tribe by retaining the same color code that has been used for centuries. Though the archetypal color code can indeed be used as a marketing tool, this is not the ambition of many Zuni artists, who demonstrate that the colors rooted in Zuni history serve to educate and transmit cultural knowledge to the new generation.

3.1.3 Self-Censorship in Colors: Keeping Knowledge Within the Tribe

In addition to the preservation of cultural knowledge, there are other communicative uses of within the tribe, as a way to either include or exclude the outside world in their transmission of knowledge. Whether in full view or concealed, colors communicate specific symbolic messages to members of the tribe. The Western world's interest in the tribal esotericism has caused certain elements of sacred knowledge to leak out, which worries some of the more conservative Zuni. The precontact Zuni/Ancstral Pueblo people had no such qualms, but faced with the increasing invasiveness of Westerners who have been fascinated by their ceremonial practices (and have misrepresented them), the tribe began to invent ways to deceive and deflect researchers and other curious people who came too close to their ancestral tribal knowledge.⁹⁸ This is especially true for the sacred kachina masks and tribal clan relics with "latent power that may cause injury (Portago 152)," such as ceremonial fetishes⁹⁹ and prayer sticks. In her 1962 *Isleta Paintings*, Parsons explains:

Pueblo Indians are trained from earliest childhood to keep the major part of their life hidden from their White neighbors and visitors. It is an intelligent technique of self-protection against those who for various reasons would make changes in Indian culture. This motivation for secrecy, however, is more or less covert and unanalyzed, but it fits in with the characteristic and deep-rooted Indian attitude that religious knowledge and ritual, when divulged to the noninitiated, lose their potency. (15)

⁹⁸ One of the oldest examples of this is found in the care of ceremonial clothing, regalia, and equipment. The Zuni used to suspend their ceremonial jewels and paraphernalia from the ceiling, in plain sight, but post-contact, they are kept safe out of sight from intrusive foreigners.

⁹⁹ We have seen in section 2.2.3 that there is a changing use of colors in fetishes that distinguishes between the ceremonial and the commercial artform.

The curiosity of “White neighbors” has led the Zuni and their fellow Puebloan people to develop “intelligent technique[s]” in order to keep the powers of their sacred rituals intact. Color has become defensive weapons used to thwart the white man's invasive quest for knowledge that some Zuni perceive as an attack. In this section, we will look over some interesting examples, from the 1980s onward, of how color is used to conceal sacred knowledge that the Zuni wish to avoid being released to the world. The most impressive examples of color deception can be found in kachina studies. As per agreement with the Zuni council, I will not go into detail on the meanings of the kachina colors. This section will instead focus on colors use as decoys, and point out mistakes in published works without discussing the sacred symbolism associated with the kachinas' specific color combinations.

As seen in the previous section, artist Elroy Natachu Jr. is engaged in educating the new generation about tribal kachinas, and he also investigates forgotten kachinas that the Zuni cannot or do not summon anymore. This means that the younger generations have not witnessed these kachinas during ceremonies and that there is the possibility of them to becoming completely lost to Zuni knowledge. One of my Zuni contacts explained that they can no longer summon the Kolowisi, for example. Tedlock describes the Kolowisi kachina as follows: "In the oceans live the yellow, blue, red, and white *Kolowisi*, four giant feathered serpents who are capable of causing the world flood (Tedlock *Handbook* 499-508)." I was told that the religious leaders who knew the prayers to use with the sacred mask had passed away. When this happens before they are able to teach the prayers to another member, the mask is preciously conserved; however, without the proper chants, the kachina cannot participate in

the ceremonies, and the knowledge of it vanishes from generation to generation. Natachu Jr. hopes to remind Zuni people of the stories of lost kachinas. He does not rely on solely on written records and prefers the oral history transmitted by religious leaders to find guidance:

Because a lot of the time, what I do is, I pick kachinas that are predominantly either seldom known or they don't come around as often or ones that have become completely extinct, and from that, before I even start working on them, I get as much information from religious leaders, community members and other places like that to find out how they looked and different scenarios. (My transcription)

Barton Wright's world-famous 1985 book *Kachinas of the Zuni* featured traditional Zuni painter Duane Dishta's watercolor illustrations of kachinas pertaining to the different rituals, ceremonies and dances of the Zuni calendar. According to McLerran, Dishta was part of a new generation of painters that depicted kachinas in "fully rendered environments rather than suspended in an idealized and timeless space (Enote 15)." When I asked Natachu Jr. if he had based some of his research on this book, he answered as follows:

Yes, yeah, that [book] is generalized, and some of it is false information. Some of it is accurate, some of this isn't. A lot of the imagery is not fully accurate. A lot of it is based on his [Dishta's] sort of censorship. Because he knew that it would be sort of mass-produced, he didn't want to put in everything. Officially, since it's a very sensitive topic, he hid some things, and he removed some things. [...]. Only some things are hidden based on some religious items, the colorations might be changed, or the lineup of a certain type of pieces within them might be changed. (My transcription)

This book has been seen as one of the few reliable sources of information on kachinas for scholars, along with Bunzel, Stevenson, and Cushing's studies. However, Elroy admits that the painter purposefully led Barton Wright astray when he "hid some things" and changed the "coloration," all this unbeknownst to

the scholar who, as it would seem from his introduction, fully trusted in the accuracy of the depictions:

The importance of Dishta's paintings lies in the fact that they are the first new information on Katchinas in half a century. During this interval, major changes have occurred in most avenues of native art expressions so that the field of study is no longer that of the anthropologist but more rightfully belongs to the art historian. (4)



Figure 160: From left to right: Duane Dishta, *Shalako*, oil or acrylic on canvas, 1991 (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo); Duane Dishta, watercolor of *Shalako* for Barton Wright's book, 1985 (Wright 36); and Ruth Bunzel, *Ca'lako*, 1984 (*Katchina*, plate 27)

Wright imagined that his approach as an "art historian" was bound to be more welcome than that of an anthropologist since the image of tribe had been damaged by previous publications that portrayed them as primitive people, and therefore that an illustrated collection of kachina would be safer and more accurate than Cushing or Stevenson's type of study. The fact that the painter did not want to wholly divulge this "new information on Katchinas" makes it clear that Wright was at least partially mistaken. While his willingness to record the kachina was genuine, Dishta remained prudent; he was aware that this book would be successful, due to the eagerness of kachina doll collectors to understand more

about the artform, and he also knew that his willingness to divulge information to scholars could potentially anger religious leaders.

Dishta bases numerous paintings off of the century-old sketches of Ruth Bunzel, painting the kachinas in the exact same positions with just a few alterations to create miscommunication with the viewer. The painter switched around some details, such as kachina accessories, but his main technique was to alter the colors of the kachinas, in what Natachu Jr. calls an act of "self-censorship." The most telling example is his depiction of *Shalako*, the king of the winter solstice celebration of the same name. Dishta painted *Shalako* in a mirror image to Bunzel's illustration, as if to show that his version was indeed a distorted reality, a doppelganger, almost the same, but inverted like a reflection in the mirror.



Figure 161: From left to right: Alex Seowtewa, A'hute (Old Mission mural) (courtesy of Ken Seowtewa) and Duane Dishta, A'hute, watercolor, 1985 (Wright 79).

Another example can be found in the depictions of the *A'hute* kachina. Compared with Alex Seowtewa's previous rendering of the Old Mission mural, we can see that important colors were switched. For instance, on the mask with the two stars, the symbols of the *Ahayu:ta* twins, Dishta once again inverts the colors red and blue used by Seowtewa; he also replaces the kachina's fur collar with an evergreen one, whereas the evergreen is supposed to be wrapped around the arms and held in the kachina's hand. Dishta forgoes the black cloth that is wrapped around the waist of Seowtewa's kachina completely, replacing it with a yellow and red bib. The *Na'le* kachina, or deer kachina, receives similar treatment. The colors of the beads composing the necklace should have been coral/red in reference to the warm shades of the Milky Way, as on Natachu Jr.'s portrait. Dishta switched coral to a greenish-blue, probably to refer to the evergreen, which is symbolic for the Zuni but misplaced in this context. He also omitted the kachina's colorful *tablita*. These examples show how Dishta painted anomalies to conceal precious knowledge and preserve the tribe's heritage by keeping certain sacred images secret. Dishta portrayed the magic that former settlers wanted to see, all the while deceiving the eyes of the non-Indian American public by switching around and playing with the colors and shapes he laid on the paper. Through his illustrations, he decided what could be shown and what was to be hidden, and some sacred colors were clearly to be hidden.



Figure 162: Depictions of the Na'le katchina, from left to right; Bunzel in 1898 (*Katcina* 1042-3), Duane Dishta in 1985 (Wright, *Kachinas* 100) and Elroy Natachu Jr. in 2019 (my photo).

The book marked the end of Wright and Dishta's collaboration; Wright shifted away from Zuni kachina and published a book on Hopi kachina dolls (although still with the inclusion of a couple of Zuni examples) one year later. Then, in 1988, he co-edited the book *Patterns and Sources of Zuni Kachinas*, which is his last on the topic, in which the illustrations were no longer done by a painter, but are photos of mosaic and silverwork in effigies. He never mentioned Dishta again and eventually shifted his focus exclusively to the Hopi, as if to create distance from this topic, possibly to avoid being the target of criticism from some of the most conservative members of the tribe, who did not appreciate his work.

Other examples of color inversion can be found in beadwork. Beadwork is an ancestral practice of the Zuni, and the tradition has continued ever since. In *Zuni. A Village of Silversmiths*, Maria Rodee explains the tradition in a section entitled "Prehistoric Background:"

Many of the forms of jewelry did not change over the centuries; indeed, some pieces made and worn today are almost identical to those found in early sites scattered throughout the region. Fine disk beads, popularly called *heishi* from the Keresan word for shell beads, along with tab or rectangular pendants are still popular, although no longer made at Zuni. (53)

While heishi beadwork is still practiced in other pueblos, the first half of the twentieth century brought access to rocaïlle beads, facilitated especially with the establishment of C.G. Wallace's trading post, which replaced the more time-consuming process of creating lapidary beads, allowing the Zuni to quickly and easily create traditional beaded dolls that could be sold at a lower price. Before the 1950s when she turned to pottery, Josephine Nahohai's income relied on silversmithing and beadwork, as well as livestock farming (see Chappel, "Josephine and Nat Nahohai" n.pag.). According to Chappel:

Milford's help with Josephine's pottery enabled her to spend more time making beaded dolls, which were easy to sell and often involved the family, with Nat carving the wooden parts and Milford painting the miniature clay bowls or jars she shaped to balance on the heads of the dolls. Milford once mused that Zuni artisans sometimes reverse their careers as they age, beginning with beadwork before turning to pottery or silversmithing, then returning to beadwork as their eyes weaken and fingers stiffen. Josephine took no less pride in her work, however, casting some of her dolls as six- to eight-inch Olla Maidens and carefully beading their bodies and clothing. ("Milford Nahohai Returns," n.pag.)

Like Josephine Nahohai, many Zuni women turned to producing beadwork that was "easy to sell," representing the ceremonial figures popular with Western customers. However, beaded figures did not always wear clothes that corresponded to the established color codes, as the Zuni again changed the traditional color schemes in order to keep their traditional knowledge to themselves.

I sketched several beadworks on display at the Hearst Museum, as seen in figure 163. The figure on the left is a representation of an Olla maiden, carrying a Zuni polychrome vessel on her head. The figure on the right is of a drummer made of wood and leather, with elaborate beadwork on the head, face, and

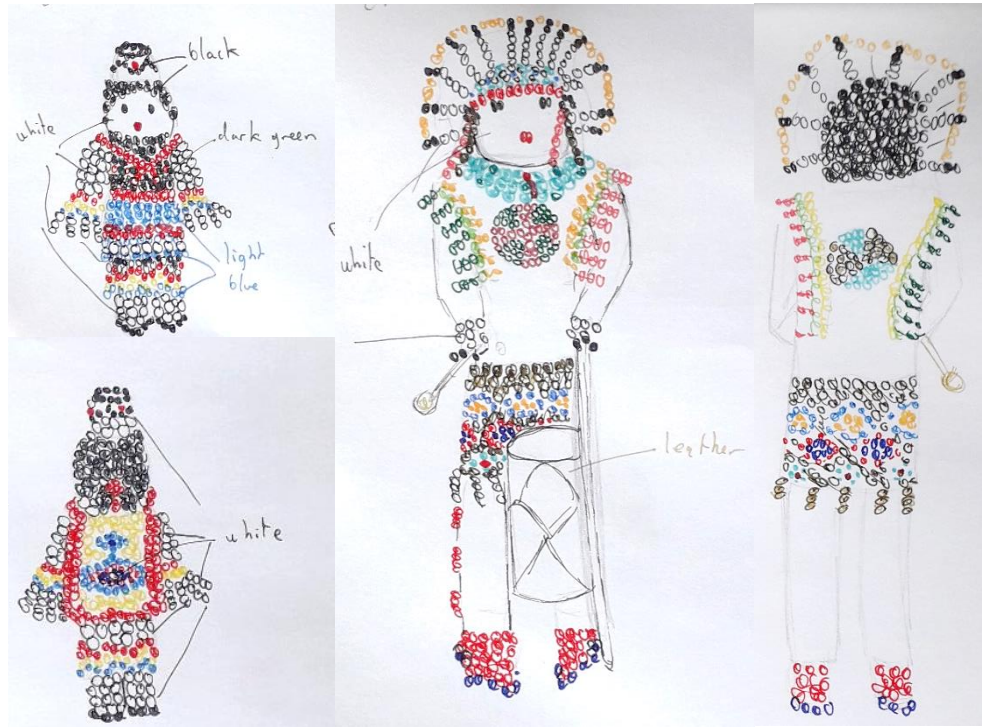


Figure 163: Sketches of the Phoebe Hearst collection of beaded dolls

headdress. The drum is made of a dowel covered with leather with a holding rod, and a drum stick is held in the doll's right hand. The colors used for both the beaded drummer and the Olla maiden do not match actual ceremonial dresses. Some archetypal colors are respected, such as the black-and-red-on-white jar on the Olla maiden's head, her black manta and the blue kilt. The drummer wears variegated black, white and yellow eagle feathers on his headdress and a blue turquoise necklace. On both dolls, the artist created Cloud House diamond patterns, with many colors, like on the traditional miha. However, the Olla Maiden doll displays reversed miha colors. Instead of a white miha with green and black Cloud House embroideries at the bottom, the beaded doll's miha is primarily green on the torso—represented in black in my sketch—and white on the sleeves. The artist thus used traditional coloring, but in the wrong places. Similarly, the artist switched the colors of the drummer's four directions design,

represented by a circular pattern on his chest and back; the four *a'witen* colors have been replaced by green and red on the front and sky-blue and black on the back so that the directions of the colors do not even match. Thus, the strict color codes of both ceremonial dresses appears to have been intentionally altered. Of course, these color differences could be related to the availability of rocaille bead colors. However, the range of colors on the dolls includes all the Western primary and secondary colors with the exception of purple, which is usually not present in traditional clothing.¹⁰⁰ These dolls were to be sold to non-Natives, so the Zuni purposefully displayed what still appear to be traditional colors while hiding the sacred ones. A relatively similar pattern of self-censorship can be detected in the Map Art project. Enote planned to have the Map Art exhibit travel around to different museums and even published a catalog with McLerran. The intention to create art for the tribe yet exhibit it to the world produced a complicated ambiguity. Curtis Quam, who took over responsibility for the stored artwork after Enote, explained his difficulties in showing the pieces. When he planned to move the artwork for an exhibit, his first difficulty was that he had to keep tabs on who would visit the exhibition to avoid sensitive topics being spread outside the tribe. As we have seen in section 2.2.4, the ZCRAT (Zuni Cultural Research Advisory Team) that gave the green light for the artists to create their works. According to Quam, they did an excellent job of coaching the artists and ensuring that the canvases did not depict any too-sensitive subjects. Enote explains, "At the front of these

¹⁰⁰ This artform almost vanished completely with the renaissance of Zuni pottery, as customers preferred the products made of "authentic" (meaning mineral or organic) products and the plastic quality of rocaille beads is seen as less attractive.

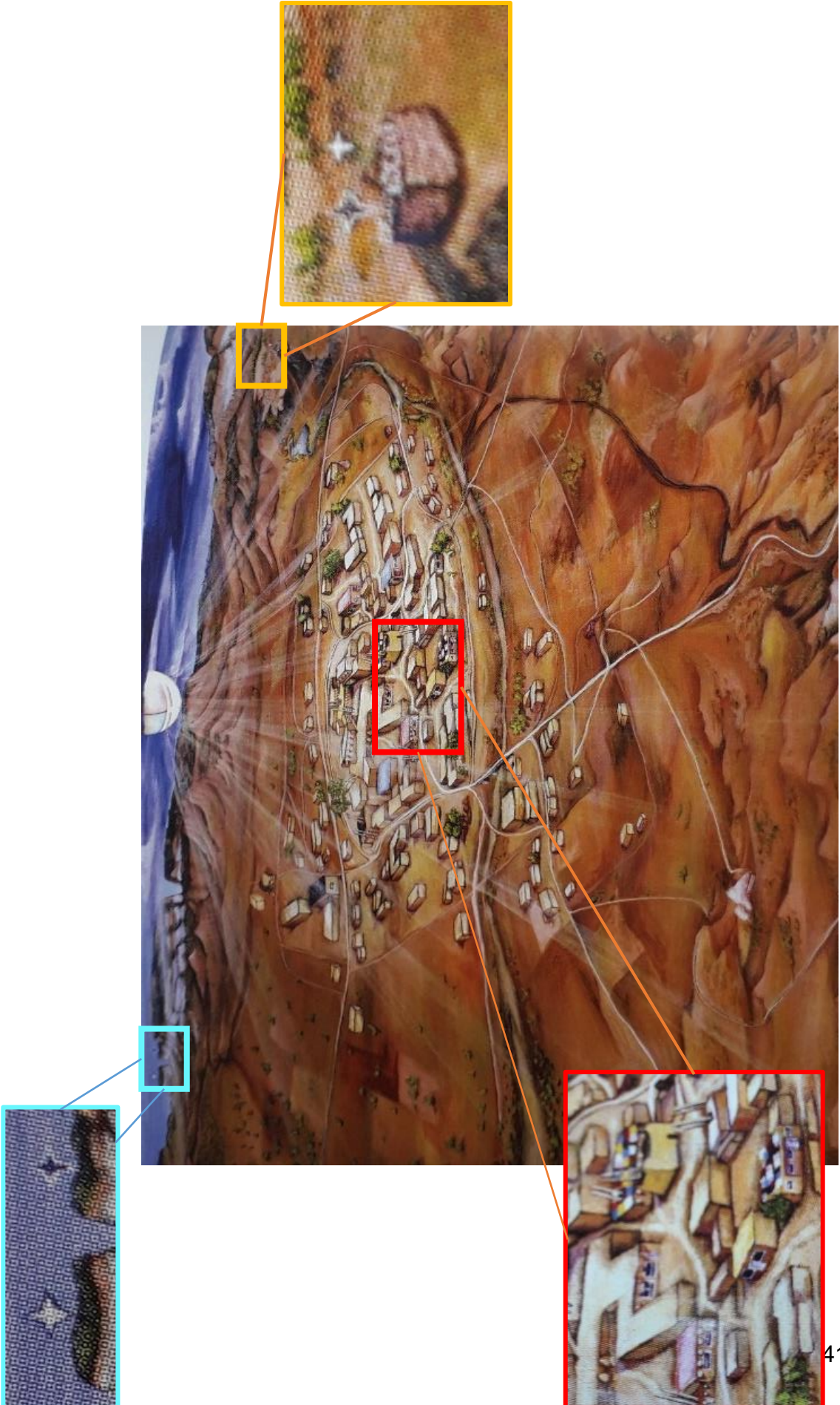


Figure 164: Geddy Epaloose, Halona: Idiwana'a (The Middle Place), acrylic on canvas, 2006 (Enote 28) 33.5x43.5 in

discussions was what not to map. Zuni religious knowledge, including some place name knowledge, is not open or accessible to everyone, even at Zuni (Enote 5).” Thus, the artists avoided some places and were very careful with how they depicted others. This explains why the colors on the canvases are rarely symbolic, except to refer to the six directions; artists simply omitted the sacred colors, or reduced them to discreet touches. For example, in Geddy Epaloose’s painting portraying the Middle Place, the Sunface, radiating life-giving daylight over the village, shows the only prominently symbolic colors in the work. However, a closer look at certain details of the painting divulges other practically invisible touches of color. There are little dark blue and white stars, most probably symbolizing the morning (white) and evening (blue) stars, the *Ahayu:ta* twins, or the (black and white) Milky Way. Furthermore, he painted some rooves of the village with the sacred colors, such as multicolor, black, blue, and red, to indicate ceremonial places; the sacred six *a’witen/’itiwan* colors shape the spatial relationships of buildings, sacred spaces, and landscape alignments. The symbolic colors on Epaloose’s painting are barely there or need to be viewed through a magnifying glass; these colors are indications for tribe members only, who know where to look. This could make us stop to consider whether the original designs and colors of the t-shirts and other merchandise sold by the Zuni could also contain deceptive color messages. For example, in the case of Elroy Natachu Jr.’s gold and black t-shirt (see section 2.1.4), the uninformed buyer might not understand the significance of replacing the black-and-green-on-white archetypal colors of traditional embroidery with this gold pattern. However, tribe members wouldn’t even need the actual colors on the shirt to understand the reference to color associations that still prevail. This is also shown in Keith

Edaakie's "native strong" shirt, which presents the traditionally yellow, blue and red raincloud symbol in a colorless version, and is sold to tribal clan members and tourists alike. In this sober design in which black and white replace all the colors of the sky, the once colorless petroglyph, which acquired sacred colored

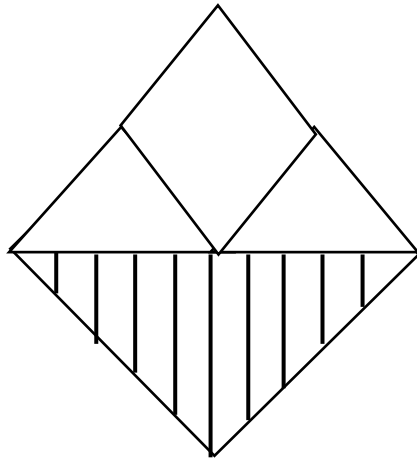


Figure 165: Edaakie ART brand's raincloud symbol, 2021 series. The blue, red and yellow colors are absent.

through the art of jewelry making, is again deprived of its color, and therefore of its sacredness (as will be shown in detail in section 3.2.3). There is a striking difference in comparing the altered colors in the work of Edaakie and Natachu Jr. to those in the digital artwork of Jaycee Nahohai, who uses traditional sacred colors on some items to cater to the tribal clan

members who make up his client base. Nahohai's sales on Facebook are aimed at initiated members of the tribe, while Edaakie and Natachu's are primarily aimed at tourists and customers of the ARTZ coop. This justifies why they play with colors to still sell genuine Native American art while only sharing what they want to share concerning the sacred knowledge of the tribe.

The Zuni have erected a substantial barrier to keep tribal knowledge within the tribe, but at the same time, artists are forced to yield to financial pressure, and often have to exhibit and export their art worldwide in order to be recognized. Though flattered by the interest the world has for their art (and their unique approach to colors), the Zuni's reluctance to relinquish their privacy and their mistrust of clients are clear in their practice of masking colors to hide tribal knowledge, while still showing off the traditional and contemporary use of tribal color with both commercial and cultural objectives. The Zuni miscommunicate

within the language of colors as a form of self-censorship, implying that there is another private channel of color communication that is accessible only to initiated tribal clan members. However, disguising tribal knowledge from the eyes of the West is not the only motivation for such prudence, and the next section will study the tribal plagiarism that has significantly impacted the Zuni, especially in relation to their age-old rival, the Navajo.

3.1.4 Zuni vs. Navajo: Colors Against Plagiarism.

In addition to the white man's fascination with esoteric Zuni art that causes the tribe to practice a certain caution in the display of color symbolism, these attractive traditional colors inspire many counterfeit works all over the world. Entrepreneurs from neighboring tribes have implemented impressive systems for mass-producing articles that exploit the "authentic" or "made by Indians" marketing strategy. One of the most active tribes in this endeavor is the Navajo, which has always been a pioneer in the Native American art market. The Navajo have a particular advantage over the Zuni because of their population density, their presence throughout the United States, and their openness to the world; they traded with the settlers extremely early and quickly understood the interest of target-oriented art markets. As a consequence, the Zuni have been forced to navigate between hiding colors and signaling them to the world.

Before discussing colors, it is necessary to understand the source of the conflict between the Zuni and the Navajo, and why the Zuni feel so strongly against the Navajo's interference in their art and ceremonies. To better understand the Zuni point of view, we will start with the story of Hudson, a Navajo who lived and worked at Zuni in the second half of the 20th century. Among the Ancestral Pueblo petroglyphs at the site of the village of the Great Kivas (late Pueblo III period, A.D. 1150–1300) there is a colorful alcove whose walls are illustrated with more recent-looking pictographs of Zuni kachinas. Tour guide and former archeologist Shaun Latone tells how Hudson was presumed to be the hand behind these drawings:

One of the shepherders that were here, he's a Navajo descendant. He does probably go to the village Zuni, to get probably fed and



Figure 166: Pictographs identified as "Hudson's," 1950 (my photos)

probably sees a dance out there. Now, he comes out here to overlook the sheep and has time, he starts drawing kachinas up here, getting the pigments from within these canyons, we've got the window outcrops of pigments, he's making his own paint. [...] Yeah, he gets all the colors. He comes here and starts drawing. He probably saw a dance over the village. It's the 1950s, but anything over 50 years old, we now consider, you know, a historical artifact. Historic Site. [...] So, and then the year he was born, 1935. These were made in 1950, so he was like 15 years old. He did all that, but due to him being not part of Zuni descendants, *he was taught a lesson*. He was drawing these murals on this side. He probably takes a step back to look at his drawings. He actually falls down. Right there on the top, he falls down and lands over here. Breaking his spine and his back. He was in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. And I think he died like five years ago. So, he ended up in a wheelchair forever. So, it's more or less a story that has a moral, you know, being taught a lesson because it wasn't his own gods. [...] *Just like Cushing, how he died before, he was just sitting here, and then he died.* [...]. Okay. So that's such a story because he was Navajo, who used to be our enemies. Yeah, and lots of copycats. They don't even have kachina. The only kachina they have are some winter god there. [...] Those come out during the winter times. So that's the only kachina they have. When you go into a jewelry store, they have all kinds of scary figurines just standing there saying, Oh, it's a kachina! (My transcription, my emphasis in italics)

The Navajo artist, identified as Hudson, committed a forbidden act in reproducing the kachinas he had seen at Shalako. Moreover, he had no degree of Zuni blood and no right to use sacred paint, yet he used the Zuni pigments of the region and mimicked the Zuni colored designs painted on the sacred masks and skins of the anthropomorphic gods. The artist therefore broke two taboos: the outside illustration of kachina and the misuse of traditional Zuni colors. The Zuni see his accident and misfortune as a punishment from the spirits for usurping. The Cushing reference in Latone's story further confirms this pattern. Frank Hamilton Cushing died in his 40s, not long after he published a picture of himself wearing a mudhead mask he had painted. This is seen as karmic retribution for his faux-pas, since taking photos of the masks is absolutely forbidden (See Hugthe

Another Side of the Story, n.pag.). The moral of the story is clearly that Zuni sacred paint and the portrayal of kachinas are reserved for the tribe's initiated members. However, some members of the Zuni council live from kachina carving, and such artists are also disapproved of by other tribal members, who adhere more strictly to the idea that kachina are sacred and must be kept hidden from the West. This disapproval indicates the conflict within the tribe and shows the growing discrepancy between conservative and liberal Zuni ideology.

This is a tense topic within the tribal council. Tom Kennedy, the British director of the Zuni Visitor Center, and former director of the A:shiwí A:wán Museum and Heritage Center, relates that there is still conflict within the tribe, since some Zuni do not want to expose their sacred colors and the most conservative members of the council want to keep any representation of kachina behind closed doors. Kennedy also has another story that adds to this argument: once, a representative of Hansen's Natural Corporation went to Zuni to bargain with the tribe. They wanted to create a Native American series of drinks, including one with Zuni flavor and visuals (Hansen's had selected the anachronistic flavor "High desert melon"). Since they did not want the label to show a Zuni kachina, the Zuni offered a Hopi kachina instead. They coupled the kachina design with the Zuni Great Seal on top of the cap, creating what Kennedy called an "authentically fake drink." As discussed in section 3.1.3, the Zuni created an illusion of authenticity with by swapping out colors and designs, continuing to subtly communicate that for Hudson, Hansen's, or any other non-Zuni, the true Zuni kachinas are off limits.

We can also notice how in Shaun Latone's story, he says the Navajo "used to be [the Zuni's] enemies." Though Latone uses the phrase light-heartedly, this still shows some sense of resentment for the Zuni's former rivals, the Navajo Nation. During his analysis of the frescoes, Latone also referred to the countless tribal wars that happened in the past and talked about how the government enforced peace between Native American tribes. He says of the Apache, "A long time ago, we used to be enemies, but somewhere along the way, the government came into play. We have to be friends. Somewhere probably, we inherited their dance (personal interview)." The Apache and the Navajo nations were known enemies of the Zuni. Southwestern Indian tribes had been engaged in cycles of trading and fighting with one another, and with the colonists, for centuries before the United States took control of the region in the 19th century. The Zuni fought as allies of the U.S. government against the Apache and the Navajo until they made peace in 1868 (Ferguson 89).

The Zuni/Navajo tension is also evoked in Zuni oral history, such as in the story of "The Navajo and She-She's wife," in which She-She's wife found out that her husband met with the Navajo. She-She gave the blue *piki* bread that his wife made for him to the Navajo. So, the wife decided to stop making blue *piki* bread, and made red cornmeal instead, which reminded her of the Navajo buff-colored flag. Her husband, unhappy that his wife had found out, denounced her to the Navajo.



Figure 167: Hansen's "Zuni Medicine Man, High Desert Melon" (courtesy of Tom Kennedy, my photo)

Four days later, the Navajo kidnapped her and she never came back, causing her family to shun She-She out of anger. She-She's wife's sister and brother decided to never speak to She-She again, as retribution for his betrayal. The story ends with the following line: "There was a time for hatred and revenge for any and all crimes (Quam 43-8)." In this story, the Navajo's readiness to kidnap She-She's wife evokes their countless raids on Zuni village, wherein they kidnapped Zuni women and looted the tribe. In the same collection of legends, "Zunis and the Navajos" recounts the Zuni rebellion against the Navajos when they used to camp close to Zuni and raid the village regularly. The story tells how the Zuni cornered the Navajos, setting traps in the gulches. Once they could not get out, the Zuni killed them. The story ends with the mention of the Navajo scalps used in an initiation ceremony (Quam 191-2).

Though the raids and wars may be over, centuries of conflicts are not so easily forgotten. The tensions that still exist today are manifested in episodes such as the one involving the Indian Pueblo Store (see section 3.1.2). The store's name before spring 2020 was *Shumakolowa*, which means "dragonfly" in the *Shiwi* language. The dragonfly is a sacred creature for many Native American tribes in the Southwest and an iconic symbol of the Zuni, for whom the appearance of a *Shumakolowa* is often the harbinger of rain or blessings. The Zuni were irked because the shop assistants were Navajos; the Navajo sold the Zuni art the store and were in charge explaining it as if it were theirs. Some Pueblo people see presence of Navajos as central figures in the IPCC store as a betrayal, and it can be confusing for customers who might not easily distinguish between different Native American communities. Since *Shumakolowa* is a Zuni name, the Zuni abhorred the fact that they were represented by Navajo shopkeepers. Since

then, the name was changed to the Indian Pueblo Store, to make it less specifically Zuni.

Nevertheless, the main reason behind the current Zuni intolerance of the Navajo is that the Navajo are their top competitors, reselling inaccurate copies of traditional Zuni art, which they label as "Indian-made" or "authentic Indian," and Zuni artists greatly suffer from this cross-tribal plagiarism. Bsumek studied the impact of consumerism on Navajo arts and crafts between 1868 and 1940, as they were the first Native American nation whose crafts—and culture— were sold to the world at large. According to Bsumek, the Navajo were both victims and willing participants, trapped in the image fabricated by the settlers and using this same image to produce and sell more. This love-hate co-dependence between the Navajos and the non-Native consumer market is at the origins of the "vanishing Indian" myth that projected a skewed image of Native American art, crafts, and culture to the world.

Nevertheless, the Navajo kept on being productive, and their highly-developed skills and ability to read the market allow them to notice and react to trends quickly, as can be seen in the current boom of Navajo fetishes and, the ultimate sacrilege in the eyes of the Zuni, "Navajo-made" kachina dolls. Jeff Shetima states that the Navajo kachina dolls do not respect Zuni (or Hopi) paraphernalia and body paint. Navajo carvers create trans-tribal versions of gods that are neither Hopi, Zuni, nor any other tribe's:

With Navajo kachina, it's almost made up, you know, their, the way they dress their kachina dolls aren't necessarily the way they should be dressed, or the way they make their faces or, you know, paint their faces. It's not; it's not correct. It's just, yeah, it's just made up. Their kachinas are made up. It's just it's not... It's like, you can't look at it and not think like, 'What is this' You know? (My transcription)



Figure 168: From left to right: Unknown artist., Hopi Hemis Kachina, ca. early 1900s (Portago, plate 9), Unknown artist, Navajo Hemis kachina, 2021 (courtesy of Patty from Kachinahouse)

Wright explains that it is the colors painted on the bodies and masks that embody the symbolism of Zuni and Hopi kachinas (see Portago 158). The Navajo disrespect the colors and thus disturb the symbolic meaning. However, if we take a step back from the sacred and focus on just the artwork alone, we can see that the Navajo borrow from the symbolism of other tribes to create one of the most fascinating examples of trans-tribal artforms, full of surprising designs and colors, and most websites that sell these Navajo dolls portray them as a creative source of income for the Navajo people.



Figure 169: Two Rainbow kachinas (courtesy of Patty Topel from Kachina House)

Navajo dolls are made of different common varieties of hardwood, contrary to the cottonwood tree root used for Hopi and Zuni kachina dolls. Furthermore, the dolls are for the most part machine-made, so the Navajo can produce them quickly and in larger quantities. The colored symbols painted on the dolls' faces range from rainclouds to flowers, or other nature-related designs. For instance, figures 168 and 169 show three Navajo kachinas, courtesy of Patty Topel from Kachina House, a shop selling authentic Native American art such as jewelry, fetishes, and other objects. To the right is *Hemis*, a kachina which was originally Hopi but has traveled around to many tribes; he is known as *Hemish* to the Laguna and *Hemushikwe* (see figure 170) to the Zuni (see Portago 110). The Hopi usually paint his body black with corn smut and add light-colored half-moons on the chest, and dress him in an elaborately-embroidered Hopi-style kilt. For the Zuni, the symbolic designs on Hemushikwe's masks are of the sky: clouds or rain



Figure 170: Zuni Hemushikwe (Wright Kachina of the Zuni, 91)

clouds, the Milky Way, birds, half-moons, feathers, and rainbows may appear. The body is usually decorated with earth-related symbols and black or earth-toned body paint made with corn stalks and husks, as it is for the Hopi. According to Wright, the black/earth tones are essential, as they represent the darkened earth after the rain (90). In the Navajo version, the *tablita* is of the sky, but the body's color

symbolism is altered. The body and kilt are royal blue, with little to no reference to the Pueblo's earth-related symbolism except for what appears to be weaving patterns that represent mountains.

Another popular Navajo kachina is the rainbow kachina. On the Kachina House's website, the description reads: "This extremely colorful Kachina represents the desire for peace and harmony between tribes (Topel n.pag.)." There is no trace of such a kachina in Zuni or Hopi records. The famous Rainbow Man is a spiritual being, like the Sun, who does not belong in the world of the kachina, indicating that this doll is one of the "made-up" kachina Jeff Shetima mentions. The very description of the doll indicates that this is the kachina invented by the Navajo to regroup the symbols and colors of every tribe. Two versions are represented in figure 169. The Navajo borrowed from Hopi symbolism for the cloud skyband symbol, illustrated by three colored half circle-shaped clouds. They also borrowed the thunder/raincloud symbols on the *tablita* from the Zuni. The Navajo adorned the *tablita* with the rainbow and oddly placed

Milky Way designs, which evoke the yellow and blue “yin yang” friendship design discussed in section 1.3.1, and colorful bright red, yellow, green, and purple feathers. This eye-catching kachina is quite popular, and competition is stiff; both Navajo and Zuni paint and decorate the dolls by hand, but the wooden part of Navajo dolls is machine-made, while the Zuni ones are hand-carved from cottonwood root, and the machine-made Navajo kachina can be sold for up to ten times less than a hand-carved Zuni one.

Another plagiarized Zuni artform is fetish carving. Jeff Shetima, who makes his own living from fetish carving, explains how it is difficult to share his savoir-faire. Some tribe members might veto the transmission of knowledge since it comes with the risk of tribal techniques being stolen. He jokingly states that:

[...] Yeah, I mean right now yeah, you know, I think with any type of market you know, when there is money to be made, people, other people, will jump at it to get into the market, even though it's not their culture, not their tradition. You know that now, Navajos are making a fetish carving, which they're not really known for. So, I hate to say, but yeah, they're copycatters. Nah! (My transcription)

Fetish carving is one of the only artforms that was originally exclusively Zuni. Weaving was Navajo and Hopi principally, pottery was handed down by the Ancestral Pueblo people to all Southwestern tribes, commercialized sand-painting was Navajo, and kachina doll carving was Hopi. Zuni fetishes were the pride of the tribe and linked to their identity as artists. Nevertheless, fetishes sporting colorful feathers that no longer look anything like even the commercialized Zuni versions are now on sale in all the Indian markets of Arizona and New Mexico. What is striking is their size, easily three to four times that of Zuni fetishes, and the lack of color: less-expensive Navajo fetishes can be recognized by their basically colorless shape, contrasting with the ever more

imposing feather offerings placed on their backs. This difference becomes even more marked as Zuni fetishes themselves become increasingly colorful. A Navajo artist created the prototype of the fetish figured below, which was then produced in large quantities and displayed at Native American art markets in 2019. The fetishes are molded from a grayish concrete that would make any Zuni carver cringe, and don't feature any inlay work, which is the specialty of Zuni carvers. Tom Kennedy commented on the phenomenon:

Recently, the Navajo has taken up fetish carving as a lucrative way to push Indians' authenticity. The Zuni are facing many counterfeits and a growing rivalry in the art market. Navajo fetishes are extravagant, which easily attracts customers, and do not follow the Zuni way. (My transcription)

Let us compare this "extravagant," "lucrative," "counterfeit" product, represented in the sketch in figure 171, with a trendy Zuni bear fetish. The Navajo carving style is curvier around the nose and bottom, and no inlay work is seen. The Zuni style tends to include three approaches to the animal's face, either blocky or cubist, or cartoon-like, or a more realistic rendering. On the Navajo version, what is striking is that the stone itself is not colorful; instead, the Navajo adorn the dully-colored object with brightly-colored offerings, such as turquoise and yellow



Figure 171: Composite sketch of currently commercialized Navajo bear fetishes (my sketch) molded in grayish concrete, then decorated with colored feathers. The colors are in the offerings, tied to its back.

feathers and brightly-colored turquoise stones. In addition, the offering band is not really tied around the fetishes belly but is glued down over its back, stopping at its feet. This gives the impression of a Zuni offering band, without using a thin thread that might risk breaking.

As we have seen in chapter 2, the unexpected competition has pushed Zuni carvers to the limits of ingenuity to offer a variety in their work that will attract customers. Using high-quality material and original colors rather than the cheaper Navajo stones is definitely one way to stand out. Zuni artists also take the time to walk the customers through the art of fetish carving, the meaning of the colors, and how they chose the stone, to raise the purchaser's awareness of the spiritual process of carving (see section 2.2.3.) They must constantly find a balance between displaying their brightly colored work in order to sell pieces and hiding key aspects of their art in order to preserve them within the tribe. For instance, in the figure 172, artist Jayne Quam uses an innovative technique called "secret inlay."¹⁰¹ The carver has inset a myriad of vivid and colorful elements in the haunches of the stone rabbit, arranging them in enigmatic patterns. She carefully chose an onyx in a warm and subtle tone that is ideal for evoking the rabbit's fur



Figure 172: Jayne Quam, Kaleidoscopic Rabbit, variegated onyx, 2021 (courtesy of Keshi, the Zuni Connection)

¹⁰¹ KESHI Facebook post, 2021.

and complements the vivid colors she used as embellishments. A sacred JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE design is included within the colorful *mélange*. Quam will not say how she executes this distinctive technique that gives the fetish its kaleidoscopic quality. Her secrecy imparts a sense of mystery which further adds to the fetish's attractiveness and also allows the artist to keep this style unique, protecting herself from plagiarism.

Kachina doll and fetish carvers are not the only ones suffering from plagiarism; Zuni jewelry styles are also imitated. Traders who work with Zuni artists create documentation to inform the customers, like the digitized poster in figure 173 created by Keshi to help customers tell Zuni workmanship from fakes. They go into details on what is Zuni and what is not, such as the Zuni's omission of kachina figures in commercial jewelry designs, and the fact that "Many fakes are sold [...] by tribes not known for carving fetishes," without, however, specifically mentioning the Navajo. While there is not much information about the use of colors—such as "copycatters" using similar-looking materials and colored styles—they do give information on some of the materials commonly used, warning against the presence of "plastic or stabilized turquoise beads" and "machine made pen shell beads." Zuni handmade turquoise beads and Kewa-imported *heishi* beads are slightly irregular, contrary to machine-made and plastic ones. Navajo plagiarism has a significant impact on the tribe's already fragile economy, which brings us to another of Keshi's tips on how a customer can recognize a Zuni from a Navajo artifact: by the price. There is a significant price gap between mass-produced Navajo work that is "machine-made" and therefore less expensive, and the higher-quality Zuni work, which may not enter into the average

Look for:



- Name of the Zuni carver, attributable to a Zuni family known for carving fetish necklaces
- Heishe (fine shell beads separating the fetishes) hand made, usually from Kewa Pueblo
- Where you buy them: seller's expertise in Zuni work is paramount, not just a high price and good presentation
- Many fakes are sold at museums, galleries, pow wows, and by tribes not known for carving fetishes.
- Zuni fetish necklaces rarely consist of more than three strands and matching earrings are rare.
- Expect that the price will be \$300.00 or more per strand.

Avoid:



- No heishe between fetishes, called a "stacked necklace" probably not Zuni.
- “Wrapped” string around the necklace: generally not Zuni
- A necklace with a wingspread eagle centerpiece is probably a fake.
- Armadillos or katsina-like figures usually indicate it is not authentic.

THE Keshi Foundation

Figure 173: Keshi. *The Zuni Connection. Document on Zuni vs. Others' Pieces of Jewelry* (courtesy of Keshi)

consumer's budget. Zuni kachina dolls, fetishes and jewelry are far more expensive, as the price reflects the quality of the materials and the time spent hand-crafting the item. High-quality colored stones solid enough to carve from can be expensive and hard to find, and Zuni kachina dolls have articulated limbs, which shows the attention to detail and savoir-faire that is also their selling point.

However, this concept of plagiarism can be debated, since Native American tribes have always exchanged their arts. Hopi and Zuni motifs have always been interconnected in pottery, with each tribe being inspired and inspiring the other. This has been shown in many examples, such as Hopi-Tewa Nampeyo's revival of the Sikyátki motifs, still popular at Zuni today (see section 3.1.2). In weaving, Navajo blankets have traveled throughout the southwest and have been very successful among their neighbors. The Navajo traded their dyes and high-quality pigments with the Zuni in the 1900s, allowing them to have better colors to work with. The same could be said of the kachina; we have already seen the case of the eagle kachina, and the *Hemis* kachina, which the Zuni borrowed and appropriated from Hopi. Finally, one of the critical examples is in the art of silvermithing, also influenced by the Navajo. The Zuni drew heavily on Navajo cluster and squash blossom designs in coral and turquoise to create their more elaborate petit point, needle point, and snake-eye designs. Additionally, trade with the West has given rise to what have become "Zuni" items; for instance, the blankets the Zuni traditionally wore around their shoulders originated from Pendleton Woolen Mills company, established by British weaver Thomas Kay upon his arrival in Oregon in 1863. After Kay traded his colorful blankets with Native American people, the Pendleton style began to be seen as Native American, although it is in fact a British enterprise.

This new opening to the world comes with advantages and disadvantages. The Zuni have access to everything, but their art is also accessible to everyone, and becoming an artisan provides few financial guarantees. The cash economy puts extra pressure on the artists; they can no longer simply be creative for the sake of art but must also be businesspersons and use the market to their advantage. To make a living from their art, the Zuni have learned to play on colorful, creative techniques to distinguish themselves from the competition. They also constantly perform a balancing act between transmitting their colors and techniques in order to raise awareness and hiding secrets and sacred color symbolism from the outside gaze. Artists even create “secret” styles to thwart the competition and keep their techniques safe. The colors openly used in Zuni art communicate Zuni authenticity to the world in the face of heavy competition. The following sections will show how Zuni artists use colors to defend not only to their tribal secrets and their commercial interests but their individual psyches, collective tribal integrity, and complex identities as people of the Zuni tribe against a sometime hostile world.

3.2 Zuni Colors as Weapons and Shields: With and Against the Western World

3.2.1 Finding the Middle Place: Colors in Cathartic Expressions of Self and Society

For the Zuni, art is *co'ya*, meaning beautiful/multicolor; in other words, art *is* color. From the archetypal black-and-red-on-white as well as the more experimental pigment recipes used in ceramics (such as we saw in Jaycee Nahohai's work in section 2.2.1), to sculpted colored stones or the smooth textures of acrylic and oil painting, colors *create* Zuni art; they are the material without which it does not take shape. Since Zuni artists are fully immersed in colors, it is important to consider the therapeutic value of manipulating color and how artistic creation can serve as a form of catharsis for the artists. We have seen how colors play a fundamental role in Zuni artistic and ceremonial life and how *a'witen'itiwan* colors are used in healing ceremonies, for example. In daily life as well, artists are able to refocus on themselves and work through emotions and conflicts of identity using the application of color in artwork.

The existing field of art therapy can serve as an interesting basis of comparison for this process; however, the Zuni worldview, which naturally defines their aesthetics and their psychology, creates certain important distinctions between the Western and Zuni approaches to art as therapy, especially as regards the importance of color. Whether Zuni artists adhere to traditional uses of media and *a'witen'itiwan* symbolism or assimilate Western tools and techniques, their culturally-specific perception of color has a unique impact on how they relate to it therapeutically during the artistic process. We will therefore outline a few Western applications in the field of art therapy, and explore how similar principles are applied within the tribe, formally or informally, and in ways uniquely suited to the Zuni's own worldview and cultural experience.

The fundamental principle behind the concept of art therapy is that artistic practices can improve one's mental and even physical health. In her 2001 *Healing Arts: The History of Art Therapy*, Susan Hogan defines art therapies as a way to "encourage the client to explore their feelings using art materials, usually paper and paint but also in collage clay and sculpture (22)." She explains that contrary to psychologists, art therapists "may not feel that a verbal analysis is necessary and may lay greater emphasis on the actual production of artwork (including cognizant gestures made and the client's reaction to the art work) (21)."

Western studies even mention the specificities of art therapy for Native American people. Already in their 1998 article "Art Therapy and Native Americans: Blending Culture, Creativity, and Healing," art therapist Phoebe Farris-Dufrene and psychiatrist Michel Garrett recommended that Native American psychological therapy consider Native American art as a cathartic healing experience, as "Native Americans regard art as an element of life, not as a separate aesthetic ideal. In native societies, the arts are aspects of public life which brings together dance, poetry, plastic and graphic arts into a single function: ritual that is the all-embracing expression (243-247)." However, Western art therapy can tend to overlook an aspect of the artistic process that is essential to the Zuni: in art, colors matter as much as forms, if not more. In her 2004 article "The Use of Color in Art Therapy," mental health counselor Rebecca L. Withrow notes that "most of the focus in art therapy is on the creation of an image or a representation of reality. Ostensibly missing from the discussion are the therapeutic benefits of nonrepresentational visual art (33)." This is especially true for the Zuni, considering how significant certain colors and color materials are to them in terms of spirituality and cultural identity, and also their traditional

associations with both spiritual and physical healing, as we have already discussed in the context of the Zuni medicine society ceremonies, in which the *a`witen/`itiwan* colors play a central role.

Within this unique cultural context, Zuni artists' constant application of colors in the process of creating art is an even more powerful way for them to engage in what Hogan calls the "explor[ation of] their feelings." Furthermore, even Zuni children have more than just a basic involvement in working with colors since they are the children of "a tribe of artists," as painter Seowtewa calls it (see section 1.1.2) and start observing and helping their artisan parents at a young age. For example, Keith Edaakie got early exposure to working with the archetypal turquoise-coral-jet-mother-of-pearl silversmithing colors while helping his parents Raylan and Patty Edaakie make Surface pendants (see sections 1.1.4 and 3.1.2). Similarly, Kenneth Seowtewa assisted his father in painting the Zuni Old Mission (see section 2.1.2) and Jeff Shetima followed in his uncle's footsteps carving fetishes:

[...] I observed my neighbors, my uncle, my neighbors when they were making fetish carvings at a young age, primarily my neighbors who were carvers. They would be carving outside, and I would be playing around, just watching them carve, and one day they left their equipment outside and had all these little scrap materials laying on the ground. I just turned all their motors and started carving away. And I created a snake. That was probably one of my first carvings that I agreed was neat.

Whether it was through painting, carving, or crafting, Zuni children like Shetima were traditionally quickly initiated into the arts of creation with Zuni colors, due to the prevalence of the materials and the importance of the activity that surrounded them. In her 2005 study on *Child Art Therapy*, the psychologist Judith Aron Rubin explains that "[i]n art children manage tools and media in order to make personal

statements, helping them to feel better (because they have mastered something) and to speak more clearly (to express themselves) (312).” Zuni children, perhaps especially those from families of artists and artisans, are uniquely positioned to master the use colors in this way, and to use them as an identity-affirming tool and a valve for releasing negative emotions.

For these same children, now grown up to become Zuni artists, the very act or process of creation, involving the conception and manipulation of multiple colors, can provide a refuge and an outlet for emotional or psychological pain. In the summer of 2018, Levon Loncassion initiated the exhibition "Zuni Ceratops and Anomalous Illusions," displayed at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. In his interview for the IPCC, he explains how coloring has been a natural response to pain since his childhood:

I remember when I was probably around seven years of age, I think I had my first psychological breakdown. The realization that we're all going to die, and the universe is expanding, the sun's going to burn out, all these things that they were teaching us in school. And for me, just having that realization, I think I internalized it to the point where I was fearful of everything else, so there was a time where I just was caught in that space, and every time they would ask me, "What's wrong with you?" and I was like, "We're all gonna die!" and as a kid, no one really took the time to explain it to me properly, and so I internalized it, and I think that was another influential part of me being an artist because I went inside [myself]. And I would just be crying, and then they'd be like "He's crying, we don't know what to do with him." "Just give him some markers or crayons and he'll be fine." So once they did that I kind of broke myself out of it and I spent like hours just drawing dinosaurs, really large dinosaurs. [...] That kind of focused my thoughts and energy into creating works of art. (See Loncassion, n. pag.)

In the same interview, he also revealed that he grew up in a violent household and turned to coloring when he needed an emotional release; when he “had to escape, [he would] take a bunch of those materials from school and work on it alone by myself in [his] room, just to get away (Loncassion, n.pag.)” The child’s immediate response to pain was to use colors to create and focus on an object that was somehow reassuring him.

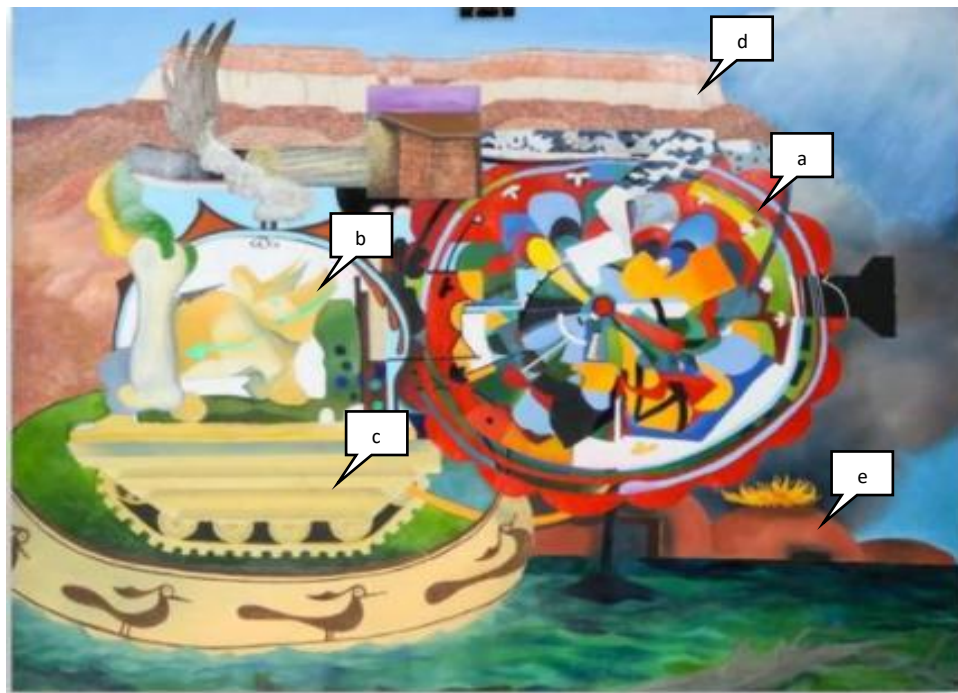


Figure 174: Levon Loncassion, *Zuni Ceratops*, acrylic on canvas, 2018 (courtesy of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center)

Years later, the young man has created a postmodern reiteration of this childhood process in the canvas entitled *Zuni Ceratops* in figure 174. Loncassion used to be a fireman, and not long after he left this job to focus fully on his art, some of his former colleagues died while firefighting. The green of his childhood dinosaurs is replaced by dominant yellow and red tones on a rosette (a), perhaps reminiscent of the color of the fire that took the life of his colleagues. The artist fetishized the Zuni Ceratops with a blue heartline that he lays on a basin-like pottery vessel (b). The strikingly colored and disjointed dinosaurs attract the eye

and look almost like a collage juxtaposing the traditional Zuni world with the postmodern, industrial one. The background of Zuni landscape colors (d) is reminiscent of his childhood, often spent outdoors at Thunder/Corn Mountain (*Dowa: Yallanne*). In this fetish-like drawing of the dinosaur, the artist's grief for his lost colleagues seems to tap into his childhood strategy of using coloring as a reassuring distraction from emotional disturbance and his premature realization of the inevitability of death.

We can offer a more detailed interpretation of the significance of the colors in Loncassion's painting, basing our analysis on conversations with Zuni artists in order to gain a better understanding of their unique approach to color. In the background, the predominantly brown/orange/beige colors depict the mesas of the Zunilands (d) and traditional Zuni ovens (e), one of which has caught fire. The realistically-layered warm colors of the mesas and landscape contrast with the brightly colored juxtaposition of Zuni cultural objects in the foreground. From the oven fire, the smoke rises up over the horizon, probably a reference to the artist's trauma linked to his former job as a firefighter; however, far from disturbing the peaceful atmosphere and having the world "go up in smoke," this background disturbance is overpowered by the bright Zuni colors in the foreground. We can observe that the *a''witen''itiwan* colors are dominant on the rosette, which stands out as the only object in the painting with such bright and pure colors (applied without mixing or shading). The six sacred colors, yellow, blue, red, white, multicolor, and black, thus seem to anchor the artist in a chaotic atmosphere, and prevail over the other tones, seeming to symbolize that the artist finds freedom in his Zuni roots.

Loncassion's work demonstrates how working with traditional Zuni colors enables the artist to engage in non-verbal catharsis. It is important to remember that the Zuni see the sexpartite colors as being interrelated and functioning together as part of a whole rather than just being six distinct shades with six distinct powers. Thus, Zuni artists constantly imagine and apply colors in meaningful combinations. In the Zuni cultural context, it is the application of color that both heals and reveals an artist's therapeutic journey, not just the representative forms. When used in a meaningful combination with one another, colors can both aid in healing emotional wounds and create a psychological safe haven for the artist.

A different form of therapeutic process linked to color manipulation can be found in the way other artists benefit psychologically from perpetuating the traditional art of creating their own pigments. Colors were not always directly accessible at *Halona Itiwana*. The Zuni Indians have always made pilgrimages to recover pure white salt at the Sacred Lake or sacred colored objects and pigments for their rituals. These trips are part of the process of artistic creation and provide an opportunity for healing introspection. In their 2005 collection of articles *Pilgrimage and Healing*, medical anthropologist Michael Winkelman and anthropologist Jill Dubisch introduce the topic of healing pilgrimage in communities around the world. They explain that the spiritual journey of a pilgrimage is one of self-reflection and transformation (xix). This spiritual journey leads to a sacred place that "engag[es] with special energies and powers, often embedded in the landscape and architecture (xviii)." In the case of the Zuni, not only do they benefit from the spiritual powers of the pilgrimage site, they also collect the colors of those powers to bring home and integrate within their art.

For Zuni artists, color-collecting pilgrimages are a way to focus on themselves and connect with the spirits, the earth, and the sky, as they do also when they create the art. One of these pilgrimages is made by the Zuni to the Pacific Ocean every four years to collect sacred colors. In the late 1800s, Cushing wrote about the Zuni pilgrimage to the "Blue Pacific," located west of the Pueblo. In her 2000 study *The Zuni Enigma*, Nancy Yaw Davis also emphasizes the importance of the "ocean of the sunset world" for the Zuni people. Clan members were in charge of bringing back important colored shells and sacred seawater, as well as the white mother-of-pearl and the red coral used for ceremonial offerings and, later, for lapidary work (see Davis, 49).

The process of gathering pigments to create the sacred body paints also provides the context for a self-affirming color quest, such as the pilgrimages to gather the pink clay used by the mudheads (see section 2.3.4) for which the Zuni go to the Sacred Lake. For turquoise paint, they go in search of oxidized copper ore (azurite and malachite in a calcite matrix) that they find east of the Rio Grande or that they trade with the pueblos of this area. They make cakes and balls of this color by grinding the ore to a fine powder mixed with water and boiled with piñon gum. The cakes can then be kept and used for an indefinite amount of time (see Roediger 99). The organization of these ritualized collection trips falls under the responsibility of the clans, and the material brought back to the tribe is made into colors that serve as a way to communicate with the spirits, so it is only natural that finding and producing the purest colors brings great pride to the clan and joy to the people. As Winkelman mentions, such a journey "restore[s] one's relationship with aspects of the sacred (xx)," which seems a fitting description of

the Zuni process of searching for and collecting these sacred colors that were traditionally used as a conduit between the tribe and the divine.

Even today, there is pleasure in finding the purest colored material and in respecting any material taken from the earth. Noreen Simplicio shares her pride in the peach-colored clay dug and processed by herself. She says that when there are bad times, practicing her art is a way to find peace: “When things get really sad, I find peace in just doing my art. So, you know, life is kind of challenging right now. But I'm trying to stay strong and be positive (my transcription).” Processing the clay and laying the natural paint on her pots is an emotionally healing process; the repetitive movements clear the mind in a meditative manner. For other artists as well, this process includes making the colors themselves, showing once again that Zuni artists do not merely apply or observe colors; for many, pigment-seeking and paint-making are also part of the therapeutic artistic process evoked by Noreen Simplicio.

For the Zuni, manipulating color has long been a way to refocus and become one with the spiritual elements that are at the foundation of their culture. This is one of the reasons why color-based art, especially working with clay, is offered at Zuni as a therapeutic solution for people who suffer. Raylan Edaakie discussed the fact that in the tribe, drugs are now a big problem, along with alcoholism, which, sadly, has been an issue for a long time. In his opinion, the principal reason is boredom; the youth dream of having busy city lives, and are quite inactive in the Pueblo. Hard drugs like meth arrived in the village not long ago, and are wreaking havoc among the youth, to the point that tourists are encouraged not to leave their lodgings during the night to avoid potential danger. In 1991, the Department of Health and Human Services Center for Substance

Abuse Prevention funded a project to develop alcohol prevention messages targeting teenagers (see Stevers, n.pag.), and as part of the project, artistic activities were also set up. The Recovery Center contacted Noreen Simplicio, asking her to teach pottery to recovering teenagers. Simplicio explained her program:

So, what he wanted from me [was] to teach in the cultural program they had there, where they used the cultural program to teach the recoveries to find their true identity. Because, you know, recovery people, they lose themselves. They lose their identity, who they are, and whatever. So, I got there and they told me what they wanted me to do. They wanted me to run the art part of that, the program. They wanted me to use my art and teach my art—just the basics. Just like kind of planting a seed, and it's up to the individual to do what they want. So that's what I did. I said 'okay' [...] They let me run my own program, and it was successful. They loved it. These people were so broken, they were able to use the clay, and they loved it. They loved my program. The program was so popular, I was really busy. So anyway. So, within that program, we worked with these individuals for like 12 weeks that I come in and work with them with clay. (My transcription)

Simplicio was in charge of teaching them to mold clay, shape pots, and paint their creations, using both natural and commercial pigments. Her method for “finding the true identity” was to invite the recovering teens to engage in tactile work with colors as part of a healing process involving the manipulation of clay-based material and the various pigments that make up the traditional Zuni pottery color palette. We have seen in section 1.1.4 with the example of the Zuni Great Seal how these colors are representative of Zuni identity. The Zuni use ensembles of color and color processes as tools in the complex quest to recover one's identity and self-esteem; this is not restricted only to *a'witen/itiwan* colors, but also includes other archetypal colors and their subsequent application in material artforms. In addition to the therapeutic nature of the creative art process itself,

colors that are culturally familiar can provide a centering feeling, like an emotional anchor for those that share them.

Beyond the traditional ceremonial healing context in which the ritualistic theurgist embodies colors to cure the patient, colors are an integral part of a therapeutic artistic process for the Zuni, and serve as everyday tools for finding psychological grounding within the tribe by remembering the past and rediscovering one's roots in a world that leaves little place for tribal practices. For the people of Zuni, touching, carving, and painting colors are part of their identity as Zuni, and as such these activities are an important in the process of self-recognition and affirmation. This need for psychological healing also shows how the Western world affects post-contact Zuni culture, art, and colors. Issues that have arisen from contact with the Western world, such as drugs and alcohol, have also affected the tribe so much that they take refuge in colors and use them as part of a quest to recover their identity. The anchoring provided by color therefore helps the Zuni refocus and find their own psychological center, their personal "Middle Place."

3.2.2 Colors as Criticism: Social Commentary in Art

In addition to using them as a tool for personal recovery and mental health, Zuni artists also use colors to comment on societal issues and injustices, composing their artwork in order to convey targeted messages. In this way, colors are also a weapon to protest against what is wrong in the world as a whole. For the Zuni, this is often in relation to the disrespect and injustice they have suffered at the hands of Anglo-American society and government. Problems such as economic overconsumption, global warming, imposed territorial boundaries, and the rise of "electronics" are reflected in Zuni art, the colors of which are increasingly used to transmit messages of emotional and material suffering, and criticize the trespassing of boundaries and the sullying of the spirits of nature.

We have already seen in sections 2.1.2 and 2.2.4 how Enote's Map Art project is the Zuni response to the Anglo-American concept of spatial boundaries. There is an equilibrium between the use of the sacred directional colors and mastery of Western color gradation techniques in the map paintings, always balancing Zuni and Western approaches to art, and using acrylics and oil colors to portray Zuni beliefs. The painting of the waterways in figure 175 demonstrates the use of color gradation; the artist uses subtle brushstrokes to blend the rainclouds and waterways to show their interconnection. He depicts the multicolor Rainbow Man in a mix of Zuni/Western approaches to color as a way of documenting the Zunilands. The harmonious colors of the painting show the many places related to water that are not on official US maps but which have sacred significance to the Zuni and figure in their oral history, such as Salt Old Woman, *Malokatsiki*, who once inhabited Salt Lake in Catron County, New



Figure 175: Edward Wemytewa, *K'yawakwayina:we (Waterways)*, oil on canvas, 2006 (Enote 38) 36 x 48 in.

Mexico, about 60 miles (97 km) south of *Halona Itiwana*. The story of this lake is as follows: Salt Old Woman lived near Black Rock, but when the Zuni disrespected her and wasted her precious salt, she abandoned the Black Rock area and moved south, leaving a trail of dead plants in her wake. After some time, Salt Old Woman left the Zuni world to go to Kothluwala, the land of the kachina. Since then, the Zuni must pray to her to have salt (see Wright, *Kachinas of the Zuni* 94-95). Salt Lake, where the Zuni go on salt-collecting pilgrimages, is not part of the legal Zunilands. However, this is a place that is a part of their history and their traditions, and thus belongs to them culturally.

In his 2019 exhibition at the Zimmermann Library at the University of New Mexico entitled *Anthropocene Epoch—The Beginning of the End of the World as we Know it*, the Zuni artist Edward Wemytewa takes the expression of Zuni activism through colors one step further. Wemytewa was born and raised at Zuni;

his main media are pastel drawing and tempera paint, and his subjects focus on the religious landscape of the *A:shiwí*. For this exhibition, he labels his work as the "Art of the Oppressed."¹⁰² His art includes various representations of the pain of the economically and politically disenfranchised Native Americans. To describe his work, he says, "The urge to draw is instinctive to human emotion. I would love nothing more than to have quality, undisturbed time to enjoy painting for the sake of painting' arts." His painting does indeed appear as if each stroke on the canvas cathartically frees his mind of complicated emotions. Perhaps Wemytewa's most aggressive work is one entitled *Remembering and honoring the EXTINCT*¹⁰³ *world of Indigenous Nations*. On the canvas, the colors serve as a way to condemn violence and commemorate the loss of whole nations. An evil horned creature threatens the realm of the Sun Father, the daylight/life of the Zuni nation; the creature is painted in matte glacier blue and Crusoe green with a raincloud terrace symbol on its face. The horned creature hides the white and yellow Sun Father from view and seems to have drawn a bloody half-circle across the sky. It brandishes a sword and a gun, weapons introduced to America by Europeans, and seems to have trapped the people below it. The dripping bloody red half-circle is copied in a smaller size to underline "EXTINCTION." The subjugated Native American silhouettes are depicted with what appear to be bullet holes in them. They hold onto each other as if chained together, like paper dolls all cut from the same sheet of paper, and also hold an arrow attached to a rainbow, representing the weapon that the *Ahayu:ta* twins used to dry the earth, as well to connect the pillars of Zuni cosmology and existence, the Sun Father's realm and

¹⁰² According to an interview included on an exhibition placard at the University of New Mexico.

¹⁰³ Original typography.

the underbelly of the earth. The menacing figure seems poised with its weapons ready to render the natives extinct by cutting them off from these metaphorical parental figures, Mother Earth and Father Sky, so crucial to Zuni existence and

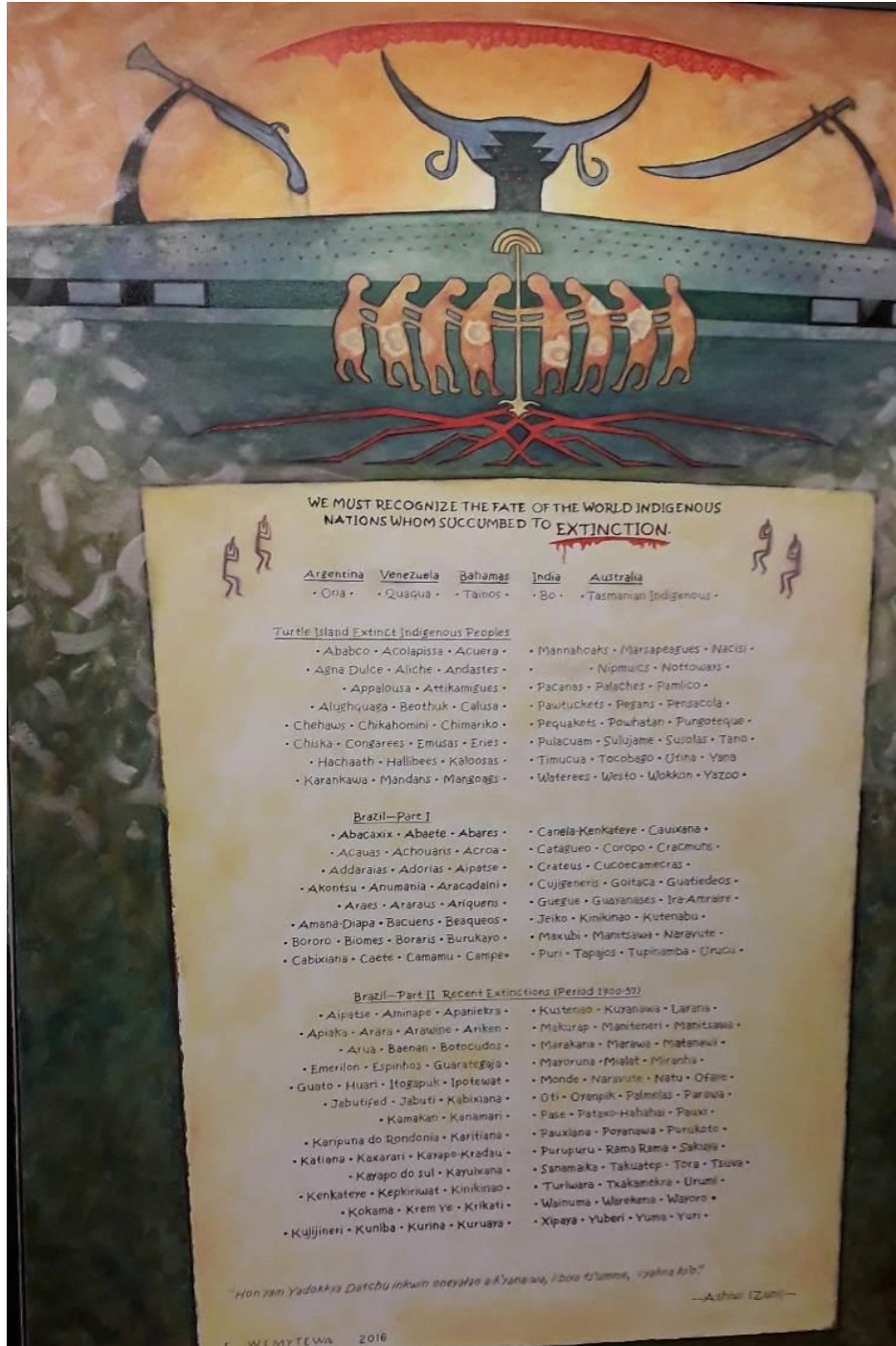


Figure 176: Edward Wemytewa, Remembering and Honoring the EXTINCT World of the Indigenous Nations, graphite and oil on canvas, 2016 (my photo).

identity. Wemytewa indexes the lost Native American nations on a painted parchment, like a memorial plaque. He uses an expressive coloring technique in the background around the parchment, with harsh strokes of oil paint mixed with graphite, and also chose colors such as green and beige, not among the sacred six, along with a technique that would not be recognized as traditionally Zuni; the dark green background is interestingly shaded, contrary to the flatter colors that the more traditional Zuni artists are known for. The painter seems to have chosen Western colors and techniques to highlight current Native American societal issues, and denounce the US government for their silence and lack of recognition concerning the issue.

This is even more apparent in Wemytewa's other works exhibited at the same exhibition, such as one entitled *Feminine Energy-Blessing of Warm Rains* in which this time a *'witen/itiwan* colors are overwhelmingly present. This 2016 piece is inspired by the world's duality, the energy balance between male and female, night and day, fire and water, and in particular the feminine duality of softness and strength. The University of New Mexico's exhibition text explains, "The energy is a balance of fire and water, which manifests into gentle warm rains, and yet, can present itself as an opposite force of energy." It also comments that indigenous women of today inspired the artist as they take on more robust roles within leadership. The women who took a stand at Standing Rock (on the Sioux reservation in North Dakota) particularly inspired Wemytewa to illustrate the "Water is Life" cry; this nonviolent protest joined 300 tribes in protest to block the Dakota Access Pipeline project. In their 2019 article entitled "Water is life – an indigenous perspective from a Standing Rock Water Protector," Chas Jewett,

a Lakota woman and activist at Standing Rock, and author Mark Garavan explain the Ojibwe phrase *Mní Wichón*, meaning "Water is Life:"

In the water walks women carry pails of water taken from the water source and follow the river's course through the day, making offerings of tobacco, praying to the water and singing the water songs. It is the women who do this because water is a life giver and women, as life givers also, are the protectors of the water. Women and water are deeply related. [...] In the walk Chas says they are there to 'heal the water, to heal themselves, by loving the water and by praying with it (Jewett and Garavan, n.pag.).

Wemytewa illustrates the women's protection of the water in their role as water-bringers. On the woman's white miha (see section 2.1.4), the artist paints two yellow and blue rain serpents holding tricolor cloud symbols, ready to pour water down on the people. McManis explains that for the Zuni, snakes represent the "curative" power of "lightening that usually accompanies [...] dramatic Southwest thunderstorms (27)." The yellow and blue snakes, represented in the colors of the continuity of life, are breathing out the tricolor rainclouds, the colors of the Sun father's realm that bestows rain and therefore life. The coolness of the blue rain contrasts with the orange and yellow Sun Father, who seems to hold a terraced bowl from which water will pour out. We can recognize the green and black weaving patterns and embroideries related to nature and moisture, along with the sacred rain-bringing frog in the center of the piece. Wemytewa represents *tak'yaw'udenanne*, which means "shafts of rain falling like long straight (willow) sticks as a blessing (on the land),"¹⁰⁴ with graphite pencil in regular, thin, hatched black lines similar to those used on the Rainbird design in pottery. In Zuni beliefs, the male and a female willow always grow in pairs (see section 2.2.4), represented by the artist as pairs of black lines within the green

¹⁰⁴ Translated from *Shiwi'ma* by the University of New Mexico for the exhibition.



Figure 177: Edward Wymatewa, *Feminine Energy-Blessing of Warm Rains*, graphite pencil and felt pen, 2016 (my photo).

embroidery of the miha. The artist's portrayal of femininity also reverberates through the heightened delicacy of the black lines that represent the rain and the woman's hair, compared to outlines in other of his works. The edges of the butterfly's wings are blurred by the falling rain and even seem to drip with rain. The artist explained that he wanted to represent the strength of the female butterfly summoning rain to the people and protecting the people, and the combined precision and delicacy in the linear rain and the outlines of the butterfly's wings seems to sum up this notion of strength and softness.

While this mixed-media work employs soft-looking colors and shading techniques, it shows the artist's strong support and admiration of the Standing Rock women. The colors send a clear message: the *a'witen/itiwan* are used to depict Native American strength in the face of a world that is largely unwelcoming towards First Nation people. Here, the traditional colors are the basis of an activist message to fight against oppression, an eloquently pacifist way to wage war on the greed of the cash economy. The colors of the first piece help the artist express his unease and his revulsion with the ways of the world, while in this piece they are a way for him to support and pay respect to noble tribal causes. Wemytewa explains that:

I have enjoyed combining and synthesizing these creative artistic/technical skills into a new genre of art/storytelling theatre. This synthesis adds whole new levels of creativity and thought-provoking avenues for art forms and art pieces that supplement and complement our traditional forms of storytelling. Should a debate arise over 'art' versus 'illustration,' I can't argue. I admit I don't have time to paint in the traditional sense because of competing issues and priorities, but I 'paint' what I can in limited spurts of time between activists' forums.

The artist struggles to find time at all to create art, and as a result orients himself more towards illustration rather than traditional paintings of kachinas and scenes

from the Creation Myth that he seems to distinguish as “art.” However, this gives him more freedom in the subjects he wishes to depict. His illustrations are thus “complementary” to traditional artforms, completing the genre of traditional painting with the visual storytelling of activist messages.

The cartoonist Phil Hugte (see section 2.2.4) is another well-known artist who used his work as a form of peaceful activism. Hugte's favorite weapons were Zuni humor and a black pen. Hugte also used colors in his kachina and Zuni hero portraits; however, one of his most famous works is a black-and-white comic book depicting the "other" side of Frank Hamilton Cushing in humor-filled artwork. Hugte was one of the children Gonzales taught, so he was encouraged to depict daily scenes in “fully rendered environments (Enote 15)” and worked on the use of depth and perspective early on. The use of color to create depth comes from Gonzales’ teachings, but it is his own innovative cartoon style and use of media that have earned him the admiration of the next generation of artists. The panels illustrate his conflicted feelings about Cushing: on the one hand, he admired Cushing for acting as a spokesperson for the Zuni; the tribal elders had urged him to protect the Zunilands from encroaching Navajos and white settlers, and the Zuni were grateful for his support. As a result of his defense of the tribe, in 1884 Cushing was recalled to resume his duties in Washington at the Bureau of American Ethnology. On the other hand, Cushing sent countless irreplaceable Zuni ceremonial artifacts to the Smithsonian Institute, and, as we saw in section 3.1.4, Cushing (and Stevenson) broke cultural taboos by publishing images of kachina dancers. In the 1993 TV show *Colores!*, the artist said about his Cushing cartoon exhibition:

What I feel about Cushing and Stevenson...They dug too far. They dug too far. What I feel about modern archaeologists...I think that they can only go at a certain limit, and that's it. But they can't go in-depth with our religion. I think Cushing and Matilda Coxe Stevenson, there was a lot of damage [...] Especially with Matilda who took photographs of our religious events. ("Another Side Of The Story" n.pag.)

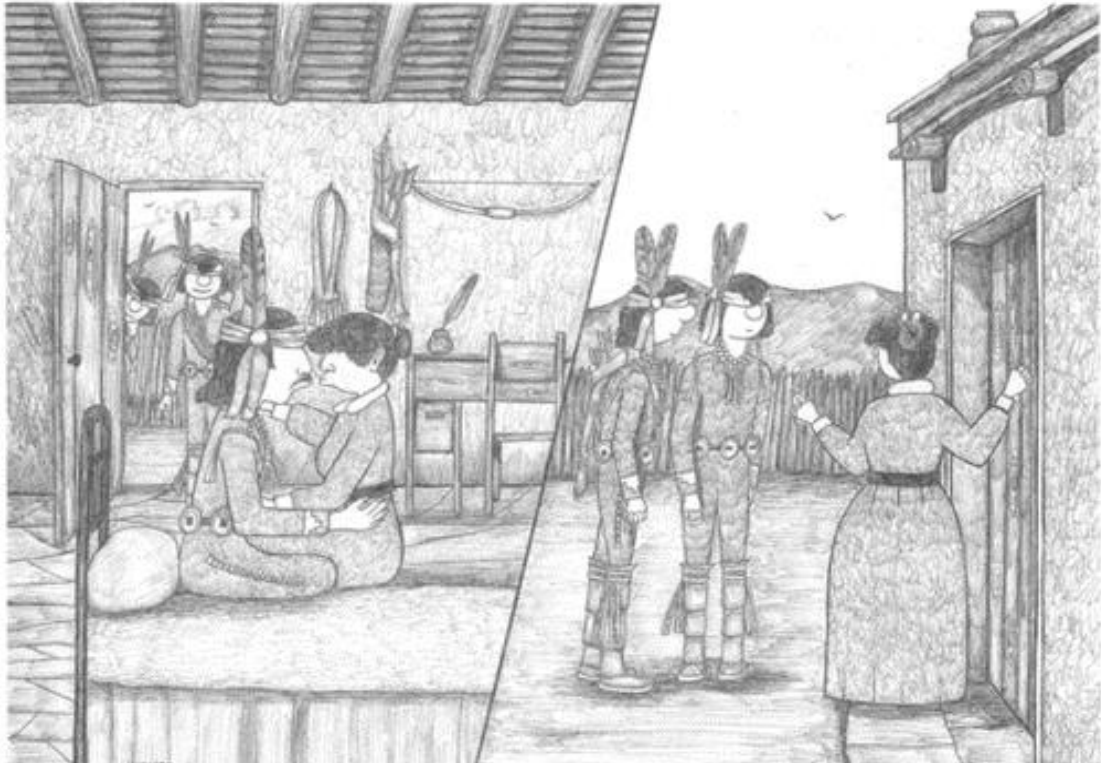


Figure 178: Phil Hughte, *What You Should Do When You Go to Cushing's House*, ca. 1990.

The artist commemorates and criticizes Cushing by portraying him as a hilarious caricature of a clumsy-looking, clueless white person, and also as a consciously disrespectful man, fully aware of the serious affront he was committing to the tribe. To study the artist's all black-and-white style, we will first focus on one of Hughte's favorite panels, entitled *What you should do when you go to Cushing's house*. In this scene, the artist uses both ink and pencil with various techniques to create depth, texture, and shadow, in addition to the comic-book-style black outlines. The round-nosed Zuni disturb Cushing and his wife during an intimate moment, depicted through the outlines of their puffed lips. The story goes that Cushing's angry wife quickly got dressed and went outside, where, as shown in

the scene to the right, she then taught the Zuni how to knock. Hughte gives the Zuni a nonplussed expression, with just a dot for their mouths. He represents the characters themselves in a typical cartoon manner with clear black outlines, but also adds detailed shading with darker and lighter hatched lines in the background, such as on the mountains. With black as his only color tool, Hughte still manages to record all the nuances of the cross-cultural misunderstanding on



Figure 179: Phil Hughte, Bad Boy Cushing, ca.1990.

paper, as he did with many of the other images in the same book.

In another panel, he portrays a more controversial scene of Cushing posing as he took his famous picture of himself with his mudhead

mask. As we saw in section 3.1.4, the Zuni blame Cushing for this violation of privacy and believe that his premature death was an act of divine retribution. In this panel, the artist creates shading with cross-hatching rather than by smudging, creating a background of angry lines that is much more emotive than in his previous Cushing series, evocative of the tribe's horror at Cushing's betrayal.

Again, what is striking about Hughte's work is that there is only one "color," black, which must serve as both outline and coloring or shading. Hughte's work is in black and white, like a book with words printed in ink on paper, but he also depicts traditional objects in shades of grey on many of his panels that the Zuni know are of a specific color and so will mentally translate the grey tones into the proper color; a ceramic bowl will be imagined as black-and-red-on-white, etc.

These colors are so deeply entrenched in Zuni thinking that Hughte did not even need to physically represent them in order for them to be present, as we will discuss further in section 3.3.1. Moreover, in his choice of using black and white over other colors in correspondence to the comic-strip or cartoon aesthetic (as opposed to the color-oriented kachina painting genre), Hughte finds another way of criticizing Cushing's attitude and behavior: he deprives Cushing of the beauty of the world depicted through the use of the wide range of colors typical of the Zuni palette and reduces him to a cartoon-like caricature, thereby stripping him of his status and scholarly authority.

Equipped with different color techniques and tools to illustrate current Zuni issues, Zuni artists have begun a new tradition of expressing activism in art. Whether it is through the use of comic outlines or expressive shading such as in Hughte's Cushing series, or with strongly symbolic colors such as in Wemytewa's work, colors are a way to express concerns with the ways of the world, and serve as a rhetorical means to provide commentary on societal issues. Beyond the sacred six colors, which are ultimately codified by their ceremonial associations, artists and illustrators find freedom in Western colors which they can use in a way that is as representational as it is symbolic. Zuni artists make deliberate choices in color and style to communicate social criticism and social commitment both to their fellow Zuni and to the Western public alike, not only to preserve their heritage, but also in the hopes of forging a better future together.

3.2.3 Reinterpreting and Claiming Ancestral Designs with Color

The motifs traditionally used in Native artforms such as jewelry, pottery, weaving and painting often have common origins in Ancestral Pueblo petroglyphs. Through the development of other traditional artforms, the Zuni have applied color to what were originally achromatic designs, allowing them to claim or reappropriate these motifs as belonging to their culture and build a distinctive color style that sets their art apart from that of other tribes. The abundance of colors, media, and materials in modern tradition tells the story of the tribe's evolution throughout history. Modern developments in tribal aesthetics are deemed important by tribal elders in order to keep contact with the younger generations. However, this color diversity was not so obvious in the early forms of art. Ancestral Pueblo rock art from the prehistoric period consists predominantly of outlines of symbols and patterns carved on the rock surrounding their settlements. Petroglyph carvers had no intention of adding color, but rather exploited the natural color of the rockface to create what we will refer to as "achromatic" motifs. Later, trade with the West and the arrival of canvas painting allowed artists to recreate petroglyph motifs in color within a stylized landscape on a flat, white canvas surface. This section will study how petroglyphs marked, or better yet, carved out the artistic history of the tribe, and will focus on how the Zuni added colors to an originally achromatic artform by painting petroglyph motifs on canvas and engraving them on fetishes. As the achromatic carving technique gave way to interpretations of the motifs in color, petroglyphs became both a symbolically colorful and a commercially valuable artform.

Before introducing the application of painted colors to petroglyph motifs, it is necessary to understand what exactly petroglyphs are. Most of the still recognizable non-eroded rock art dates from AD 900-1500, during which period northern Ancestral Pueblo groups carved representations of human-like figures, blocky mountain sheep, flute players, spirals and seemingly random geometrical patterns on rock faces. In his forward to *Signs from the Ancestors* published in 1990, Dell Hymes says that while traditional art is a fundamental part of Zuni art, it is by no means *static*. According to him, "it would be misleading to call Zuni tradition 'conservative.' Where the world is centered, meaningful and whole, expressions of sacramental relationship to it, songs and virtual symbols can joyfully enact a maxim of modern poetry, *Make it new* (preface x, original emphasis)." Indeed, whenever art is concerned, each spectator, specialist, and expert offers their very own vision, dissecting, interpreting, and reinterpreting older works of art. Zuni artists also work within these parameters, blending old symbols and colors with new trends to "*Make it new.*" Petroglyphs are a prime example of this, as even "painted petroglyphs" were achromatically carved first, then often colored at a later date to transform them into pictographs. For instance, the Ancestral Pueblo people much later added striking colors such as pink, lavender and gold to the original carvings of unique geometrical shapes northeast of the Pueblo at *Heshoda Ts'in'a*, the "Place of Writing (Young, *Signs* 44)."

The curious, non-figural patterns of the site are coupled with recurrent motifs and figural art. It almost looks like the Ancestral Pueblo people carved using a similar process to automatic writing, projecting a stream-of-consciousness narrative on the wall that appears to have been the only way for the Zuni's ancestors to immortalize their story. The very name *Heshoda Ts'in'a*

invites us to ask if those symbolic designs were to be seen as "writing;" if so, are achromatic petroglyphs and pictographs similar to other societies' use of ink on paper? In the Zuni language, *atsina* (46) means either "writing" or "picture." This means that the concepts of drawing and writing are unified in a single linguistic expression, making petroglyphs iconographies, from the greek *εικόνα*, image, and *γράφειν*, to write. We can therefore conjecture that the Zuni's ancestors wrote with pictures. There is no written *Shiwi'ma* language, so it seems that the early Zuni illustrated their history through petroglyph drawing.

In her 1990 *Signs from the Ancestors*, Jane M. Young describes four ways of engraving petroglyphs (see Young 49-50). The first is pecking, which consists of striking the rock face with a solid piece of rock to create shapes. The second is incising, gouging, or scratching, which consist in carving linear patterns to create the outline of the shape, contrary to pecked petroglyphs, which looked "filled in;" these first two techniques are illustrated in figure 180. The third technique is abrading, which consists in rubbing the stonewall to create an even surface. The Ancestral pueblo people often used this technique to smooth out rough rock faces enough to be able to draw on them. The fourth technique is drilling, rotating a solid tool (often made of metal) in the stone to create holes.¹⁰⁵ The Ancestral Pueblo groups often combined more than one of the four engraving techniques to create a fresco-like ensemble of petroglyphs spread over the rock face. The process of removing part of the rock makes the material underneath look lighter in color, so that the engraved image stands out in contrast to the rest of the surface. Like the black-on-white printed ink of a book, petroglyph

¹⁰⁵ Native Americans now use rock chisels or hammerstones to engrave modern petroglyphs



Figure 180: From left to right: pecked animals and lizard-like creature (Zuni ancestors) and gouged embroidery or brocade patterns, Village of the Great kivas, Pueblo II period (my photos)

engravings are “non-colors,”¹⁰⁶ a term Michel Pastoureau uses to refer to the neutral black-and-white of printed text, which, according to him, disappears as the reader focuses in on the meaning of the written words and imagines the scene in color.

The Ancestral Pueblo people and early Zuni engraved their history on the stone; these manual artworks, along with other artistic production in the form of pottery, lapidary work, silversmithing, and fetish carving, provided expressive and lasting ways to record symbols, stories, and histories in contrast to the ephemeral and variable nature of oral history. In her 1993 *Petroglyphs and Pueblo Myth of the Rio Grande*, Carol Patterson-Rudolph affirms this with her interpretation of the Keres petroglyphs. She claims, however, that Native petroglyphs are not to be read in a linear fashion, and that the symbols’ meanings can change from one petroglyph to the next (see Patterson-Rudolph 11-2) so a single pictographic element can be interpreted with various meanings. For instance, in the Keresan Rio Grande petroglyphs in figure 181, she is able to understand the myth of Uretsete and the Spider Woman, a Chacoan legend from the Keres-speaking Indians such as the Acoma, Laguna, Zia, Cochiti, Santa Domingo, San Felipe, and Santa Ana, all pueblos with which the Zuni traded. This legend is a version of the Creation Myth, in which the Spider Woman, *Tsichtinako*, sang a song to *Uretsete*, to create the *lariko*, the bringer of life (see Eaton 30). From “turkey track hands (a),” “ears of corn (b),” “heads (c),” and “appendages (d),” Patterson-Rudolph pieces together a part of the legend: “Urestete has created the lariko and instructed the people to pray through it (Patterson-Rudolph 117).” The bird

¹⁰⁶ My translation of the original text: “non-couleurs (*Noir* 146).”

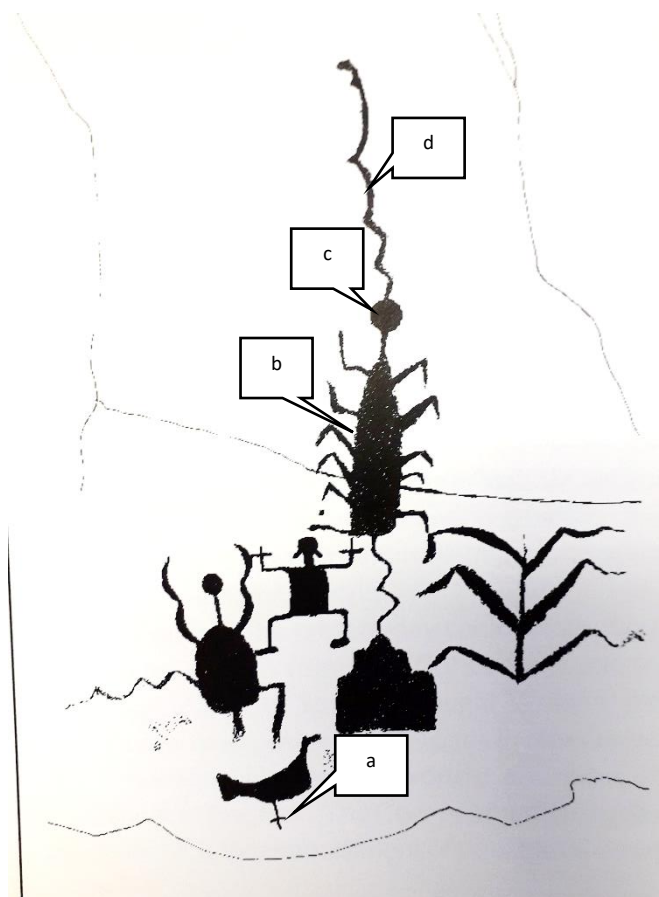


Figure 181: Carol Patterson-Rudolph's sketch of the Keresan petroglyphs, Rio Grande (Patterson-Rudolf, 117).

with the turkey track design making its one cross-foot in (a) represents the Spider Woman. The ear of corn in (b) represents *Uretsete*, or Corn Woman in Keresan. The head and appendages in (c) and (d) represent the corn plant, and the events of the myth are as follows: first, “Uretsete asks Spider for advice in making the lariko.” Second, “Uretsete returns to her ‘abode’ below-the Sipapu,” or *Shipapulima*

for the Zuni, the place of emergence. Third, “Corn fetish becomes the representative of Uretsete as the Corn Mother” and finally, fourth, “Spider sits by Uretsete and advises her.” The symbols used in these petroglyphs might have different meanings when used in isolation from one another; for instance, the crossed “turkey track” motif can be used as a metonymic symbol for the turkey. If Patterson-Rudolph’s interpretation is correct, it gives us an example of how petroglyphs’ meanings can change when juxtaposed to tell a story, as well as how they can be used to record tribal history, such as fragments of the *Chimik’yanakona pename*.

We can observe that this pictorial form of writing was continually moving, changing, and evolving, since petroglyphs immortalized the content, technique,

style and influence of a certain period, as well as expressing historical figures and ceremonial events. The period from A.D. 400 to B.C 500 was the most abstract, with meandering lines, geometrical shapes, and very few figures except for variations of flute players and mountain sheep. Then the Zuni figural period started around 1325 with incised and abraded human and animal figures, and kachinas such as *Shalako* and *Koyemshi* appearing in the area. After the introduction of metal tools by the Spanish around 1500 A.D., ceremonial and kachina figures and masks such as *Kolowisi*, the serpent, deer with heartlines, mountain lions, and animal-deities in general, became more and more abundant (see Young, *Signs* 67-70). The Ancestral Pueblo people also engraved the same patterns that would be used in brocade and embroidery styles. Contact with the Spanish provided access to forged metal tools which facilitated the creation of petroglyphs, and Ancestral Pueblo petroglyphic figures also depicted the introduction of horses, horse-riding and hunting, recording how the Spanish conquest changed the local fauna and daily life.

Colored pictographs are much less common than petroglyphs, and are usually monochromatic, in the sense that they were composed of one single color selected by the artist. On rare occasions, the Ancestral Pueblo people turned a petroglyph into a pictograph by painting over the lines with brushes made of animal hair. They mostly used their hands and fingers to create designs or hands prints on the rock's surface with mineral paint and pigments; the rock art site near *Kyaki:ma*, for example, contains many colorful painted handprints on the rock wall. The study of kiva painting shows that the Ancestral Pueblo groups had access to paint pigments in the *a'witen/itiwan* colors, such as iron-rich ochres for red (hematite), yellow ochres (limonite), for yellow, turquoise/malachite for

blue with kaolin added to create a more lavender shade, kaolin and chalk for white, and manganese for black (see section 2.1.2.) Near Zuni village, the Ancestral Pueblo groups predominantly use red, yellow, white and lavender at the *Kyaki:ma* and *Pescado* sites (Young 81). In pictographs, the Ancestral Pueblo people often use red to emphasize the heartlines, such as on the deer south of *Kwili Yalanne* (a site located to the west of the Zuni village), and white as an outline for figural designs. Most of the colors have disappeared, and data on the composition of the pigments is scarce. However, this shows that, with the omission of blue, the predominant colors are the same as in the Zuni Creation Myth: yellow, white, and red, and black on the figures painted north of *Dowa:Yalanne* (Young, *Signs* 60).

The Zuni today do not know the significance of many of these colored symbols. For instance, Young's Zuni guide could only say, "I don't know what it means, but I know it's important," concerning the forms and colors used (*Signs* 6). Young's study of petroglyphs does suggest that while many symbolic designs and color codes retain contemporary meanings, their signification has changed throughout the Zuni's process of reinterpreting petroglyphs and pictographs and integrating these images into other artforms in order to record and *own* the past, since, in addition to oral history, visual arts (painting, carving, pottery) and dancing are the tribe's preferred way of establishing their historical tribal identity and anchoring it in the present.

Rock art was clearly a way for the Zuni's ancestors to communicate, a way to claim the surface as a part of their territory, and express that they existed there. However, there is little in the record to show how the *a'witen/itiwan* system might be related to the iconography. For example, the Ancestral Pueblo groups incised

and abraded countless mountain lions. However, the expected yellow coloring of the lion is absent; Young even found a white painted mountain lion north of the Zuni pueblo (*Signs* 83). Scholars have found limonite and yellow ochre pigments as early as the Basketmaker II period (AD 50 to 500), so the absence of yellow lions was not due to a lack of access to paint. This could mean that the *a'witen/itiwan* color system was not yet “set in stone” and that variations existed. However, the pigments used in pictographs were not always long-lasting and the colors wore off easily, which could also explain why, while Pueblo Indian tribes share the same ancestors, their color systems have diverged throughout time and has become more specific to each tribe.

Though they may vary, colors are still clearly linked to the legends recorded in rock art. In her book of the same title, Barbara Tedlock refers to visual and verbal forms of expression as the Beautiful (visual) and the Dangerous (verbal) (see Barbara Tedlock, *The Beautiful and the Dangerous* and Young, *Signs* 93-4). The conjunction between the two shows that they are by no means separate concepts but are rather in interaction, with one feeding the other and vice versa. In her account of her journeys at Zuni, Tedlock defines the word for beautiful, *co'ya*, as attractiveness. This is also linked to the ideal of *k'okshi*, mentioned in section 2.1.5, which implies that the ideal Zuni person must be good, obedient and attractive; a beautiful person inside and out. Opposed to this is the dangerous *attanni*, a complex Zuni concept referring directly to the concept of danger with the connotation that such danger is linked to the supernatural. Tedlock gives the testimony of a Zuni woman:

Seeing the kachinas is okay, it probably means that it will rain, but to recognize a person dressed as a kachina is, as you know, *hish attanni/very dangerous*, frightening. If you don't tell anyone, then

maybe you end up following that dead person to Kachina Village. You know, how dead persons like to get the living to come back with them to their homes? Yes. If a person dies during kachina dances people say that they just couldn't help themselves. The dancers were *hish tso'ya/very beautiful, exciting*, and so they blacked out, dies... And then they followed the dancers. (269)

Zuni visual art and its color-full palette belongs to the "beautiful," whereas the oral histories which recount the lives of supernatural beings belong to the "dangerous." Thus, by picturing scenes of "dangerous" beings, beautiful visual art is also embedded in the "dangerous." The colorful artistry and scenery used in ceremonial arts such as dancing and singing similarly embeds the "dangerous" sacred elements within the "beautiful." Thus, the "beautiful" way of writing and setting one's thoughts and feelings on a surface through colored art is a way to provide a record or memento of the "dangerous, and this complementary pairing of the beautiful/dangerous in visual art is manifested through the dual aesthetic and narrative uses of colors.

Trade with the Westerners allowed painters to experiment with new material, as we saw in section 2.2.4, and achromatic petroglyphs evolved as Western contact changed the Native artist's approach to colors. On the one hand, by using acrylics in dark, earthy, brownish shades, artists were able depict petroglyphs in paintings, imitating the original natural colors of the achromatically carved or pecked rock. In the Map Art exhibition catalog, Enote and McLerran interviewed the Zuni painter and carver Joey Zunie, whose acrylic on canvas paintings pay homage to the petroglyphs the Zuni's ancestors once engraved along their pilgrimage to Zuni village. Speaking of some of the Whitmore Wash petroglyphs he painted, Zunie says:

[...] paintings on the rock wall...[tell] of our origin and creation—how we came from the underworlds. It's visually there, on the rock, and it's

very meaningful... just to actually see...what our oral history...is right there in the Grand Canyon on the wall painted. (Enote 40-1, original typography)

In his painting of the *Four Corners* (figure 182), Joey Zunie uses many realistic shades to color his petroglyphs. The different human figures, Kokopellis and locust Kokopellis, goats, bear tracks, human footprints, and Middle Place symbols are executed in lighter earth tones which stand out against the harmonious brown to grayish tones of the rocky landscape. These painted petroglyphs could almost be seen as pictographs, as they are painted with colors. However, the intention of the artist is to mimic the pecked artwork.



Figure 182: Joey Zunie, *Four Corners*, acrylic on canvas, 2008. (Enote 40)

On the other hand, painters were also able to renew and “beautify” petroglyphs with the purposeful addition of particular colors. In his painting *Lava*

Falls, Opposite Three Springs, and the Hematite Mine (figure 183), Zunie again reproduced the petroglyphs in acrylics, this time using a range of warm colors representative of the New Mexico and Arizona landscape, such as the dark orange color of the rocky mesas on the bottom right. However, the painting also features a sharply contrasting blue section with blue and black petroglyphs on the top right, representing the shadowy darkness of the hematite mine. The complementary orange/blue and oppositions in the placement of the petroglyphs is a mindful choice; Zunie's use of two monochromatic zones in contrasting

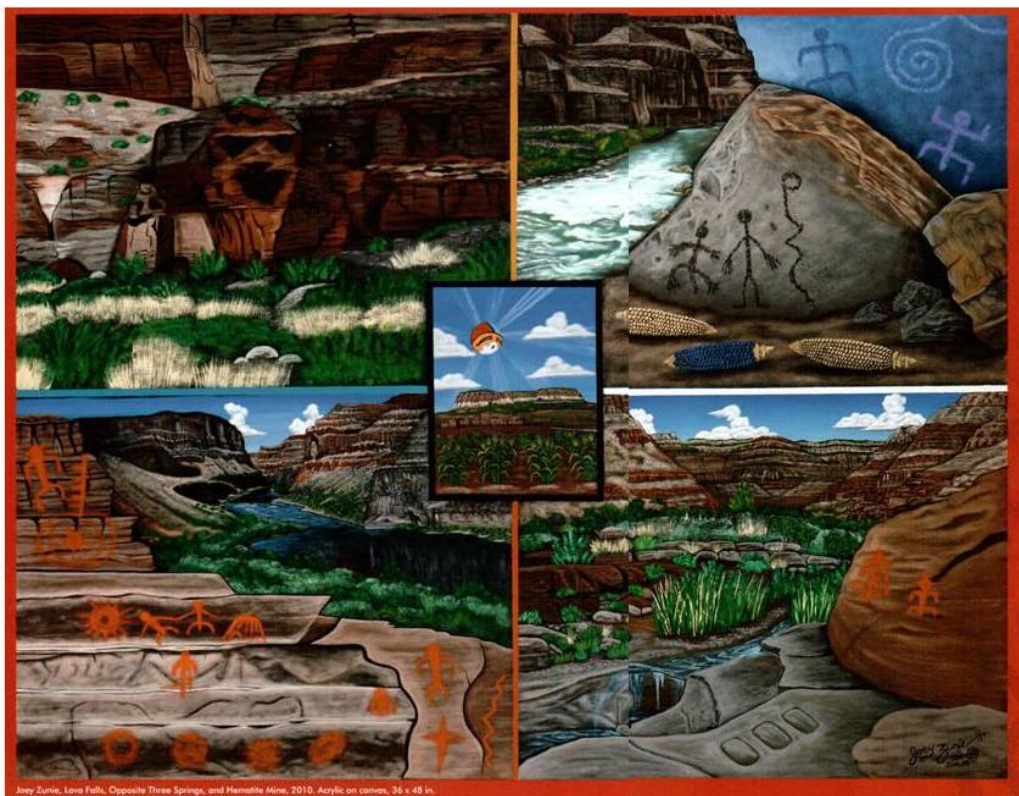


Figure 183: Joey Zunie, *Lava Falls, Opposite Three Springs, and the Hematite Mine*, acrylic on canvas, 2010 (Enote 42-3).

colors, rather than a more realistic rendering in earth tones, draws the viewer's eye immediately to the petroglyphs. By rendering the petroglyphs in these contrasting monochromatic colors, Zunie transposes them from their original achromatic state, carved in the naturally occurring tones of the rock, into color

schemes chosen by himself as the artist; he as the painter thereby transforms the “dangerous” petroglyphs of the supernatural, adding the “beautiful” color-full dimension to them.

Colors often gain in meaning through their relation to other colors. The orange and blue monochrome petroglyphs add a light/dark contrast in Zunie's paintings which is also reminiscent of the Zuni's yellow morning/blue evening complementarity. Here, Zunie's use of color suggests the "continuity of life," or the expression of life's cycle in two yin-yang-like opposing but complementary colors (see section 1.3.1). While this pleasing orange/blue contrast could be linked to the Western notion of complementary colors, it is more indicative of a prevalent Zuni symbolism in the artist's work.

The coloring of originally uncolored petroglyph designs is a transmedia process in which potters, silversmiths and lapidary workers all break new ground, as can be seen in the use of colored JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE symbols. One of the instigators of such a trend was potter Tsiayuditsa (ca. 1871–1959) in the 1940s. According to ceramics specialist Chappel, "[s]he reconceived a Zuni Polychrome composition now called Rainbird (*kya-shima wot'tsa'nah*) incorporating a tapering spiral of ancient lineage (Chappel)." The use of this motif greatly inspired Randy Nahohai, who regularly produces new styles of the *kya-shima wot'tsa'nah*. The colors used in the ceramic rendering were the contemporary polychromes, black-and-red-on-white, with the beak of the bird and head alternating between black or red, which is still the current trend. Silversmiths



Figure 184: Top left to right: Randy Nahohai, Rainbird pottery motifs, 1985, 1987. They clearly refer to the four directions and their respective colors.

Bottom left to right: Dan Simplicio, channel inlay bracelet with Hawikku pottery designs, Middle Place silversmith/lapidary work, with colored architectural rendering 1938. Randy Nahohai, Rainbird motif, 1999 (Photography by Gavin Ashworth for Chappel).

and lapidary workers also assimilated the symbol, as we can see illustrated in figure 184 in Dan Simplicio's channel inlay style take on the *kya-shima wot'tsa'nah*. He transposed the now pottery-inspired shape into silverwork, always with the Rainbird shaped like a Middle Place spiral. On his bracelet, the Middle Place symbol is now colored in red, black, white/off-white, and blue, representing all the sacred *a'witen/itiwan* and archetypal colors of Zuni jewelry

work. This particular expression of the Middle Place blends the JOURNEY TO HOME metaphor of the spiral with the Rainbird as a metonymic representation of rain.

Zuni artists have applied specific color codes in the coloring of petroglyph designs, further affirming the importance of color relationships. Let us take for example one of the most ubiquitous symbols of the tribe, the Surface, which is depicted on numerous pieces of jewelry, pottery, and in paintings. The Surface represents the sacred Sun Father who is himself a symbol of life, allowing the crops to grow and providing the warmth that brings joy to the people; as we have seen, the *Shiwi'ma* word for life is *tek'ohannanne*, which means "daylight" (Young, *Signs* 96). On the Surface, each color is associated with a sacred stone or sacred material, which themselves are symbolic. Although there are variations, the standard form is as follows: the forehead, divided in half with turquoise on one side and coral on the other, embodies the sunrise and sunset; the symmetry of the two halves expresses the perpetual equilibrium between them. The blue color of the turquoise associates it with the sky, indicating oneness between the physical and spiritual realms, as the Sun Father is a spiritual and supernatural being that reaches out from the sky towards the mortal people below. Coral embodies the warmth that the Sun Father radiates, bringing protection and comfort to the people. Both mother-of-pearl and jet are used to complete the Sun's face; the former represents the range of gleaming colors embodying intuition and imagination, and the black jet generated by the fossilization of wood represents the color of Mother Earth's underbelly in which human life originated. Together these four constituents and their vividly contrasting colors balance each

other within a unified circle; the four materials and colors together thus represent the cyclical four seasons, the protective animal deities/Beast Gods, and the cardinal directions. The combinations of colors complete, rather than alter, the meanings of each one. This “beautiful”—meaning colored—transformation of a dangerous design —meaning linked to the supernatural— therefore adds a conceptual dimension of cyclical natural processes and completion to the original achromatic petroglyphic symbol. The Sunface and the Middle Place spirals are far from being the only petroglyphs to receive symbolic color treatment; other designs have also had relatively fixed colors applied to them. One of these is the raincloud symbol introduced in section 2.1.5, figure 74. This design appears on ceremonial paraphernalia, kachina masks, jewelry, graphic t-shirts, inlaid fetishes, and painted on canvas, always respecting the same color code of blue, red, yellow and white on black; the fact that the Sunface and the Raincloud both belong to the sky realm as supernatural beings explains their relatively similar color codes.



Figure 185: From left to right: Sunface petroglyph, Village of the Great Kivas (my photo), lapidary work by Larry and Lorinda Dickson, and a close-up of Joey Zunie’s rendering of the Sunface, acrylic on canvas, 2011 (Enote 40).

The transformation of these symbols from achromatic petroglyphs to fully chromatic art is made even more significant by comparing the Zuni’s

appropriation of petroglyphs with that of other Pueblo tribes. As the color system is specific for each tribe, coloring a design is one way for the Zuni to possess a version that is theirs. We have seen that Zuni colors refer to their identity; adding colors is therefore like adding the tribe's label. By way of illustration, a controversy surrounds the Sunface design, since it is one of the emblematic symbols of the Zia tribe; however, Westerners have also borrowed the symbol and transformed it into a symbol of the state of New Mexico, quite popular in the tourism industry; it is even one of the first results if one does an Internet search for "New Mexico." Publicly-displayed plaques such as the one in figure 186 imply that the design is an equally Zia and New Mexican state symbol, and Sunface merchandise such as T-shirts, mugs, and keyrings fills the shelves of tourist shops. The Zia claim that the Sunface symbol is theirs and that it should not be abusively commercialized. In 2019, a whole exhibition was organized in Albuquerque's Indian Pueblo Cultural Center named "Ours: the Zia Sun," showing about thirty objects and one hundred digital transmedia artworks in order to explain the symbol's origins and to raise awareness of what it means and to whom it belongs, culturally.



Figure 186: Zia/New Mexico State Symbol plaque in the Sandia Mountains (photography Jimmy Emmerson)

By applying colors to it, the Zuni have reclaimed their ownership of the Sunface symbol: these four-colored versions are uniquely Zuni, contrary to the Zia's achromatic version (the same distinction can be made in relation to Hopi raincloud symbols). The addition of colors, in this case, is another form of "writing," which communicates the special meanings the colored symbol has for the tribe and allows for its immediate recognition as Zuni. Not only have the Zuni "made it new," as suggested at the beginning of this section, they have added "beautiful" colors to the "dangerous" sacred tribal legends and symbols to reclaim them from outside exploitation.

However, we cannot ignore the commercial interest of Zuni artists. Amidst stiff competition, claiming designs through colors is one way to stand out from the mass industry of the tourist's shops mentioned above. The archetypal colors in pottery and jewelry, which the Zuni also carry over onto canvas, allow immediate identification of the fashionable "Indian-Made"/ "Made in Zuni" designs with color schemes tourists can easily recognize. This transformation is a slow process, but there is no denying the influence of the modern cash economy. The Zuni Sunface, like the Zia Sunface, has become an emblem of the tribe to the non-Native American world. Contrary to a century and a half ago, colors are now destined to be sold, and thus need to best represent the "beautiful" tribe while keeping the "dangerous" well hidden, as we have seen in section 3.1.4. This new tradition therefore comes with a cost: commercialization demands a certain visibility that many Zuni are not ready to accept.

In this section, we have seen how the Zuni continue to write their history through the use of symbolic designs, now creating colored history books with the use of new materials. Petroglyphs have evolved into a new form which is a

testimony of the new skills acquired by Zuni artists, showcasing their artistic talent through the renewal and innovation of traditional techniques, as we can see in the examples of lapidary art and acrylic painting. The study of color application to symbols such as Sunface allows to observed the process through which achromatic symbols become symbolically colorful designs that are then branded as Zuni, securing the tribe's cultural ownership of these symbols and the right to use them as recognizable indications of tribal identity.

3.3 Conceptualizing Zuni Colors: Culturally-specific Codes and Cross-cultural Identities

3.3.1 The Concept of Phantom Colors: from oral to visual narrative

Zuni colors today are a blend of culturally-specific codes with cross-cultural influences, generated by the growing assimilation of Western concepts and lifestyles. Exploring the unique ways in which the Zuni conceptualize and mentally picture color will help us to understand how colors are used to adapt to change and portray their identity as Zuni in an Americanized world. In a section of his analysis on colors, Fäber Birren discusses the concept of "eidetic imagery," which he defines as a "sensory reality" (*Response* 30)." He illustrates his concept with the example of childhood imagination. According to him, children construct stories with visually and physically present toys that can be handled manually. They can mentally picture vivid stories in which "images are seen. Pictures stand before the eyes, and details are distinguished in them that may be counted and identified as hues (32)." Hence, these mentally colored images are subjected to the same laws as other sensations and perceptions; they exist somewhere between sensation and mental image. This means that the mind pictures colors, and that it constructs and reconstitutes shapes and colors.

It follows then that when a person sees a color, they connect it within their memory to all their underlying culturally-specific associations. We have seen in section 1.1.2 that the Zuni inherently associate the *a`witen/`itiwan* with Beast Gods and their respective directions, even when the color is merely mentioned. However, this chapter has shown that the Western world has a growing influence on the way the Zuni use and perceive colors, whether it is through Western education and the use of the English language, or the access to new materials.

As elements of Western lifestyle and perspective become more embedded within Zuni culture, the Zuni's culturally-specific ways of conceptualizing and mentally picturing traditional colors have correspondingly evolved and expanded.

To think about color is to have the freedom to imagine it as you wish. In his article "Beyond the Elements: Investigation of Hue," color specialist David L. Muller discusses the cultural specificity of each hue for several subjects and concludes that "For the anthropologist, these data show that the evolutionary structure of basic color terms compiled across cultures can be assessed in the perception of individuals, further bolstering psychological determinism (161)." Such "psychological determinism" is part of the construction of the self, meaning that each person might assimilate colors differently in their mental imagery. Within our minds, we have the power to create and distort colors and shapes, a mental freedom which opens endless doors in the study of color usage and perception.

A distinction can be made between "seen" colors and "felt" colors. The French philosopher Henry Maldiney suggests that mental colors belong to "space" (see section 1.3.1). This "space" is different for each culture. A Zuni bridal garment, for instance, presents a specific palette composed of principally black-and-green-on-white embroideries in patterns linked to fertility, such as cloud houses picturing flowers and dragonflies, symbols of moisture and germination, the male and female willow, water, etc. (see section 2.1.4). The wearing of such colors expresses the wish for the newly married couple to start a family. In contrast, Christian wedding dresses are traditionally pure white, which is usually related to purity (and virginity) and thus, a bride dressed in white is supposed to reside in a corresponding mental space; she is supposed to be pure, etc. This cultural nuance shows how "traditionally" colored garments, and color in general,

correspond to a code that individuals perceive according to their own specific culture and personal experience.

As we have discussed, sometimes even just the mention of colors will provoke a similar stimulus to seeing them, as they seem to exist on the mental spectrum of existing colors, subject to cultural and societal codes. Perhaps an appropriate term for these colors that link cultural color codes with the eidetic nature of colors in mental space would *phantom colors*, from the Greek *φάντασμα* (*phántasma*, meaning a phantasm, an image, apparition, or a specter). Contrary to eidetic images in general, phantom colors are culture-specific. Phantom colors are learned in a community and built up over past experiences in order to have specific meanings attached to them; they are the imprint of a color in the mental space. For instance, the Zuni associate the *a'witen/itiwan* colors with their respective directions and their Beast Gods. Depending on the context and the individual, the *a'witen/itiwan* colors may also be one of the symbolic colors of the kivas, or indicate a particular time (time of the day, season, or life cycle, as discussed in section 1.3.2), or even an object-equivalent for the bilingual Zuni (see section 3.1.1).

An interesting perspective on this phenomenon is provided by Kandinsky, who states that “as the object is not perceived but merely named, the hearer receives an abstract impression of the de-materialized object. This creates a certain inner vibration (28).” The mental functioning of color is similar to this “inner vibration,” which he describes as a “corporeal conception [...] which we may feel within us on hearing the word [...] (28).” According to the artist, hearing a word reverberates in our thoughts to “conce[ive]” or more precisely, mentally construct, the object named in our mind. Though Kandinsky is talking about objects, this

“inner vibration” is similar to what happens when we think of colors, mentally depicting the colors to give them a figural shape. For example, when Zuni hear a word such as “rosette,” they would mentally reconstruct the colors of the motif, as the colors matter as much as the shape.

Michel Pastoureau develops this idea further in his study of symbolism associated with colors in *Noir*: “What matters is the thought of red, and not the concrete and chromatic representation of the color.”¹⁰⁷ This suggests that, though deprived of visual stimulus, a phantom color doesn’t even need a specific shape to produce an imprint in association with social or cultural codes. Every thought is cultural, as it depends on our self, our education, our environment, and on the context. Thinking a color would thus invite the mind to think about the culturally-specific codes associated with it. For example, if Zuni people think about the *a’witen’itiwan*, the “vibrations” mentioned by Kandinsky will enable them to picture the colors themselves, but not only that; they will feel also feel the connection with the multiple Zuni color codes, not just through a mental imagery, but in an intricate system of connotations. For instance, we have seen that Loncassion’s use of the *a’witen’itiwan* colors on the rosette of his *Zuni Ceratops* (see section 3.2.1) was one way to show the artist’s embracing his Zuni roots through art after leaving his Western firefighting job. The Zuni will then associate the color with a succession of symbols that their cultural background has taught them, such as the mountain lion-bear-badger-wolf-eagle-mole hierarchy (see section 1.3.2), the six directions, etc.

¹⁰⁷ My translation of the original text: “Ce qui compte c’est l’idée du rouge, et non pas la représentation matérielle et chromatique de cette couleur (84).”

The first playground of phantom colors is in storytelling. When hearing oral history and folk tales, the Zuni can mentally reconstitute the stated colors and their connotations. The mention of a particular color in a story sends a stimulus, an impulse towards the brain, leading the person to imagine it and react accordingly. In traditional Zuni culture, the storytelling season allows the elders to instruct the youth on their migration history and the Creation Myth. Obviously, in Zuni tales, as in any others, colors are coded culture-specifically. Knowing these codes, Zuni storytellers can manipulate their audience's imaginative process with phantom colors. For instance, red and black are efficient to set a foreboding atmosphere in Zuni legends, since red is the color of thunder, as illustrated in a scene from Cushing's collection of legends, which precedes the death of the hero's Grandmother: "Off in the south [...] the earth trembled, and the lightning shafts flew about [...] red-bordered clouds (*Folk Tales* 128)."¹⁰⁸ Secondly and more commonly, black or the darkness of the night sets a tense atmosphere. In color theories, darkness is shown to be universally feared. Pastoreau supports this with the following statement:

Humankind has always feared darkness. Men are not nocturnal animals, have never been, and even through the ages, they more or less managed to tame the night and darkness, they remain diurnal animals, reassured by light and bright colors.¹⁰⁹

Many can relate to the experience of tension when an orator enlivens his story with a chilling event happening in the dark; the lack of light, and therefore color,

¹⁰⁸ This also explains why artists often illustrate terraced rainclouds with the red color, creating a sort of exciting foreboding association with thunder. As lightning bolts are both *c'oya* (beautiful) and *attanni* (dangerous, see section 3.2.3), and related to the weapon of the *Ahayu:ta* twins, red thunderclouds are also seen as positive.

¹⁰⁹ My translation of the original text: "L'homme a toujours eu peur du noir. Il n'est pas un animal nocturne, ne l'a jamais été, et même si au fil des siècles il a plus ou moins apprivoisé la nuit et l'obscurité, il est resté un être diurne, rassuré par la lumière, la clarté et les couleurs vives (*Noir* 28)."

can bring on a feeling of insecurity even in purely mental images, and in Zuni tales this darkness is often a symbol or an omen of danger. For instance, in the legend of "Coyote and the Badger," clouds cover the sun, announcing that the cliff on which the Coyote has rested is about to collapse (see Quam 79). The danger associated with darkness can also be found in Cushing's "The Ugly White Boy who Drove the Bear Away from the Southeast Mesa," whose white hero asks his grandmother to paint him "as frightfully as [she] can (*Folk Tales* 224)." The color used for this frightening effect is charcoal black, and the grandmother "blackened the right side of his face with soot, and painted the left side with ashes, until he looked like a veritable demon." The black color successfully mimics the "Death Demon."¹¹⁰ This can explain the Zuni association of black with the fear of the "unknown," the "otherworldly" black color, the core of the Earth, and the fourth underbelly, the land of pre-human existence and the land of the dead.

Like in the legends of many other cultures, the storyteller may play with a listener's ability to detect good or bad intentions based on the color of heroes and creatures. The way colors are mentioned in tales is a crucial part of understanding the subtext, as colors guide the reader by implying additional information about the characters that may not be explicitly given in words. Black creatures, for example, are usually a source of misfortune. Commenting on Andrew Peynetsa's "The Boy and the Deer," Tedlock specifies in a footnote that the uncle who killed the benevolent supernatural deer rode a black horse, while the uncle who rode a white horse did not commit any crime (see *Center* 27). In addition to this, he states that blackbirds are typically the transmitters of bad omens, an example of

¹¹⁰ The "Death Demon" is most probably an incarnation of witchcraft.

this in the legend of "the Girl who Took Care of the Turkeys," in which blackbirds prevent the Coyote from learning a sacred song (*Center* 69-71), whereas in the tale of the "Spirit World of the Zuni," white geese are "spoken of as a good omen" and are "believed to be the source of prosperity (Quam 54-55)." As black is the color of nadir, the land of the ancestors, this also means the storyteller only needs to compare a person to a crow or a raven for the hearer to understand that the bird symbolizes a mourning widow. The exception to this ominous association is the black crow who guided the Zuni tribe to the Middle Place.

Studying Native American legends forces Western scholars to reassess and relearn colors. This often leads to confusion and misunderstandings. For instance, the tale of the "Yellow Water Serpent's Head" (Quam 140-43) tells the story of supernatural beings who have to fight a monstrous *yellow snake* and a monstrous *blue snake* in order to seduce the priest's daughters. As we have seen in chapter 1, Alvina Quam's translation of the tales from *Shiwi'ma* into English maintains a certain source-oriented approach. As it was initially translated for readers with some degree of familiarity with Zuni culture and color symbolism, the book does not include any explanatory footnotes. The only thing accessible to non-initiated people is their own culturally-specific imprints of the colors of the yellow and blue snakes; non-Zuni readers may for example experience the phantom colors as indicative of "warmth" (yellow) and "coldness" (blue), and maybe see these colors as being in opposition to each other. This has absolutely nothing to do with Zuni color concepts, however. The key to understanding the colored snake metaphor is to be found in the symbols attached to both, the snake and its associated color. We have seen in section 3.2.2 that snakes represent the curative power of lightning (McManis 27). The culturally-specific codes or

symbols attached to the snake remain stable, but in this example, colors add a variable notion of space and time to be associated with it. Benjamin Lee Whorf, who studied the notion of time and space in the Hopi community, argues that, in Native American culture, time and space are heterogeneous ("An American Indian Model of the Universe" 123). Zuni phantom colors are chronotopes associated with spatiotemporal notions (see sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2), and we have also seen that the complementary yellow and blue association symbolizes "continuity of life." Therefore, the legend metaphorically drives the heroes to kill the "yellow snake"—the monstrous snake in the morning in the north—as well as the monstrous "blue snake"—who is the same snake in the evening in the west—in order to defeat the entire deity; both need to be defeated to end life's continuity for the snake. We can therefore conclude that colors follow and represent culturally-specific codes—in this case, notions of time, space, and complementary duality—that can be mentally associated with the shapes of animal deities.

In her article posted on TED.com, Kate Torgovnick May explains how colors serve as narrative tools. She elaborates on how blockbusters use colors to add to the narrative in four crucial ways: to simplify complex stories, to make the audience feel, to show the character's journey, and to communicate a story's ideas. We can link these same techniques with phantom colors in Zuni storytelling. First, Torgovnick May claims that, contrary to black and white movies,¹¹¹ colors help ease the audience into the story and help walk the

¹¹¹ Interestingly, though, black and white artforms also make use of phantom colors in their own way. In Phil Hughte's black and white drawings, for example, the viewer automatically fills in the colors mentally based on the suggestions of the setting and what is already expected from real-life observation, or known about the Zuni physical and cultural landscape. However, in storytelling, the audience uses verbal cues to automatically think in colors.

characters through the plot. In Zuni storytelling, phantom colors indicate notions of time and space, as in the yellow/blue snake example. The knowledge that yellow and blue are morning/north and evening/west and represent the “continuity of life” is crucial to the understanding of the snake story; without it, the audience would not grasp why colors are mentioned, or even why there is a second colored snake at all. Mentioning the color to refer to a direction or different associations of the colors, such as “coral direction,” or “yellow direction,” is a dominant feature in Zuni storytelling which allows the audience to orient themselves in the tale.

Second, Torgovnick May claims that colors evoke emotions, and illustrates this point with the example of the American computer animation studio Pixar, which creates a "color script" for each film, used to lend an atmosphere to each scene that fits within the larger story arc, like a colored storyboard. This is how Pixar can make the scene appropriately joyful or nostalgic. In Zuni storytelling, most of the *a`witen`itiwan* sacred colors have bright and heroic associations and each color can be selected according to its influence on the audience’s feelings; evoking multicolor as a phantom color carries with it a joyful feeling and the awe of beauty, contrary to evoking darkness, which gives a foreboding feeling.

Third, Torgovnick May argues that colors essentially go together with and provide information about the characters. In chapter 1, we defined the metaphor COLOR IS GUIDANCE, based on a study of the “raw” beings’ colors. In Zuni stories, the color of the hero’s clan or kiva, or the color of the deities they summon in order to heal and seek guidance all evoke phantom colors that communicate essential information about the journey of the hero to the audience, information

that only a person with an understanding of Zuni culture and the symbolic color system can comprehend.

Finally, Torgovnick May states that colors help communicate an author's story. We have already discussed how colors orient and guide the audience and create a specific atmosphere. When colors are associated with shape (such as in the example of the snakes), other culturally-specific codes can arise. Maldiney asserts that "[c]olors and shapes are inseparable."¹¹² Color and optics specialists have debated this issue in the medical field; in his 1997 article, Jules Davidoff studied patients with achromatopsia, following up on the assumption that they cannot, or only barely, distinguish between shades of color, but can see shapes perfectly. Nevertheless, in Davidoff's conclusion, he defends that the brain possesses a "pictorial register in which colors and shapes are brought together, an internal color space which serves as a memory store, and a color-naming center (qtd. Hardin 10)." This seems to support the idea that colors and shapes are deeply intertwined. Following the archetypal principles (see section 1.3.4), colors and shapes are usually perceived and thought simultaneously, as the brain would in most cases associate a color with a shape to facilitate cognition. For the Zuni, this is even more relevant, because as we have seen, there is no equivalent *Shiwi'ma* term for "color." Instead, their notions of color are formed via the system of object-equivalents we explored in section 3.1.1, which makes it logical to conclude that they would always associate a shape with a color.

The "memory store" role adds a third essential notion: color, shape, and *object* together contain culturally-specific codes. This is what Kandinsky calls the

¹¹² My translation of the original French text: "Mais couleurs et formes sont inséparables (196)."

"spiritual conception" of an object, which he illustrates with the example of the red tree: red plus the object "tree" gives the spiritual value of "autumn" (83). According to this reasoning, memory plays the role of the "object-ification." Memory links a color to an object. The brain recognizes colors and shapes and associates them with culturally-specific ideas, which themselves result from perception. For example, for the Zuni, white is the color of healing power, and when associated with a figure, it is perceived as being a supernatural character. An eagle on its own is the representative of the sky, a messenger from the Sun Father. However, in Zuni legends, when associated with the color white, the eagle becomes a supernatural being that can take the shape of a human. This is illustrated in many legends, such as Cushing's "Youth and His Eagle," in which the female deity is described as "a beautiful maiden [...] in garments of dazzling whiteness, softness, and beauty (*Folk Tales* 34)." Similarly, in Tedlock's "The Boy and the Deer," the sons of the sun are supernatural beings or "daylight persons"—they are "dressed in white (*Finding* 11)."

Maldiney's study explains the "phatic," from the Ancient Greek *φατικός*, "discursive," aspect of colors and shapes that precedes any real objectification, and states that "[t]he phatic moment [...] isn't bound to any construed objectivity [...] it belongs to the most original *Erleben* state; it is itself the immediate communication in presence that is sensitive-intuitive, that we have with phenomena."¹¹³ The *Erleben* state is that which precedes the "objectification" meaning, before people associate color sensation with objects, and so is the

¹¹³ My translation of the original text: "Le moment phatique (Erwin Strauss) ou thymique (Ludwig Binswanger) dont nous parlons ne se rattache à aucune objectivité constituée." (139). « Il appartient, écrit Strauss, à l'état de l'*Erleben* le plus originaire ; il est lui-même la communication immédiatement présente, sensible-intuitive, que nous avons avec les phénomènes (54)."

culturally-free color pictured in the mind, just before culturally-specific associations come into play. For instance, when the Zuni hear about the yellow snake in the previous example, they would first picture the snake in that color. Then once the object is mentally pictured, the Zuni would attribute to it all the culturally-specific meanings associated with that color. This second state is what Maldiney refers to as the *Erlebnis* state, a culturally-specific object towards which people's thoughts are heading. Maldiney asserts that "a color, a shape, a shape-color, or a color shape have a *sense* in the opening that introduces us to the world before the identification of any object (my emphasis)."¹¹⁴ This "*sense*" is clarified as "belong[ing] to the *how* of [people's] presence in the world and not of the *what* of a representation."¹¹⁵ In the *Erleben* state, colors connect people with the world before being associated with any concrete object; these object associations occur in the *Erlebnis* state.

The *Erlebnis* state thus is the key to the understanding of Zuni phantom color codes, as it is bound to their life experience. With this in mind, let's return to the example of the yellow/blue snake. The Native American *Erlebnis* approach to colors stems from their experience, meaning their association with this coded, culturally specific object: the snake. For Christian cultures, the snake often is associated with the temptation and sin that led to the Fall and exclusion from Eden, whereas for the Zuni, the reptile is revered for its curative powers. Thus, yellow and blue are associated with the object-snake present in Native American people's memory and change the snake's meaning. This is when the third

¹¹⁴ My translation of the original text: "Une couleur, une forme, une forme-couleur, une couleur forme ont un sens, dans l'ouverture duquel nous sommes introduits au monde avant l'identification d'aucun objet (139)."

¹¹⁵ My translation of the original text: "Ce sens était celui du *comment* de leur présence au monde et non le *quoi* d'une représentation (139)."

element of Davidoff's conclusion comes into play: the "color-naming center" based on one's culture. This "center" is the cognitive process carried out by the figurative center of the brain that associates a color with its name. In order to understand the Zuni color meaning, we need to take into account the *Shiwi'ma* color terms and the specific objects each color relates to, such as corn, ochers, azurite, etc.

We can organize the parts of the process concerning Zuni phantom-colors in the following chart:

Pictorial Register: <i>(Perception)</i>	Internal Memory Store <i>(Memory center)</i>	Color naming center <i>(Association with objects)</i>
Color and Shape	Object 1	Color and Object 2
Culture-free/ <i>Erleben</i>	Culturally specific/ <i>Erlebnis</i>	From perception to cultural specifics

Figure 187: Conceptualization of phantom colors

A yellow ("like corn," object 2) snake (object 1) would be "a snake yellow like corn," thus involving the object corn and the object snake. If two culturally-specific objects are brought together, twice as many feelings/symbols are attached to it. Therefore, there is a double signification created with the *object color term*, which relates to the *Shiwi'ma* language, and the *colored object*. The corn that is at the origin of the *Shiwi'ma* yellow color term is sacred as we have seen in chapter 1 with the PEOPLE ARE CORN/ CORN IS PEOPLE metaphors showing the equation of corn with life, as corn is historically the Zuni's most essential food source.

Here is the example of the yellow snake once again, combining the *Shiwi'ma* color term with the *a'witen/itiwan* symbolism, showing all the stages of association that Zuni brain experiences and processes almost instantaneously.

Pictorial Register: (Perception)	Internal Memory Store (Memory center) Object 1	Color naming center (Association with objects) Object 2
Yellow	Snake	<i>lupc²i-k^wa</i> : yellow corn + north
<i>Erleben</i>	Healing powers	Zuni life and north/ <i>Erlebnis</i>

Figure 188: Conceptualization of phantom colors with the example of the yellow snake

Thus, the yellow snake is associated with the north, and the *Shiwi'ma* color term further associates yellow with corn, which is life. Similarly, the Zuni transpose associations to an object 2 when a color and an object are stated. The yellow snake is a being with powers related to the north, and thus includes the potential associations related to the YELLOW IS BEGINNINGS metaphor seen in section 1.3.2, meaning winter, morning, birth, etc. The phantom colors are thus conceptualized colors that add meaning to a shape, with the ability to orient the listener and manipulate their feelings, making the mental image clearer, and anticipating the next possible turn of the story.

However, as we have seen in section 3.1.1, the English language has replaced *Shiwi'ma* as the first language spoken in Zuni homes. The storytelling season in winter, called *Delap'na:we*, has also practically disappeared; the Zuni now usually live individual houses, so the grandparents who remember the tales are no longer living with their children and grandchildren, which makes the transmission of knowledge more difficult. Though some households still practice storytelling, it is becoming a rarer and rarer experience. As a consequence, the Zuni have created cultural events to prevent this vital part of their culture from disappearing. The ZYEP (Zuni Youth Enrichment Program) has found a project called the Oral History Theater, in partnership with the A:shiwi A:wani Museum and Heritage Center, whose purpose is to connect the younger and older

generations through the cultural tradition of storytelling. The Zuni are in possession of the 1960s audio recordings of storytelling from the Doris Duke Collection, which inspired this project. Directed by the University of Utah from 1966 to 1972, this collection includes the transcripts of interviews with Native Americans from tribes located in Utah and the neighboring states, including Zuni living on the reservation and in cities, in order to document American history from their point of view. The ZYEP has created a partnership with the Oral History Theater to produce to a two-night theater performance, open to the public, which makes use of recorded *Shiwi'ma* stories, and participants from three different generations work for two months to write a script in *Shiwi'ma*, create the sets and costumes, and rehearse.

As we have already stated, the non-*Shiwi'ma*-speaking youth no longer understand the entirety of the Zuni color naming center. Though they associate a *Shiwi'ma* term with a shade, they have lost much of the Zuni lexical dynamism, such as the notion of “going towards another shade.” Instead, the “color naming center” has been replaced with English connotations, which adds a third object to the semiotic process. Nevertheless, teachers and clan members still teach the association of colors with places. If we go back to the yellow snake example in this context, we can draw the following chart:¹¹⁶

Pictorial Register:	Internal Memory Store	Color naming center (Shiwi'ma)	Color naming center (English)
(Perception)	<i>(Memory center)</i> Object 1	<i>(association with objects)</i> Object 2	<i>(Association with objects)</i> Object 3
Yellow	Snake	North	Cheerfulness, the sun or illness/cowardice
Erleben	Healing powers	North/ <i>Erlebnis</i>	Happiness/warmth <i>/Erlebnis</i>

Figure 189: Conceptualization of phantom colors with the example of the yellow snake and Western associations

¹¹⁶ See appendix 7 for a study of the *Erleben/Erlebnis* state of all six *a'witen/itiwan* colors.

The *Shiwi'ma* color naming center has partially disappeared since the language is no longer understood. The Zuni youth have lost the notion of “corn” and thus the notion of life associated with corn. Nevertheless, the association of yellow with the north prevails, and English culturally-specific associations replace the notions of corn as flesh or life. In the youth’s mind, the yellow snake is a snake from the north (Zuni associations) that can be a bringer of happiness or illness/cowardice (Anglophone associations). Although participants in the theater project have reported an increase of 26% in favor of speaking the Zuni language (according to ZYEP), the youth are also transforming *Shiwi'ma* phantom colors with this interesting and complex cross-cultural approach, showing us that phantom colors are not merely culture-specific, but also generation-specific.

The study of phantom colors reveals that understanding the way colors are mentally pictured is an essential factor in understanding Zuni color perception. The functioning of phantom colors creates a window into the Zuni’s traditional and cross-cultural worldview, showing how colors are mentally processed to create an imagined narrative that mixes ancestral Zuni and Western codes to create new ones and contributes to redefining the notion of Zuni identity in a Westernized world. The paragraphs that follow will offer an exploration of phantom colors in visual art, showing how Zuni visual artists make use of this concept to play with suggestions of culturally-coded colors without the latter necessarily being physically present in their artwork.

In storytelling, phantom colors assist the audience in understanding the entire narrative, and the intention of the speaker. Zuni artists can take this concept even further, with visual narrative entirely made of phantom colors. Visual artists play with a combination of phantom colors and haptic colors so that the spectator

envisions the colors of the initial design even without those same colors having to be physically present. It is thus possible to subtly suggest many colors along with their associated culturally-specific codes in color variations or even achromatic and monochromatic designs. For instance, Keith Edaakie often shows a white raincloud in his “Native Strong” shirts, which alludes to the red/yellow/blue colors of the raincloud design (see figure 165, section 3.1.3). The following paragraphs will explore how phantom colors can be produced and employed in visual art by studying some of the notable examples in Zuni painting and drawing.

In her 1985 article on Zuni petroglyphs, entitled "Images of Power and the Power of Images: The Significance of Rock Art for Contemporary Zunis," Jane Young showed tribe members Zuni petroglyphs and asked them to explain what the design represented for them (11). Most interviewees answered with fragments of myths: characters, heroes, references to places, etc., which allowed her conclude that petroglyphs are metonyms of narrative, "because they have the power to evoke parts of tales and myths and, furthermore, they do so in an affective manner." For instance, she refers to designs that were later used in pottery, such as the pecked, water-related animals like frogs and toads, and how their image is meant to call rain down to the Zunilands. She also talks about the anthropomorphic figures with tails that the Zuni identify as their "raw" selves, the *K'ia-pin=á-hâ-i* (see section 1.1.2). A passage from the *Chimik'yanakona pename* following the birth of the *Ahayu:ta* twins and the ascendance of the people to the surface tells the story of how Zuni ancestors were once “uncooked” creatures. The *Ahayu:ta* twins washed them, cut their tails, separated their webbed fingers, and removed their sex from the top of their heads. In doing so, the twins "cooked"

the Zuni and hardened them with fire—the same fire that came from the twin’s lightning arrow and hardened the Earth (see Young, *Signs* 122-24). Young continues her analysis by explaining that viewing the petroglyphs elicited a strong emotional response and that their references to sacred figures of Zuni oral history “evoke[d] stories (130, 134).” This analysis can be transposed into the domain of phantom colors, which similarly refer to pieces of Zuni knowledge and history and act as metonyms of sacred concepts.

In *Signs from the Ancestors*, Young found that when the Zuni are shown



Figure 190: Close-up of Keith Edaakie's Bishla:shiwani A:wan Heshoda:we (see section 2.2.4)

petroglyphs of Beast Gods, they systematically “describ[e] their associations with specific colors and directions (130).” This response shows that the Zuni think about achromatic petroglyphs in colors. It is a similar process as the one described in chapter 3.2.3,

through which the petroglyph motifs became colored in jewelry. However, the colors are evoked mentally through the object represented (Beast Gods in Young's example), drawing on the cultural *Erlebnis* associated with the colored object. These associations allow artists to incorporate powerful symbolic designs based on petroglyphs that are linked to the *a'witen/itiwan* color system. For example, the Zuni would always mentally picture an achromatic mountain lion petroglyph as being yellow and associate it with the north. This also means that even non-yellow mountain lions refer to the yellow north. Keith Edaakie's painting for the Map Art project represents a seemingly colorless or in any case

alternatively-colored mountain lion formed by the white clouds in the sky, but the artist confirms the image's grounding in direction, which in turn suggests its phantom color:

So, this is the mountain lion because it's up north, and also that with the medicine fraternities there's two animals that are associated with them, and one of them is the mountain lion, and the other one is the wolf. And so, that's what I wanted to do, to kind of in the clouds, kind of represent that mountain lion inside the clouds there. (My transcription)

Although this representation of the cloudy mountain lion in acrylics might not seem to correspond to established color symbolism, a Zuni immediately understands the yellow-north reference and connects it with the corresponding medicine fraternity and its symbolic directional color. Furthermore, since we know that the yellow mountain lion is the big brother of all other colors and animals, and is at the top of the color hierarchy (see chapter 1), not only do the Zuni picture the color yellow with the northern connotation, they also picture this color's relationship and interconnection to all the other *a'witen/itiwan* colors. Young explains that many of the Zuni who associated the petroglyphs with the Beast Gods and directional colors illustrated their argument with the tale of the Giant Water Spider of the Creation Myth, who spread his legs out to touch the yellow north, blue west, red south, white east, multicolored zenith, and black nadir. This mental image is what allows the phantom yellow of the mountain lion to always be mentally pictured in connection to the rest of the *a'witen/itiwan* colors.

Young theorizes that achromatic petroglyphs are metonyms of narrative, and we can see that phantom colors are deeply embedded in these narratives. Even non-representational petroglyphs that tell a story follow a similar process, and again, the Zuni do not even need to physically represent the colors in order

to mentally picture them. For instance, the achromatic JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE spiral refers to the origins of Zuni history. This suggests that the middle of the spiral is home, *Halona Itiwana*, the Middle Place. Consequently, all of the *a'witen/itiwan* colors metaphorically surround the center of the spiral. Thus, the mere presence of the achromatic petroglyph suggests all of these color associations, and shows how the entire representational system is so entrenched in Zuni history that Zuni respondents, especially *Shiwi'ma*-speaking Zuni, will automatically mentally picture the invisible phantom colors along with all their complex associations. We can combine this insight with what we have learned about the color terms in section 3.1.1 in the phantom color chart (see figure 191) corresponding to the Middle Place symbol:

Pictorial Register:	Internal Memory Store	Color naming center						
<i>(Perception)</i>	<i>(Memory center)</i>	<i>(Association with objects)</i>						
		<i>Object 1</i>	<i>Object 2</i>	<i>Object 3</i>	<i>Object 4</i>	<i>Object 5</i>	<i>Object 6</i>	<i>Object 7</i>
Achromatic	Middle Place	North/yellow	West/blue	South/red	East/white	Zenith/multicolor	Nadir/black	
		fups'ikwa (corn)	ti'akwa (turquoise/blue sky)	shilowakwa (coral)	k'ohakwa (corn)	K'uchuchukwa C'oya (mottled/Beautiful)	k'wi'ni'kwa (dark/no light)	
Erleben	Migration Myth/Home	mountain lion	bear	badger	wolf	eagle	mole	
		yellow corn north mountain lion	turquoise sky blue west bear	coral south badger	white corn east wolf	zenith/beautiful eagle	nadir dark (no light) mole	

Figure 191: Phantom colors chart for the JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE achromatic design.

The JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE petroglyph thus refers to all the colors and the Beast Gods protecting *Halona Itiwana* because their colors surround the village. And if we take the *Shiwi'ma* naming center into account, it carries with it the *Erlebnis* object associated with each *Shiwi'ma* color term; for instance,

k'ohakwa etymologically means white corn, so this association is also mentally pictured. The achromatic JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE therefore sums up all the symbolic associations with colors: places, Beast Gods and object-equivalents.



Figure 192: From left to right, Knife Wing of the priesthood of the bow (Cushing, *Zuni Fetiches* 53), and Knife Wing petroglyphs (Young *Signs from the Ancestors* 84).

We can find another example in the Zuni Knife Wing figure, or '*Achialataba* in *Shiwi'ma*, which the Ancestral pueblo people pecked south of *Dowa:Yalanne* (see Young, *Signs* 82). The bird-like creature immediately evokes the multicolored eagle. In Cushing's depiction of a Knife Wing seal, which he reproduced based on his own initiation ritual, the Rainbow Man's presence on top of the seal cements the association of the anthropomorphic bird with the multicolored sky. When the Zuni see an achromatic Knife Wing petroglyph, they immediately associate the symbol with the phantom otherworldly multicolor and connect the bird with the sky and the realm of the Sun Father, who represents all the colors in the world.

Artists can of course play with phantom colors to help with the narrative of their own works. In 2019, Keith Edaakie exhibited a painting done specifically for the ARTZ opening in which he illustrated the outlines of an antelope kachina. He designed the antelope with a software illustrator and printed it out as a vinyl

sticker stencil using a plot cutter. He then placed the stencil on his canvas and spray-painted over it. Because he wanted people to recognize the kachina in the design, he painted *Mahawe*, the antelope kachina (see Wright, *Kachinas of the Zuni* 100), in the foreground, in an effective contrast with the white color of the stencil. Edaakie explained the origins of the traditional symbolic antelope design in silversmithing and lapidary art and the connection of his family's artisan practice to his canvas:

So, my grandfather and my dad, that was a silversmith too as well, that's what the inspiration was basically. [...] So, this is his bolo work, this is a bolo that he created; And so, I got it on the computer, and I created that same design as his work there. And that was basically the start of this painting back then, spray-painting the white jewelry stencil on the back of it, and then from there, basically what it is, an antelope dancer and so that's why you see, the kachina right there, the antelope dancer. [...It was] his trademark [design], there were a lot of these kachina-type figures that he would create and seeing the photo of his work, I wanted to, kind of represent what he did, and through my two-dimensional art, because he also was a muralist too. (My transcription)

With this painting, the artist acknowledges his grandfather, creator of the antelope bolo and his parents, silversmiths and lapidary artists. He also included an extra-tribal viewpoint in the work, explaining that he

...had another friend of mine come in, and he [...] lived in the Philippines, and he said when he saw this, he thought it was one of those beetles that had those pinching claws in the front. So, that's what he originally thought that was on the headdress there is, to make that connection and basically tie all three of them together. (My transcription)

For Edaakie, the painting represents and honors the relationships, Zuni and other, he forged with these three people. The interpretation of his friend from the Philippines also shows that non-Native American people would have trouble

Pictorial Register: Internal Memory Store		Color naming center		
(Perception)	(Memory center)	(Association with objects)		
	Object 1	Object 2	Object 3	Object 4
White	Antelope	Blue Turquoise: oneness between physical and spiritual belief fi'akwa (turquoise/blue sky)	Red Coral: warmth and ocean life, sunrise shilowakwa (coral)	White mother of pearl: intuition and imagination k'ohakwa (corn)
Erleben	clan (extinct)/Mahawe (rain bringer)	turquoise sky blue/ oneness between physical and spiritual self	Warm sunrise, coral, ocean life	white corn east/intuition & imagination
				jet k'wi'ni'kwa (dark/no light) dark (no light)

Figure 193: Phantom color process in painted reiteration of bolo tie motif

understanding the symbol, whereas a Zuni would recognize the antelope kachina immediately from traditional silversmithing patterns.¹¹⁷ Moreover, when seeing Edaakie's white stenciled version of the jewelry motif, the Zuni would immediately picture the archetypal phantom colors of traditional lapidary art in their mental space, since silversmiths have reproduced this design in these colors since the arrival of commercialized silverwork a century ago. We can therefore trace this phantom color process in the chart in figure 193. Once we compile the meanings of the corresponding stones in silversmithing as seen in section 2.2.2, we can theorize that the Zuni color-naming center simply adds them to the antelope, so



Figure 194: From left to right: Keith Edaakie's grandfather's antelope kachina bolo (courtesy of Keith Edaakie), and Keith Edaakie, Antelope Kachina, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 2019 (my photo)

¹¹⁷ In contrast, the antelope kachina's actual colors look nothing like the lapidary version. The kachina interpreter's dominant colors are yellow and brown (according to Edaakie) and black (according to Wright) to evoke the antelope's fur and antlers, whereas Edaakie's grandfather's lapidary work follows the traditional colors of the artform, that is to say: red coral, black jet, blue turquoise, and white abalone shell, or mother-of-pearl, the same Zuni traditional jewelry colors that are found in Rainbow Man and Knife Wing designs.

Edaakie's achromatic design would then refer to blue turquoise, red coral, white mother of pearl, and black jet. However, even with the level of detail in the above chart, we have barely scratched the surface of the complexity of the Zuni aesthetic experience, because the colors also represent the cyclical four *a'witen* which call other associations to mind, such as the four seasons, four years, four worlds, four protective animal-deities, the four cardinal directions, and so forth. Furthermore, Edaakie has hidden another symbol in the painting. The muted purple lines behind the white-outlined kachina show the fragment of the seemingly transparent Edaakie Art brand raincloud symbol we discussed in section 3.1.3, suggesting the phantom colors of red, blue, and yellow together within the background (see the explanation for the raincloud color symbolism in section 2.1.5). This form of play with phantom colors is typical of the painter's style. For example, in his *Summer Messengers* bird painting, there is a barely visible pottery Rainbird symbol etched beneath the purple, blue, black and yellow layers. The Rainbird shape itself automatically refers to black-and-red-on-white archetypal phantom colors of pottery even in this whiteish outline, showing how colors and shapes are interconnected. Similarly, in his turtle painting, the observer needs to look closely to decipher the more abstractly represented all-white raincloud terrace symbol, which is usually polychromatic, and the hachured lines off to the side, as well as the dotted white Milky Way line, which would usually be black and white; all of these symbolic designs are related to the Turtle clan, now extinct. The phantom colors are clearly mentally pictured, as are all of

the meanings related to pottery motifs, so once again, there is no need for these precise colors to be visually present here, as the symbol itself represents them.



Figure 195: Keith Edaakie, close-ups of details from *Summer Messengers*, and *Turtle*, acrylic on canvas, 2019 (my photos).

Edaakie's painting demonstrates how painters can project phantom colors within their work to tell a story, and how they establish their narrative intentions even before they start painting. The latter can be seen in connection to Manlio Brusatin's notion of "antigraphice" in his 1983 *Storia dei colori*; the term is derived from the Greek *ἀντί*, meaning opposite and before, and *γραφικός*, meaning belonging to painting or drawing, picturesque, of or for writing (82). Antigraphice is the moment that comes before painting, before drawing; it is the intention of the artist when he reflects on the color he will use, his projection of the color palette onto the blank surface before actually applying it. These mentally-pictured colors must also include the phantom colors the artist imagines; the antigraphice colors represent the colors that the artist thinks of using in order to create the metonyms of narrative he wants to project on the canvas. They are both the

objective *Erleben* colors—mimesis—and the culturally-determined *Erlebnis* phantom colors—symbolic.

Phantom colors have probably long been employed in Zuni oral history and storytelling, but only in the contemporary context have they been assimilated in the visual arts. On kiva walls, the Ancestral Pueblo groups took great care in developing the exact shades to represent the color they wanted to illustrate. Now that the Zuni have mastered the multiple techniques and extended color palette associated with acrylic, oil, and spray-painting, they are imagining and projecting color and color associations before applying the actual colors on their canvases. For example, Keith Edaakie focuses on a harmony of color combinations within the composition, which he implements in his paintings with new techniques. His favorite color combination is an "outer space" purplish/blue. He states: "This was like some of the favorite things that I like to do. These were all done with spray paint, and so, this is the type of things that I kind of wanted to do here, so the outer space, yeah, inspiration (my transcription)." He thought out and applied the colors in order to give an otherworldly feeling with a background that mixes purple and black. The colors he chooses lay the foundations of the atmosphere in his paintings, showing how the artist not only imagines and projects the antigraphice phantom colors while planning out and picturing the end result they will produce, but also selects colors that add narrative to the painting.

Another subtle example of the link between phantom and antigraphice colors can be found in Eldred Sanchez's painting of the *Kokokshi* or *Paiyetamu* exhibited at the Zuni Visitor Center. Sanchez belongs to the second generation of Zuni painters, together with the masters Duane Dishta, Alex Seowtewa, and Phil Hughte. A common subject between them was one of the female variations

of the rainmaker kachina, *Kokokshi*, the "Good or Beautiful Kachina (Wright, *Kachinas of the Zuni* 85)," or *Paiyetamu*, the God of Music, who is related to the Corn Maidens and whose body is composed of multicolored corn in reference to the *a'witen/itiwan* symbolism. The antigraphice composition Sanchez' painting with a tempest in the background includes the colors that refer to the six kivas with the snow (winter/yellow), the rain (blue/water), the sun (red/summer), and



Figure 196: Eldred Sanchez, *Kokokshi or Paiyetamu (?)*, probably oil on canvas, 2002 (courtesy of the Zuni Visitor Center, my photo).

the lightning (white, light-giving) as the earthly colors, and the two otherworldly colors represented by the rainbow and clouds (multicolor, cloudy heavens) and the ceramic pot (black, cave/womb). This means that to reveal the painting's narrative, the observer must understand both the antigraphice intention in the background composition that sets the atmosphere as well suggesting the phantom colors of kiva symbolism and their correspondence to the

a'witen/itiwan, which will be addressed in more detail in section 3.3.3.

Further understanding of the antigraphice process of projecting colors in composition can be gained from Elroy Natachu Jr.'s explanations of the stages his art goes through. He first thinks about the colors and the symbols he wants to

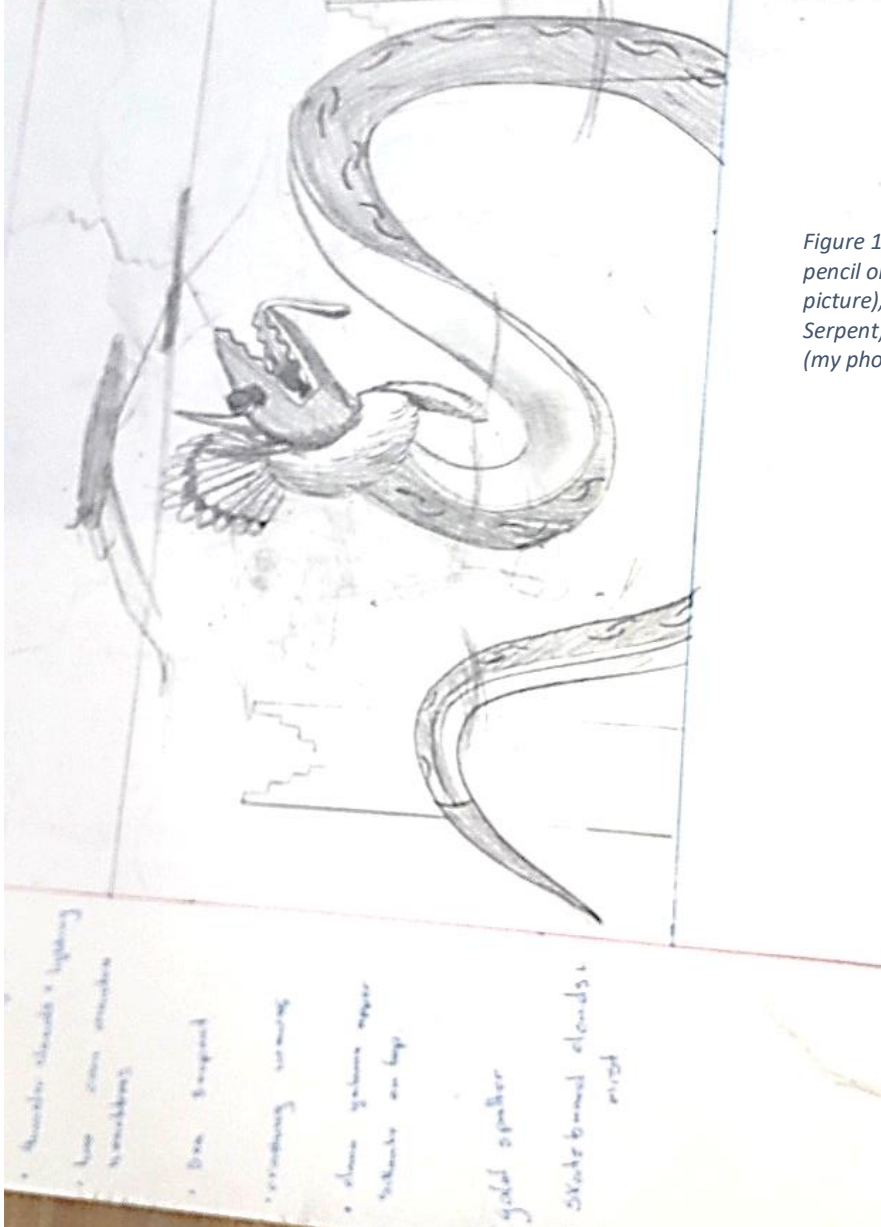


Figure 197: Elroy Natachu Jr., pencil on paper, 2019 (my picture), Ko'loowisi (Plumed Serpent) copy of a greeting card (my photo).

place in his background. Then, he consults religious leaders to learn about the colors of the kachina that he plans to paint and experiments with different patterns and colors in sketches in order to plan out the symbols and color combinations that he will apply:

So, this one's the beginning step, so before I even get to painting, I have to... my mind is in sort of that realm of [where] I have to sketch everything down, so this is my process for creating the paintings. I try not to come up with a title already, so I put it down... Especially for art shows, I need to write down the dimensions, the year it was made, what sort of medium, and then I write down my thought process. Maybe I need a certain type of background that I'm envisioning. (My transcription)

During the preliminary sketching process, he lays out his thoughts and adds comments on composition, embroidery patterns, and colors he would like use. In short, he projects mental colors onto his sketches in order to envision the final result. This can be seen in how he presents a sketch of one of his paintings of *Kolowisi*:

So, with those, I got like basic sketches where I just wanna leave a little bit more work because I haven't really set on this idea so I might change it, or I might think some more. So, this one's another painting that's in the work. It's ... kind of has that glower feel as a dark looming creature. So, it's supposed to represent our stories in our migrations or foundation stories of the Great Flood. So, I have the sea serpent here, and these two pillars are representing a brother and sister that gave their lives for the actual bringing down in the water. (My transcription)

The final result may differ from his sketchbook notes. For instance, in this antigraphic stage he had planned to add gold coloring, part of his trademark style, to the *Kolowisi* painting, as indicated in his notes. But in the final version, he altered his intention midway and replaced the gold with a much more somber coloration to enhance the "dark looming" atmosphere. These visual colors, applied after the projection phase is over and the artist has already started his

painting, are thus *prographice*, representing the ultimate choice of the artist to modify the initial *antigraphice* intention. The final visible colors in the artwork are the result of both the *antigraphice* and *prographice* processes, while the symbolic phantom colors seem to rely more heavily on the projection and planning carried out by the artist during the *antigraphice* stage.



Figure 198: Marcus Homer, *And Everything Nice*, ink, 1991 (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo).

In black-and-white artwork, which became especially popular after Hughe published his cartoons of Cushing in the late 1990s,¹¹⁸ phantom colors are even more relevant. There is a clear Western influence in black-and-white art, whose European roots date back to 15th-century printing, in contrast to the Zuni's

¹¹⁸ See chapter 3.2.2.

traditionally colorful approach. The colors themselves are invisible and it is up to the imagination of the observer to determine them based only on suggestions of darker or lighter tones.

Painter and potter Marcus Omer's black-and-white print figured above is entitled *And Everything Nice*. Omer's title plays with English/Zuni subtext in reference to the children's rhyme "boys are made of snips and snails and puppy dog's tales, girls are made of sugar and spice and everything nice," thus mixing the Western expectation of traditional gender attributes with the Zuni ideal of femininity, as here "Everything nice" applies to the six colored Corn Maidens who represent everything good, as well as the Zuni ideal of k'okshi, (to be good and beautiful) that we discussed in section 2.1.5. Both of these are implicitly linked with the concept of *co'ya*, meaning beautiful and multicolor. Simultaneously, the title indirectly hints at a parallel idea of what they are "made of," and we have seen that the Corn Maidens were made of corn which is seen as the most important and sacred source of life for the Zuni (see section 1.3.2).

The painting uses "non-colors" to depict the multicolor concept inherent in the Zuni notion of the ideal. The art itself is representative, but not the colors, as the lack of color does not allow the observer to identify the specific direction of the Corn Maiden, or the multicolored reference; nevertheless, a Zuni person can immediately color the black-and-white kachina, mentally picturing a white miha cape with black and green embroidery, the Corn Maiden grinding colored corn, and the raincloud symbol pictured in its default three colors. We have seen in the previous section that colors give the audience ways to understand and orient themselves within a tale. In visual art, the choice of a non-color medium may intentionally deprive the spectator of the colors that would contribute to

understanding the narrative, and instead create a new achromatic script relying on phantom colors that can be hinted through subtext, such as the title, or the associations of the represented figures. Once this message is clear to the viewers, they may mentally recolor the black-and-white artwork with the information gathered.

Phantom colors in visual art depend on the observer's imagination to complete the image according to their own personal and culturally-specific codes. Artists play with the individual replacement of certain colors with other colors, evoking them only through their phantom associations. They also use non-colors to suggest an implicitly colored narrative within the seemingly blank slate of a black-and-white image. The observer must therefore take on an active role in processing the painting and reconstituting its colors in his or her mental imagery in order to understand the narrative. In oral narratives as well as in visual art, phantom colors contain fragments of culturally-specific codes related to the tribe's and the artist's identity as Zuni, but this identity and the mentally-pictured colors that accompany it are also evolving with the integration of extra-tribal cultural elements and aesthetic concepts. The following section will study these cross-cultural meanings in painting that reveal how Zuni artists conceive their culture and identity in an increasingly Westernized world.

3.3.2 Case Studies of Allegorical Background Colors

Throughout this chapter, we have discussed how the Zuni use color to transmit knowledge, keep tribal secrets hidden from foreigners, and as a trademark to distinguish Zuni artwork from that of other tribes. The Zuni's unique mental conception of colors has also been shown to act as a tool with which to convey specific messages in visual art. The symbolic value of colors has evolved and is no longer exclusive to the six sacred colors, having drawn inspiration from Western color systems along the way. In addition to culturally-specific phantom colors, artists play with cross-cultural color codes, using color in a kind of allegorical sign language that can take some thought to decipher. As we study some examples of the color messages in the creations of contemporary painters, we will need to be able to understand and analyze both Zuni and Western color codes in order to understand how the Zuni depict themselves as modern artists of the Zuni tribe.

As discussed in chapter 2, painting on canvas is a relatively recent artform in the tribe, with only the last three generations of Zuni having had the opportunity to train and then pass down their training in this medium. Natachu Jr. explains how this intergenerational influence caused his style resembles Duane Dishta's:

But before then, I was overly influenced by another painter who was in there, Duane Dishta. He was related to me through my family, my late uncle, so that's why a lot of my work and his work have similarities. There's a lot of attention to detail, but mine is more detail-oriented. Because he would put a lot of detail, but he wouldn't go in-depth into like in a lot of the shading and things like that. (My transcription)

The details in Dishta's work were mostly on the kachina, and usually the background was a village scene containing few if any symbolic elements. Gradually, however, inspiration from Western styles, both representational and

abstract, began to appear in paintings, especially in the backgrounds. In painting, colors create form; while the human eye sees shapes, depth and dynamic movement, on the canvas itself there are merely layers of colors applied with different techniques. Applying any sort of colors on a white surface—whether it is pencil colors, felt pen, watercolors, oils, or acrylics—is color-layering, until the shapes appear to the human eye. In Zuni painting and other visual arts, colors and shape contain meaning on their own, as well as meanings they acquire through association with other elements. The latest generation of Zuni artists practices building in layers of colors, combining both the Western and Zuni color significations to create their own language, and hiding messages and whole stories within the background, the symbolism of which can easily be overlooked if the observer does not study them closely.



Figure 199: Larry Loretto, *Bad Moon Rising Series*, felt pen and ink on paper, laminated, 1991 (courtesy of the Heard Museum, my photo)

Artist Larry Loretto provides one of the first examples of this in his 1991 series of Surface felt pen drawings entitled *Bad Moon Rising* (figure 199). Loretto

is a skilled silversmith and is admired for his inlay and channel inlay designs; his bracelets and cuffs are particularly popular. His work in this medium can be distinguished by the regularity of the design, with smooth and well-polished bands of stones evenly divided into rectangles by silver channel framing. He also uses other designs such as the “shadow box,” consisting of a cutout top layer that is usually domed and soldered to a solid bottom layer. Interestingly, his felt pen drawings, now thirty years old, look nothing like the symmetrical lapidary work that is his current specialty. The drawings are saturated with flashy colors in the background, as Loretto uses a palette ranging from pink and purple to shades of blues and greens juxtaposed with asymmetrical black lines, giving them a dynamic and almost nightmarish atmosphere. For example, instead of its traditional flat rectangular mouth, Loretto drew his Surface with a round mouth that seems to express anguish, especially on the second panel, somewhat evocative of Edvard Munch’s 1893 expressionistic work, *The Scream*. The title of the piece is of course a reference to the hit song “Bad Moon Rising” written by

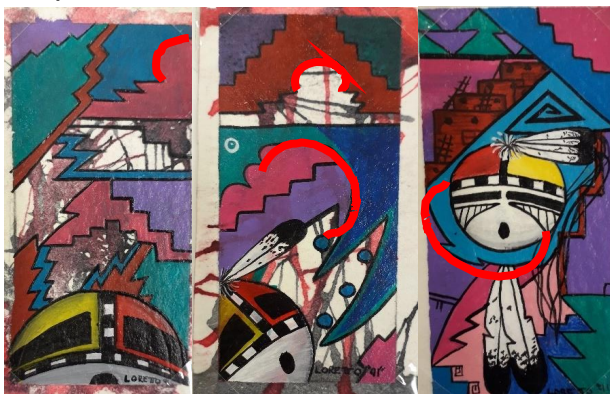


Figure 200: Emphasized “bad moon” in red

John Fogerty for the Creedence Clearwater Revival’s 1969 *Green River* album. As we will see in more detail, the song metaphorically refers to apocalyptic weather that threatens to take one’s life. The

following paragraphs will present my own interpretation of the artwork, which I see as illustrating the couplets of the song to create a further metaphorical image of the impact of Westernization within Zuni culture.

From the point of view of the *a'witen/itiwan* system, except for the Surface and the blue-green related to water, the colors make no sense. The artist plays with the use of Western complementary colors, green and purple, to offset the Surface's primary colors, red and yellow. This causes the traditional hues of the Surface to stand out clearly against what appears to be the color chaos of the apocalyptic background. Facing the Surface is the "bad moon rising," an indicator of change, represented in a crescent-shaped line (emphasized in red in figure 200) that affects the weather until it overwhelms the Surface. This "bad moon" is an outlined half-circle, void of any color, which comes closer to the Surface on each panel until it surrounds it in the third.

We can align excerpts from the lyrics with the colors and shapes in Loretta's drawings. The first couplet goes as follows:

I see the bad moon a-rising
I see trouble on the way
I see earthquakes and lightnin'
I see bad times today
Don't go around tonight
Well it's bound to take your life
There's a bad moon on the rise

This couplet is represented in the first panel and introduces the Surface and the "bad moon." The artist represents the "lightnin[g]" with overlapping terrace symbols and zigzags in the background, which take the shape of lightning bolts (see figure 201). The different hues of the lightning loom over the worried-looking Surface, seeming to threaten this symbol of life. The song continues:

I hear hurricanes a-blowing
I know the end is coming soon
I fear rivers overflowing
I hear the voice of rage and ruin
Well don't go around tonight



Figure 201: Overlapping terrace symbols, representing the lightening

Well it's bound to take your life
 There's a bad moon on the rise, all right

Hope you got your things together
 Hope you are quite prepared to die
 Looks like we're in for nasty weather
 One eye is taken for an eye



Figure 202: The "overflowing" river in a reversed wave

The second panel expresses the "rage and ruin" of the bad moon as the tempest starts to overwhelm the Surface. The

"nasty weather" pictured in a reversed wave of blue and green with a black outline represents the "overflowing" river (see figure 202), with drops of water (see figure 203) falling onto the Surface; the wave seems about to wash over the Surface and "take [his] life."

The song ends like this:

Well don't go around tonight
 Well it's bound to take your life
 There's a bad moon on the rise
 Don't come around tonight
 Well it's bound to take your life
 There's a bad moon on the rise



Figure 203: The drops of water for rain in blue circles

On the third panel, black hachures appear under the Surface to symbolize rain,



Figure 204: Black hachures that represents rain/tears.

similar to their use in pottery decorations, and show

that the Sun is crying (see figure 204). On the right,

the pure blue triangular JOURNEY TO MIDDLE

PLACE symbol (see figure 205) forms a whirlpool that surrounds the Surface.

The JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE symbol acts as a portal, and is represented

in blue to metaphorically represent the West. This blue whirlpool seems to suck



Figure 205: Triangular JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE symbol

the Surface away from the Middle Place, "taking life" in the

sense of losing Zuni traditional life and taking the Zuni to an



Figure 206: Multistoried houses, representing the Middle Place

unknown Westernized place. The Sun, the generator of life, leaves behind the Pueblo and its multistory house complexes, which are represented in the top left corner (figure 206).

In all three panels, the expressive background is created with a chaotic mix of colors, including red and black streaks blown through a straw that evoke smears or rivulets of blood (see figure 207, background). The Surface in the foreground represents Zuni tradition with its sacred colors; the garish, nontraditional combination of colors in the background represents the Zuni's traditional past being overtaken by the chaotic West, causing them to lose their traditional identity and lifestyle. The artist marks the end of an era when the traditions and values of the tribe were unique. Despite themselves, the Zuni are sucked into a Westernized universe where everything seems turned upside down, represented here by the atypical inversions of color and references to



Figure 207: The rivulets of blood in the background

Western color symbolism. Thus, the Western approach to color – and life – engulfs Zuni colors and the values for which they stand.

Loretto's work shows how the colors need to be interpreted, linked with their shape, and deconstructed as keys to understanding the message of a work. Loretto paved the way for another generation of artists who would mix both figural and representational art, combining the Zuni and Western approaches, to speak through their images in order to pass on messages to tribal clan members by building in layers and using hidden color meanings linked to secret knowledge. Elroy Natachu Jr. explains:

For the longest time, my work was a little bit more abstract in the background, but the main figure work was still sort of in the contemporary and modernist style; but I consider myself more of a symbolist artist where I hide symbols and other things in my paintings. That way, I help tell the story along more easily. (My transcription)

Background colors can contain hidden messages that add another dimension to the narrative of the artwork.

So, like, right here we have a hidden rainbow, and also see those prayer effigies which were predominant, and like corn maiden dance ones. And so, they're hidden here, and they're hidden here. So, I like to do a lot of hidden symbolicry [sic] in a lot of my paintings along with the detail work. (My transcription)

Natachu Jr. goes yet a step further, purposefully using dark tones to camouflage esoteric references. He uses layers of colors to “hide symbols” that “tell the story of the kachina” to educate the tribe concerning these lost supernatural beings, as we discussed in section 3.1.2. The meanings can only be deciphered with the help of the painter himself or another initiated expert. For instance, in his “Peace Offering” painting, the “hidden” prayer effigy is related to the Kianakwe Mosona kachina.¹¹⁹ The story of this kachina is recorded as follows: long ago, when the Zuni ancestors migrated across the land in search of the Middle Place, they attacked and plundered many of the people they came across. They reached *Hantlipinka* and met *Chakwaina*, the Warrior Woman who governed over the *Kianakwe* people. The Zuni coveted their many irrigated cornfields and great towns, so with the *Ahayu:ta* twins as their leaders, they waged war on the inhabitants for four days. After four days, some kachinas came to help the Zuni, but four of them were captured. All the kachinas escaped, but the *Kianakwe* caught them again, except for *Shalako*. The Zuni prayed to the Sun

¹¹⁹ See Wright, *Kachinas of the Zuni* 77 and Bunzel *Katcina* 1009-13

Father for help, and he granted them the knowledge of how to kill *Chakwaina*: her heart was on the rattle she carried. A Zuni arrow pierced her heart, and the Zuni charged into the village and freed the kachinas, killing many *Kianakwe* along the way. The survivors hid under the village until the Zuni gave them the chance to join the *Dowa:kwe* (corn clan) of the Zuni, as the black corn people.¹²⁰ The title of Natachu Jr.'s painting, "Peace offering," refers to the basket of cornmeal or corn kernels that the *Kianakwe Mosona* carries in the artist's sketch in figure 208, also just visible in the bottom right corner of his acrylic painting, in which the dancer is making peace with the Zuni, offering the coveted corn that started the war. The painter camouflages the shapes with dark colors which blend in with the dark blue and black background, creating hidden details that only Zuni or those familiar with Zuni oral history and kachina origins will be expecting to find.

Another example, this time with a camouflaged non-Zuni symbolic design, is found in his painting of *Kothlamana*, one of the four kachinas captured during the *Kianakwe* war, *Ihamana*. On the painting, the background refers to the berdache kachina *Kothlamana*, previously mentioned in section 2.2.1., represented by a non-Zuni LGBT rainbow. Natachu Jr. calls the berdache "the two-spirit kachina [for non-binary or mixed gender], they're sort of an LGBT type gender figure within our community (my transcription)." He refers to the most famous berdache, We' Wha, a notable fiber artist, weaver and potter, whose

¹²⁰ Compilation of the accounts in Stevenson, *Zuñi Indians* 36, Bunzel, *Katcina* 1010-1, and Wright, *Kachinas of the Zuni* 74-5.

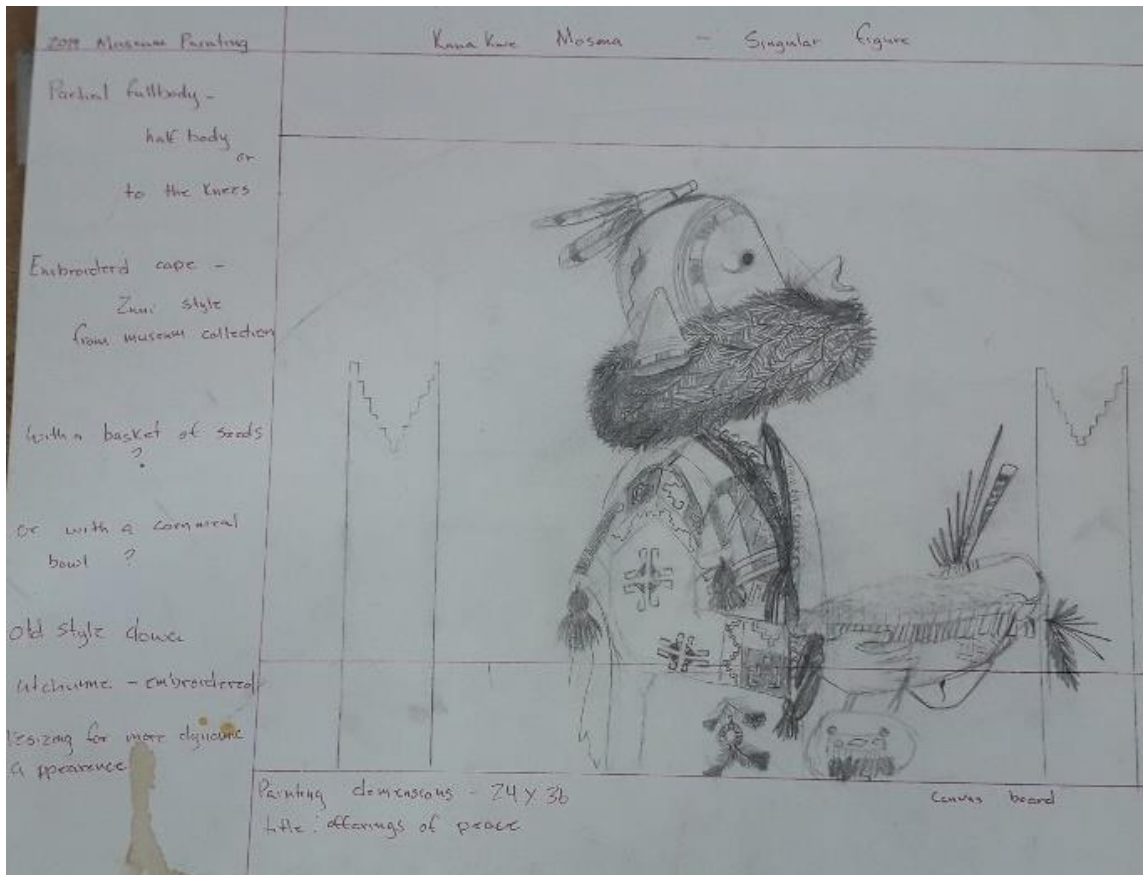


Figure 208: Elroy Natachu Jr., Peace Offering, acrylic on canvas, 2019, depicting the Kianakwe Mosona (my photo).

impeccable work earned the admiration of Mathilda Coxe Stevenson. The artist reveals that the closeness he himself feels to We' Wha influenced the attention he gave to the painting:

Yes, so that's that well-known one, and his name was We' Wha. And then he's also related to our family through those, through the blood ties. So, this one is, at least the composition, was more to my liking, it gave it a little bit more dynamicism [sic], but I also got to do a lot more detailing in the hair, the textiles, the shirt, the hands... And just putting as much detail into my work as possible. (My transcription)

The artist further confided his own difficulties in carving out his place in the world; as a Native American man, and therefore already a minority, as well as being one of the few openly homosexual members of the tribe, he personally identifies with the berdache's tale and its corresponding kachina. This time, the camouflaged rainbow is not related to the story of the kachina: it represents the artist's support for and affiliation with the LGBT community. His first sketch depicted the Rainbow Man's colors, though he dropped this idea in the final version in favor of what is probably a muted LGBT rainbow. According to Nora Gonzales for *Britannica*, the use of the rainbow flag as an LGBT symbol originates with artist Gilbert Baker in 1978, who "said in an interview, 'Our job as gay people was to come out, to be visible, to live in the truth, as I say, to get out of the lie. A flag really fit that mission, because that's a way of proclaiming your visibility or saying, 'This is who I am!'" The flag includes specific colors with specific symbolism attached: "hot pink for sex, red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sunlight, green for nature, turquoise for art, indigo for harmony, and violet for spirit (See Gonzales, n.pag.)." Somewhat contradictorily, the Zuni artist disguises this LGBT symbol in the background in a subtler reference to gay pride. In this context, the background of the painting becomes just as important as the foreground, and the symbolism of

the contemporary Western rainbow is key in fully understanding the message of the artwork and the artist's intention.



Figure 209: Elroy Natachu Jr., Kothlamana, preliminary sketch and acrylic on canvas, ca. 2015 (my photos)

Elroy Natachu Jr. and Keith Edaakie both carefully choose shades of color to lay the foundation of the story they want to tell. For example, in his turtle and bird paintings, Edaakie portrays the appropriate colors of yellow for the “messengers of summer,” and purplish-blue for the “messengers of moisture.” Natachu Jr. also uses blue to refer to moisture, particularly in the form of fingerprints in the backgrounds of some of his paintings. He says:

So, the fingerprints played two aspects, sort of as in our culture and religion we view our ancestors as moisture bringing and they sort of are in that realm of clouds rain and things like that. So that's why I oftentimes do fingerprints in the background that are kind of hidden, similar to like when you're driving, and it's very cold, and you get a lot of condensation on the windows, and if you put your hand on it, it acts as the same way. So, it's that similar sort of connection of that moisture aspect, and that's why

predominantly when I do hidden hands, I do it in a blue coloration which, like most religions, is sort of the standardized color for water. And, a lot of times what I do is I don't sort of... Like I don't spare no detail, so I would work this on with complete detail, and then even though some of it gets covered up, it's still hidden under there, I build it in layers. (My transcription)

The kachina depicted in Natachu Jr.'s painting figured here is named *Hetsululu*, and is one of the lost children of the migration myth. The artist explains that this kachina was formerly a boy who fell to the bottom of the Sacred Lake:

Yes, so the story for this one is that he was one of the children that were lost during the crossing of our Sacred Lake, and the children that went to the bottom they became fully formed. And then in one way that the parents were appeasing them, and their families, was by providing them with prayer effigies, so that's where they got their wealth, their clothing, their jewels and things like that. But this kachina, in particular, his parents were still in mourning, and they didn't know if he was in that sort of ethereal realm. So that's why he is very poor— in his clothing and his structure as well as his actual jewelry— so that's why he was only given a breechcloth for his neck and a little bit of feathers. But the story goes that he's painted with all the sacred colors of the earth to give him importance and when he came, he sort of [was] appeased [...] You go into a separate place where nothing is wrong. It's just pretty, happy, a better version of this world. (My transcription)

The boy is in the misty “ethereal land,” an in-between zone that connects the land of the living and the land of the dead, the ancestors. Natachu Jr.'s intention behind the water-blue handprint is double: first, it refers to the ancestors, the “moisture bringers,” who appeased the boy by painting him multicolor “with all the sacred colors of the earth.” Second, the blue represents the water surrounding the boy, showing his relation to the Sacred Lake.

The splatter work Natachu Jr. is famous for further demonstrates the importance of background colors. In his half-finished painting of the *Na'le* kachina seen in section 3.1.3 in figure 162, he mentions that he “[...] might add splatters of golden hues in ‘Inca Gold,’ in the top left corner to refer to Japanese spiritual belief. The golden color would be guiding the kachina (my transcription)”. In



Figure 210: Detail from Elroy Natachu Jr.'s *Hetsululu*, acrylic on canvas, 2019 (my photo). We can note the blue fingerprints blending into the background in this detail.

Japan, the golden color symbolizes the heavens, the sun, and the powers of the gods, and represents the virtuous path Japanese people are to follow. Japanese temples are often decorated with gold for this reason. Here, another culture's color symbolism influences the artist to assimilate the Japanese color of divine guidance in combination with the Zuni blue for water; this transcultural use of colors breaks down social barriers to create its own color language: Zuni and non-Zuni, men and women are all part of the same world.

In Zuni artwork, color communicates stories and messages which can be hidden behind the central images in the foreground, so even the background colors must be scrutinized and understood to unveil the artist's true intentions. The colors serve as a tool for painters to experiment with and grow as artists, and show how Zuni culture is expanding with their

openness to the West. In Zuni art, colors are thus a way both to communicate secret messages understandable or relevant only within the tribe, or to support more global causes, such as the LGBT community in Natachu Jr.'s case. Some artists might wish to disguise their esoteric symbols in order to keep them privately within the tribe, while others use the background to disclose added

dimensions of their identity as a member of the tribe and as an individual. Whether the message is private or public, what is striking in the decoding process is that many of these approaches to an allegorical language of colors show a blend of Zuni and Western symbolism; more specifically, the Zuni appropriate Western techniques and symbols for their own artistic purposes. Loretto's work represents the first steps in color abstraction, while the work of Natachu Jr. opens up an entire cross-cultural realm of color signification, with Zuni, Japanese and other meanings at his service, but both artists engage in a visual game of hide-and-seek using symbolic background colors. Through this process, Zuni colors are not only Zuni but draw on other culture's colors and color meanings to embellish and enhance the palette. The Zuni's unique conception of colors has become cross-cultural; it is changing and moving along their culture as Zuni artists choose to adapt and assimilate what inspires them from other cultures to brand it as theirs.

3.3.3 A:shiwi A:wan, Belonging to Zuni

We have seen in sections 1.1.4 and 2.1.4 that Zuni cultural life as well as the core of their belief system is based on emblematic colors that they often display as blazons. This system may be seen as obsolete in confrontation with the many changes cross-cultural exchanges have offered, and there are some discrepancies between the modern use of colors with cross-cultural meanings and the traditional use of colors that strictly follows the *a'witen/itiwan* system. However, even these traditional systems are moving forward and adapting to different facets of current society. In this section, we will study the colors of the different Zuni societies with a focus on ceremonial kiva colors and ritualistic colors of the kachina society, which will show us that while these color-oriented traditions are jeopardized by encroaching Westernization, accompanied by a lack of resources necessary to protect the sacred color-associated places that are essential to ceremonial practices, the tribe is also open to change and finding new ways to use color as cultural reinforcement, thereby reshaping and reaffirming their identity as contemporary Zuni tribe members.

Contrary to clan membership, which concerns all Zuni and is bestowed on each of them through filiation, Zuni societies require following specific rites of passage to gain entry; for example, Zuni people must be cured of an illness in order to enter a medicine society, as mentioned in section 1.1.3. In his 1990 *Southwestern Indian Ceremonials*, Tom Bahti explains that there are six esoteric societies: The Sun, The Rainmakers (which are in charge of 12 priesthoods), the

kachina society¹²¹, the priests of the Koko, the War Gods, and the Beast Gods. Each cult has its own priests, fetishes, rituals, shrines and ceremonial calendar, and is associated with a direction, and thus with a color, firmly linking the societies to all the *a'witen/itiwan* colors. Matilda Coxe Stevenson illustrated the shrines and practices for some of the societies. Without going into exact details in order to respect the privacy of the Zuni's sacred rituals and ceremonies, it is evident that they all make use of recurring symbols which rely on the significance of the traditional six colors; Knife Wings, Sunfaces, Milky Way lines, sacred colored feathers, six-color carved or painted fetishes with heartlines, colored prayer sticks, arrows/snakes, yellow/morning and blue/evening stars, totems, and offerings such as cornmeal are all part of ceremonial life.

Out of these six esoteric societies, one is specific to Zuni men: the kachina society, which is divided into the different kiva groups belonging to a ceremonial chamber, or kiva, which also has its corresponding color (figure 211). Every Zuni man can be initiated into a *Kotikanne*, or kachina society and become a member of one of the six kiva groups that the kachina society is divided into. Each member feels affiliated with the color attributed to the kiva chamber and they may display the kiva colors on their moccasins. The kivas are ceremonial rooms in square buildings with an entrance hole or hatchway in the ceiling that symbolize the underbelly of the hearth and the people's subterranean origins. Each has its own priesthood, rituals, religious paraphernalia, and special times and places for worship and ceremony; for instance, each kiva has a *Shalako* mask (see Wright, *Kachinas of the Zuni* 35) and two Salimobia masks, and the kiva members are

¹²¹Also called Koko. The priests of the Koko and the kachina society have a strong relationship, though they still represent two distinct societies.

responsible for the masks, clothing, and rituals. The attributed colors correspond to the location and hierarchy between each kiva. The colors of the kiva ceremonial chambers are metaphorical; the kiva itself may not physically display its color but one may refer to the color just to locate the kiva.

Kiva name ¹²²	Heiwa kiva He'iwa	Muhewa kiva	Chupawa Kiva	Ohewa kiva	Uptsana kiva Upts'anawa	Hekiapawa kiva
Color	yellow	blue	red	white	multicolor	black
Shiwi'ma¹²³	He'i (wall)	Muhe (dung)	Tsu (corn kernel)	Ohe (brains)	Upa (kiva group) and tsana (small)	Hekä pan-e (black wall or place being a wall)
Meaning 1	Barren regions	waters	beautiful	Day	high	low
Meaning 2	winter	waters	summer	Light-giving	Cloudy heavens	Womb caves

Figure 211: Kiva Society Colors (Wright Kachina 58-59)

To be accepted into the kachina society, Zuni boys have to undergo a ritual in which the six kivas welcome them during what used to be a ten-day initiation to inform the initiates about the responsibilities of being a kachina society member and a dutiful Zuni. During these ten days, the kachinas visit the boys following a strict north kiva/west kiva/south kiva/east kiva order. The last part of the initiation involves the six Salimobia, who line up and each strike the boys four times, starting with *thluptsin'ona*, the yellow Salimobia, followed by *thlia,'ona*, the blue, then *shelow'ona*, the red, *kohan'ona*, the white, *Itapanahnan'ona*, the multicolor Salimobia, and *shikan'ona*, the black Salimobia (see section 1.3.3, figure 35). The ceremony ends with a kachina bringing godly offerings to the boys, which they accept in order to be blessed.

¹²² Based on information from Barton Wright's *Kachinas of the Zuni* (Wright 84), Elwis Clay Parsons's Winter and Summer Dance Series in Zuni in 1918, the information given by the Zuni Visitor Center, and Amanda Montoya and Ted Jojola's *iDpi Zuni Pueblo Mainstreet Presentation* (Montoya 14).

¹²³ According to Bunzel (*Katcina* 877-78).

This ten-day initiation to the kachina society ceremony has not been practiced at all since 1981, as three out of the six kiva ceremonial chambers are no longer functional, so only a few are still currently used. Many other society rituals, also practiced in kivas and following the colored pattern, have also been impacted. The deterioration of ceremonial life parallels the physical deterioration of kivas; the southern red Chupawa, or Corn kiva ceremonies have been able to be performed since 1980, and without practice the ceremonies may vanish altogether. This impacts the sacred *a'witen* four-colored cycle on which the Zuni calendar and cultural activities are based. The ceremonies are crucial to understanding the Zuni community and helping the Zuni children to find their place within the village; the ten-day initiation ritual enables the youth to go through a rite of passage that imparts understanding of their importance within the tribe as each boy has a role to fulfill in order for the community to function. However, since many of the kivas are so damaged that it is impossible to go inside them, the *a'witen* pattern of the kachinas is thrown off. The youth are instead offered an abbreviated version, still with the Salimobia, but much shorter, and the Salimobia cannot start from the kivas of their respective colors, which distorts the ritual. It also means that the kachinas do not have the required ten days to properly transmit Zuni knowledge to the boys. As kachina members, they incarnate the kachina during dances, which is the most sacred aspect of Zuni ceremonial life. The kachinas are part of the beautiful and dangerous combination introduced by Barbara Tedlock (see section 3.2.3), and thus, are connected to the sacred as something to be both feared and in awe of. Gradually losing the proper ritual functioning of the kachina means that Zuni children cannot really comprehend their place in the tribal structure and the notions of what is sacred to

the tribe. Some children were caught drawing kachinas, having misunderstood the sacred nature of the kachina colors and the need to protect it with the taboo against representing the kachina.¹²⁴ Lacking this understanding, they in turn will not be able to transmit such knowledge to their own children.

Despite this apparently critical situation, the Zuni are working on several ways to remedy the issue and have come up with three solutions, one concerning the state of the kivas; one concerning the shortened ceremony, and one concerning the education of the new generation. Dan Simplicio, Noreen Simplicio's cousin, has initiated a kiva rehabilitation project. As a member of the Crow Canyon Archeological Center,¹²⁵ he and his associates explained his project in an article published by the journalist and writer for *Yes!* Michael J. Dax, entitled "Zuni Tribe Returns to Sacred Ceremony to Strengthen Community." According to Simplicio, the Corn Kiva is used to host many other religious facilities for all kiva groups and conduct summer kachina dances according to the Zuni calendar, which is based on the cyclical *a'witen* colors related to time, with yellow/winter, blue/spring, red/summer, white/autumn, and the blue/yellow-white morning and evening stars. This is why the kiva restoration project is an important way to give the youth a chance understand and continue on the old ways. In the meantime, Dan Simplicio hopes to modernize the ceremonies. He is aware that the tribe cannot revert back to the precontact organization of the Zuni calendar, so he and Noreen Simplicio plan to investigate how the ten-day ceremony can be

¹²⁴ There is much to investigate about how the ritual is held currently, especially without the *Kolowisi*, who cannot be summoned anymore.

¹²⁵ The Crow Canyon Archeological Center has a mission is to empower past, current, and future Native American generations through archeological research. In 2014, they forged a partnership with the Zuni Tribal Council to focus on what the Zuni saw as priorities: preserving the *Shiwi'ma* language and heritage, creating inspirational cultural experiences that push the young generation to succeed in life, and creating more economic opportunities.

adapted to fit within the confines of modern life. As they both explain at the end of the article, they know that they cannot fully go back to the old ways, but they wish to work on some form of “continuation.”

In the meantime, the ZYEP is taking over with projects in order to raise awareness among the youth and educate them in Zuni cultural tradition by using colors. Starting from the principle that colors bring the Zuni together, since they are part of what makes life *co’ya*, or beautiful in all its colors, one of Keith Edaakie’s latest projects built on his long-lasting partnership with the ZYEP to organize events in an art camp, during which he and the children used colors as



Figure 212: Keith Edaakie, talking about this art project with the tribal youth, working on World Color, Facebook Live, 2020 (courtesy of Keith Edaakie).

a tool to join with their culture. First, he invited the youth to practice and create drawings and paintings. Then, the children cut the many practice pieces into tiny squares to make a collage, which was used to color Keith Edaakie's Sunface and cornstalk design (figure 212). His goal was to teach the youth that their personal artworks could create something bigger and more beautiful when put together with the work of others:

One of the things that we wanted to teach the kids is that much time within our community, sometimes, being an individual person in such a big world, we find ourselves kind of ... lost. [...]. One of the things that we wanted to teach them, you know, is that we're all part of a collective that's part of a bigger community. (Personal interview)

Some of the children were upset that their work was being cut, yet they were all pleasantly surprised when they saw the result. Their teacher insists that this was a way to show them that they are being seen and heard, that each and every one of their opinions matters in the community, and that it is their individuality that creates the "whole" community. Edaakie explains his choice of the cornstalk to represent the children who grow under the Father Sun's light and warmth, also symbolizing the ZYEP's influence on the community's youth. Like many other projects conducted by the ZYEP, this one provides a way to rejoice together over the colors that regulate their culture's sense of time and growth, which explains the title of the communitarian artwork: *World Colors*. By contributing to all the Sunface's colors, the children are invited to be a part of the whole, allowing the Zuni youth to build their collective identity through the strength of their individual ones, to feel a sense of belonging within the colorful *co'ya* world.

In an Americanized world, the Zuni may not always feel "Zuni," since most of them are pressured in one way or another to adopt a Westernized lifestyle.

They are often forced to find jobs outside of the Zunilands to provide for their families, and let their child be educated according to the Western system. Zuni colored-oriented ceremonies, which are part of the tribe's core cultural structure, have also been greatly impacted, and all of these factors cause the younger generation to not feel as connected to ceremonial life. To prevent their community to suffering from the negative effects of these changes, the Zuni use colors to teach their children and bring their nation together through strong cultural affirmation. Colors enable the Zuni to display their feeling of togetherness and affiliation as tribal members. The Zuni *a'witen/itiwan* colors thus have allowed them to build their identity as "Zuni Indians" in the modern world. By using colors traditionally and innovatively, they embark on the contemporary "continuation" of the old ways to which the Simplicios refer.

The Zuni notion of time is not linear, consisting of past/left future/right, like most Western illustrations would depict it. Instead, it is a complete cycle, represented by the JOURNEY TO MIDDLE PLACE metaphor, an infinitely spiraling path towards the "middle," the center, which is their geographical, spiritual, and cultural home. Zuni colors follow the same path, moving forward with modern touches and new shades and techniques that show their skills and aesthetic sensibilities in one specific moment, anchoring the Zuni in the *now* that links the past to the future. Nevertheless, the movement is always spiraling until it comes full circle, arriving back at its *a'witen/itiwan* roots and at the sense of belonging felt within a community made of kin, brothers and sisters, in with a shared a language only they can understand. Throughout these evolutions and revolutions, colors have become a tool to educate and involve the new generation, enabling them to change and reshape their cultures, and move

towards their modern self in a continuous journey to find the Middle Place, their personal and collective cultural center, *Halona Itiwana*.

Conclusion

As Barbara and Dennis Tedlock explain, the traditional Zuni vision of the world is “composed entirely of persons, as opposed to the everyday world of ego and object” (*Teachings* xiv). This vision naturally carries over to the Zuni relationship with color. Through their language, oral history, myths, and ceremonies that entwine their culture and their past with the living colors of nature, the Zuni have developed an intensely meaningful experience of color. Colors *are* sacred protective Beast Gods, live-sustaining resources such as *lupc²i-k^wa*, “yellow corn,” and ceremonial objects that serve as channels for spiritual guidance and healing. Zuni art is the reflection of this unique worldview and cosmology; the traditional color palette reaches deep into the tribe’s cultural psyche and reverberates through their stories and collective memory, connecting the Zuni to their home, *Halona ‘itiwana*, as well as to the worlds below, the underbellies of Mother Earth from whence their ancestors emerged, and the Kachina village *Kothluwanwan*, the land of the dead. Colors therefore play a vital role in religious activities, in the form of offerings to deities such as colored prayer sticks and dry-paintings, and as visual prayers offered not only for the well-being of those who presently inhabit the Middle Place but for all the people born of Zuni blood, and the spirits of nature protecting them. The guiding and protecting role of colors is emphasized by Zuni oral history, according to which colors/directions were assigned to the guiding and protecting Beast Gods, which then carried over into Medicine Societies, and so possess the “powers to make peace and war and to heal illness of all kinds (Bennett 28),” powers that contemporary Zuni artists still wield in their meaningful use of color today.

The cardinal color concept that pervades Zuni life, as explained in the discussion of Toudoire-Surlapierre's mention of the concept of chronotope colors in section 1.3.1, has existed in Native American culture for hundreds, if not thousands of years. The first non-Native Americans to enter into close contact with the Zuni during the phase of Western expansion tried to change the tribe's culture and beliefs with campaigns to Christianize the native tribes; they were followed by the first anthropologists to publish on Zuni art and colors, and who often chose to present Zuni culture with an emphasis on its mythology, thus over-mystifying the symbolism of colors and associated artforms. The simultaneous Western fascination and condescension towards the non-Christian spirituality of the Zuni color system has facilitated its mystification both by researchers and in art marketing, in particular with regard to the symbolic colors of Beast God fetishes, attracting a primarily Western consumer base that, especially in the context of the trend towards New Age spirituality in the latter half of the 20th century, equated tribal and "primitive" with authentic and magical.

However, as mystical as they may seem to the Western mind, the underlying concepts of Zuni spirituality and its accompanying color palette reflect just as much the tribe's keen observation and respect for their natural environment. Prior to US westward expansion and settlement, the Zuni palette was directly representative of their ancestral territory, manufactured from the very substance of the Zunilands or traded and collected from neighboring tribes and during pilgrimages. Up until the intervention of European American settlers, the Zuni had not only successfully survived by depending on the natural resources of their area, but had also formed a complex, sophisticated, aesthetic culture, using these same resources to supply the media, colors, and inspiration for their art. While

certain materials and tools evolved and new trading partners were established, the cultural meaning of colors for the Zuni remained essentially the same; there was no debate on what traditional colors were, as no “untraditional” colors had yet been placed in opposition to them; colors *were* traditional only. Modifications to the palette were relatively minimal and had more to do with periodic, stylistic changes of colors, often borrowed from neighboring tribes, than with fundamental differences in interpreting colors.

The Zuni’s unique cultural experience and history have given rise to culturally-specific ways of conceptualizing, mentally picturing, and symbolically using color that are vastly different from Western color perception in cognition, psychology, and artistic practice. Many Western thinkers, from scientists such as Newton and Munsell to humanists and experimenters such as DaVinci, Goethe, and Kandinsky, have put forward what they considered to be universal truths concerning colors, agreeing that colors originate from light and follow a hierarchy of primary/secondary (and later, complementary) colors. However, the Zuni sexpartite chronotope that I have referred to as the *a’witen’itiwan*, as it includes Young’s concepts of *a’witen* (Young Signs 102-3) for the four directions of the Sun and *’itiwan*, a vertical zenith/nadir concept whose middle the Zuni think of as home, follows a different hierarchical logic that is not based on three primary colors creating three secondary colors, but on six distinct yet interrelated earthly and otherworldly directional colors. Similarly, in contrast to the Western and specifically Anglophone classification of basic color terms (see Berlin and Kay), the Zuni/*Shiwi’ma* language comes with its own specificities which produce color meanings that are not entirely compatible with the nearest Western equivalents. If we admit, as Benjamin Lee Whorf suggests, that the structure of a language

has an impact on its speakers' cognition and worldview (and vice versa) and that a people's perception is relative to the modes of expression inherent in their spoken language, then we can clearly see how Zuni worldview, linguistics, and cognition interinfluence one another in the development of *Shiwi'ma* color terms associated with culturally-significant objects or object-equivalents that often also include dynamic nuances of transformation. The meanings of these terms are deeply rooted in the long-term development of Zuni culture, displayed in its traditions, and acquired as knowledge through shared experiences, such as during ceremonies and storytelling, that are a part of community life.

Native Americans from other tribes who have stayed with the Zuni for long enough, as well as people and experiences that the Zuni have encountered through their own travels, and increased contact with the outside world overall, have also been responsible for the introduction of color changes into the Zuni palette via new media such as paints or minerals, and inspiration taken from designs, trends, and so on; these introduced colors have all been classified and categorized in relation to the traditional Zuni color system through the lens of values and beliefs that we refer to as *culture*. The color palette that has been constructed through this process and the materials from which it is composed reflect the cultural identity of the people involved in its construction. The search to understand how a culture uses colors is thus a search that tries to make sense of the multicultural world these colors represent.

As we have seen, the criteria and the very notion of what is traditional are constantly evolving, especially for the younger generations who are more and more impacted by the outside world. The Zuni's forced immersion into Western-

based education and, simultaneously, the English language has contributed to the partial loss of the dynamic aspect of Zuni color concepts and their replacement with static English color terms, and to changes in the fundamental meanings and understanding of the origins of colors, with important characters of Zuni history such as the Father of colors, *Pò-shai-añ-k'ia*, also being slowly phased out. The scholarly mindset according to which Zuni color terms and concepts have been deemed lacking in development still prevails today in color studies, as we saw in section 3.1.1 with Lenneberg and Brown's concept of the "codability of colors," and Berlin and Kay's concept of "basic colors terms," which cannot be applied to Zuni color concepts without drastically oversimplifying them. However, despite all of the uncontrollable changes flooding the Zuni world, the tribe's artists have found ways to exploit complex cross-cultural influences, playing with juxtapositions and blends of Western/Zuni aesthetics and symbolism in order to transmit artistic messages within the tribe and to the world beyond.

The story of traditional Zuni colors is a story of change, a notion most people struggle to grasp because the very concept of change often implies the loss of concrete evidence to hold onto. For example, even if the Zuni had wanted to hold onto ancestral colors and color symbolism as the key criteria in defining traditional color use, there is no definitive visual source to establish exactly what Ancestral Pueblo colors were. The traditional palette and the history of colors are based mainly on notions of the ancestors' belief system and practices narrated in legends and transmitted from generation to generation through oral history, with inevitable variations arising from discrepancies in memory and interpretation. As the Zuni kept no written records of the past before the first explorer's publications, they rely instead on the knowledge and experience of former generations, mainly

in the form of Zuni tribal leaders, mentors and artistic niche bosses, and the remaining fragments of Ancestral Pueblo art to establish their “truth” about colors. What does remain of the artwork created by Zuni ancestors, immortalized on carved objects, pottery fragments, kiva walls, and rock faces, has clearly left its mark on the current Zuni palette, but it is easy to see and understand the changes made to the latter by observing the approach to colors in their ancestors’ art, the “ideology promoted in colors (Schaafsma 81),” that can now be compared with the current use of colors. The colors that make up the current cultural palette are perhaps richer and more varied than the colors of the past, and include differences in technique, media, and symbolic or esoteric meaning. They represent a different way of living in the world as a Zuni person, in which new cultural elements, including colors, are introduced through the accumulation of external influences and experiences.

This development comes with its own issues. While most Zuni artists appreciate having easier access to a wider variety of color media such as imported gemstones, or electrical appliances that make firing pots or polishing stones easier, these changes may also feel uncomfortable and be difficult to accept, especially when they are not sought after but rather imposed by outside forces, such as Western society with its differing cultural perspective. Beginning with the three main encroachments of Western culture within the tribe, the introduction of the cash economy, institutionalized education, and the gradual replacement of the *Shiwi’ma* language with English, the clash of values began as a struggle between tribal culture and the West, but soon became an inter-generational divide as each subsequent generation absorbed more and more of the outside world. Starting in the twentieth century, as American society rapidly

and unavoidably imposed “a world of ego and objects” upon the Zuni, most of the tribe understood the potential of Zuni colors to provide an important means of subsistence in this new economic and cultural context, and as the Zuni relied more and more on producing arts and crafts to make a living, these cultural changes increasingly seeped into their artistic processes. Instead of the traditional sexpartite system centered around the movements of the sun, Western foreigners viewed color according to Newton’s theory of reflecting light through a prism, and Munsell’s wheel was taught as the universal system of primary, secondary, and complementary colors. Laura Gonzales’s school teaching years provided Zuni children with their first access to commercial painting media, and first gouache, then watercolors, oils, and acrylics became affordable and reliable options. New artforms developed and took over, bringing with them additions and modifications to the color palette that would in turn become to be seen as traditional decades after. The Zuni themselves now collect “exotic” fetishes and other artwork such as paintings to decorate their houses. This process demonstrates that the Zuni were attracted by these styles and colors and also to some extent voluntarily adopted them into their new world of ego and objects, much as their ancestors built on Ancestral Pueblo motifs and colors and later incorporated Spanish and Euro-American designs into traditional Zuni styles.

However, the older generations may still not agree with welcoming new colors into the cultural palette, and as a group, the Zuni still seem to think of new colors—those that cannot be seen as corresponding to the *a’witen/’itiwan*—as “different” or “exotic” colors that don’t belong on traditional ceremonial objects. In the Zuni palette, the concept of “traditional” is related to the culture’s history, contrary to the concept of “exotic/modern” which is associated with newness,

according to McFadden (see section 2.1.1). For the Zuni, the traditional colors that are repeatedly associated with the heroes in oral histories, cardinal directions, and religious objects are familiar and comforting. The notion of “traditional colors” thus represents a cultural function in which certain criteria need to be met. More than anything, the establishment of traditional colors reflects the accumulation of past culture and lifestyle concepts. This explains why the *a’witen/’itiwan* colors are used to represent not only the Zuni cosmology, but also the Zuni system of social and family relationships with each other that shows in their clan and society colors, contrary to “exotic” colors, which the more conservative tribal mindset considers as having no symbolic association or role within the interrelated earthly and supernatural dimensions of the Zuni universe, and therefore cannot express any Zuni relationship, either human or divine.

Despite this resistance, Zuni colors have inevitably transformed to become an intricate palette with a system including multiple culturally-specific meanings. It is, as Marit K. Munson would say, an “expressive part of a rich symbolic world (25),” overflowing with symbols of ethnicity, cultural identity, and self-reflection. It is a palette of history and domination, tradition and change. It is a palette that Zuni people relate to when they look at it, especially when the colors are associated with familiar patterns. But most of all, it is a palette influenced by tendencies and people, all of whom have contributed meaning to the colors now called “Zuni.” In particular, the people who have carved, painted, polished, and woven colors have given meaning to this ever-evolving traditional palette and have left behind cultural manifestations—fetishes, pottery, paintings, jewelry, or dyed, woven, and now printed fabrics—of these meanings derived from their

individual experiences with other color palettes, as well as the collective experience of being a part of a cultural community that attaches particular significance to colors. These colorful manifestations of cultural significance are reflections of their identity that show how they see the world, and as such can help us understand what happens to a community when its traditional color palette changes, or what changes within a community are expressed by accompanying evolutions in its color palette.

Throughout these changes, Zuni identity has evolved in parallel with the evolution of its culture and art and now includes complex multicultural elements. Artists have found their own way of attributing meaning to specific colors and relating them to traditional beliefs, such as the color purple which reminds some of the hues of the sky, or the pink stones included in the jewelry archetypal palette to replace red; “exotic” shades have been readily included within the palette when they can be related to a hue of the *a’witen/’itiwan* and fulfill a cultural role. Often, these new colors are first loan-colors, borrowed from a source culture for aesthetic purposes, until they are assimilated through their integration into the target culture by acquiring pertinent meanings. Thus, such colors are as culturally specific as they are multicultural; they are shareable amongst cultures, and they can be loaned and integrated with new meanings to create another, previously unseen color code.

There are also the colors that artists use as wholly exotic and foreign to the Zuni palette, demonstrating the changes that accompany increased exposure and communication with the outside world, facilitated most recently through global travel and the Internet. These new colors are also an avenue of freedom for young artists; beyond the restraints of the color palette imposed by former

niche authorities in their medium, contemporary Zuni artists find a way to center themselves in an Americanized world and affirm their modern Zuni identity by drawing on the wider American color palette to fulfill their artistic vision. This allows them to thrive both as Zuni artists, or just as artists, without the restrictions of living up to the “Zuni” label. Their creative abilities and new colorful trends show how these artists are “Zuni American” and at the same time ensure the continuation of their distinct culture within a modern, cross-cultural world. In addition to these identity-affirming experimentations, contemporary Zuni artists are also using colors as markers of Zuni identity to teach future generations, granting them access to their cultural heritage and helping them find their place within their Americanized Zuni world, as well as taking a stand with colors to redefine their identity beyond the imposed definitions of the West, as they did with their collective contributions to the Map Art project.

For all of these reasons, studies on Zuni art need to take into account the evolution and the impact of Westernization on both Zuni identity and the art that expresses it. The interviews with Zuni artists reveal the complexities of the culture when it is explored through their eyes. The tribe continues to hold onto traditional values that represent the essence of the Zuni way of life, and simultaneously there is now a deeper cognitive meaning attached to new colors that are related to cultural resistance and self-preservation. By assimilating a color, the Zuni reappropriate elements of imposed Western culture; they choose to change, instead of having the change forced upon them. The modern Zuni palette now includes the culturally reappropriated remnants of the forced imposition of foreign values upon the Zuni people, which they initially resisted and in many ways continue to struggle against today. As a result, Zuni culture remains strong, and

the people are thriving despite the hostile, competitive, and sometimes demeaning treatment they have endured from the outside world. The creation of art at Zuni demonstrates how its people feel a sense of belonging through colors that is not only produced through the associated feelings of familiarity and comfort but also through being in control of what colors they establish as “Zuni” and “not Zuni.”

The interaction and trade between the Zuni and the rest of the world can be a constructive force in building on the existing patterns to create something new; the participation of each culture in the art trade alters and broadens the perception of art on both sides, as can be witnessed in the expansion of the Zuni palette and the discovery of new facets of art by an appreciative Western public. However, because Western studies of Zuni art are also often carried out from the cultural perspective of the historical development, criteria, and classifications that exist within Western societies and Western art, scholars have often tried to fit Zuni art into one of these boxes by classifying their use of colors as “naïve,” “exotic,” and “primitive.” Experts who have studied the Ancestral Pueblo people’s techniques of creating colors from existing pigments in their natural environment have continued to portray the Zuni people as “primitive,” or less developed and sophisticated than Western cultures. It cannot be denied that the ethnographers and anthropologists of the previous centuries who have studied and attributed meanings, symbolic codes, and other associations to color in Zuni art and crafts have contributed to expanding our knowledge and understanding of the Zuni and Native American palette. However, their approaches have staged the Zuni as actors in a play in which outsiders define the roles to be played by the Zuni people and their traditional—or “primitive”—color concepts, as we saw in section 1.2.2

with the ZUNI IS FICTION metaphor generated by McFeely's observation of the Zuni image established by scholars.

Nevertheless, now that contemporary Western art itself has come full circle and accepts as modern techniques and aesthetics what in the past have been called "naïve" and "primitive" styles, and has also embraced aesthetic influences and artistic techniques from all over the world (a clear cultural benefit of the otherwise controversial process of globalization), and now that the latest generations of Zuni artists have themselves opened up to global influences and proven that they can employ any artistic technique and medium they choose with skill and expressivity but in a way that is still recognizably "Zuni," perhaps now as "Westerners" we can finally appreciate the singularities of Zuni aesthetics, techniques, and modes of expression, as well as Zuni artists' keen observation and commentary of the world around them, as being just as artistically sophisticated and powerful as the aesthetics, techniques, and expressivity of the most iconic or avant-garde Western artists.

For the Zuni, the *a'witen/itiwan* colors are forever linked to time and place. These are the same colors that have always been the home of the Beast Gods, the six sacred directions, and the Zuni calendar, but they are also simultaneously evolving to include new variations, combinations, and techniques. The exploitation of symbolic color systems in art marketing could be seen as a threat to the Pueblo's cultural heritage and the well-being of the community, just as such changes have been a threat over the past centuries during which invasive settlers, missionaries, and anthropologists have all imposed their own cultural and economic agendas on the tribe. The difference today is that the Zuni now have more control over their destiny. They make informed decisions that govern

such changes and consider how these changes will affect the important aspects of Zuni culture, the preservation of which will necessarily include the preservation of colors symbolizing sacred places, personages, and events; all of which are intimately joined at Zuni, the Middle Place, where the signification of colors, despite their multiple and evolving meanings, remains at the very heart of both the past and contemporary cultural identity of the Zuni people.

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Appendix 1 - Interview with Keith Edaakie:¹²⁶

Zuni, November 15, 2019.

Charlaine Clerc:

Hi Keith, it's such a pleasure to meet you! I have been a fan of your work for a long time now!

Keith Edaakie:

Thanks! So, I guess we can see whatever it is that you want to see. This painting [see figure 52] here is talking a little bit about our migration. We do have a story of how our people migrated from a place in the Grand Canyon.

Charlaine Clerc:

Is it Ribbon Falls [the place of the emergence in the Zuni Creation Myth]?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, Ribbon Falls, and then traveling place to place to come here, and this is one of the sites that we visited on our way here to Zuni. It talks about the clan system and talks about the two war gods, and this is actually a smaller painting that I've done of this. There's a building called the Zuni youth enrichment project which has a park, a really nice facility, and they actually ask community artists to do murals for them to be on in the building. There's the same concept, the same idea; the same story that's in this smaller painting is over there on a large big eight by eight mural!

Charlaine Clerc:

So, does this represent the birth of the two clans? The bear and the deer?

Keith Edaakie:

Actually, it's the birth of the two war gods. Those are the two shrines that kind of, um, like accommodate those two war gods. So yeah, here's that, and that's kind of almost the same idea, and it has the same petroglyphs that you can see down at the corner.

Charlaine Clerc:

Are those petroglyphs on the site?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, so this place is called Hardscrabble Wash, and it's pretty close to the Arizona border, New Mexico border. It's about 30 miles west from here. And it's inside a little canyon. And basically, so what happened is when they got to Hardscrabble, one of the things that happened is the origination of our clan system. So, each person within our community has a clan, one that they're born into: their mother's clan. So, we're a matriarchal society meaning that everything goes through our mothers. So, when a child is born, they're born into their

¹²⁶ The following transcripts (appendixes 1 to 5) may contain certain linguistic anomalies due to inconsistencies in the recorded audio as well as individual spoken language mannerisms.

mother's clan, and then they're a child of their father's clan, so we have two different clans. So, my mother is a Turkey clan, so I'm a Turkey; and my father is a Sandhill Crane clan. So I'm the child of the Sandhill Crane clan. But at this site is where the origination of our clan system started, and originally there were twenty-one different clans. Right now, well, we have about fourteen different clans, so there are seven that have become extinct.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, this happens when the family passes away?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, so basically, since it's passed down through the mother's side, when a clan has more males than females, that's when they slowly start to die down in numbers, and then eventually, if there's no more women to carry on the clan, then that's how it becomes extinct. And so, there are seven classes that have become extinct. But, what happened is that as the people traveled here, they were put into groups, and then as these groups were formed, they were then given the first clans to each of these groups. And then one of the things that they talked about is during that whole time there was continuous rainfall that was happening, and what happened is, as the rainfall started to fall, the water started to trickle down the canyon walls and it created a little pond like that what you see the painting. It created a pond, and then from that, with the splashing of the water, they said there was foam that started to build up, and from this foam is where these two war god deities were created. Basically, what I've heard is they were talked about as being adolescent boys and having some distinctive marks on their faces, kind of almost like face paint or paint type thing, kind of to distinguish themselves as warriors. And so, they were created from the foam that was coming down from the splashing of the water, and so when these two boys first encountered the Zuni people, nobody's ever seen them, nobody knows who they were or where they came from. And so, they introduced themselves as the two war gods; in our language we call them the *Ahayu:ta*.

Charlaine Clerc:

The twins, or war gods? They are talked about in many legends, such as Dennis Tedlock's *Finding the Center*.

Keith Edaakie:

So, they come and encounter the people, and nobody's seen them. Nobody's ever seen them, and the people wonder who they were, and so they questioned them: who they were and why they were here. So they related the message that, you know, we were created from the foam, from the water they were brought here from our father, the Sun, which is basically the creator of everything, and they told them that from this point on, they will help lead them to what we call the Middle Place, Zuni. And so they'll be in search of that place, and so they told them that, while everybody was given clans, that if they were to travel with them, they would need clans so that way they have people who will take care of them. And people will have different obligations that they might have to take care of, and so the two brothers looked at all the different clans and, based on the characteristic, the older brother, he's the one that chose the deer clan. And so, when he chose

them, they asked him, "why did you choose the deer clan?" and basically replied to him it's because of the strength in the deer's antlers. You know, since he's a warrior, he said that if any harm comes my way, the deer's strength in the antlers will basically be my protection, kind of like a shield, and so that's the reason why he picked the deer clan. And even to this day, the deer clan is responsible for the older brother, and we're getting pretty close to that time, to where they basically recreate the shrines and everything, and that's basically what starts our fasting period. And so the deer clan, the *Shohkwida:kwe* clan, is the one that prepares all those stuff for the older brother. And so, then the younger brother was looked upon, and they asked, "you probably are thinking the same way your older brother is," and so he answered, "yes, I am." He started looking around, and then he's the one that chose the bear. And they asked him as well, "why did you choose the bear?" And he told them, "just like my brother, the strength in the bear's paw is going to be my protection from any harm that might come my way." It's a shield, yeah, not a weapon. And so that's the reason why he chose the bear clan, and now just like the deer clan, the ancient bear clan are the ones that also create those preparations for the *Ahayu:ta* before we start a fasting period. And so, from then on, that's when they started to take the people to the middle village. And what really was neat and interesting is that I used to work with the Counseling Program, where a lot of people lost touch with their cultural identity and a lot of their traditions, so we took them to places like this to kind of reconnect them. And there was a cave that we always go through and, you know, it was always dark and we never really bothered to look around in there. Until one time, it just happened to be the right time of the day because there's a shimmer of light that would go into the cave, but it would just shine on that one part. It just happened that one person had a white shirt on and passed through that light and it kind of illuminated the whole cave! So we told him to stand there and then we started to see all these other petroglyphs that we'd never seen before. And basically, what we saw was this petroglyph here [showing a bear paw print petroglyph], kind of telling the whole story.

So up at the top corner, we saw a bear paw that represented the younger brother, and then the deer print that represented the older brother. Then we saw this spiral that kind of started off as a zigzag and then went into a center. Basically, a lot of times, what people will say is that's the migration route, starting from the Grand Canyon, going from place to place, trying to climb the middle place, and then they spiral right down to the middle. One of the other things that happened there is ... there was a particular dance that they did which is called the short motto, and it's a round dance that they did. One of the things that they told us is that since the earth is still fairly young and new, it was really soft, I guess you can say. What they say is almost like a jello mold, you know how, like a type of jello. And then everything would just kind of shake and tremble. They said that with the earth being so fresh and new, the earth would often tremble. And so what they said ... what they wanted to do was, they wanted to harden the earth, and so that's why they wanted to do that round dance, and what they would do is as such: people will hold hands around in a circle as they dance to certain songs that are only sung during that time, and so you'll see those petroglyphs too that have people holding hands around like that. It was really interesting the very first time that we saw that, because when you hear these [oral histories] from our elders when you hear about all the events that took place and sometimes, me

personally, I questioned myself. Did they really...? Did that actually happen, or they just kind of making stuff up? But then, to really actually go to the place that they were talking about and to see something that was there thousands of years ago, that was etched onto the rock, that basically told everything that we were listening to, it was just kind of a moment where you know it really hit us. And it was really gratifying to finally get to see and to validate that, you know, the things that they were talking about, all the things that they tell us, you know, actually did happen because somebody took the time to really etch in all these little details about what we heard, what we're learning and to have it there, at that same place that actually did happen...

So yeah, I mean, it was just by luck that that person wearing that white shirt went past it, and was able to light it up, the cave. Because it's really dark in there, and it's kind of hard to see. But once that gentleman passed through it, we were able to see everything, and then next time we went with the flashlight, we were able to actually see a whole lot more as far as what was on there. So, it was really interesting, and so that was basically my inspiration for creating this painting. There is a lot of just a lot of hidden messages and details here, some more petroglyphs of how they emerged from the underworld. So, this is a pass-up with the trees. So, these four different trees from which the first forms of people with tails were used to come up. And then, there's actually at Red Wall wash. There's actually a hematite painting that was painted onto the rock and kind of depicts that figure there, a person only showing half the body, and then another person extending their hand out to kind of pull them up, help them out. And then, of course, the sun there, to, you know, indicate that basically why and how everything started. And then over here with the two stars, the petroglyphs, and there's a lot of times people think that those little arrow things kind of almost look like turkey prints or a bird track, but they're actually arrows pointing down, showing them that they descended down to the earth to help them out with their journey. And one of the things that we also did is that I remember as we were walking through these canyons. One of the clients that were part of that treatment center, they came upon a basically fully intact pottery shard just like that, and it was really neat to see, and basically, one of the things that we're always told is that our spirit and social spirits are always there. Even though the place may be deserted, their spirit remains and lives there, and so that's kind of what I wanted to do there, with the pottery piece. Because that was theirs, kind of bringing everything to life and telling the story the way it happened. And the way it is.

Charlaine Clerc:

I see you're using acrylics?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, so I use acrylics and then use the airbrush to kind of paint in that mesa there and the water reflection. I've been painting for about maybe 20-25 plus years, and so I definitely progressed as far as my work!

Charlaine Clerc:

This is one of the questions I had for Elroy Natachu Jr. and you. I learned about the work of both of you from the Map Art project and the books that were printed

and edited by Enote and McLerran. So, I was thinking: what would you change now, with ten more years of experience? This looks great!

Keith Edaakie:

I know, that's what everyone was saying and, you know, some of my paintings, I did do a lot of this landscape type stuff. But well, the clouds [showing one of his earliest paintings in figure 120] are... Yeah, it just needs refining it a little bit more. And I think a lot of it is watching different artists and how they do it. I remember for several years, and I was really grateful to Netflix because they have the Bob Ross series [*The Joy of Painting*]. On there, he worked with oils but a lot of the techniques that he uses work really well with me with acrylic paint. I usually use Youtube. It is actually great to be connected and to be able to share the techniques with other artists. Yeah, it's great. So yeah, the mountains back here are basically how he does it with oils. But since, they use acrylic because they made it and the texture is really fluffy. So that was his style, too, with the brush that he uses and just creating those instead of painting every single little leaf on there. The effect is really great with the water. Yeah, so that was, yeah, that's a lot of like I said, progression and, you know, always trying different things. My spouse always gets mad because when I try something new, it doesn't work out the way I want it to, and so, I just kind of leave it and restart another one, and so there's like a whole bunch of stuff that's like half done! And then she's like, "how come you don't finish them!" It's because I don't like it, that was like a test trial of it, and that's not really how I wanted it to look, and so, you know, that's just me! That's just the way I do it! So, this is another one that I did (see figure 76) with the same area because what happened is you can kind of see in this picture, there's like a little divide, and one of the things that we were told is that...

And so the people were presented these two eggs, and they were told to choose which egg and whatever hatches from it, you know, is what's going to lead them to whichever direction they're going to go, where they're going to stay. And so, the Zuni people, I guess, we really like colorful and beautiful stuff. They decided to choose the colorful blue egg with the speckles on them, and the other group that was there with us was handed this basically dull ordinary egg. It hatched, and then after that, they were told whatever hatches from here is going to lead you to where you're going to go. And so, of course, from the dull egg comes out the scarlet macaw, and that's the one that led some of our people down to Mexico. So, they went south.

Charlaine Clerc:

They went down, and your ancestors went up.

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, and then we continued this way, and they continued that way, and so they're talking about one of the ways they described it as the land of everlasting sunshine. So, you know, along the equator it's always warm and hot, and so that's the place that they took them. And there you'll see those abundance of different colorful birds like the macaws, the parrots...

Charlaine Clerc:

Is it related to the red cardinal direction (south) or not at all?

Keith Edaakie:

I'm not too sure, but there are times when there's a lot of people that talk that there's a community down in Mexico or Central America, actually, that is very similar to us here at Zuni. And so, they said they have the same traditions, they have a clan system since it started here, they do a lot of the same traditions that we do. And it's basically almost the same language. Just about, since it's been separated, it has a different dialect type thing. So that's our research right now. What was really interesting and, I guess, also validating to us too, is while we were working at the Substance Abuse Counseling Center, we were over here at our local museum, and we just got done talking about migration and how people travel from place to place. And then, I don't know where, there were some visitors that came in, and there was an elderly lady, she was from the Museum of Northern Arizona. She was asking about our migration, if we knew what our migration story was and how it went, so we're telling her, you know, we just actually got done talking about it, and she asked us about this particular part. Like "what do you know about the people after they separated?" And so, we told them about the two different eggs and how those eggs were chosen, and how our people chose the crow and came to Zuni. And then, she looked at us, and then she told us, "Well, it was our people that chose the parrot clan," and that was our people that headed down south. And so, she was telling us that all our stories are the same except once we get to this point where we separate, and then it's different. We have our own stories, and we have our own way of telling these things, but she was telling us, you know, "our people were the ones that chose the parrot egg or were given the parrot," so it was like, just like, with that same thing is like, really validating that you know, this random person coming out of Mexico, Central America, just telling us that they have the same stories, they have the same ideas. It's just that when they got there, they had their own story after that.

Charlaine Clerc:

The journey must have been quite different.

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, and so that was that. And so that was that part of it, and then, of course, ours was the crow that came up from the colorful egg.

Charlaine Clerc:

So you use a sort of foggy atmosphere.

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, and so coming up from the eggs themselves, kind of, I mean, I think a lot about it in my head when I hear these stories, a lot of it, it's kind of almost really unbelievable type things, you know, the things that we always joke about is ... it's kind of almost like the Harry Potter type video or movies that we see because you know, some of them, the way they describe it, it's almost magical, about how things happen. And so that's kind of what I wanted to do is like have these eggs here but just all of a sudden, these birds coming out of nowhere. So that's why you see these transparent colors and they come into full vision here. And so,

those are some of the things that, you know, I always envisioned in my head whenever I heard these stories ... is that it's something really magical, like things that we don't see. Now I'm pretty sure those types of things happened a long time ago, and those are some of the ways that I wanted to capture them. This is, like, this magical type of atmosphere as far as these things happening. And so that's the reason why I kind of painted them transparent and flying out. That composition is also interesting to see, and you're crossing somehow and just leaving. Yeah, so, that was fun.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, was it commissioned, or is it just something you wanted to portray and share with the community?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, it was; so, this painting I actually did when we were going to go to the Zuni show that happens every year at the Museum of Northern Arizona, and like I said, for me, well, going back, I guess. I used to be a Zuni language teacher with our school district, and so one of the things that I first learned when I joined the district is that the kids now, they have really, really short attention spans! Yeah, and so when I first started teaching, the first thing I tried was basically, how I was taught, and you did work just standing in front, talking, and then having me listen to the others. So, I tried that, but the kids were there for two minutes, it was gone, and so I had to think of different ways of, you know, capturing their attention and keeping their attention. And so, I did it with my art, so I had a chalkboard and every day as I was talking, I would be drawing pictures of these type of images, these type of things that were in my head to kind of help engage them, to really understand what I was talking about. But after the day was over, you know, I raised the chalkboard, and it was gone. And so, when I left the district, that was my thing; is that while somebody's gonna have to teach them and what resources are they going to use, if there's none available because we do have a bilingual program. But a lot of the things, the resources that have our base, basic vocabulary words. It's not enough to express everything. There's really not much to tell these types of stories or to do these types of teaching sessions that will be helpful. My thing is that, when I leave, I still want to help the kids, but how am I going to do that? And so, that was my idea. My idea was to create these types of works to create a resource for people to use, and so every picture that I create, I definitely keep documentation for myself, so even though a piece does sell, at least I have that documentation still, where I can share with people who are interested, people who want to use it. And so, yeah, that was my thought into doing this. Because I had an art show that we were going to, but I really didn't know what I was wanting to paint. But this has always been in my head of how I've envisioned it, and basically just sitting down and getting to work, and it was nice. It was fun. I actually did this in like a day!

Charlaine Clerc:

This one (see figure 45), the style is really different.

Keith Edaakie:

This one's actually done with spray paint. So, you can see the Kansas gray paint that I use. You can actually see the splatters from the can itself. But these paintings [of the Creation Myth] kind of take a lot of effort and thought beforehand and really executing that plan to get it to where I want it. This one was just like a fun little thing that I did outside that painting that I was working on when I was getting ready for the Santa Fe Indian market. It has a lot of little intricate detail in it to where you kind of had to release there, stroke by stroke, to where it took several days, and my back started to hurt from being bent over. It's just kind of working up. And so, I said I needed a break, but I couldn't take a break because I needed to work because we had that art show and we only had a few pieces. So I was like... well, I need to create something else, and so I thought I'd done a lot of work with spray paint before, and so let me try this. And basically using stencils, a quick brush, I created these two birds and kind of almost made it like a cosmic type.

Charlaine Clerc:

So how did you choose the colors? Was it just in for inspiration, or did you want to do something outer space-like?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, so like again with YouTube! Sometimes you watch a video, and then it shows you suggestions of videos, and then you can start off watching one particular video, and then if you stay on long enough, you end up at a whole different place! I don't know how I started it, but eventually, I ended up watching a guy from Mexico, and he was a spray paint artist, and he created these really cool pieces of work using spray paint, and I really got inspired by that and ... that evening I told my spouse, "Let's go to Home Depot," and she was like "Why?" and [I answered], "Let's just go." And so we went and took some spray paint, and then we went home, and we got there. And then she's all, "Why are we here?" "I'm getting spray paint." "What do you need this spray paint for," and so after several days, I was practicing, and I started creating almost a similar type of work that he did, but kind of created to my style and what fits my vision as far as art, and so I created spray paint art. You have pottery designs here. These were like some of my favorite things that I like to do. These were all done with spray paint, and so, this is the type of thing that I kind of wanted to do here, so the outer space, yeah, inspiration. So I created quick stencils of the birds, and after that, I used the paintbrush, and I painted in some of these brush strokes, and as I said, everything was just kind of whatever it was going, with the flow of the creative process, so not really thinking and just working. And so like, all of these little scribble lines, it's a little bit like graffiti work, so I guess, you know, it goes well with the spray paint. This one was actually completed in like 30 minutes, and so that was a really good break for myself because, as I said, I was really trying to work on something that was really intricate. You have responsibilities also to do it; as I said, I needed to take a break, but I still wanted to work. And still, it was just outside, just really having fun, basically. It still has the stories because of these two birds. If we could create a hierarchy of birds, these two will basically be on the top because [they are] the messengers of summer. We do have the Bullock's oriole and then the blue jay, and those two birds are really important to

the Zuni people, and so basically the messengers of moisture. When we had our Zuni River flowing through our community constantly, you know, there're all sorts of birds that would be around because there was water; and so these two were regarded as the highest of those birds that were around here.

Charlaine Clerc:

Oh, so this is why you have Rainbird pottery patterns all over!

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, you see that Rainbird design with the pottery and then the other bird design here with the pottery and just kind of representing both. It's like a multimedia kind of canvas, you know, try to, yeah, different artforms represented in one two-dimensional painting which is interesting, right? Because that's the thing. I also did a multitude of different types of art. I did pottery, I did weaving, dancing, those weaving designs there [on the background]... I did jewelry... Everything I just wanted to include in this little painting too. You know, jewelry is something many people talk about, but painting not so much, and I'm really into it, I think. You can see clearly the evolution of, you know, people are also trying new stuff, and that's, yeah, great; that's cool, that's always been my focus, and I think that was really one of the pluses when we opened this gallery. Because when I first started working on my two-dimensional work, it was when I was basically just straight out of high school. Normally about a few years after high school, I tried to work full-time as a two-dimensional artist, and so when I recreate a painting, it was not to the level I was at, but it was still something good. Yeah, so I would take them to the galleries around here. But a lot of times, they were saying they don't buy.

Charlaine Clerc:

Because traditionally, this is not what people usually buy when they think "Indian-made?"

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah. So they told me that. Paintings really hardly ever sell, so when you hear about Zuni art, you definitely hear about the potters, you hear about the silversmith, the jewelry, fetish carvings, and everything, but when you hear about two-dimensional artists, at that time, there's only really two influential people that you'll hear about. And one of them was my mentor, and he was Alex Seowtewa. He's the one who did those big lifestyles and the church, and he was actually one of those people that I worked with at the Counseling Center, so his stories are basically what I took in. Well, now they're my stories and I am putting them out on canvas. But he was so... you hear about Zuni painters, he will be one of them, and the other one will be Duane Dishta. A lot of the kachina paintings and those were the only two predominant names that you will hear about. Zuni painters and anybody else, you know, are complete unknowns and I was one of those complete unknowns, and it was very difficult to try to sell any of my paintings. So that was one of the hardest things so what I had to do, is my parents are silversmiths, so they told me that, you know, I could do some of the orders that they got, but what they had me do is these little pendants or these little earrings that they create with Sunfaces on them. But what they will do is they would get an order for like four dozen, so like 40 pieces, so 98 Sunfaces. Yeah, so it's just

basically sitting there, creating the same thing over and over again, so there's no room for creativity. So for me, you know, I really... Like... have these things in my head that really get put out, in these little tiny repetitive type work. And so I did it! But it didn't last long because, you know, it just wasn't for me. It wasn't my niche. These were some of the things that I wanted to create, but unfortunately, it wasn't paying our bills, which is a big problem for artists.

So basically, I think everything happened the way it should have anyway, so I couldn't really do this full time, and I was lucky enough to work fine with that Counseling Center. Working there actually helped me improve my art because now my art actually tells stories versus what we were talking about earlier about these younger artists that, you know, just want to do it, but a lot of times they don't know what to do, and so that was me. You know, I would see Alex [Seowtewa], his work, and it would just be me replicating what they created and not really creating my own stuff, and a lot of times, I will create things that I really had no idea what I was creating. And so now working with that program, working with the people that I did, learning a lot more about our history and our culture, now I'm able to create my own stuff to where I don't have to look at anybody's and say, "okay, I want to create this the way he did it," now it's mine, and say that "this is what's in my head, this is what I envisioned and this is what I want to put on the canvas." And so, even though I didn't work as a full-time artist for many years, it definitely did help me. Now that I am doing this full-time, you know, I have this vision of my own that I don't have to replicate anybody.

Charlaine Clerc:

You can be yourself and create your own style.

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, and create my own style, as you said. So that was really helpful, and it was really beneficial to me, so, you know, even though I did take that, I would say about a 14-year break, I mean, I was still creating, but I wasn't doing it to where I was trying to sell anything. It was just basically for myself. For my own, I guess, more like a hobby at that time. Now it's become more and more involved and more with a purpose versus just creating something that I want to. Now it has some kind of purpose with our community. so those are some other things, incorporating and trying different things... I always tell people that, you know, I'm really thankful and blessed to have been born in the time period that I was, because what I see is our generation is basically the last fluent speakers, because our community now speak English, speak a lot of English. When I was growing up, I was fortunate enough to learn our language first, and then we went into the school system is when we learned the English language.

Charlaine Clerc:

So *Shiwi'ma* is your first language, the one you feel comfortable with.

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, but now it's basically reversed the other way around where kids today learn English first, and then they learn the Zuni language within the school system. So, like I was saying, I was fortunate enough to be able to learn the language. I was fortunate enough to learn a lot of traditional upbringings growing up that a lot of

what our younger generations don't have anymore. But I was also born early enough to where I was able to understand a lot of the modern technologies and the modern values that they have, so I'm able to incorporate both of them together to work. You know, I had the traditional sense in it, but it's also technology, so that's why, you know, we created a lot of these different things too as well. So graphic design, using the computer to create a lot of different designs on the computer, even basically painting on the computer, is one of the ways that you know, I've been working too, as well.

Charlaine Clerc:

And you changed some colors, I mean, the shirts [see figures 66 & 67] are quite different!

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, that wouldn't be the traditional [colors] we always think about; So you know, I think for me always thinking of, you know, innovative ways of creating art. and so t-shirts definitely are one. Everybody wears shirts, yeah, and so what better way to create wearable art for people to wear?

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you're working with a computer, and do you usually use a particular software?

Keith Edaakie:

I use Illustrator. That was funny because when we were starting off, I did get the [Photoshop] trial version that was like for 30 days, and then it expired, so what I did is just create a different email to get another 30 days!

Charlaine Clerc:

That's smart!

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, and luckily, we have a subscription now where I can pay monthly versus paying more now.

Charlaine Clerc:

It's easier on the budget.

Keith Edaakie:

It definitely is! And so I use that to create a lot of images and also to tell those same types of stories, and to also show off a lot of our community artists here. That black shirt actually features pottery from one of our artists here. Her name's Noreen [Simplicio].

Charlaine Clerc:

How do you choose the colors?

Keith Edaakie:

A lot of the designs we do are like the black shirts. So black is pretty easy because a lot of people like black, and it goes with everything, but other times, you know,

it's just kind of what looks nice. And this one actually here is my spouse's work, she does this mandala type of work. So, I told her that, you know, I'm gonna create a t-shirt design using your design, and so that's what we created there. They actually came out really nice, and so originally, she didn't consider herself an artist. She helped me with a lot of my stuff, and just kind of with some encouragement, nudging her a little bit, she finally started taking on her own stuff and doing her own things too as well.

Charlaine Clerc:

So you have cloud designs in squares?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, so basically, we kind of took... I know it's a kind of a symbol that you see everywhere, but we kind of created our own branding with that cloud design, and so we use that to create a lot of different things, and you'll see that incorporated in a lot of our t-shirts so...

Charlaine Clerc:

It's a modern kind of approach to this symbol.

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, so that's basically that cloud design, you see there is basically our branding, to let people know that we printed that shirt.

Charlaine Clerc:

These are complementary colors (see figure 122). You like to use purple, I noticed.

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah! Purple's actually one of my favorite colors!

Charlaine Clerc:

The contrast is really nice.

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, and this is a portrait of my daughter. So, they have an indigenous day that they have throughout the school system. So, each class will present a social dance, so her class did the pottery dance. This is a photo I took of her. She didn't want to smile, so she just had this tiny smirk. It was kind of early, and you know, she's just kind of not really feeling it.

Charlaine Clerc:

So she learned the dance! This is impressive. I was lucky to see a Zuni pottery dance in the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. It's just like, the whole body moves except for the head!

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah yeah, hers, since it's a social dance and since there were a whole bunch of kindergartners, for sure, they would have difficulty balancing that pottery on their head, and so actually it's made out of papier-mâché! You never know! I mean, it was basically a family project that they sent home for the families to work on how to create that pottery, to work together on a project. We did create the papier-mâché pot, but just me, being the artist, I just didn't like that rough texture of the newspaper, how it's really warped from the clay or from the glue. And so what we did is, we went into Gallup, we purchased car bondo, and we covered the whole thing and to give it a nice smooth texture too. We then shaped it, sanded it, then gave it to her grandma, who used to paint pottery. She painted the pottery designs on there for her and, she's part of the badger clan, and that's why you see the badger design on the potter versus the typical deer design that they usually have on their pottery. You can see the part of a deer, but she wanted the badger to be on display; she was really animated about having her clan being put on there.

Charlaine Clerc:

The pattern behind, is it a rain pattern?

Keith Edaakie

Yeah, it's our symbol again, the rain cloud symbol. So, you can kind of see the rain coming this way and then the tree, so yeah, if it's bigger you'll see the triangle come this way with the diamond right there, and the two triangles here, and then that will be the whole rain cloud.

Charlaine Clerc:

Did you choose red and yellow to bring contrast?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah. So that was actually done with spray paint. What I did is, I spray painted the red and orange and then the yellow, and then I used tape, then I taped off. I masked off the areas I wanted to stay clean, then I went back over with the white and the purple one, and the black around the edges, and then when it peeled the paint off or tape off, the covered areas is what stayed behind itself. But yeah, if I had a bigger canvas, it would have shown that same rain cloud design on the back. This is a traditional momentum. So the necklace that she's wearing is basically kind of a family heirloom her mother had as a child, and I believe her mom used to wear it too.

Charlaine Clerc:

It's from mother to daughter.

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, so it's continuing, and then the dress is what the miha design. It's a miha dress. It's a different type of dress than the traditional manta; it's not the black one. So this is more of the robe type, but yeah, so that's what she was wearing that day. She had her hair in a traditional bun with hair tied in the back. So, this other painting (see figure 194) again incorporated a lot of different things. So, my grandfather and my dad, that was a silversmith too, as well, that's what the

inspiration was basically. It's his silversmith work. So, one of the other artists showed me a bolo that my grandfather created that he was fixing up, and it's that one. So this is his bolo of work, this is a bolo that he created, and so I got it on the computer, and I created that same design as his work there, and that was basically the start of this painting, again using spray paint to create that pottery design in the back and then spray-painting the white jewelry stencil on the back of it and then from there, basically what it is, and antelope dancer and so that's what you see, the kachina right there, the antelope dancer and so also to kind of tie it all together to actually show what it's representing which is the antelope and so that's what's painted up in the front because then which is a really good thing. My parents, they create these Sunfaces, that's kind of their trademark type of thing, the Sunface, and a lot of his trademarks were a lot of these kachina-type figures that he would create and seeing the photo of his work, I wanted to kind of represent what he did, and through my two-dimensional art, because he also was a muralist too. He did the De Anza hotel in Albuquerque. He's the one that painted those murals down in the basement, and he's basically the reason why they're saving that whole place. But anyway. So, he was a painter too, so I wanted to create his work as far as his jewelry, and then what it represents as far as our tradition and culture, and to show what this continent represented.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, it's the same kachina?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah. So that stencil is this kachina here, so you can kind of see the wooden ears that's represented, and then the horns, and then the feathers, and just the different things like that.

Charlaine Clerc:

This is like each of your paintings tells a story about your family?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, it's either about family or a lot about our history like I said, you know. Certain times I just create something just for the heck of it! I've created, but a lot of times, it really does take some time and thought.

Charlaine Clerc:

So you work on some sketch first, or do you just picture it on the canvas?

Keith Edaakie:

Sometimes. This one I know for sure I just created. Well actually what I did is, I created the white outline design on my computer because originally, I was thinking that maybe I'll create a t-shirt or a postcard or something from it. But I decided not to. So I had it there for a while, and then I had this canvas, and then I did the background of it and just kind of came up with a blank slate and was all like, "okay, what next?" I didn't know what to do with it, so a couple of days later when I was, like, scrolling through my computer, and then I thought, like, what was this? Because I kind of did it really quickly. Then I saw "what is this," and then I opened it, and I saw the file, and what we have is what we call a vinyl cutter.

It's a plot cutter where the computer cuts out a piece off like a big giant sticker, so the computer cut out this big giant sticker where I just kind of placed it on my canvas, and then I used white spray paint to spray it over it, and then pulled the sticker off and then the design will stay there. And then I was just going to leave it just to show the jewelry that they created, but it was missing a lot so, there were a lot of people, [who] could interpret it wrong, and so I decided to paint the kachina that it represented, then once I was done with that, I said "well I need to create some paint with what the kachina represents," and so that's when I painted the antelope in the front, the contrast with the white also.

Charlaine Clerc:

So you really like purple, because I understand there's no reason, other reason for the color other than it's cool, it's one of our favorite colors too. I like that it contrasts well with so many other colors.



Figure 213: Keith Edaakie, Staff, acrylic on canvas, 2019 (my photo)

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, definitely, so yeah, a lot of the things that I work with, there's definitely some kind of purple that's incorporated into the paintings. And that was actually one of mine too, that the ones with the hands on it (see fig. 213).

Charlaine Clerc:

This is a different style again!

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, so again, this is [pointing at the background] with the spray paint, and this was my donation for the pueblo art using purple artwork. So a lot of overlaying images, I use spray paint for the background and just kind of like almost the graffiti type images. You see the deer hoof prints, lightning? And then you'll see with stencils? Or I think I used tape, the deer, the steps and then with the paintbrush, you'll see the deer house painting from the pottery. And then this is actually the hands of the deer kachina. Oh, and so when they come in, they have these wooden staffs that they kind of walk away from there trying to just show the intricacy of what this staff holds and what it has. And at that time, I had this fascination with painting hands! And so also displaying really old-style jewelry that we don't really see a lot, which is this big cluster chunk kind of bracelets, that turquoise. Because right now it's really difficult to get real big pieces of turquoise now, a lot of them are just these tiny pieces and so, just kind of showing how this big cluster jewelry that we made a long time ago, so it's the family heirloom. Some people still have those types. The other artist here, Daryl Shack, his father owns some really big cluster jewelry like that. He has a big pendant that has a turquoise about this big and then bracelets basically that have the same size too. So I just wanted to kind of showcase that. And I actually did a series of those, so there was that one and two other paintings that I created with the hands (see figure 195). So this was one of the favorites that I created.

Keith Edaakie:

[About figure 194] I wanted to create something because my grandfathers created their jewelry, and I found this Knife Wing design that they created on the bow guard. Well, it was just a pin, but I made it into a bow guard. But I also wanted to incorporate my parent's work, and this is some of the work, the inlay work that they do. So that's what I wanted to incorporate with this bow guard, to incorporate my grandfather's work as well as my parent's work. And this was kind of almost like that bird [painting] one, where I just kind of paint it however I want. So, you see, these real thick brushstrokes along with the eagle feathers and the hands again, and then the same type of background with the different images on the back.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you just do different techniques? You started looking up to Alex Seowtewa, and then went from that and picked technique up along the way?

Keith Edaakie

Yeah!

Charlaine Clerc:

Did you study color theories, or did some colors just inspire you?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, well no, I think, I never really had any formal teaching other than taking a few art classes in high school, but a lot of it was just kind of, yeah, you know...

Charlaine Clerc:

...start from scratch?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, I think there was just kind of introducing us to different mediums and some techniques. But as far as, you know, color theories and color compositions and those types of things really weren't addressed there. So a lot of it is just kind of, I guess, me picking up on what will look good together and placement of the objects that I want to paint, and sometimes it just kind of works out on its own because a lot of times, I used to sketch on my canvas and then start painting but now a lot of times I just kind of go and go, just paint, and if it ends up in a certain way it ... a lot of times, it works out that way. I would have to figure out what to do other times to make it fit more perfectly onto the canvas. This is a lot of watching, observing other people and how they do their crafts, picking up techniques from a lot of different places, and so, like I said, picking up. The artists that work primarily with spray paint, watching Bob Ross videos and picking up some of his techniques, trying out my own stuff... And YouTube has definitely been a playground. If there is a way that I want to try to do something, the internet would have been a really good helpful tool. Some artists ask the same type of question, and so when I start typing in my question, it already automatically fills in the rest of it. It's all right. Somebody already asked that question. And then, you know, watching and observing and then trying it and then, you know, refining it to make it fit my style.

Charlaine Clerc:

So you're picking up a lot of techniques, but have you ever tried other materials? Because you seem to favor acrylics. Did you try some other media besides the shirts?

Keith Edaakie:

I did try oils. Once, well, I tried oils just several times, but... I don't know, it wasn't for me, or maybe it was just the quality of the oils wasn't [much] because I didn't want to spend so much because the oils are really expensive. That's also a real concern. I wanted to try it. But I didn't want to spend like 20-30 on the tube of paint that I might not end up using frequently, and so I bought like a basic starter kit at Walmart, I think, and, you know, the pigments weren't really too great. I mean, I was able to do certain things, but I guess it just didn't work really well for me, too, whereas... Like, I guess I'm just so used to working with acrylics. Yeah, just thinking of different innovative ways of creating or finding different substrates to paint on, myself with Elroy [Natachu, Jr.] and Kandis [Quam], we've also painted on skateboards. Oh, so yeah, I painted a skateboard (see figure 53) for the Indian market. Um, I didn't get a picture of the board itself, but a gentleman took a picture of me with it. It's really good to where it's interchangeable because you can see [that] on my Surface design shirt. It's the same sun face that I use, so you can pick up something that you created and then kind of mix and match as we go along. Like I said with that plot cutter that I have, my computer was able to cut out this stencil that I used to paint onto the board as well as this, so instead of hand-painting the design on there, I was able to use the big giant sticker

basically to spray-paint on there, and it was, you know, trying to use basically whatever. You can kind of make up the warrior figures right there. I don't know if you can see it, somehow, we can see it's on the picture, and then there's another one right here too. There's a figure. It's up here. His arm, his head are right there. So these are the two stars that are represented right there. The stars were actually sent by the sun, and then what they were talking about was this bow made out of a rainbow, and his arrows were lightning—and so placing those two stars on the arrows and shooting them down to Mother Earth.

Charlaine Clerc:

Then you always paint fragments of the Emergence Myth?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, and so basically, you get it, everything that I do, it kind of basically tells the whole story. But yeah, this was fun, and this was basically the same style of art that I was telling about, with the Hispanic guy who uses primarily spray paint, because this is basically all spray paint. Yeah, so when we were at the Indian market, this was the first piece that I actually sold! When we were setting up, there was an individual. He said, “Oh, that looks cool, I need to take that,” and so that was the first piece that we actually sold at the Indian market. So yeah, yeah, I don't know if he's gonna use it! What's really neat is that a lot of people now collect skateboards that are hand-painted not to ride on that but just to get them. So it's basically instead of buying a canvas, they're buying the skateboard, and it's a big collection that a lot of people have because we had another one displayed, and that gentleman bought that, and he said, it's going to be added to his collection of skateboards that he's collecting, and so that was fun! What's fun about it is that with spray paint, and this type of art, it's done really quickly so ... you know, as with the [plot] cutting, it took some time for planning and figuring out how it's going to be, but executing it was just kind of like of ... probably an hour and a half.

Charlaine Clerc:

That also looks like spray paint on the orange sun.

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, so basically that's the technique that I use, is what I did is, I spray-painted it yellow, right in the middle, with a whole bunch of paint on it, and then the orange and then the red and I believe a little bit of purple around it. And then what I did is I spray-painted the whole thing black, so I covered it with black, then I take a newspaper, and then I put it along the area. Then when I peel it off, that is what creates those textures. And then after that, you know, just spray paint, so you can kind of see that texture around the edges right there, where the newspaper peeled off and left some of the blacks. And it shows some of the colors from there. And once it dried, I added some more colors, and then the purple and then the black, and then the stars are basically just dipping my finger in white spray paint, and just flicking it like that, to create those little stars all along here, and the same way with this here was the blue, and then the white. And then spray-painted it black using a newspaper and then peeling off the black technique. You could see some of those newspapers where the textures kind of ... and then this was

basically done the same way with just different colors, so you can see orange, the blues, the greens, and the yellows, just kind of painted on there. And it was then using the newspapers to show those colors and white. So basically what I did is, I took a lid from a coffee can, and then I placed it as a stencil, and then that's how I was able to create that round planet shape type here, and create just basically those types of things, and those were stencils that, you know, big sticker, put it on top. And then spray-painted, I think a white, a really yucky-like yellow color, so that is why it stands out from the rest of it. And then the same thing here too is that this was a stencil and then spray paint in it, different colors.

Charlaine Clerc:

For a long time, I had the pleasure to discover your art through the previously mentioned collection of interviews and paintings of the Zuni Map Art project, edited by Jim Enote and Jennifer McLerran; could you talk about your three paintings?

Keith Edaakie:



Figure 214: Keith Edaakie, Nankoweep, acrylic on canvas, 2010 (Enote 60) 36 x 54 in

Yeah, and so this one (see figure 214) actually was a place called *Nankoweep* at the Grand Canyon, and what was really fun and neat about doing this is that it actually took us down to the Grand Canyon on a riverboat tour for two whole weeks. So, we were down on the river for two whole weeks, and we got to visit a lot of these different sites along the Grand Canyon. And each artist was kind of designated areas to create paintings of. And I was given *Nankoweep* to do a painting of. And so, a lot of things we wanted to show were some of the granaries that we saw way up on the high cliff edges. Because we're kind of thinking how it would have looked and with the village kind of down closer to the river, their gardens, their fields, and everything and they had all these trails going along. But

their granaries were located way at the top then again, just trying to imagine what it would be like long ago. What life would have been like. So I painted this lady picking up the berries from the yucca and gathering them because with the Grand Canyon, you know, there really wasn't that much, so they had to gather and collect as much as they could. And then we saw this half-built home here, which was kind of probably broken down from deteriorating, but instead of making it look like it was broken down, I wanted to make it look like they were just now building that. And so yeah, that's why this guy is here—pulling those boulders in this building. This person here kind of really could barely see but bringing grains that could be stored up at the top. But a lot of it was just trying to get this background, the colors of the water. It was really nice because, when we went, we've seen pictures of the Colorado River, especially when the little Colorado river when they open up its generating system. It brings in this really chocolate mud water, and then the rest of the way the water is just brown, but we were fortunate that didn't happen, and it was really clear blue-green waters as we traveled along the river. So that was fun! And of course, all the rapids that we went through, yeah! And then Ken was telling me that he was quite scared. He and I were always on the same boat. It was fun. It was interesting. There were some pretty neat experiences and some really terrifying experiences, but it was a lot of fun. But again, also showing the wildlife and, you know, it wasn't just our people that were living there.

Charlaine Clerc:

You tried to capture the color of the earth.

Keith Edaakie:

And right here, and it's really hard to see, but...

Charlaine Clerc:

On top of the hill?

Keith Edaakie:

There is a big horn sheep. So yeah, I know, it's kind of hard, it just looks like a little blob there.

Charlaine Clerc:

But the original canvases are quite big, so it must be easier to notice!

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, because this one was three feet by over four feet. I painted a pretty big canvas. But yeah, there's little tiny bighorn sheep along the top of the canyon there, which was pretty cool because we actually did see some as we were walking down or traveling along the canyon. You can see my... I guess you can see the improvement in my clouds. Less light here, yeah, I think it was more fuller and more... It captured the different shades and hues of the light because I know when I first started, it was just always, well, the way I saw it! I thought clouds were just white, so I'll just use white to paint in, but you know, like studying and learning and then watching other people paint clouds. They add different hues like the yellows and the purple and the pinks and the different things to show the different

values of the textures of the clouds. And so, here it was just basically just using white paint to paint in these clouds, but now, like I said, adding more color to it to give it that more fuller look.

Charlaine Clerc:

This is definitely something that you would like to change?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, I definitely, I probably would change the clouds in there and then... And I think was kind of part of the photo, then a lot of it was what I saw so... that was a really neat trip, a lot of fun! And then this one was interesting because they had this Map Art going, and so this was the last one I did. This is the second one I did for them, and so Curtis Quam was a big part of this along with Jim [Enote], but Curtis usually was the person that would get in contact with the artist and let them know what was going on. And so Curtis called me up and said if I was interested in wanting to do a painting, and he was talking about a site and that we're going to go visit that site. And that's basically all he said. So first I didn't know it was going to be an overnight trip! They didn't tell me that there was quite a hike that was going to be involved! So, I think we hiked like 10 miles or something round trip and so he just said "let's go, we're going to go on this day" and so I thought, okay, let's figure out what we're going to go visit and come back. But we ended up spending the night there, the day before we're going to go hike. But anyway, it's the National Monument, but what they called it is *Bishla:shiwani*, the house towards the north (see figure 120). And I think one of the biggest things for us to do was to emphasize that, you see, Navajo National monument and you think that is Navajo, so, you know, just showing that Zuni had a lot of history to it. There are sites around here that a lot of people don't know about that Zunis do have a lot of connections to. And so that was the main reason why we wanted to do this painting, to reconnect with this site that you've never seen before. So basically, what they did is, they told me there were three different sites. One of them had inscription rock or inscription house which is this site here, and it was basically closed off to everybody. And that's the one that we had to hike to get to. And there were ancestral ruins all on the top there, and that's basically kind of the formation of them, the mountain that it was the house was in. And this foreground here is basically the river that kind of was flowing through there. It was dry, but there was this arroyo that was there, so you could imagine a long time ago that was full of water. And so that was basically this foreground here, and then this part of it here, is kind of a shot of what we saw up here, and then this is a necklace that was used by medicine men, some of our medicine fraternities. Basically, as part of our migration route, those medicine fraternities are the ones that travel to the north and most likely travel to this area here, and so making that connection with the bear claw necklace and then the eagle feathers that they use along with the red eagle plume, that kind of distinguishes the medicine fraternities. So again, that's my beginning stages of creating eagle plumes; it kind of looks like just a big red-orange type! But yeah, that's probably one thing that I would change! So, this is the mountain lion because it's up north, and also that with the medicine fraternities, there are two animals that are associated with them, and one of them is the mountain lion and the other one is the wolf. And so, that's what I wanted to do, to kind of in the clouds, kind of represent that mountain lion inside the clouds

there. So that was inscription house and that's basically this part, which kind of connected to, like, if you do this. That's this other, and that's one of the biggest sites there we were able to kind of go in and see a lot of different things. One of the things we wanted to incorporate was some of the vegetation. So we saw willows that we use here, the willow sticks that we use here, so in our tradition there's... I guess you could say genders for the different willows. So, the female and the male type. And so, incorporating those into the painting, too as well.

And then, the other side that we didn't get to see was, that was I believe they said if we wanted to go see it, it was going to be like a 14-mile hike in and then 14-mile hike, so... Yeah, so that's the one that we didn't get to go see and so the challenge was trying to get all three different sites onto this canvas but in a way to kind of make it flow, connected. So yeah. There's the inscription house, where both of these kinds of share the same sky, but this one here, where the river turns into the sky for this site here and then vegetation and landscape kind of changing here, and then having this kind of blend into the ground here, to show what was up here... So this is connected too. Yeah, because I wanted to do kind of like what Ken did, with his, where he had a circle and then an arrow that points there. But I didn't want to have a circle, and the line shows. I just kind of made it kind of blend in with everything there.

Charlaine Clerc:

This is such fantastic work! Could you tell me more about the last painting?



Figure 215: Keith Edaakie, Zuni River Basin, acrylic on canvas, 2009 (Enote 60)
32,5 x 54 in

Keith Edaakie:

So, this was the first one that I was commissioned to do, and it was the Zuni river basin (see figure 215). Like it was talking about when the Zuni river was flowing, you know, there was all this wildlife and birds and everything that used to be around everywhere, so I just kind of wanted to show that here, and it was a lot of research as far as the different birds and the different things that we wanted to

incorporate into the painting. So originally, when they gave me the layout, the outline of what they wanted in, they had like three whole pages of different birds that had the English name as well as the Zuni name! So, Curtis came, and he said, "here's the list of the birds that they want to incorporate into the painting," so he gave me the sheet and it was kind of like taped together. So, he gave it to me, and then he pulled it up, and there's like, all these different birds that were listed on there. So, then he said, "we're just kidding, but I mean if you could..." they had ones that were highlighted, as far as things that they definitely wanted on there. And prior to that, what they did is we actually took an airplane, a single-engine airplane that took off from our airport here, and we got to actually fly around this whole river basin area, so a majority of it showing the Zuni pueblo and everything that happens, but we actually flew to where the river started, which was in the Zuni mountains. Yeah, that was a pretty cool thing.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you could see the entire landscape?

Keith Edaakie:

Yeah, so that's kind of, I guess, the reason why I painted it more like a higher elevation yeah and shooting everything as far as you know the mountains and then just the different elevations and how it goes and *Dowa:Yalane* [Corn mountain] right there, and a lot of the different birds again: there's the oriole that I painted over there. And then what you call a kingfisher and the turtle, the fish, duck, frog, the sandhill crane, the mallard as well as the American coot? So, you know, then again, the two different willows, the male and the female willows, and then the cocktails. A lot of different things were utilized, that were around the riverbed area. Of course, you know, the waffle gardens and the oldest that they used to get the water, and the known livestock with sheep pigs... You know, they were all imported animals, but those were still a big part of our livelihood, and it was fun! Because they hear stories of the river, and when certain times ..., when it will flood because a lot of these waffle gardens were pretty close along the riverbed area, and there were people would tell me about when the flood would come in, then everybody would have to go and try to fish out their pigs because they would wash away with the plastic. Then these two here, the lady with the Olla, that one's on her head, you know, basic everyday essential things like drinking water, cooking, watering their gardens, and washing many different things that they needed to do with the garden or with their lives. They had to get the water from the river... Oh! That's why I kind of depicted that in traditional attire, and everything and then the gentleman right there, a lot of the offerings that we do, we offer to the river because the Zuni river actually flows from the Zuni mountains to the community. And it goes directly through what we call our Zuni heavens, *Kothluala*, and then the river connects then to the little Colorado River, which then goes down to the Gulf of Mexico. One of the things that they say is that when we make our offerings into the river, they eventually make their way to the Zuni heavens. And so, that's why they have the offerings in his hands, giving it to the river to offer to our ancestors at the Zuni heavens, so this is so important.

Charlaine Clerc:

Do you have posters of all the canvases, so you can show them to the younger generation?

Keith Edaakie:

They did create posters, but I think it was only of the original four that were created. I don't think they ever got... They were talking about wanting to do that, but I do not think they ever got to creating those posters. The only thing that was created was these publications with the books that have all of them. [...]. Yeah, this was fun, this was something we definitely needed because, as I said, the purpose was to identify those areas that have significance to Zuni, and why they have the significance to Zuni—versus a traditional map that shows an area, place, names, and maybe other information. But with these maps we wanted to create ... were to tell these stories of why they were important to share, show which areas were important and also to share. So for me, I wanted to show what it was like a long time ago.

Charlaine Clerc:

Have you ever thought about doing a sequel of the project?

Keith Edaakie

Yeah, I mean, yeah, that'd definitely probably be good. I think that could get them involved. I think there are a lot of grants out there that we could probably do that. And it's definitely something that we do know we need because, as I said, a lot of our kids now are growing up in a different environment, I guess you can say. Because they're more into mainstream ideas and mainstream media, and a lot of them start to lose a lot of our language and the reasons why we do a lot of things. So just to kind of re-educate or even educate some that don't know. Because a lot of those resources are gone, a lot of our elders who have a lot of wealth of information are, you know, slowly going away. But you know we're fortunate that there are still several people who know many things that can share these things. But it just needs to be in a way that the kids are receptive because if they're not receptive, we're just basically talking to the walls!

Appendix 2 - Interview with Elroy Natachu Jr.:

November 14, 2019

Charlaine Clerc:

So, is this a project you've finished already?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

No, this one's I'm currently in the working on. So, this one's the beginning step so before I even get to paintings, I have to... my mind is in sort of that realm of I have to sketch everything down, so this is my process for creating the paintings. I try not to come up with a title already, so I put it down... Especially for art shows, I need to write down the dimensions the year it was made what sort of mediums, and then I write down my thought process. Maybe I need a certain type of background that I'm envisioning. And then my sketches are very crude, and they're not as detailed. They're just sort of the groundwork for position, posture and trying to find out where to cast the hero where I'm supposed to, light and dark, to make it look a little bit more realistic. So, this was the original version. It was supposed to be a full-body but I had to cut it down because this painting was about 24 by 36 so it was very long. So, this is the [one I'm about to] finish you see. [Showing the *Na'le* painting]. [...] Yeah, I didn't want to put a lot of light in here because I wanted to, sort of, resembling that dawn as where the light barely creeping up across the mountain, that's why there's a very little highlight from actual face portion, the jewelry and the textiles. And that's where I like to do tons of detail. It is because I am a textile worker, I do embroidery, so I know all of the patterns, their meanings, and I incorporate it in that same manner through the shirt. And what I like to do is add a lot of ancestral textiles that were really around.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you're trying to keep the tradition going.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah, at least some sort of the visuals, because I've noticed that my paintings, and the main goal of why I was creating the paintings, was to create sort of that bridge between the older and younger generations. So, it creates talking points within our community because originally, all our history was passed down orally. It was always through stories, and that was predominantly through like the winter time where storytelling was predominantly done. So, this is another way of doing the paintings. For the longest time, my work was a little bit more abstract in the background, but the main figure work was still sort of on the contemporary and modernist style, but I consider myself more of a symbolist artist where I hide symbols and other things in my paintings. That way, I help tell the story along more easily. So, like, right here [showing the sketches of the *Kanakwe Mosona* and the berdache] we have a hidden rainbow and also see those prayer effigies which were predominantly, and like Corn Maiden dance ones. And so they're hidden here, and they're hidden here. So, I like to do a lot of hidden symbolicry in a lot of my paintings along with the detail work. So, with those, I got like basic

sketches where I just wanna leave a little bit more work because I haven't really set on this idea, so I might change it, or I might think so more. So this one's another painting that's in the work [showing his sketch of the *Kolowisi*]. It kind of has that glower feel as a dark looming creature. So, it's supposed to represent our stories in our migrations or foundation stories of the Great Flood. So, I have the sea serpent here, and these two pillars are representing a brother and sister that gave their lives for the actual bringing down in the water; And then also within that story, we have the Water Spider who, through his actions, he let down his heart and once it hit the ground and petrified, and that's where we're supposed to have our forever home.

Charlaine Clerc:

The Middle Place.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, so this all is that story in a more symbolic fashion but also in that modernistic of sort of a contemporary style.

[...]

Charlaine Clerc:

May I ask you questions about the Map Art Project? Because this is how I got to know you actually years ago. So, I've read the interviews [in the catalog by Jim Enote and Jennifer McLerran] and I was wondering; this was the project's purpose. Like you're doing, this was to share and teach to the new generation. Was this how you got into this sort of painting; to share with the younger generation?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, because originally, my paintings were a little bit more just color fields with centralized figures, but it's more so for the last four years that I've been really taking. Because I kind of think about it, the previous [project] before these four years was basically study work, just basically trying to figure out what colors were, how they affected the mind and also how they affect the viewers' viewpoint but also to practice the body structures, the hands and the feather work sort of as training before I actually started incorporating a lot of this symbolism. And that's where a lot of our acrylic works or the transfer work came into play. So, this is another one that I did. Originally, it was supposed to be a full party, but I didn't like how that composition was sort of off... There wasn't really no dynamism to it, and there wasn't as much movement... It was just very basic and similar to a lot of my study work where there was just a figure but there wasn't really much going on, and it didn't really tell that story. So, this is the finished version, so this is making use of that acrylic transfer method and also the hiding of the little pillars right here. You can kind of see them right here. [showing the Berdache kachina] Right here, I put in the figure because this one represents the two-spirit Kachina, which is predominantly only found within Zuni where they're sort of an LGBT-type gender figure within our community.

Charlaine Clerc:

Is that the Berdache?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, so that's that well-known one, and his name was *We' Wha*. And then he's also related to our family through those through the blood ties. So, this one is, at least the composition, was more to my liking, it gave it a little bit more dynamicism, but I also got to do a lot more detailing in the hair, the textiles, the shirt, the hands... And just putting as much detail into my work as possible.

Charlaine Clerc:

And what about the colors you chose for this [work] or in general. How do you choose them?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

For the backgrounds, I have mainly been skewing for a darker tone, and the main aspect of that is more sort of like a dreamscape-ish, when sometimes in our dreams, you don't really see the full picture. So sometimes there's a little bit [of] black, and there's a little bit of light, so I like how it kinda combines that dawn-esque coloration, like sunset kind of tone. But it also gives it more of a dreamscape quality. There's a lot of my work beforehand that was very bright and vibrant. With this, I'm thinking about it as a study on how this will affect the viewers' viewpoint if they can sort of comprehend that dream as... Like an ethereal sort of aspect.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, your work was experimenting on colors, what is pleasing, what isn't? How the person looking at it can feel the colors.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah. So, this one's the one that's one of my recent ones, and then here's the secondary one. So, this one was a little bit supposed to be like a full-body picture. But with my canvas, it wasn't really big enough. Even if I did to those exact sorts of compositions, it would be very tiny. It would be too time-consuming. So, this one is the finished product.

Charlaine Clerc:

Wow, the colors are nice!

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah. Because a lot of the times, what I do is I pick kachinas that are predominantly either seldom known or they don't come around as often or ones that have become completely extinct and from that. Before I even start working on them, I get as much information from religious leaders, community members, and other places like that to find out how they looked and different scenarios. So that's why. And also, with the textiles, you can see all of the detail from the diamond twill patterning to the diagonal twill patterning. And that's a similar type of patterning that you can see in the loom that is set up in front. It's starting out as a tie diagonal and then it'll go into a sort of a diagonal twill. But originally that's the traditional coloration, is the deep indigo with a sort of very dark brown coloration.

Charlaine Clerc:

Okay, and what about those fingerprints? [pointing at the *Hetsululu* painting]

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

So, the fingerprints played two aspects sort of as in our culture and religion we view our ancestors as moisture bringing and they sort of are in that realm of clouds, rain and things like that. So that's why I oftentimes do fingerprints in the background that are kind of hidden, similar to like if when you're driving and it's very cold, and you get a lot of condensation on the windows, and if you put your hand on it, it acts as the same way. So, it's that similar sort of connection of that moisture aspect and that's why predominantly when I do hidden hands, I do it in a blue coloration which, like most religions, is sort of the standardized color for water.

Charlaine Clerc:

This is a very impressive effect here [pointing to the cloudy trail].

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

That's a sort of, new sort of misty cloudy-like quality that I'm working with. A lot of the stories are again linked to moisture, so that's sort of that same aspect of the moisture in the clouds, like how they start to form and sort of the area above here [pointing to the Kachina].

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, I noticed that the clouds and rain were very often connected, water and clouds.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

So instead of doing it in a very realistic [way], it's more on that ethereal sort of green light, a smoky-ish color. When I work with a lot of kachina, I try to make the flesh like the pigments that they wear look as realistic as possible.

Charlaine Clerc:

This is darker than I thought! So, this is a multicolored kachina!

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, so the story for this one is that he was one of the children that were in loss during the crossing of our Sacred Lake, and the children that went to the bottom, they became fully formed and then one way that the parents were appeasing them, and their families were by providing them with prayer effigies, so that's where they got their wealth their clothing their jewels and things like that. But this Kachina, in particular, his parents were still in mourning. They didn't know if he was in that sort of ethereal realm so that's why he is very poor in his clothing and his structure as his actual jewelry, so that's why he was only given a breechcloth for his neck and a little bit of feathers. However, the story goes that he's painted with all the sacred colors of the earth to give him the importance, and when he came, he sort of appeased and sort of like a visitation from his spirit to the mother to show that once you pass on it's not just a complete, like your body or your soul, it just disappears here. You go into a separate place where nothing is wrong. It's just pretty, happy, a better version of this world.

[...]

Charlaine Clerc:

It's very interesting how you use paintings to teach the new generation.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, that's what, throughout the entire history of Zuni kachina, artists have always been scrutinized. But it's actually the main sort of cultural active culture preservation because a lot of times, community members who don't know the stories or are active in the Kiva societies and things like that, they don't know what certain things are supposed to mean and things like that. And oftentimes due to the advent of Google and things like that they can just look for pictures and faces that they see on pictures. And sometimes pictures aren't fully accurate. So, they're not talking about these subjects within the family that have access to wealth of knowledge. This is one form or one way that they can sort of start that oral history tradition

Charlaine Clerc:

Once you're done with your painting, how do you inform the new generation? Do you talk with them?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Sometimes, but a lot of the times, it's through the clientele. We do set up events and things like that. We sell print and duplicate versions, so those people come around, and I always ask their parents if they're initiated or not before I can go into full detail into what certain things mean and things like that. So, once I get the okay, they can come and visit anytime they want and learn certain stories, the meanings, and things like that. It is sort of my way of giving back to the community.

Charlaine Clerc:

It's a very nice way of doing that!

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah! So this is what that one looks like. And the current one that I'm working on is this one, and it'll look like that once it's fully complete. [showing the *Na'le* painting]

Charlaine Clerc:

So here's the sketch.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

And that's the one in progress.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, could you explain once again your technique with the ink so that I can record it? How do you start the creative process?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Beforehand like with the areas like this, I use color blocks with either masking tape or something like that because I want those very crisp and pristine lines to give it that modernist edge. And then from there, I'll start with blacking out the entire canvas to be black, and then once that set, I'll start with turquoise and start with a light wash and start building it up, and that's what causes the separations here, and it causes it to give that smoky effect. And then want something with that, and while the paint is still kind of wet, I'll do a layer of blue, then let that completely dry, and then do a layer of black and while it's still wet. I'll put my handprints in there, and that's what causes that condensation sort of aspect here. And then once that's done, I'll do the splatter work, and that's what these little black dots are, the black splatter of color shifting things. I kind of like to use the technique where a lot of religious iconographies and stuff like that in churches often have like gold leaf or something shiny to sort of designate the importance or the religiousness to that particular group. So, I do that same sort of treatment

through these color-shifting paints that have that sheen and have that sort of wealth to it. And then from there, once the background is completely done, I have to sketch it out first to make sure that I can get like, the composition right and figure out if I need to change it. So, this becomes sort of my reference point, and then I use a technique of making cartoons from the transfer paper, and then that's the way I based my sketches, so usually, I have three cartoons made of a particular piece in different compositions. So, this one's more of a standard version. This one's more leaning forward. So, the staff that he carries will be a little bit more up here. It's more of a hunch. So, once I get that going, I'll start from the face or the way I started this one was the feathers in the back then the antlers, [...] then the feathers' here, then I went to the face. These were left at the ears and then the evergreen collar, the mouth, the feathers, then once I'm done with the face, I move to the body. And a lot of times what I do is I don't sort of... Like... I don't spare no detail so I would work this on with complete detail, and then even though some of it gets covered up, it's still hidden under there, I build it in layers. So this one is that kilt right there and then once I get the necklace done I'll put in these beads that represent the Milky Way and then from there I'll put in the arm that goes this way so it will cover most likely a portion of this, and then from there I'll finish the arm here first and then this part and then go down to the body and what will be the last part I'll add is this staff he carries and also his hands. So, I have it in steps in a way. I have steps one two three four five... That way I can work in a way that I'm not disturbing any other paint and, or, of separate areas because it might change the entire composition or the light. Because if I try and do it in sections, the lighting will be fewer. One part will be highlighted here but then once it comes to here it'll show off that sort of lighting ratio to it. And that I really go into details, you can see that a lot more if you look into all the little lines in the feathers, the hair, the beads. Even feathers that are sort of hidden you can still see those little micro lines.

Charlaine Clerc:

The texture is really impressive, especially in a 2D painting you know, so I'm impressed.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, normally what I do is I just... I have larger brushes and those ones are just for placing my colors but what I actually paint with is the number 10 script brush that's really big so it's not small but it's very thin and that's what I use to do all the fine detail work. And like most painters, we start to get the calluses of the work. Because I'm holding the brush similar to a pen so it's always lending here [shows his callused index finger]. So when I'm holding it, it starts to build up!

Charlaine Clerc:

I can imagine! So, you're using acrylics?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, this is all done with acrylics. That's why a lot of people are surprised that the acrylics that I use are like ceramical, they're not really high-end quality acrylics. The main reasoning for that is that the instructor who taught at the University had his theory you can create beauty from practically nothing. And his motto was "manipulate the medium and don't let it manipulate you." So, from that understanding, I'm able to take all of his teachings because what he did was practically broke us down and then built us from the ground up. So, all of the knowledge that we thought we had going in we had to leave it at the door and relearn the whole thing. And which was a good teaching point because a lot of my work was following that same sort of patternization. For me it was becoming very stagnant, there wasn't really no sort of improvement or there was not any sort of meaning put into it. So, once I went through that sort of university setting with a lot of like-minded individuals that's where a lot of changes into my artwork started to occur. And then also with my sort of involvement with the religious aspects of our community became more prevalent. And a lot of different things that were going on in my life. It started to build this idea of that community involvement and community restorations because a lot of my interactions within those religious cycles, even the older generation, they didn't know certain aspects, whether it be from religious imagery and symbolicry, colorations to even textiles, their formats and things like that. So, it's a way of helping bring back all of this knowledge that was a lot of times common sense and sort of common knowledge, so it's my way of sort of bridging that gap from the past and present.

Charlaine Clerc:

So when you're participating in the Map Art, you went to some sites, you have traveled, you wanted to see these sacred places for yourself?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, so that's when we started the Map Art we were the original ones to go actually on the rafting trip. Nowadays it's only a week-long and they take the big bigger boats that are not as dangerous as the ones we went on!

Charlaine Clerc:

It was an adventure!

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah, so this one was a, really, sort of a change and when a lot of my viewpoint started to change as well because going into it... I have a fear of heights, and also I can't swim, and there was a lot of water! So, it was sort of what they call testing your mental and just testing your resolve sort of aspect to it. So, we started off at Lees ferry and then we went to the various sacred sites and a lot of the olden villages, and that's where a lot of us were given sort of direction of our paintings that were supposed to do this part, and you get designated these areas

so throughout that entire trip. Because at the time, the painters that were there, some of them weren't very religious or active in our religious community except for several older gentlemen and myself. We were the ones that were predominantly active in our community in that sense. So, it was a lot of inter exchanging of ideas, knowledge, techniques and things like that. And it was one way that, sort of, we grounded ourselves by experiencing the terrain, the environment of our ancestors, and what they went through, and it gave us more of a deeper appreciation for our culture. From that map of our project, that's where I was starting to come up with these tests or sort of experiments in my paintings to see how I can incorporate the idealism and that sort of sense that I got from that map project involvement. It's a lot of community involvement, community exchange, and helping one another that's where my work is flowing as of today is in that direction with that same sort of aspect of all of those things I experienced. [...] So it's taking that same aspect of using those imagery as teaching tools to bring back our oral history. And a lot of the painters that I talked to from the Map Art Project, a lot of us kind of want to redo our paintings and make them better!

Charlaine Clerc:

Okay! So, you might actually have a sequel of the project!

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah, because a lot of us were looking at our work and thought, "oh I could have done this that way," because we look at our progress from then to now, and we're like, "oh no!"

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you want to use this growth, somehow you've grown into your art and use it for the community. So, do you think that there'll be a sequel to this project?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Hopefully! There are some additions to the Map Art project that were done after that, and those were on local sites within this area, like some of the religious sites or some of the olden villages. There were maps created of those particular places. So hopefully, they'll do another one or something that does more with the oral part because a lot of times we have little exhibits and we show off the paintings, but there's no real sort of oral exchange of why certain things in the painting are there, why they're not, things like that.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, I would be interested too, actually! If I show you the painting, can you explain it to me as a foreigner, because... so I was really happy to see that there were actually interviews with this book, because, usually, when I look at a Zuni painting as a foreigner, I don't understand what I'm seeing! So, this was offered

to me by Curtis Quam [about the Map Art project catalog]. So, this was your interview, and this is your painting!

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, I was given four particular spots. And a lot of it is based around sort of our migration, so we have the sacred colors, which are also indicators of Zuni in particular based on their color patterning. So, yellow's for North, blue's for West, South this red and white is East but then also with the combination and all of these [for Zenith] and also with the black. Black is for the underworld, and when combining black, red, and all of these colors in the multicolored eared corn, that's what calls it... What's sometimes known as Zenith or the sky. So, it has the combination of both and also with a classic [...] patterning but also with a sort of cloud formations that means the war gods, and those ones were the ones that relate to our creation story that brought us out from the underworld and guided us through our migration. And so, the first panel is of a springing area, and that one I wanted to make it, to sort of show the olden clothing was predominantly just the breeched breechcloth made out of yucca fiber. And since our community predominantly didn't use hides at the time a lot of the times, it was mainly just yucca and either rabbit for blankets or turkey for their blankets. Those are the predominant ones that were of that era. So, with the harvesting of water, it showed us that sacredness with Springs and water in particular. And then the secondary site shows the ruins of an old village, but with also petroglyphs that were scattered around, and those petroglyphs showed the stories of the migration and sort of like mile markers or sort of logs on their journey. And then this one was one of the ingenuity because it was way high up, almost if you didn't really look you could miss it completely, but it was a bridge that they had created by using yucca twine, and they would twist it together, and they would create a loop in action that would create bridges, and that's how they would manage to sort of escape during times of flooding. Because there in the monsoon season, they would inhabit the villages that were more towards the lake or the shoreline, but once the monsoons came, the water levels would rise up, and they would have to inhabit that upper area. So, these were ways that they were utilizing the canyon landscape to create safety and wayfinding so that they could still live in that area but be protected from all that flooding. And so that it was basically showcasing a lot of their ingenuity and how they were able to create these structures. And this last one is, was like an amphitheater. It was a giant cavernous cave, but it had a sacred sort of symbolicry and imagery on the inside. But in the insight, it was really like a nice amphitheater, it had great echoes, but it also had great acoustics. So, it was the last spot that was given to me for my map art project. So, a lot of these represent sacred sites that were particularly prevalent to Zuni and how our ancestors use their ingenuity and knowledge base to create these structures and show their viewpoint on how they would create these sort of petroglyphs and things like that.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you were talking about changing your painting. What would you change?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

I would... I would make it more realistic and make it a little bit more... A lot of my lines at the time weren't as straight, but now I can make them very pristine and crisp, and they would give it more dynamicism because of the way that I view it now is... The compositions are okay, but they could be very much improved. Either in point of view or more shading and lighting in certain areas to give it more of that 3D effect to it.

Charlaine Clerc:

You would change the colors a bit to try to bring more contrast.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah, I would add a little bit more earth tones and a lot more contrast, that sort of movement aspect to it.

Charlaine Clerc:

I really enjoy it. This painting and the whole map art project got me into painting because the *A:shiwí* are known for their carvings, ceramics, and jewelry. Painting was something new to me. And I learned that it wasn't actually "new." It's just that we didn't know it as foreigners.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah, so that's why I like a lot of the older works because our ancestors used a lot of kachina imagery, a lot of imagery through petroglyphs and pictographs. So those are two separate things. Petroglyphs are more chiseled in a sort of design patterning but they also use pictographs, which are made out of mineral pigment, oxides, something that will stain the actual rock and they'll create paintings from there. And it's just interesting to see their sort of viewpoint at the time and what they thought of as good. And as time changes, those have still become a constant in a lot of our modern-day painting, you still see petroglyphs, pictographs around here, and there's still that understanding of... Sort of the sacred. So that's where a lot of our paintings come from is that they're all sacred and important in their own way. [...] If you get a hold of Jeff [Shetima], he knows the way to what's known as the Village of the Great Kivas. That one has a lot of pigment-based drawings and a lot of it's kachina work, and that's where you'll see that development profiles from side, profiles, frontals, and also some variations of that. As far as petroglyphs, he probably would know where to find them, but a lot of them are pretty much scattered up through the entire area.

Charlaine Clerc:

[...] What artist inspired you? You talked about van Gogh and Pollock. Were there other artists that you looked up to?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, so I was inspired by them when I got into University and studied a little more, like modern art and classical art courses mandated to take from my field. But before then, I was overly influenced by another painter who was in there, Duane Dishta. He was related to me through my family, my late uncle. So that's why a lot of my work and his work have similarities. There's a lot of attention to detail, but mine is more detail-oriented. Because he would put a lot of detail, but he wouldn't go in-depth into like, in a lot of the shading and things like that. But he had a great composition in his bigger ones. So that's where I started to experiment to see if I could get that same sort of aspect, more a still sort of imagery like that without giving it too much movement. And then another one that I was inspired by was Alex Seowtewa, and that was the time when I was in middle school and high school where they were doing a lot of the [Old] Mission work repairs. So, we would have school trips to go there, and then I was also mentored by his son Ken Seowtewa.

Charlaine Clerc:

I was in touch with him some time ago, but we have lost touch recently.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah, so he was one of the other artists that went on the trip, and we exchanged a lot of ideas that we sort of have, that same understanding of community, and also, it's at bridging that gap between. Because a lot of our younger generation is predominantly on their phones and heavily influenced by the imagery on TV, so that's one of the main points of why I chose to go into this field is to utilize that same sort of imagery and that modernist field to see a little impacting in the same way that westernized imagery wants to. And see if there's that correlation in art imagery that we create that will impact in that same way.

Charlaine Clerc:

Did you ever think about digital art to teach the new generation?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

I tried, but I prefer to paint! I like getting dirty! I prefer dealing with paintbrushes and paints and just getting dirty. Yeah, Keith Edaakie does more of the digital. He has the mind for it. He uses a lot of digital software to create the imagery of our t-shirts and things like that. And also, that printing was completely made from digital images. The closest I ever got to work on digital imagery was the use of acrylic transfers. That was when I used to work for the University of New Mexico. I used to work under the Student Senate and was into student relations, so on

my off time, they had a program called Publisher. I was basically binding shapes in the same way as I would do for embroidery because I knew the shapes and I knew the style pattern, so I was thinking maybe I could utilize that program that has these shapes already in place and just piece it together like a giant puzzle. So that's how I created those textile patterns to give it dynamicism because a lot of the time, I like that harsh black that is contrasting with bright colors.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, I was thinking about other influences, so you had studied the color theories. Did you change the way you use your colors really?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, because I've noticed that a lot of colorations for various places affect people differently. For Zuni, we like bright colors, and then in my other places, they're more subdued in coloration. So, it's all about experimentations, but I've been mainly using color theory to see how it affects the viewer's sort of understanding and their viewpoint and the what sort of theory or... What they get from the painting to see if it's similar to mine or if I need to improve some area to get that same sort of view.

Charlaine Clerc:

You worked on experimentations, to see which color goes well together. Were you influenced by the color wheel at all?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Sometimes yes. I use a lot of contrasting and complementary colors. And with the complementary colors, they... Often times when they're put together, they look a lot brighter than they already are. So, a lot of that theory has already been in place in a lot of religious iconography and things like that within our Pueblo, where we combine things like blue in gold or reds and green. So, when combining those two, they look really vibrant. Well, more than on their own. They sort of have that dull or singularity within them, but when you're combining both of them, it brings some more variety to the piece. That's why with a lot of my paintings, I combine both masculine and feminine sort of brushstrokes and also of composition and also textures.

Charlaine Clerc:

What would you call the feminine or masculine strokes?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

So, for the feminine, I would do a lot of it, mainly on the facial work, and things like that should create very smooth, pristine, especially with a lot of the female kachinas. But where I bring into masculine is through their hands and their skin

and other things like that. Because a lot of the times, our ancestors were very mobile and did a lot of tasks, there was a lot of wear and tear to their bodies, and I try to portray that in the painting.

Charlaine Clerc:

I like it. It's whimsical. It's impressive work because the kachina is rather expressionless. There is no smile, no tears. It's complicated to work on their feelings, and you have to rely on the elements of the painting and the positioning. For example, the one looking up seems melancholy!

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

So that's where I have to think about it ahead of time, how I want to make the painting sort tell that story about how I want it to look. Because when you paint kachina iconography, it's based on how you position the face and also how you position the beads, the feathers, everything like that. It gives it movement, and it makes it look totally different from the way it originally looks where it was very expressionless and blank. But when you add in the shading, the lighting, it looks a little bit more softer and docile or friendly, whereas if it was just like without all of these detail, it would just look very clean and flat, and they would just be just expressionless and emotionless.

Charlaine Clerc:

This is called the evergreen?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Right yes, it's similar to a wreath type fashion, and a lot of times, those kachinas that do have every color have an association to like the forest in areas and things like that, things that are pertaining to nature.

Charlaine Clerc:

Do you choose your colors on the kachina, or is it the kachinas' own color first?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

They're predominantly like set in stone what colors they should be, the way they dress, and the accoutrements. The rest... Everything like that is kind of basically already set in stone and sort of like that general understanding. And that's where I like to bring in a lot of traditional aspects because a lot of the people that view these or especially for the community members, they don't know that they're supposed to wear this, or they're supposed to have that, and as the generations go along, since a lot of them don't talk to the elders or they don't have knowledgeable individuals within their family that might know about certain subjects like this... This is one way that they can get a sort of a viewpoint into that aspect.

Charlaine Clerc:

Okay so you told me you did your research, you talked to the elders. Do you also rely on Duane Dishta's books? I know he worked on a kachina book.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes yeah, that one is generalized, and some of it is false information. Some of it is accurate, some of this isn't. A lot of the imagery is not fully accurate. A lot of it's based on his sort of censorship. Because he knew that it would be sort of mass-produced, he didn't want to put in everything. Officially, since it's a very sensitive topic, he hid some things, and he removed some things. [...] So, it was his own way of doing censorship.

Charlaine Clerc:

Was it the same in the Old Mission?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

No, those ones, that's completely accurate. Only some things are hidden based on some religious items, the colorations might be changed, or the lineup of a certain type of pieces within them might be changed. The old missions were completely accurate.

Charlaine Clerc:

Was the Old Mission open to the public, or was it always closed?

Charlaine Clerc:

Initially, it was opened to the public, but it was closed for a long time because they weren't sure the building would be structurally sound. What was the downfall to a lot of the murals is that they didn't completely dry out the wall before painting on it, so a lot of the hidden, trapped-in moisture started to seep out, and a lot of the pieces or pictures were starting to start flaking off the wall. I believe the tribe is trying to do a preservation project to see we can remove the murals similar to what's been in a lot of museums. They're going to try and see if they can save the imagery by removing sections of the walls.

Charlaine Clerc:

Okay, so it's still in progress.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes hopefully, it's able to be done that way. If not, there might be touch-ups by the family members. Because predominantly the ones that were assisting him [Alex Seowtewa] I believe was his son Ken. Ken Seowtewa was the one helping him do the painting.

Charlaine Clerc:

Indeed, it's an impressive work, and somehow, well, when I look at your picture, I can see some influence.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

So, what is interesting about my style, it's very distinctive. You can kind of pick it out of our lineup because it doesn't look like the basic landscapes where the kachina figures were sort of muted, their colorations and their minds are a little bit more vibrant and a little bit more of the combination of the contemporary, the modern but also tradition.

Charlaine Clerc:

Everything's there! And the lines here, was it to add contrast?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

For contrast, but these are also considered cloud houses, so in a lot of like pottery work, you see the deer-in-his-house motif, that's where the deer is in that stooped over building or like a structure. It's that same way of relating that he has a particular house, but he is also associated with religious aspects in our community.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you are picking up pottery designs for your painting?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, it's combining both a very modernistic straight edge but also with that sort of soft but straight pottery aspect. So that's another pottery design, and then this one represents sort of prayer effigies like what he has there in his mouth/bow. Those were indicators of, in a lot of Pueblo, of female pottery, and it was their way of creating the sacred sort of prayer effigies asking for rain. And then this one is representing what's considered a cloud step pattern or could also be considered as a bird. It goes from black to almost like a very dark gold color and very rust color.

Charlaine Clerc:

So how long does it take to paint a full canvas like this one?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

So, one like this usually... When I was doing my study where he could have apparently done like within a week or so but now that I'm putting in more detail into textures, feathers things like that, they could range from two to about four weeks, depending on how much detail I want to pack into.

Charlaine Clerc:

And I suppose depending on the steps because sometimes you change in the middle.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah, sometimes I'll be looking at it and at the position or composition doesn't work out like well and find that the sketch wasn't to my liking and I need it to make it look a little bit more movement to it, but also, it'll affect the softness of the actual figure. So, I needed a way to change it up, so that's why I went for this composition midway through and that always constantly still happens or whether it be from the position of the arms to the position of the leg or the rest of the textiles something might stay the same or something change.

Charlaine Clerc:

You're working step by step depending on how you feel when you paint.? I would have loved to see you at work!

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah, that's one thing that I found that I cannot really do is paint and talk at the same time! I think my brain just needs to do like laser focus and just be my own thoughts when I'm sometimes painting, and I tried that, like I first started there being asked to demonstrate things like that. But I noticed my lines aren't as crisp, and they're not as fully detailed, and I was like, "why isn't it coming out right?" When I'm in my own little zone and realm, it's when my brain kind of gets to shut off for a while, and it's just like almost like a meditative state when I'm just focused on a particular area of the painting that I totally forget about what I'm doing, what I need to do or things like that. It's my way of sort of relaxing.

Charlaine Clerc:

It's important that you get into that state of mind, and you want to preserve it.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah, so usually, if there's a lot of talking or anything like that, I'm putting on my headphones and listening to music to get me in that head space. Then from there, I'll start working and getting a lot done.

Charlaine Clerc:

Do you have other sketches that we could have a look at?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

These are the only ones at the moment. I can't find my other sketchbook.

Charlaine Clerc:

Oh, it's a shame. I would have wanted to compare it with your earliest work!

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

I had it for the longest time, like, and like all things, when I clean I don't know where I put this! I cleaned it and all of a sudden that sketch book disappeared it I had to buy a new one. I couldn't figure out where in the world it went because they had all the old sketches and models, all those paintings.

Charlaine Clerc:

And the painting you did of the flowers [on the cards sold in the shop] for example, is it the same process as the kachinas?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Oh, those are Kandis' work! So Kandis [M. Quam] was the one whom I taught how to paint four years ago.

Charlaine Clerc:

You're her mentor.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, I kind of ran her through the same process, she was also influenced by the way I used my color theory, and I explained to her the difference; where I got it, where I got the inspiration from. She did some research on how flowers are shaped and how they complement. And she did studies on now she's creating more realistic looking flowers but also keeping that sort of feminine aspect to it because you can tell the difference between her and my paintings. Mines are a little bit more masculine, although they like to combine a little bit of the feminine. Hers are a little bit more feminine in the composition and structure of the animal figure she does, but also black like that, she painted a little bit more softer and whimsical. If I were to do it, it would be a little bit more structured and a little bit more sharp.

Charlaine Clerc:

Okay, so you are teaching her, and others people too?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

I teach just her at the moment because if I teach somebody else... Well, it's rather rigorous because it's similar to how I was taught it because my instructor was taught from the old masters. It's basically tearing you down to build you back up. So it's that same aspect. What you might know isn't relevant at this time. What I'm going to teach you is what I'm gonna teach you, and what you learn from it is what you'll take on in the future. Whether you want to utilize it or not is up to you. So it's basically that same sort of format where you break down the ego, and you break them, that sort of attitude barrier so that way you're more receptive to learning things: compositions, colors... Because they're going in the mindset "I know I know" or "yeah I can do that" or "yeah I was thinking that." If you were doing that, if you were thinking that, why haven't you done so sort of aspect. So that's why when I teach people, I have to go in that same aspect because I want to find out if they're really dedicated enough that they won't just waste my time or waste their time!

Charlaine Clerc:

If they're receptive?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes.

Charlaine Clerc:

I had a question because you told me you were weaving?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Right.

Charlaine Clerc:

I don't know much about the colors. You told me two days ago that it was mainly turquoise, green, red used in weaving. Are those the three principal colors for this art?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, so the primary colors that are used in a lot of textiles for the traditional aspect, you got reds, greens, and blacks, but then the only time you see what are known as exotic colors are in that capes that like the one that he's draped over his shoulder. And those ones do what you know as what we call miha [white embroidered cape] or the embroidered capes or dresses. That's where you see

exotic colors, like really bright yellows, turquoise... And because of those, they're representing all of the colors that are in the world and all of the flowers that are derived from there, and there are oftentimes placed in what's known as cloud houses, so for cloud houses, they are predominantly plant life, also insects like dragonflies, butterflies those that are have an association with water or with like the harvest and things like that, because the bottom portion of that textile represents sort of the earth realm. And the top portion, which is this part that you can see, it represents the sky realm where you see that rolling clouds, and then also this line represents the heartline, similar to pottery where they have heartlines, textiles have those as well. And then this is a cloud formation that's found, oftentimes along coastal areas was known as wealth opals or mayor's pales where there will be a cloud formation that causes a sinking action. And that's what a lot of people are surprised about is that our ancestors actually had trade routes that range from the coast of California to the very tip of Mexico. Because indigo can only survive in South America. So, from there, the indigo for dyes were harvested from various parts of Mexico because they would actually be grown in the jungle-like atmospheres like in South America. They're very short. They're about the size of a finger inlay. And then from there, they would use a year and fermentation process that would actually cause a chemical reaction and that's when indigo pigments would occur. And you can see that a lot in all public textiles, that use of indigo because of association to water and its resemblance to that coloration, a very deep ocean-like water.

Charlaine Clerc:

They would go on a pilgrimage of sorts.

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yeah, that's where a lot of our Migration/Creation stories also came into play is that there was a group of Zunis that actually went down to Mexico, lived there, there's some that still lives there we don't know where they're at, at the moment. But it's all the oral history, and that's where we get our parrot clan from because parents are predominantly from South America or Mexico region, in that jungle-like area, and as they migrated back up, one group, and that's where we get the parrot clan. And a lot of our clan divisions are based on either animals or plant-based like the tobacco, mustard and then are like the dogwood and that we also have animal clans like the bear, the eagle, the deer, the rabbits and things like that. And each clan sort of came from either different areas, or they were created during the time in our migration where the clan systems were sorted. So hopefully, I'll be done with this one [showing his half-finished kachina painting] by mid of December because we have our religious event in two weeks. Yeah, so hopefully, I'll have time to sit down and get into it.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, I hope so too! Will you post it on the website of the coop when it's done?

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, as a new item coming in. Yeah, all the details here, from the little teeth that are in his mouth right there to all the feathers and the yarn and the strings that are used to tie them to the little feathers that I used as its beard. I go very heavily into detail

Charlaine Clerc:

And every time I look at it, I find something else!

Elroy Natachu Jr.:

Yes, that's what I like to do in my paintings is that I pack in so much detail so that way when you look at it for a long period of time, you'll still find something new to look at.

[...]

Appendix 3 - Interview with Jaycee and Milford Nahohai:

November 17-18, 2019.

[...]

Jaycee Nahohai:

After that, it just started developing and on its own, on how I started exploring different techniques. And that's kind of more or less how I started with just being more wild and creative with how I was trying to kind of come up with a concrete concept of what I could do or, you know, is, it was just the exploration of how to go about painting. Yeah. So, it's come up coming up with the style. Because if you see, that has his own style, here's the end there, Anderson Peynetsa, them, they have their own style of theirs, too, and their own style of painting. So, you can automatically see whose, whose parts are whose, it's part of his creative process. Yeah. So anytime you see just the shape alone, like these types of parts, you can tell that's Randy's, but when it comes to the detailing of his painting, then, of course, you can see that he studied enough of his work that he can tell that's his work right away when you look at it, as opposed to it being... there's no other potter here!

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, I guess the shape is pretty striking. And then, the details and the designs are easily recognizable.

Jaycee Nahohai:

So just that alone with that knowledge, you will go and think that, you know, everybody else is the same as what people assume. So, with that part of that knowledge being, you know, passed on to whoever is taking in the information, they kind of more or less, just because this one person is doing their own, you know, with their own style, and, of course, how faster their production is, compared to the next one. Sometimes they are, you know, do kind of comparisons to say like, wow, why is it so much for this person, as opposed to this person whom you could do it for this much, too. So, there's always that conflict of how much a person is getting paid. And sometimes that's where you can lose your business out to, because the person doesn't have the information or the background of not knowing what time it takes to go and put it into a piece. So, fortunately, I'm glad that you're, you were able to take this, you know, liberal course to... Yeah, I think it helps you to see the process behind it. Yeah. And then not only that, but it allowed you to go in and see that. Yeah, they're not all the same. So that's the reason why it takes more time into it. Yeah, it's not something that you create over and over again, just one design that you have. And the good thing too is that you actually do see like, this is the, you know, it's not... How would you say... It wasn't just something that I, you know, had already thought about? You just saw me do it. So that's great. That's the thing too, and even like this one to you, you might you change your mind, you're just, yeah. So, it's good that you were exposed to this stuff, with whatever that you may have questions

for later on. So, if that's, that's something that you wouldn't normally send emails to. So, if that's one thing that you want to go and look back into as far as asking questions, then we could go and add that on to what you need to.

Charlaine Clerc:

I guess what would be traditional for them is traditional? Why would this be traditional or not?

Jaycee Nahohai:

Traditional? More will be like the smaller... Just traditional-wise, and this would be traditional. Because I would think that it's because of the painting style of it and then just the way, you know, the design of it is being showcased, too.

Charlaine Clerc:

So that kind of detail? Like feathers? They just tell that because the shape is similar?

Jaycee Nahohai:

The shape, that too. And then, of course, they're not being used to seeing new stuff that is different. Yeah, different colors as well. And that's something you know that I try to emphasize, you know, saying that, you know, this is a different color that I'm going to be making or producing. They can like it or not. The work speaks for itself.

Charlaine Clerc:

You mean that even if you're using your own clay and paints, some think that your work is not Native American art. Do you know why?

Jaycee Nahohai:

They keep that, you know, notion, still. Traditional still, for the colors, will just as far as pottery goes, always come back down to the white, the brown, and then the Zuni, red. That are the three main colors that you would see traditionally on Zuni pottery. But if you go a little bit further back, that's when you start seeing the usage of the green, the green slip that came out of nowhere. And maybe... Maybe you're not, you know, that's just due to the fact that maybe that's when we started exploring, going to the Pacific to, you know, gather water from there for the medicine men that go there. Maybe that's why they have seen the Japanese come about back over. Who knows about that part of it. But we're, that's one of the things that is asked, like, "where did that slip come from?" The slip, but the paint? Where did that come from? You know, there's a good period in the Zuni pottery where that slip, that paint was being used. And there were, to a degree, it was a real dark green to real light, like lime or fluorescent, even to that point, but it died out after, I think, the Pueblo Revolt, just disappeared. Yeah. Chapell has data. I think that's about the same time after that technique died. It took that long for a piece to come out with Zuni with the, you know, the glaze paint. And that's what features on that pot. That's the bigger water Jar. I thought the paint was going to be dripping. Yeah. So just hearing that alone, you know, that makes the mind wander. Did you look at some of the other older pieces as far as the colors go? There was a, you know, variety of different colors. Just that the fact is, this is

the mindset of what traditional is to the older people whoever think, or whoever has been brought up in that spectrum of what they think traditional. It's sometimes hard to argue with people that think that just because whatever has been done for so long, the old way, that it's, you know, yeah, sure. It may be a traditional bow. When did it become, when was it established that it was traditional.

Charlaine Clerc:

It's not fixed because it's always been evolving? It's moving forward?

Jaycee Nahohai:

So, one of the things that, you know, dad always told me was that art is always ever-evolving. Of course, don't limit yourself. So, I heard that so many times, but you know, I wasn't, you know, I kind of had that mindset. We're like, yeah, you're just talking whatever. So, you know, fortunately, you know, the speed work speaks for itself. Not only the work but then, you know, people who are engaged in, you know, interested in that work are the ones that were the ones who are purchasing the work that I'm doing. So, you know, that speaks for itself. Yeah. So, I'm glad I haven't really had to, you know, do anything to, to while, to make a statement? Something, you know, or, you know, make a gimmick, to kind of do marketing for anything, but, you know, that's, that's just something that I'm glad. As far as family names go, I'm glad I have that backing. But for the amount of time that I've been able to kind of establish myself, as far as, you know, and Nahohai, artists, then, you know, that's, that's something different to go floating into the whole thing of it. But as far as artists coming from Zuni, yeah, I have to go separate myself from that part of it too, because it's something unique that we're working with, to not only are we focused with just certain objects, but we're looking into other stuff as far as research and trying to make it accessible and accessory to either what you're going to be wearing, or if not, to the owls itself. So that's always a good thing to explore.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah. See? Yeah, I think I was in the ARTZ coop, and I saw the T-shirts. It's interesting the way artists are modernizing designs to reach the younger generation.

Jaycee Nahohai:

That too, I mean, you can do anything, as far as design-wise goes. Some, I hate to say like, are some of the things that are being repetitious or designs that are being used in the school. And that plays a factor in how much of the designs are being used so much that it's just oversaturated to a point where everything kind of looks the same, so there's just a copy of a copy. And it's been like that for so many years that when you do see certain designs, you are automatically associated with that being, you know, Zuni design, and one of those designs that usually end up kind of popping up will be one of those crooks, and then they will have those lines and sometimes it... Sometimes you will see a lot of that different variations. If not just that, it'll be just this alone. And then there'll be a lot of line usage like that. So, it's not to say that it's a boring design, but you've seen it so many times that you wish you could sometimes tell it grows old too. Not only that

but to go ahead and go and study at museums, as a Native American, you're allowed to go and check into any facility that has artwork because you're allowed to go in and look into it. But sometimes that, you know, the teachers or whoever don't want to take the initiative because it's sometimes too much work or they don't want to allow themselves to, you know, explore that part of it too. And that, you know, leads to questions sometimes like, does the teacher not want to do that themselves on their personal agenda?

Charlaine Clerc:

You're using the books to learn the patterns and designs, and you see the evolution, so you know, you can get inspired by that.

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah. Yeah. So that's that, really, I mean, as I said, that's not to, you know, talk bad about anybody on what they're doing. They're doing good in their own lane. So that's, that's on them. But, you know, to bring the new generation in... It's a problem for the new generation to be too much in front of a screen. But I think this is a universal problem. Yeah, yeah, no, yeah, that will be the other thing too about it is that a lot of kids say that there's really nothing to do around here. But we can turn around and tell them, you know, there is the art that you can, you know, do as a fallback if you do start studying that part of it, too. But, you know, kids like kids too much. That's what I heard a lot. So, it's always been kind of my pet peeve about, you know, having kids be on the phones or tablets for so long. I mean, I think the only reason why, you know, as humans allow us to do that as parents is because it has them as their minds occupied to where, you know, instead of them, you know, causing trouble. So, yeah. That's just one of the things that I say to be more active. Because, yeah, so it's kind of, it's kind of hard to kind of, you know, teach something new when you know, something else has your mind occupied at the same time. [...] But know that this is the one that I want to go and do, okay. Yeah... When I saw his owl counterparts, just the way the, you know, top part looks. It gives me more playing field to kind of give more expression to it like the way these are right here. So, this one I when I got... frustrated with it. So, I ended up just using the scraper, taking off a little bit, and after that, I used the eraser. Yeah. Then I ended up erasing them and stippling for this one. Yeah. This one. Yeah. So, it came in pretty nicely after like, you know, it looks like it's actually shade. And just that color is still in the background, from this background I got done for the whole thing of it, too. And to top it off, I have been looking at the owl from the back. And I like the way it looks. So, I say I don't want to do the dots. I got rid of them. Now it looks better. I wanted to still keep it in the same type of... how would you say, element? But yeah, just that texturing. And I didn't want to get rid of that. So, I kind of hesitate to, you know, keep my owls like that. Because sometimes when I add more, and that's when it's too much. And then when I end up doing it, you know, it does look like it I kind of overdone it, and you know, but what else can I do? I can't go and wash off the owls after that. So, it's, I just keep it the way it goes. And Milford, it's the main one who usually... I've asked him numerous times on certain projects, and it's not the same answer that I will have gotten from, you know, when, you know, Dad will, you know, I will ask him questions, and you know, he will tell me, maybe we just live here and there or whatnot, but with the male variables, it looks fine. You

know, yeah, I mean, I kind of just show him from a distance too. So, where he just sees it, you know. Yeah. But, you know, sometimes the one remark that he had made was that you're just trying to be God, like your dad. I kind of hold him to that standard, too. You know where? Yeah, I got to keep this going. That's the way I look at it. Not... Not being God, but you know, just the fact that I'm done trying to step into the field where, you know, his name holds strong for the pottery part of it, you know? And you know, it's cool that these people are showing interest in and that's the cool thing. So that's the reason why there's a market for the owls alone, but it gets tiring when you know, I'm the one building them myself. But luckily, Mom was able to go and build these. And she's been working. So, this is, this is her showcase of her being busy as well. And yeah, a continuation of something. Yeah. Not only Dad, but I asked her to go and you know, make the necklace for the big owl. So, she was able to make that and I told her "You think you can go and sand them, can you sand the beads for me?" Then she had done that and we had gone up to go visit her to get the beads from her. She goes, "this is the most boring job ever painting the beads one by one!" So that's when I told her "Now you know how I feel." The first time I started making the beads, and you know, that was just by watching her go and get some of these regular, you know, crystal beads that she had been working with and putting it over my owl that I had left behind because one of those owls that she had pulled into the kiln, of course, there was an accident that happened. So, there was an air pocket in the wind that popped off. So, I let her keep that owl up there and ever since she's kept it on the shelf, and she's had the necklace, adding a necklace each time. So, but just the idea alone kind of gave me that thought of, you know, making the beads. Once I started doing that, I was precise about adding paint to it after I got it assembled and everything and then polishing it one by one. So that was tiring, in itself, it will probably take a whole week at least from cutting them individually, rounding them out, making holes in them and, you know, checking to see if it was correct or whatnot. Once they're dry, she's going to sand them and fine-tune them. And then after that, paint on the way I was thinking them, I had a clay slab, and then I have it right in the middle, kind of like a mount. And I have my toothpicks. So more multiple of them standing up. And then each bead has its own section to go and be placed on. So, after one will be painted right away. That was my little factory type of thing. What did they call it? Just the process of making it. So anyway, after that. I have been doing that for a good while and then finally asked my mom if she could make them. And that's when she started making different shapes as well. She started making the flat rounds and we painted those white. They look like shells too. So, there's been a number of owls that we have done with necklaces. That's the cool introduction that I've been, you know, feeding off of my mom. And like the other one too. She made the baby ones. Like the business card one. That's just been a different introduction for me to go and make owls too, you know, and that's based off of her. And that's a big influence from her all thanks to Mom. All thanks to Mom. But yeah, I'm still glad I was able to, you know, watch Milford and my grandma. The main one would have to be, you know, dad, because he will be in the back room and he was always working. So, I will always watch him. Either building a pot there, you know, or getting clay ready. Almost every step that you could imagine. I will see him doing that in the back. And that was always kind of the thing that you know, you just kind of grow

accustomed to them. And it's just boring, you know. But the practice in your painting, that took a long time.

Charlaine Clerc:

This is just impressive.

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah. So maybe one day you say it's a talent. I mean, it's not really, it's because it's just due to a lot of practice. Same thing with the... It goes with the DJ too, do practice in order to you know, keep up with the music and so on. Yeah. Just to be current and everything. So that's the reason why everything's always changing, both even with just designing. It's cool. I like it. It's cool. So, I'm excited to see that owl too.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, I would really love to see it.

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah, but I think there will have to be after getting those done. It's gonna take at least a couple of weeks. And by that time, that's when I'll be able to get into painting the bigger owl. So, I was hoping I will get the other one done. The orange one, but I don't think I'll be able... The striped. Yeah. I was looking at more of an exotic face of how to kind of give all those rigid lines in the exotic face.

Charlaine Clerc:

The exotic face?

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah well, the color, the colors itself, it's more, it's nothing that I've done before. So that's why I call it exotic. Yeah, it's different too. These are going to be exotics, especially the color definition of that to me. It's different, that's the main key, so he can tell this looks like a female too. So, it's more petite in the facial area. That's what I like about the different... More rounder. It looks like a female. So that's what I like about this one. The different owls that she makes, you know, it just depends on how she feels. She doesn't really try to reproduce the same thing. It may look like... the same but it's not. You can see all the shapes are different. And that's, that's, I think just influenced based on what I was doing. After that she saw what I was kind of doing with the... Not the ears, but the horns. I still call it the ears. Yeah, yeah. So, but, that's kind of the cool thing, too.

Charlaine Clerc:

You have influenced her shape too, with your painting skills.

Jaycee Nahohai:

Well, anything that I show her you know, I think that kind of gives her an idea of you know, what she can do with the building of the owls themselves, too. I think she kind of gets overworked with making owls so she asks sometimes if she can make something different. I tell her it's up to you. But you know, the owls are the ones that are going to be moving so just... Just wait... Just watch! But yeah, she's

wanting to make some bears too. So... Like the bears that she used to make back then. I know it's probably in this one right here, the book, the one from Chappel. The testament! Oh, this one right here [showing Dwight P. Lanmon and Francis H. Harlow's *The Pottery of Zuni Pueblo*]. This is the Bible, remember? Oh, yeah, these are like, his sketches too. So, I like the way the layout came out for this one of the feather designs that you will see for Matsaki, so...

Charlaine Clerc:

Did you make all these pots?

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yes. It's based on all the designs. But um, these are all based on, you know, what he saw in all of those designs, and it's just basically dissecting them how he felt and making them different. So, you can see where some of those designs have been used on some of the pieces that he had painted. So, you can... You can tell his mind was functioning the way they were designing back then too. So that's kind of why I take this book into consideration because it shows a lot of what he was doing. You know, design-wise, and that kind of helped me look into what he was doing on his sketchbooks to kind of get more of a glimpse of how he was dissecting certain things. So that's why I was able to go and see how he'd done his deers and his antelope and what not too... So that was the cool thing that I was able to go and see through searching through that. So, you know, there's a lot of cool stuff aside from you know, just pottery alone too, sci-fi stuff!! See, so Milford is really the one who started doing like the different colors and he started using that on his frogs for his canteens, or even his bows, too. So that will be like his work from the early 2000s. That red from his Australian pigment that he got right here. You can see. Okay, there's a red counterpart. And then is yellow. So, you could tell that's really thick the piece. So, so even right here, too. Yeah, these are different pigments. [...]

Charlaine Clerc:

They're light.

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah. And I think this is due to the clay being aged for so long. Because that and then what Josephine used to like to do, what she liked to add was that tempering. So it's just grounded up pottery shards that they were adding to the clay to kind of give it that. I guess the term would be, you know, to give it small bits to have it less vulnerable to you know, cracking when it's firing. I want that too. So, when I was using the clay like that, I found out that you know, trying to sometimes kind of soften around, so that some of the tempering will be exposed on the surface or even on the inside. And then it will come out and pop out. So, sometimes you will see little dips on the surface. Luckily, I have been kind of fixing that by having mica paste, and just kind of fill in every so often, and waiting. Finally, you'll just fill it like you would with plaster. And once it's done, just send it off, and it was cool. But yeah, those things were really thin, just logistically to work with.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, do you experiment with clay to sometimes?

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah, because when after Josephine had passed, we had gone and checked in the stew house, you know, to see what was in there and there was still pigments, so we were able to find the real bright ochre, the Zuni red, and it was just real gold-like color. So, we got to use that. Milford has found the bucket of clay that she had processed already. We just ended up you know, re soaking it and we started using it, we made a water jar and a couple of owls. We have made those being what was it called, three-generation, 3G pot or something like that. So, with Josephine already processing the clay, Milford building it, or either Randy and myself, that would be three generations. So right now, all those things are pretty cool to do. Yeah. I was glad that I was able to go work on that when I was probably just barely in high school and getting out of high school. That was that time kind of where I was in my stance of "do I want to do this?" Or "do I want to do that?" It was more music at that time. So yeah, it's been a long, long road. Yeah, this snowy pottery here is also soft looking like Dad's collection. Because the owl that's here that doesn't look like that. I mean, it's kind of similar, but the colors are different. Grandma Josephine. They're all made by both, or all three. All three are made by both of them. But I think mom painted these ones and Josephine painted this. So that's the difference between them. That's cool. Yeah. These are the bears that she would do.

Charlaine Clerc:

Oh, yeah. It's cute. And really in dynamic, you know?

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah, the way she developed that was her saying that she would watch us as kids rolling around on the ground.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you were her inspiration!

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah, so at that time, she will always make them in threes. So, that will represent me, Josh, and Alec.

Charlaine Clerc:

You think about changing the shape with more movements.

Jaycee Nahohai:

The owls? Yeah, cuz the way big owl? Oh yeah, this one, that's the second time I've done that because the first time I have done something similar to that, I think I actually have it on this owl, and so that was one of the first times. Yeah, you can tell this one's more hyped up on the top to where it's kind of giving that stance, too, so that's why I said that this has to be different because of just the movement alone. It makes it look like it's more of a boss or whatnot.

Charlaine Clerc:

And you already know about the shape of the eyes you want to give?

Jaycee Nahohai:

They're probably going to be a little bit thinner. Kind of like this. So it gives it more definition to it. That was the one that kind of had that push, different movements for the wings. Yeah, when I noticed it was like this. That's what I've seen that it's trying to do Elvis.

Charlaine Clerc:

I wouldn't have noticed if you didn't tell me.

Jaycee Nahohai:

You can't see it like this. But when you look from the bottom that's where you can tell!

Milford Nahohai, joining in the conversation:

Yeah, that's you know, and not many people look at this from the bottom.

Jaycee Nahohai:

Usually, everybody's on Facebook. Yeah, but yeah, sometimes not. Everybody's on there too, though. It just depends. The cool stories that you hear about the *Kolowisi* and just water serpents in general, what you hear of different mythologies of Americans are not their mythology, but they're whatever they feel culturally. You know, they have their background stories and whatnot. And sometimes when you do hear about certain things like that, one thing that you always hear is that they have access to different lakes because they have tunnels or little portals that they get to swim through. So that was, that's always the cool thing and you know, just imagining that you can always think like, Okay, well, where is the guy right now? And just the water serpents from other tribes.

Milford Nahohai:

So, you might be too late to go out to the spring rain. Yeah, there's a certain spring that they call Rainbow Spring. But that's towards a pool. And if you looked in that area, in one section, there's a little doorway. And that doorway is for him to go on over. We used to go out there with our groups. I don't know if I got pictures on here or not. And then we'll call him the love story about the plumed serpent. [...]

Charlaine Clerc:

I found some shards this morning by the Kiva village.

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah. Is that like the, the ones that really, you know, catch my attention are the ones that really have those real thin lines. That's, that looks pretty cool when you see something like that. And then, of course, the different colors that they usually have as well.

Charlaine Clerc:

There's actually quite a color palette.

Milford Nahohai:

This is... These are the parts that Randy finished, they're ready-made for. They have like a museum. It's a museum for pottery ceramics from all over, but they said that they didn't have any Native American pottery. So, Randy and I were the first ones to have pieces made to go over there. That's one of Randy, so mine was a cornmeal bowl. I don't think we do but it's where we used to take our students out there. Yeah. Just tell them to look for the shards.

Charlaine Clerc:

Everything I've seen just this morning was black-on-white with thick lines and with very thin ones.

Milford Nahohai:

These are different ones that I've picked, you know, different things around here like about a piece of chrysocolla, I think, because the chrysocolla and shells and a turquoise bead were like a piece of probably, like, clay, but that was made like a necklace. Yeah. And then this one, you could see the glaze on top. And they could have been some kind of a handle. To me, that part was like maybe like a parrot design. They were still playing tic tac toe! Yes, I like this one because it's got a lot of glazes there. And this is a real fine line, you know. And then the corrugated.

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah, see that's always amazed me, like the corrugated pieces like that.

Charlaine Clerc:

I wonder what was the technique for that?

Jaycee Nahohai:

Stick!

Milford Nahohai:

Sticks and fingers!

Jaycee Nahohai:

They had a stamp!

Milford Nahohai:

I don't know. Have you seen the window? Yeah, the pottery. And so those are all historical pieces. These like, were... Jim Ostler and I worked together. and Jim Ostler lived in Zuni but his wife was living in, lives in another place. He will go to different auctions. Bought all these, and then after he passed away, his wife brought them down here, told me to keep them up here because she didn't want to have them at her house because that area is now for pot hunters and she didn't want to have people bother her. So that's why she brought it down here. And that's just for, as references, just to show, you know, to different people. Even this is an old basket too. This one, I like that because it's compelling. So with the glaze is a really old one. And then the coloration now. The other corrugated one, like, whoever got it, they found that, you know, they tried to fix it, and you could

see them were using Elmer's' glue on it so you can see where some of that had dried up. And this was like definitely a cooking pot because it's all black! I got one too. I went to a conference up in Cortez and there was a guy that was making reproductions so I got one myself and I was I used it, put in like for my, for my coffee and everything like that but now you know with a coffee it got stains on it. I thought, you know, when we fire it, the other stains come up but when I reported it, the painting left, you can see some of the things that were left. But I like that because there you can see the designing that went into it, the type of designing that they wanted to do. Either with sticks or else.

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah. You have to figure out how to do the indentions right to try. And this is Randy's version of... What do you call it? A corrugated.

Milford Nahohai:

He did some work of corrugated, he did corrugated and everything like that, too. We're trying all different, different styles. He was always up there and worked on this clay or otherwise on his paintings when he would do paintings like that too. One time he did a painting. And then I think a bowl. And those two are competing against each other for best off shelf. And I think what's the pot or the painting. That's azurite, right. That's what they were. No, it's not critical azurite, right? They grind it down, and they use it to pour their paints. Not for pottery, but for prayer sticks. Like these spaces over here. You can see here constantly. This one has a blue. And that one has a yellow. And then the blue is coming from the azurite, right, after it's been ground down and they use it as a paint. I tried. You know, like grinding it down and making my paint for my pottery when I fired it, it just turned black! It wasn't good. This is like, you know this one, because it's got to... Like there's that color of the turquoise. But then I guess with the bleaching in the sun, it sort of turned white but that's the old turquoise color. Mom used to, you know, like, people will bring pot shards over and we will grind it down. This is the one that I like to do without glazing.

Charlaine Clerc:

Is that why it's so shiny?

Milford Nahohai:

Yeah, the glazes and that's where I like, I like the idea of the *Zuni Enigma, the Japanese connection*. Yeah, I would say that was where a part came in with, with the glaze. That's one thing that you know, like, I always was wondering about when we get a good explanation of, you know, how that was done, but nobody knew. And so, say, there is you know, like, some validity with that theory that she has.

Charlaine Clerc:

I wonder if she wants to do DNA tests.

Milford Nahohai:

I don't know if she does that part because at the end of her book, when we talked, she thought to say, you know, like, this is my theory. Prove me wrong or prove

me right, now the ball is in your court. Great. Yeah, when she came the last time, that's when she just told us like, this might be the last time you're seeing me today. I'm getting old now. [...]

Milford Nahohai:

You are getting up at four, I'll still be working.

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah, that's probably like my peak. hour, sure. There.

Charlaine Clerc:

Oh, when you can really work well. So, you're done with polishing?

Jaycee Nahohai:

I was thinking of adding some black or something to it.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you wanted more contrast with black?

Jaycee Nahohai:

Because I'm not sure I added some more kaolin into it. So, it might become a little bit lighter, maybe, but I'm hoping that it still keeps the matrix effects when it fires too. So I hope I didn't lose that part of it because it gives a different texture too, yeah, we'll see.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you'll fire it tonight?

Jaycee Nahohai:

Tonight. After we get this all done. Cuz after that, I really need to get those done too.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you would paint the moccasins?

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah. Yeah, design it and painted it. So, I told my cousin that I needed some paint he brought over. The paint is acrylic. Yeah.

Milford Nahohai:

Those, he did paintings like that for other nephews when they took part for the start, but then he also like, this is what we call an altar, that they have an altar with the Shalako houses are made, and what they'll have is an altar. And then when the dancers like kachinas come in, they do a blessing ceremony to bless the house. Randy did about three or four alters like that for different people or like our family.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, this is modern.

Milford Nahohai:

Yeah. They were both in the eagle clans. We see eagle feathers. Red or red also represents a color out there. The Kiva's.

Charlaine Clerc:

Okay, so there is a color in the kiva?

Milford Nahohai: & Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Milford Nahohai

So that's why they ran on. Since they were members of the Golden Eagle clan. Their eagle feathers had a little bit of gold on there.

Jaycee Nahohai:

Yeah, the gold color represents that part of it for them.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, is it about the location within?

Jaycee Nahohai:

So yeah, so the blue one is on the west. Which whichever? I don't know which kiva it was? I don't know what. Okay, it's south, so the red, it's red? Yeah, that's a kiva. The cardinal colors. Yeah. So, we're actually in the right area according to this part of it too. Okay, yeah. So that's a joke around here, saying 'Southside'.

Charlaine Clerc:

And so, this year, you'll do the same for your nephew?

Jaycee Nahohai:

I'll do something else. I'm kind of figuring like, how to incorporate that same design with the clouds. Yeah. But I'm trying to figure out how I can incorporate that same...Just the layout for the thunderclouds. Turning it around, and after that, that's the whole design. Designing panel for that one. Yeah, just to figure out what I'm gonna do.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, I didn't know the clothes were related to different colors.

Jaycee Nahohai:

I'm gonna pick them the same, but I was trying to see if I could do it by clans, but the guy was at my eagle's. So, he's just a child of the eagle. Yeah. So, it was, it's different. Yeah. Because he said, bear. Yeah. He said he's a bear. So, bear clan. Yeah. So, I could not have to steer away from using that part of it.

Milford Nahohai:

It was easy for Randy, his nephews were both of the same clan.

Charlaine Clerc:

Okay, so now you need to be a bit more creative.

Jaycee Nahohai:

And so yeah, I think the Rainbird will be pretty good for both. Okay, so Rainbirds still, yet that's what they were praying for, to just that part of it.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, the gold is for the eagle.

Jaycee Nahohai:

No, no, no, no. Okay. I could, but no, no. Okay. It's just the Rainbird itself. Yeah, so just the whole part. I'm gonna have to figure out how to kind of run it across this just by figuring that out with this. I'm gonna do that. Because it's thought that same triangles are the thunderclouds, are still going to be in there somehow that's the reason why I want to still keep that method, but it's going to be turned around on that part of this section right here. So, these will be hanging down, just like the way this is. So that's kind of still the way I'm looking at it. And in my mind, it's gonna lean towards more of the color, colorization right here. So it gives us more of a color, color aspect of it to red for it. For the kiva. That's cool. It's still running through my head. Just the paint, just the paint, the paint, and the layout of how I'm gonna do the color scheme because I don't want to paint the whole thing blue, like the way is on this on this other one. And I have a white border, maybe.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, every year you just scrub off the paint and start over?

Jaycee Nahohai:

No, this is for them to keep, for you know, their attire for other times that they're going to be dancing. That's on them. That's their gift to them. You're participating.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you mean that's your responsibility?

Jaycee Nahohai:

It's my, yeah, like the responsibility for them to look, you know, for them to take care of. Yeah, yeah. And then not only that allows them to go and use it later on to, just, not only one time. Yeah.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, it's not like the masks, and every year every time you have to scrub them off.

Milford Nahohai:

This is what the moccasins were like before but they're changing you know, like, they wanted to personalize theirs. They're like that. Those are like that, but they're just wanting to have them personalized.

Appendix 4 - Interview with Jeff Shetima:

November 14, 2019

Charlaine Clerc:

Jeff, it's a pleasure to meet you! I actually had to work hard to find you! I know you like to work with difficult stones, such as the Sonoran Sunrise stone with its unique colors.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, this stone is made of copper, which gives it a blue color. It's a tough stone, very dense! It's hard to work with, because the stone is so dense, it sparks when I work it on the machine. The stone was found in Mexico and Arizona, but the mine closed and it became expensive. Yeah, so, Kent McManis, the one that actually introduced me to the stone, the Sonoran stone. He actually gave it to me to create some work for him out of that material. After that I really enjoyed that material, I started searching to find and purchase the material of my own. It was pretty tough but you know I kind of got lucky in finding some of it, especially on eBay! Well yeah, that's one of my other Sonoran pieces, that's just right there [pointing at the Inn's card about the opening of the Artz coop.]

Charlaine Clerc:

That's how I knew I needed to talk to you! I recognized the style from the Coyote Family [which is in Albuquerque's Fetish Museum] So you specialized in this stone or do you also work with others?

Jeff Shetima:

I work with almost any stone, it just depends on the moment, on what I'm feeling. What I visualize is something that I see within that stone. I, you know, I want to bring that animal out.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, the stone inspires a certain shape.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah exactly.

Charlaine Clerc:

And what about the colors? Are the colors of the stone pleasing and you pick it up or is it the shape that matters most? Or both?

Jeff Shetima:

I think the shape. The colors aren't necessarily. But it's just what draws me to that particular stone that makes me want to create out of it, the stone itself. Sometimes color does influence my creation, but then again, you never know what's underneath the stone. You can see the color in the stone, but once you start working with it, the color variation may change.

Charlaine Clerc:

So it's always a gamble, you can never start with a stone and think "oh, this is the color I was looking for!"

Jeff Shetima:

It's always a gamble. All of my carvings. When I do create, sometimes it's kind of strange in a sense where sometimes, colors would actually complement, or come out naturally and complement the creation of the animal. That seems like a raccoon, you know, that black area around the eyes and face. When I worked with material where that little black stripe would just like come out of the stone and make the raccoon come alive. It's very interesting when you see a raw rock and you visualize an animal spirit or an animal within the stones and you bring it out, and it almost becomes realistic. That's fascinating sometimes. Some come naturally but some take a lot of thought processes.

Charlaine Clerc:

For example, for the coyote family, you have this blue part, it emphasizes the rawness of the stone and the animal that looks realistic. It fits together.

Jeff Shetima:

Oh yeah.

Charlaine Clerc:

I was really impressed! How do you create them, how do you select the stones for the inlay work?

Jeff Shetima:

My fingers?

Charlaine Clerc:

It's very tiny, how do you make that happen?

Jeff Shetima:

It's a lot of practice, that has to be done pretty fast just because I put a groove in there about 1/8-inch groove or yeah 16th to 1/8-inch groove to set its stones. So, what I do is like pre-prepare it first, you know, at the beginning. I will pick the starting point. Usually, it all depends on the animal and what the position is so I would choose my starting point to make sure that I have the right stone that's going to fit at the beginning, and from there, once I place the glue, the glue will dry pretty fast so I will have like a quite a bit of already pre-cut stones and I would glue the first stone, and then I will just like constantly try and fit real fast. You have to really be fast because otherwise if the glue dries before you set the stone then you have to regroove it, which is a pain if you let that happen.

Charlaine Clerc:

All right, I understand that you have to be meticulous! When you look into fetish carving, what always comes back is the six cardinal colors, and this is what is said in any book about Zuni fetish caving. Like the north is yellow and so on. How do you feel about that? Does it fit your work?

Jeff Shetima:

Well, I do. It just all depends on what the project is. It's either, I would if I am asked to. Some of those things are usually by requests by collectors.

Charlaine Clerc:

They want a [6 cardinal fetish] set.

Jeff Shetima:

They want a set. It just all depends on how you... How you determine the colors. It may be the stone itself, it may be the arrowheads itself that represent that color of the direction and in some cases, I've used the eyes to represent the color and the direction of colors only, with the eyes.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, a blue stone would represent the bear.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. Yeah, the bear will have blue stone, the badger will have, you know, red stones, there's the coyote, or the wolf could have a, you know, like white stone eyes or could be with white stone, and so forth. Like the mountain lion yellow, and the eagle might be like opal, because it, you know, has these different types of color variations, that could be like a multicolored type. I think I'm the only artist who's done an actual six direction of totem, is what I call them, where the animals are stacked on top of each other.

Charlaine Clerc:

I've never seen such work.

Jeff Shetima:

I have one at the works studio that, I mean, that's in progress.

Charlaine Clerc:

I need to see that.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah so, it's stacked up with the eagle being on top, the mole being at the bottom. So, the eagle is on top, then the mountain lion below, below the eagle and the mountain lion it's the bear, the badger, below the badger is the coyote, the wolf and below the wolf is the mole.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you make fetish sets with a new composition.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. Where are you headed next?

Charlaine Clerc:

I'm going to Albuquerque then Santa Fe, to visit Keshi, as I have worked with them for a while.

Jeff Shetima:

I... Actually, I worked with them a couple of years ago in helping the Zuni show that they put up in 2016, the Zuni show in Santa Fe. The first one I helped coordinate with the Keshi foundation to put up the event and then the following year we did it again and you know, it just cost too much to put up the event that they decided not to do it again. So we had over a hundred Zuni artists that attended the first show, it was overwhelming that amount of people that wanted to be a part of the show because it was basically free to the artists, versus you know at the Santa Fe Indian Market, your, their booth fees are, you know, if you add everything up to enter into, first of all, you have to be accepted to be a part of that show, then you have to pay here your booth fees which is about four, fifty-four hundred fifty dollars for two days, and on top of that you got a reserve a hotel room and all that. It gets... It gets pretty expensive right away especially when you don't plan ahead, if you don't reserve your hotel room and you know a month or two before the actual show starts, prices just skyrocket. Yeah, for like one day during the Indian Market weekend, for one night you're gonna be spending about three hundred!

Charlaine Clerc:

It's like the Balloon Festival in Albuquerque, I couldn't attend because it was too expensive!

Jeff Shetima:

So, some of the things that recently what we've been doing is, some of us just, you know, pitch in to get a big Air BnB and it's much more cheaper and it's better that way, it's a cost-efficient because you don't spend as much as you would if you were at a hotel. So, these past few years a few of our artists have gone together to rent like a three four-bedroom house and all stayed. There was space, which is pretty cool, awesome. So, who have you met during your stay?

Charlaine Clerc:

I actually met painters such as Elroy Natachu Jr. and I knew his work from way back because I'm really interested in the Map Art project he participated in. There's this book with interviews Jennifer McLerran from the northern University of Arizona directed. And he talked about it so I wanted to see his techniques and he's doing pretty cool things!

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah! He's actually our coordinator now, for the ARTZ cooperative. He's one of the artists over there, did you meet him over there?

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah of course!

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, he lives over there! [laughter] He literally lives over there!

Charlaine Clerc:

He's that committed to the project! It's an amazing project.

Jeff Shetima:

You know I'm glad he actually got on board. For a while, he wasn't...

Charlaine Clerc:

He wasn't convinced at first?

Jeff Shetima:

No yeah, he wasn't a part of this until... We finally you know... One of the other artists who actually converses with him, convinced him to come on board and he finally came on board and he's been a really big asset to the organization.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you're part of it too?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, I'm part of it. Actually, I'm one of the reasons why they formed! I, you know, the initial stages and findings, I was the first artist to be a part of the planning stage just for the organization. This actually evolved after the Zuni Pueblo Art Walk which I used to coordinate the first year so... You know, it was tough, trying to get some of these artists to participate... To participate and be involved. It was very challenging!

Charlaine Clerc:

Was it because they needed to volunteer?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeh, that too, you know. Our communities are very complex, you know, when it comes to getting involved and, you know, volunteering and you know especially through the arts. Not a lot of people want to open up and share their... Maybe share their knowledge or techniques.

Charlaine Clerc:

Is it because they think someone might steal it?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah.

Charlaine Clerc:

They are many fakes out there and I understand that. I went to Indian art markets and I've seen fetishes. So, I thought "oh great this is a Zuni artist I can talk with." And no, it was a Navajo artist! I was really surprised, I did not expect that.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, yeah, me right now, you know, I think with any type of market, when there is money to be made, people, other... Other people will jump at it to get into the market even it's not their culture nor their tradition... And, you know, now Navajos

are making fetish carvings which they're not really known for so I hate to say but yeah, they're copycatters! Nah! [laughter]

Charlaine Clerc:

What surprised me most about their work was the kachinas. I actually started doubting myself, like, did I get something wrong! I thought it was Hopi and Zuni, and suddenly there were Navajo kachinas everywhere.

Jeff Shetima:

[laughter] Navajo kachinas were almost made up! You know, the way they dress their kachina, those aren't necessarily the way they should be dressed or the way they make their faces or, you know, paint their faces, it's not... It's not correct because they don't know! It's made up, their kachinas are made up, it's just, it's not, it's like... You can't understand so when you look at it, you think "what is this?" [laughter]

Charlaine Clerc:

Is that why artists are worried that their art might be stolen?

Jeff Shetima:

You know, I think that's part of the reason why some of our community members are nervous, are really afraid to join some of these organizations which actually they could benefit from it. But slowly, you know, the co-operative is growing and with artist memberships. I've put a lot of my time and effort into helping the organization, both organizations, and the Art Walk. I'm actually the vice president of the Zuni Art Walk. Once we formed the organization and formed the leadership, I told myself I'm not gonna take this, you know. Cuz the years past I've been always volunteering to help some of these organizations and to grow and to continue operating, and I told myself, you know, I need time for myself, time to work on my art and all this, and then pretty soon once we started electing leadership it was like, I was like selected to be the president! I thought "I can't take up this position, I need someone to step up," and someone did step up and after that, they put me on a spot and told me "You're gonna be vice president" and I was like, okay it's only for a year but now it's like two years later, I'm still the vice president! I was also deeply involved with the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project which is we built our first-ever park here. I was, again, I was one of the first artists that they invited to be a part of their organization and planning for the park. I then brought on numerous artists, invited new artists to create an Artists Advisory Committee, and with several more well we had early meetings, you know, just I started from maybe about 25 artists, and it kind of trickled down to wind it up with seven artists to be a part of the artist community. And we help plan and design the park with architects, we worked with architects we put our ideas on paper and we submit it to the architects and they would go and put it on a blueprint. And so we would go back and forth, we would have virtual meetings, conferences of sorts, you know, and we would discuss the layout... It was really great for them

to implement some of our ideas into the park but when once the real numbers came in, it was like, it was like “down boys!” We were way over budget, we had to take out a lot of these ideas that we had in mind! It was a process, it was a really great experience in the process. And then you know, once it was finalized, the construction started, I would say within less than a year we had a park! So, within two years where I worked with them, I was contracted to help with the plan and all that for two years. But now we have that really nice park over there. There are a lot of murals over there. You'll see Keith Edaakie?

Charlaine Clerc:

Yes!

Jeff Shetima:

He did quite a few murals. He also was one of our mentors for the youth during the summer youth program part of the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project. He created a huge mural, which was done by some of the youth. And he had his class, you know, a watercolor painting with the youth, and then he had them cutting up the little square pieces that they made a mosaic mural out of that, which is at the park. There are really cool murals over there that pertain to our migration story, the history of our clans and it's pretty much how these murals just kind of tell the story of how, our evolution to our migration, how we got our clan system to present-day.

Charlaine Clerc:

That's what you need to display and show. I think it's important as I was quite disappointed knowing that the Map Art canvases were just in the museum's archives. I had thought that I would be able to see them and actually I couldn't!

Jeff Shetima:

Well, they're not selling it but they do have posters.

Charlaine Clerc:

I'll see Curtis next Monday. I might insist just to see for myself. It's just a shame as this is how I got into Zuni art first, because the book was available, and there were these interviews. Usually, you have just pictures of artworks but no explanation from the artists and then you have a foreigner who is reading or observing it but it's their own interpretation. Somehow there is no room for the artist to express themselves.

Jeff Shetima:

It's even more meaningful when you actually see the process of the rock transforming into a fetish carving. Especially when you're there with the artists, the artists actually explain to you their visualization of the stone and showing you.

That's pretty much what I do with my visitors that come to my studio. You know, I have tons of rocks, and you know I collect rocks, even through my outings, wherever I may be, I would collect rocks just because maybe the rock, it's drawn to me, or I'm drawn to that rock. I would just go in and pick up a rock and it feels good or like kind of visualize a particular animal within that stone, I would take that rock. But when I do take a rock from the earth personally, you know, if I do take something from the earth, I'd give it back something so what I usually do, where the rock was, that I place a little offering there. Just so that way you know that we are all in harmony with the stone, myself and the earth. Sometimes I would find a piece of rock that is naturally, you know, shaped. To not really need any type of carving, maybe it'll just need eyes!

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, a fetish doesn't need much work if it's already shaped and you feel like, okay, this is a bear, so it'll be a bear!

Jeff Shetima:

Usually, some of those are more powerful. If I have a connection with something that I found here locally, sometimes, like, well, I will keep it for myself. Where it is worth, where it's naturally shaped, and you know, I see the animal being represented within that stone, you know, and those are the most meaningful, those are some of the things that we keep for ourselves.

Charlaine Clerc:

Okay, so this would be the difference between the one you will sell, and the one that you'll keep? Others are less important?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, well, fetishes that are very important, we take those to the grave. So, you know, if I were to want a fetish blessed then there's a process that happens. During the winter months, it's the only time that really fetishes are being given life by ceremony, and it happens only during wintertime through one of our medicine societies, where you have to commit, to sacrifice your time, you have to feast, there's a lot of different steps that you have to do before your finished carving is to be blessed. And once that happens, you keep that fetish to your grave. And those are, those are not for sale. So, if someone ever says yeah, "this fetish carving is blessed by a shaman from Zuni" Nah! Unless you're Frank Hamilton Cushing! It's very interesting. You know, one time, one time I was out on a cultural hunt. Our modern societies are gonna come as hunters, kachinas. And then they needed hunters to go out there to hunt for them. And I was asked to go on a cultural hunt. And so I did. I went out hunting, and we walked, we walked all morning, four hours of just hiking and walking. And we saw this little mound, kind of isolated. I was like, a mound of rock and soil, it's kind of a little hill. Pretty steep. Like really huge rocks that were on top. So, let's just, that looks like a really good spot to go up and just hang out for a little while, have lunch and just rest for a bit.

And so, we go out there. We go up there. And before we get up there behind a tree was an ancestor site, which she noticed that like partial dwelling formation that was probably about three, four feet high. With a partial window, you can still see a window. And we're like, wow, this is really cool. I mean, you couldn't see it from down below. But, you know, we knew that it was probably an ancestral site because once we started climbing up, we started seeing pottery shards. And so below, we were like, oh, wow, check this out. You know, we're looking at pottery shards and climbing up, and then we see this dwelling. And so, we went around, trying to find that really cool spot. And there's like a rock, a huge rock that kind of, you know, caved in like that, you know, I almost wanted to cave. And so, we were like, well, this is a really nice place to have lunch. So, we looked around, it was pretty clean. So, we sat down. And I was with my cousin, me and him. And we pulled out, took off her bags, and we started eating lunch. And just, you know, he first is like, "Oh, I should check this out," he said, and "look what I found." He had an arrowhead, he found an arrowhead that was fully intact. And so, he's like, "wow, this is a blessing." And then he started talking about, Grandpa used to talk about, you know, pottery shards. There's this one particular pottery that when you find it, you keep it because and when you come across deer traps, or, you know, you see a deer and they run off. Grandpa used to say that you put that pottery shard around the deer track where you have last seen the deer at, and more than likely it's gonna come in a circle and come to that very same spot. And just gotta wait for it, is what he was saying. So, you know, before he found that, you know, we were like, just looking around looking What are your pottery shards? That particular pottery shards because they were all over us. And so, you know, I just looked. I'm sitting there looking around, and I'll pick a pottery, what I thought was a pottery, unearthed a piece of like, what would it look like clay and I unearth it and it was a fetish.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you found an ancestors' fetish?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, it was a fetish carving but it was out of clay. And I was like, "wow, check this out" you know? And we're trying to figure out what type of animal it was and we're thinking that it might be a bear or a coyote because part of the back end was missing is broken off. You can see the face and the body with the legs but there's a part of the back end just behind the back legs, part of it was missing, so it was like a mystery, like "is it a bear" or is it "do you think it might have been like a wolf or coyote" and we're looking at it, giving it to each other. It's like, well, this is my blessing, I said, so I put in my cornmeal pouch and we gave little offerings or little food offerings, sprinkled cornmeal, and then we went about, then we came home and we were like with our family. Yeah. Yeah, so at this time, it was like... It was gonna be like the mudhead giveaway where my family was in charge of one of the mudheads for our clan. And they had all these goodies and stuff that they were preparing for that big event. So, there was cooking going on at my grandma's and we were hunting and we came, we came back from our hunt with our blessings, you know, the things that we found. And we were so excited to tell

them that we found this well, you know, my cousin pulled out his arrowhead and so yeah, I found this at this one place, you know where we were at. And so, I also found natural paint pigment, which was azurite, blue stones that they used for pink pigments there. And so, I also put that in my cornmeal pouch. Well, when we get came back home that evening, he showed them his arrowhead that he found so I was like, Yeah, I found these two, and I got my, my cornmeal pouch. I dumped them. I was like dumping the cornmeal. I was trying to get out, you know, the things that I found my fetish carving and the paint. So, the paint pigments came out. And my fetish, the little fetish carving that I found, wasn't there. And so, we were like, wow, where is it? I was searching my pockets. And it's like, I put it in here. And so, they said that wasn't meant to be yours.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, so it went back to the earth?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, actually, they said that it might have actually become life. It became a raw being, which is an actual animal. I've experienced some of those. I've experienced similar situations where my little mountain lion fetish that I always carried on my hunt disappeared after I was successful during one of my hunts. And having that little finish carving fed. So, what happens is like when, when we're successful in our hunts, we'll get out the animal and have these you know, original fetish carvings that we carry around. We will place it on the internal intestine, you know, the guts and other internal intestines. Intestines are banded. We would place that on top before so the animal would feed. And so, I've had instances where my fetish carvings have disappeared. And, and more than likely when that happens it's, they say that they took on a life of their own.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, and then went back. Is that what got you into fetish carving? Or were you already covered by them?

Jeff Shetima:

I was already a carver. I started very young. I started out around the age of 10.

Charlaine Clerc:

Wow. Yes, yeah.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. And just by trial and error, you know, and by curiosity, I observed my neighbors, my uncle, my neighbors when they were making fetish carvings at a young age, primarily my neighbors who were carvers. They would be carving outside, and I would be playing around, just watching them carve, and one day

they left their equipment outside and had all these little scrap materials laying on the ground. I just turned all their motors and started carving away. And I created a snake. That was probably one of my first carvings that I agreed was neat. And when my father came home, I told him, you know, I showed him, he didn't believe me, and I was like, Yeah, I did, can you help me put eyes on it? So, he put eyes on it for me. And then I started making a few more. So, I think I might have had like four, or five snakes that I've made. And my father helped me place eyes on them. And we went and there's an individual that used to buy art. And his name was Donald Sharp. He was just down the road, where we live. My father used to make jewelry, and he would go over there and sell it to him. And so, he took, we went over there and took my, my finished carvings over there. And he actually bought it for like \$2 each, I think I made my first \$10 there at that very young age. And so, after that, you know, it was just, the rest was history.

Charlaine Clerc:

You started with a snake, it's not the easiest animal to carve!

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. And then, you know, once I started and I started making more until my grandfather... You know, when I went to my grandma's there was this hand crank grinding stone that my grandma and grandpa used to work out of, like, way early, like probably like in the 50s or something where my, my great-grandpa grandparents used to use to work on their, their jewelry and stuff, which they no longer use, because now everything was electric, you know, electric motors and stuff. And so, this hand crank was just, you know, in their workshop. And I took that outside, I mounted it on a little desk, or I think it was a piece of log that was out there and I had my little sisters and cousins help me while they're cranking it, you know, made it like a game. Then I would start carving these snakes. And one day grandpa came and he was like, "What are you, what are you making? Making snakes?" And I showed him and he told me you shouldn't be making snakes. It's not good. He told me, he told me that you'll be hated in the community. It's an especially bad omen.

Charlaine Clerc:

I didn't know because the only snake I had in mind was Kolowisi.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. And so ever since then, you know, I stopped making snakes and I started making other things than snakes and he would always tell me that every time he came home when he starts drinking, he started telling me that, you know, it's not good to be making fetish carvings, because he would explain to me why it's not, you know, how it was never to be sold, you know. Fetish carving is when you create a fetish carving. It's so... So, the animal that you're creating here is one you need to multiply. You're wanting it to be plentiful. And so, he's like telling me "Choose your fetish carving wisely." Every time you know, sometimes, like a bear

might be spotted within the village and he'd be like, it's just because you make a lot of bears. It's kind of funny, but now you know, it's just some of those things that I remember as a kid, you know, being told was very interesting. As you can see, it's a mess over here. Let me just clear this off. And you can tell that I have a lot of rocks, because, so this is actually a found. This stone comes from here.

Charlaine Clerc:

This is a local stone?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah.

Charlaine Clerc:

Is this the Zuni? Stone?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, this is. Yeah, it has a...He has some band in on here. But you know, colors change.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yes. You never know what's gonna happen.

Jeff Shetima:

If you can look at this one. It's almost a bear. Do you see the highlight? The head is gonna be right there. This is going to be the head. Yeah. So, it's kinda looking up.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, I was wondering because this is not a hunchback, right. It's looking up.

Jeff Shetima:

I'll show you. I'll bring it out. Be careful. Yeah. Just you come this way. Then just make sure everything is out of the way before you enter. Because I have a lot of things here that may hurt! I also do like photography. I do welding. I just do a lot of different stuff. In different materials. Yeah. This is a mountain lion in the works.

Charlaine Clerc:

See, it's not finished yet.

Jeff Shetima:

So that's a totem. The eyes will match the six direction's colors. Yeah, so, that's what it is.

Charlaine Clerc:

Oh, it's awesome.

Jeff Shetima:

So, it's just one rock. So that's going to be a horse. So, this is another Zuni stone. Pretty huge. It's, when it's polished, the color will be like that.

Charlaine Clerc:

It looks like another stone with lots of different colors.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, it has like dendrite. Yeah, dendrite is a crystallization of what we call travertine banding or travertine and you'll have it, some won't.

Charlaine Clerc:

You have like hundreds of projects at the same time! I can see so many things that need just one more push!

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, you know like some of these are broken like this one, you see?

Charlaine Clerc:

And this is broken?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. This was an antelope. You were talking about the colors? And so I specifically chose to see if the color of the stone would stay and create the color for the antelope naturally and so I picked this stone and looked at it, it was just you know the right stone for an antelope so I created the antelope but while I was working on, it wasn't stable enough. Sometimes, you can still rescue the spirit in the stone by having it become something out. And sometimes though, they'll be up here for a while. Before I figure out what other animal would like to come out of it. As some of my other pieces over there. I've been working on those and picture framing for my photography. This is from the ARTZ COOP. Right? Yeah. So this past October we did a fundraiser as a haunted house at the cooperative and the staircase to the basement was really dangerous, so I ripped out some of the floorings that leaked down to the basement to kind of make it a little bit more safer. Instead of having a really straight down narrow, I kind of made it to have

like a three step down, then to a platform, then turn around and another four steps down to another platform, so that way it was more safer to get down, so this is actually the flooring of the coop. So, it has a lot of history!

Charlaine Clerc:

Did you give it a second life?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, so not only is it the gallery but it used to be our first post office over there.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, this was a post office before you bought it?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, it was a post office and a gallery at the same time. So, this was probably back in the 30s maybe, it's old wood. Oh, you know it's probably wood from here locally. Pine wood. So, this actual one by flooring. So, before I took it, I ripped it apart and made a frame. This is actually from my corrals. At the ranch. Okay, and this, I am trying to do my best to fit this one. And the last piece, because it's just not working for me because this wood is naturally like that, it's really old wood. But giving it to fit the way this fit has been very difficult where I just put it aside. Yeah, so this was a piece of work that was a part of a corral. It's pretty cool. Yeah, I like the way it came out. But now I just need to fit the other. So, we get a picture in there.

Charlaine Clerc:

This is what is striking about your work. You have some raw material and you somehow beautify it.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, like this one. Look at this one. This is gonna be cool. I found this. I found this on top of the mountain. When I took the French guy up there. And I thought it was very interesting. And I saw a buffalo. Yeah, there's gonna be like, the hair, the mane or what do they call it? And the head will be right here. I have a similar one here. Yeah. It's exceptional. So, this is natural.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, using natural colors.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, it's natural. This was naturally in there. I believe it's probably Azurite, right. Malachite. You can see the little speckles of turquoise maybe?

Charlaine Clerc:

This is really exactly how you work? Actually, I couldn't take pictures of the coyote family, because it's forbidden within the museum. So, it's interesting to see your work here. And this stone is the one I was talking about with different colors here.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. That's Picasso marble. Yeah. So, it comes in various colors. You see, this is pretty.

Charlaine Clerc:

Oh, wow. Yeah, that's a very pretty one.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. So, for a while. This was a preferred medium for me. Like this. Picasso, I did a lot of Picasso Marble, just because of the color variations. It's never the same. So never the same. It's always different. It's always different, but they tend to stay together. It comes in different types of colors. Sometimes it comes in green. This is Sonora Sunrise, more of a brownish color. You kind of see what colors, they're gonna come up. So this is like this is in its raw series Sonoran. When you look at it this way almost looks like an eagle. Yeah, kinda looks like an eagle. The eagle's head is right there, the wings here. So, it might become an eagle, of the same Sonora sunrise, it's just got a little bit more copper. You know, it's more green.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, copper gives the green color.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, Green, blue. Blue color. Alright. Probably more like the aluminum. The aluminum makes it a little bit more green. The copper makes it a little bit more blue.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, aluminum is what made it so green here.

Jeff Shetima:

Some sort of aluminum? Mineral. Yeah, the red. I think that is a mix of copper as well. So, a really interesting stone to it's called moqui. Yeah, I believe that's from a different country. Maybe somewhere in the south, South America.

Charlaine Clerc:

Right. So you pick up stones?

Jeff Shetima:

That was... Actually, this was given to me. From one of my collectors in Brazil. Yeah, so some of these carvings actually belong to the guy, belong to the Brazilian guy. So, they're, he's coming in a few weeks to come to pick them up. So, this is one of them. He's got that one. He's got this one. And he's got these ones, these are really strange birds.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, they look really friendly.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah, it's, they're called a potoo.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, that's cute. Yeah, like it. Oh, so you're working with glass too?

Jeff Shetima:

That's actually a local stone. Yeah. That's found in the nutria area. It's about 2030 miles northeast from here. And it's one of our old farming villages. And so, and the humpbacks, they're out there. So, this was just another one of those natural shape creations of fetish carvings. Everything was basically pretty natural. When all I did was I just, you know, carved out the face. You can see the natural formation.

Charlaine Clerc:

You can already see the shape of the animal.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. So, it was pretty much shaped. I just brought out the face and put the inlay on it.

Charlaine Clerc:

That's an interesting stone.

Jeff Shetima: Yeah, it has a shimmer. And actually, if you look, look at the look of the sun. How it shines. In some places, there will be a sheet of it where this specific material was used for windows. Well, I don't know, I think they were just sheets or layers. Because they're, it's kind of in layers, if you can really look closely.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, this is the same material. It's cool.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. And so, this is a piece of turquoise I found at the gallery.

Charlaine Clerc:

I'm trying to learn all the different turquoise there are? I'm having a hard time.

Jeff Shetima:

Oh, that's tough. You, if you don't know your turquoise, you'll get fooled. So, a lot of the turquoise right now that is being sold aren't natural. Well, there's still natural, but they're kind of they're somewhat stabilized. Versus like "natural natural" turquoise. This is stabilized Kingman. Stabilized Kingman, which is they use some sort of like almost like epoxy resin. So, they'll just soak it in the... Soak the stone in there for it to cure faster and become more dense. So, it's easier to carve without breaking it. It's easy to carve without breaking it. And not only that, the color will stay consistent throughout the process. So, this seems to be natural. I might be wrong, but I found that outside the cooperative. It's like a mine over there. We only, we've been only in business for about three months.

Charlaine Clerc:

I know, I talked with Raylan Edaakie. And I know because I've been trying to reach artists for so long. And suddenly I found a website and it's like everything is there. You know, you can easily communicate and that's great so far for collectors who want to know more about what they're buying.

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. So and I think, you know, the museum also helps too, I don't know if you talked to someone at the fetish museum. I used to do shows over there.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yes, they told me that when Kent McManis passed away, it's been hard on them. And so the business was on standby. They're trying also to print his book again, but they don't have the copyright. So, they're struggling too.

Jeff Shetima:

He was working on the book. That was what he was working on for the past I don't know how many years. It was supposed to be, I think called the Master Carvers, something like that for both new masters...Okay, so the difference between the sandstone and the Zuni stone, this type of stone is that the sandstone will not take on the polish. So, there's another piece that I found up on the mountain. It's natural. It's a natural shape. It's a mountain lion, of course. So what I did was I just brought out the face.

Charlaine Clerc:

So even the tail was like that?

Jeff Shetima:

Yeah. Yeah. So, I just dug holes to kind of distinguish the tail. And that's that sandstone. So, it won't be much different than what it looks like. Just gonna put the eyes in there. Alright. It's ready to go. So, this, there's another stone, which I found. So, there's like different colors. You'll see sandstones that's yellow, a yellowish color. You'll see some that are red. You'll see some that are white, you'll see some that are almost purple. And there, this is another mountain lion I brought with, you know, the tail coming up right here. And this is another one that I picked up from up on top of the mountain. And I thought it was just very interesting just because of the shape of the stone. I felt it was already a mountain lion. Just like that one. So, I was telling you this is gonna be a bear, right?

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah. Yeah. So, this is a bear. Yeah.

Jeff Shetima:

So, let me just bring out the face and get a little while just to let you know and it might bring up a little dust.

Appendix 5 - Interview with Noreen Simplicio:

November 17, 2019.

Noreen Simplicio:

The rosette design is pretty much on the traditional water jars, it's basically a symbol that, you know, kind of recognizes that it's a Zuni symbol. So, you'll see it, if you see pieces in the museum, you'll see basically that design, whether it has a lot of petals in it or not. Me, when I saw that rosette design, I saw some really simple ones to make it mine. I added more petals to it just to really pop it out and bring it out. Yeah so, a lot of that is that's basically a symbol of when the Spaniards came into our village at one point in time, the medallions they wore. So, the women started painting that particular design on their pottery so some people say it's a, they call it a rosette design, and some people say it's a sunflower design. But it's basically doing, you know, like research. They said it's a pattern number, it's a design of a medallion symbol.

Charlaine Clerc:

Okay, because I've seen this symbol in some reproductions of kachinas around the ears.

Noreen Simplicio:

Yes, it's used pretty much. So that whole design like I said it would be... If you see it, if you know what Zuni designs are about, if you've seen it for so many years, you'll identify that it's a Zuni pot. Because of the rosette design and the deer [in his house]. The deer also is another one of our designs that it, you know, it's significant of Zuni as well as, you know, many Puebloan use it. So, to us, the deer is a very secret symbol, a secret animal because a long time ago that was kind of like the only source of meat that was available. And so, the men, a long time ago there was only men hunters, but in this day and age, there are women hunters, which is kind of like a taboo, a bad thing for women if you go out hunting because we are the ones that bear children. You don't wanna be hunting if you're a person that brings life. You know, so it's kind of a bad omen to be a woman hunter. It's kinda like for the men only, that's what our ancestors and our elders always talk to us about because of that reasoning that we bear children. Anyway - so when the men go out hunting for them to be successful, women would paint the deer whether on pottery or anywhere else there we might create art. They paint the deer with the heartline meaning the heart line meaning the breath of life. And usually sometimes on my deer, I would leave the tip of the mouth kind of open so that there's always breath coming in and breath going out all right. Sometimes I, sometimes it doesn't happen that way and I would just leave it, I would close the mouth but usually, I am aware of it and keep it open. So, when the menfolk bring home the deer it is brought into the house because they say when they're successful in their hunts it's almost as if our ancestors are coming home to visit in animal form. So that's why before the animal actually is brought into the house, the women go out and make a trail of cornmeal leading to the house where it's late, and then it's dressed, there's clothing that's put on the deer

as a symbol, whether it's a man or a woman, as a symbol saying that our ancestors are people that have passed out here to visit. They treat it with a lot of respect. So that's basically for me, be someone using the deer symbol. Now the birds, different kinds of birds, there's so many different styles in the birds. Why birds you may think? Well birds are very important as well as all the animals, the birds are particularly important to us because the menfolk again go out hunting birds and we use the bird feathers for prayers, things like different kinds of blessings that we ask for all the time. So, the bird feathers are really important, so that's why we use the bird symbols, and there's all the fine lines that you see are symbols of rain.

Charlaine Clerc:

You call this haching?

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, I don't do too much of the haching but I do just like straight lines, and if you really think about it like if you have ever seen rain like in a distance it does look like a fine line coming down. So that's a symbol of rain. Now there's another symbol like in this pot here. So that the fine line that you see, the sort of waves, it's what they called fields of vegetation. Maybe someone fields of cornfields of whatever they're growing, mainly the fine line as you see there on this particular bowl those are all symbols of rain. See how like this in this bowl here, the breakage of the line there that's not connected? That's a lifeline symbol. Oftentimes you would like to see that, that's the lifeline of the bowl, maybe your own life, somebody else's life. So always that symbol is pretty much significant in the pottery you'll see. So that there's always continuous life even here on earth, the path of continuous life. And these step patterns that you see in a lot of pieces.

Charlaine Clerc:

Are they clouds or mountains?

Noreen Simplicio:

I always see them as clouds, I've never seen them as mountains. I always see they're clouds. And the colors that we use, this particular piece is more of a contemporary, that's also my piece.

Charlaine Clerc:

And why is it contemporary? Is it the design or the colors?

Noreen Simplicio:

Because it is not handmade, it's ceramics, but that was already made for me. Those [other] pieces here are all hand-built. You can tell like, you know, with the contemporary style piece it's too perfect as opposed to something like this. If you stand here it's going to get some slight imperfections. So sometimes it's like that too. So those are the kinds of things that you look out for, that too perfect edges and it's too perfectly square. This one was hand-built. Everything is all like natural pigments that we collect in the mountains.

Charlaine Clerc:

So you're not using industrial pigments to decorate, the designs?

Noreen Simplicio:

It's all natural pigments. I actually do both! I use natural and contemporary and mix, I experiment with things a lot! I mean, you know, as an artist, the creative ability allows you to be creative in many different ways. And with clay, it's endless, you know it's just like it depends on you like, what kind of creative abilities you have. With me, I like to do like different things so I have a wide range of pieces that I've done over the 35 years that I've been doing pottery; it's probably going on 38 years.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you have experience!

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, so this woodwork. Davis' work. And he loves the pottery designs and he just uses it in such a beautiful way. I love his work.

Charlaine Clerc:

Yeah, I would like some in my house!

Noreen Simplicio:

He's actually tried so much pottery here! I'm teaching him! He's really good with his hands. Because he's always using pottery designs, and he's good at pottery making. So, he took some classes I'm teaching. He made a bowl, he's still working on it. He's working on the inside. It's always difficult to work on the inside, for me anyway!

Charlaine Clerc:

Because the surface is curvy.

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, it's curvy, it's not like a canvas, it's not flat. So, going back to some of the designs. See I have my lifeline symbol there. And then the lizards really are kind of influenced by several other tribes, you know. But the frogs are more Zuni. It's a rain symbol. Yeah, so I think, you know, like a lot of my frogs make people happy. I usually put one on the inside on the bottom.

Charlaine Clerc:

They call such work a friendship pot, right?

Noreen Simplicio:

I don't really have a specific name for my pieces. I just, I love my frogs, they're just... When you look at them, they're just joy. That's part of being an artist. you know, it has a lot of mindset kind of thing you know, like when you're sad, you don't want to put that energy into your work. You have to have this right sense of mind to create because you're bringing it to life. And it's gotta have a good life. So anyway, all the clays that I get is my own clay. Actually, before digging the clay, there's always prayers involved because you're taking flesh from the earth.

Charlaine Clerc:

So you give back by offering prayers?

Noreen Simplicio:

So just really respecting the clay. Those are all part of my teachings, I try to instill those in the children, and let them know. Belong to the clays because it's really special, they have feelings too because when you're making something it's moving, you're bringing it to life. So, I think by having that understanding and that concept and having the respect, I think that's why a lot of my pieces are unique, other artists cannot relate to what I do.

Charlaine Clerc:

Indeed, so this is clay from the village?

Noreen Simplicio:

This is actually the clay from Pia Mesa.

Charlaine Clerc:

So you pick up the clay, you give back prayers and offerings to the earth and then you work on the clay?

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, I process them. I process my own clay and a lot of times, say if you go to a museum and look at the pieces from the 1500s, you'll notice that a lot of the clays are really crude, they got a lot of rocks. I love to clean my clay until it's really smooth and soft. I'm just a perfectionist. So, I have a technique that I use to really get my clay really smooth and really, it's just like I said. I think I always brag about our clay because it's the best clay ever. My mom and dad were silversmiths. I really didn't pick up their art. I don't know, I guess I didn't really take an interest in silver. So, we've been to high school but I remember growing up and playing with mud a lot. You know, just regular mud, be playing outside and making a little pottery. When I got to high school, they offered a class so I took it and I was very good at it.

Charlaine Clerc:

And then you found your path and you just kept on working on your art and growing into your own style.

Noreen Simplicio:

It's kind of like I just learned the basics there, like how to process, where to get the source.

Charlaine Clerc:

Did you learn the prayers too in high school?

Noreen Simplicio:

No, the prayers aren't really taught. It was not taught in this school. If you wanted to learn the prayers, you asked somebody to teach you. And if you're meant to

learn it, it's given to you. it is like anything else, it's almost like you have to be trusted. It's what the elders used to say. With a lot of the prayers, there's elders that really know the old words and all the prayers and they really have to trust you. If you're meant to have it, you'll learn it. One time I was asking about prayers and the words, like are they all the same language, do they mean the same thing? And someone said it can be, you know, you learn the basic words, you can actually make your own. So, you have the basics and then depending on how you feel.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you're saying that you don't have to repeat the same words? You can make your own?

Noreen Simplicio:

I [once] thought that's what prayers were like, one set of words, you have to say it like this. But I came to find out that, from talking to different elders and individuals, they said that it's what you make. As long as you say what you need to say. The prayers are always important, you can kind of think that, you know, having the prayers in our language and culture, it's who we are, our true identity as Zuni people are actually people. I always say that to my son. My son lives in Albuquerque he doesn't come down as often. And he's a man and he belongs to one of the kachina societies and he hasn't danced in a long time. And I know, I was told that every male needs to have a mask as they grow up, my son doesn't have one yet. I'm just stressing that to him, someday when you settle down and got that city life out of your head, come back and focus on your identity, your roots. That's what's gonna balance you in life. I'm always preaching to him about that because this is who you are and never forget it!

Charlaine Clerc:

So, it's his responsibility.

Noreen Simplicio:

That's going to attract you, that's going to balance you in your life and have your life be good. So, I'm constantly reminding him that. He's 25 right now, I said he needs to start thinking about that because he's got a little 3 years old. You know everything about Zuni, I think it's like... We're so blessed with our culture and we still have it, you know, we still have it. Like all this stuff that you see here are all us. It was left behind from our ancestors. They left it behind for us. We still have it, we're lucky to still have it. Like all the pigments that we use, our clays, it's from the earth and are the gifts for us, even down to the stones that people use, the ideas and creative abilities that we have is what define us as Zuni people.

Charlaine Clerc:

So you mean that is a gift because you usually find as many talented people in one place!

Noreen Simplicio:

That's why like when I told you yesterday,, you know, that's why I try to be an active person in the community through my art because about five years ago I

was going through a lot of stuff in my life. [...] And then at that time, oh my gosh, my life just was upside down and I didn't know what to do. I almost started using myself because I couldn't deal with the pain and my art... Just oh my god my heart was just not there anymore and I was broken. We were moving out of our house because it was renovated and we were being moved up to the Blackrock area and everything was just a mess. So, when we were living up there, I often left, just went out in the morning, that was the first time I actually started doing my offerings. You know I do offerings when I go get clay but just like daily offerings. Like learning about why we need to make daily offerings. So, when we were living up there, all of a sudden, you know, I would go out in the morning and I would just create my own prayer about what I wanted for that day, just for that day, just to get through the day without crying. So, I would do that and then all of a sudden, like maybe a month later, there's this man that came to my door and he was actually my son's godfather. He came to the door, he actually found me, where I was living, because I went there. I was in there and he found me and he says "I'm looking for you" and I'm like whoa! You know at that time I was really angry, I just hated the world because of what I went through. So, he says "I'm looking for you, I want you to think about coming to our program" and I'm like "what program?" So, he told me and I thought "hum, that's interesting." At that time, I was so broken, I didn't know what to do with my life at that time. So, I said "okay let's see." So, what he wanted from me was he wanted me to teach in the cultural program there had there where they used the cultural program to teach the recoveries to find their true identity. Because, you know, recovery people, they lose themselves. They lose their identity, who they are and whatever. So, I got there and they told me what they wanted me to do. They wanted me to run the art part of that, of the program. They wanted me to use my art and teach my art. Just the basics. Just like kind of planting a seed, and it's up to the individual to do what they want. So that's what I did. I said "okay;" I've never worked for anybody in my life, I've always been my own. I was always my own boss because I did what I did and was able to make a living out of it. So, I told them that "yeah I'll come work for you but you gotta let me run the program, you can't interfere in the program and you gotta let me do what I want to do and you can't tell me what to do." So, they looked at me and said "Wow nobody's ever really said that to us." I said "if you want me to be the best that I can be, you gotta let me do it." So they did. They let me run my own program and it was successful. They loved it. These people were so broken, they were able to use the clay and they loved it, they loved my program. The program was so popular, I was really busy. So anyway. So, within that program, we worked with these individuals for like 12 weeks that I come in and work with them with clay. To end a whole cycle that they go through we went to the main place where our true identity is, which is in the Grand Canyon area.

Charlaine Clerc:

Ribbon Falls.

Noreen Semplicio:

Indeed, Ribbon Falls. I was so... I was like "yes I'm gonna go there, I wanna see this place, I wanna see where I come from, where we come from. because it's gonna help me," because I was so broken at this time. So, working there also

kind of help me to get over what I was going through. So, we actually hiked down there.

Charlaine Clerc:

So you went! Wow!

Noreen Simplicio:

And it was the most like craziest most really kind of stupid thing I did in my life because if you did it like around August!

Charlaine Clerc:

Oh it's hot!

Noreen Simplicio:

It's like 120 degrees with like a 50-pound bag. But the first time I was like ready to go, ready to do it. So, I trained for like a good six months.

Charlaine Clerc:

Okay, you prepared your body!

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, I prepared my body. But still you can never really know what to expect. You're in the middle of nowhere, nobody's gonna rescue you if you get injured. They even have as a sign "hike to your own risk."

Charlaine Clerc:

You're on your own! Of course, it's a legal issue if anything were to happen.

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, but we made it! And Oh my gosh it was so... So spiritual for me, you know, just being there. Just the things that happened, things that I saw... It was... Everything about the hike was... I don't know... It just changed my whole concept about life. When we made it down to our destination. Oh my god, I just, I just broke down. I thought about all the things that you know what was going on in my life at that time, I left it all there. And then the reality of the whole thing was oh my god there's somebody, no car that's gonna come and get us! We gotta make it back up and I know how hard it was getting there. Oh my god it's like "oh my god how am I gonna make it?" So, all I did all that time, there were times I wanted to quit. I want to throw my pack across the mountain. The only thing that kept me going was, I kept looking at my phone and my grandson's picture to make sure I gotta make it back. It was really hard getting, climbing back up, because there were switchbacks you know. Oh my god, it was so hard but we made it, everybody was okay. And it was cool because the whole idea of all that was actually for the recovery, to find that they come from this special place and then that they, why are they doing this to their life. The way we all helped each other with food, with conversations, with words of encouragement to keep going. There were some people that wanted to quit and just stop moving, and we as leaders we're the ones that encourage them. Like "let's rest for a while," anything with words, with food, with just anything, just to keep them moving. It was really

amazing. We all made it up there to the top and everybody was safe. It was the most... Oh my god, the feeling of like accomplishing that was really huge for me when I really think about it, I think I was meant to go there because I was asking for help when I was going through what I was going through. So, the first time was really awesome and very spiritual so when we were getting ready to do the second time I was like oh my god this is gonna be tough but it was down a different trail and a longer trail. So, we went down the first time I went down the North Kaibab trail, the second time we went down Bright Angel, which was a little further and it was the second time, first 30 minutes, the second hike I was like "oh my god!" Because my pack was really heavy, I packed kind of smart this time but still, my pack was really heavy.

Charlaine Clerc:

Of course, because you need to be well-equipped!

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, and I didn't train as much the second time. So, I said I gotta do this. So, all I did is I laid a bandana across my chest here and I pulled it and that's how I helped my pack all the way down, all the way up. And by the time I got there, I couldn't move my fingers. It was hard but we made it. So twice I've done it. Just this last September they were going down and they asked me but I said "I'm done, I'm done! I've seen it." They went and they did well so I kind of left the program.

Charlaine Clerc:

But you kept on teaching people, right?

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah you know at UIP [*Ho'n A:wan Community*] park, I usually teach the kids there. I continue to teach. I kinda wanna do like apprenticeship programs. There's a New Mexico Art, right now, they got... They're trying to start an apprenticeship program, and they've contacted me. Right now, things are not good in my family, my mom's really sick right now. I kinda, I just want to be there right now. So, I'm not trying to get involved in all the stuff because I don't know how long she has. It's kind of hard right now, dealing with that and trying to do my art. I talked about how your mindset needs to be.

Charlaine Clerc:

Are you forcing yourself sometimes?

Noreen Simplicio:

Sometimes, but you know when things get really sad I find peace in just doing my art. So you know, life is kind of challenging right now. But I'm trying to stay strong and be positive. This is awful when you have to watch somebody die like that. I'm just glad that I have my family, we're supporting each other. I'm not alone. My mom and I live by ourselves but I have my family. Like I said, the Zunis are so blessed with many many things that we have here, our village is kind of quiet and there's not much to do here but just we have some beautiful places to go hiking and all the rich culture that we have, the language, we're still practicing it, all the

art and everything. And we're blessed, the artists own this wonderful place here [talking about ARTZ coop shop].

Charlaine Clerc:

This place is amazing. It's the first place that was recommended to me when I went to the Visitor Center. I was told "this is the place you need to go."

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, it's gotten a lot of support from our tribal government, the Visitor Center, the *Halo:na* [inn], and I think people are recognizing "this is real, this is the place." The art here is all authentic. So, all the artists that display their things here are all members of the cooperative and we're looking to add more artists members.

Charlaine Clerc:

To make it grow.

Noreen Simplicio:

To make grow and to make it successful. It's been successful so far. Our new home and we were homeless and when I got this home, it was, you know, now that we got it what do we do? More work! The board of the co-operative are really good people and they worked hard to get it to work. So, were you able to visit other Art Walk artists?

Charlaine Clerc:

Oh, I did! I went to Jeff Shetima's place. He just carved right in front of me with such ease! I did not expect it, he took this big rock and made a bear out of it in seconds. It's just the way he masters the materials that's impressive!

Noreen Simplicio:

I think that's one of the key things here too. Our visitors actually see where all this art is created.

Charlaine Clerc:

The work behind is impressive and to witness the work, people are surprised and understand that it seems it's so expensive but it's a lot of work behind the scene. It takes hours, days! Especially for pottery, this is not something you can do in one day!

Noreen Simplicio:

It takes a while, it's a process. Like I said, each artist has their own techniques and their creative abilities to create what they do. And there's a story behind it you know it's not just like a piece of pottery, there's a story behind it.

Charlaine Clerc:

Do you sketch before you start?

Noreen Simplicio:

What I usually do... Well, when I first started out pottery, I used to sketch my designs and, you know, I look in books for designs. Then after I graduated from

high school I took some college courses but my whole thing was always about pottery and what I wanted to do with it. So, I focused more on that than going to college but now I said I should have gone to college and gotten a degree or something. So, when I finished high school there was a lady that lived here. She was not Zuni but she lived here in Zuni. She was Acoma Zia, a woman married to a black man. They lived here and both of them were in the educational system. They were teachers, they were, whatever they did in education, so they lived here and they also had a pottery business on the side. So, she was looking for somebody to hire, to come work for her. So, she went to the school and inquired about me. I guess, I was mentioned to her so she came to talk to me and said "well after high school what are your plans" and I said, "well I'm gonna take some classes and see where that takes me." And then she goes "well can you come like to work for me when you're not in school," "okay why not, that's a job." So, I went to work for her and she was a clay sculptress and she traveled a lot.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, she was influenced by her travels too.

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, and then so she hired me and I worked for her like about five-six years and all I did for her was she would create pieces she would design everything in pencil and all I had to do was follow the pencil marks.

Charlaine Clerc:

So this is when you learned to have a steady hand!

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, so I did a lot of designing for her and I traveled with them to different museum shows where she showed her art so I got to travel with them. You know, I loved it because I got to travel for free! And then we got close with the lady, her and her husband. I spent most of my time there with them all the time and traveled together. So, they showed me kind of like the ropes, where the shows were and what to do, how to do it. So, I worked with them for about six years and then finally she said "you know what? You should really focus on your own stuff like... You should create some pieces and we'll take you and maybe you could sell it." So, we did that and when I did like my first show I sold everything and I'm like "whoa that's really cool." So ever since then, I started doing more shows and kind of just moved away from her and she understood you know. And then we used to work for like department stores, we used to do a lot of different things, just little trinkets that we'd hand-cut and mass-produced. So, she had to hire extra people. So, we used to do that a lot. Then I just kind of left and went on my own and I've been on my own since then, I'm just doing my art. And my son, I had my son and then I think when he was four years old, they, the school, they know what I did and the school invited me to come to share my talent with the children and that's kind of where I became a resource person for the school district to come in and teach a class maybe or share. So that's where the teaching part came in and I'm like "I like this!" So, I started working with the kids a lot, ZYEP [Zuni Youth Enrichment Project], they found what I was doing and they contracted me to work on some accounts. So I've been working for them off and on for like about a good ten years

ever since they had their first summer camp for kids. I really enjoyed it and I continued to do that. My latest project was the big pot we did with the kids. I don't know if you saw it.

Charlaine Clerc:

Not yet.

Noreen Simplicio:

So, you didn't go over to the park? I think they're closed right now? The only time they're open is when there's like a soccer game going on. [shows the big pot she made with the kids]

Charlaine Clerc:

Wow, it's so big and the colors are so bright!

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, it's six by five feet.

Charlaine Clerc:

The colors are brighter!

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, actually it's exterior paint. The whole thing is [made with exterior paint]. There's actually two of them, this one has been done by another potter. So they're sitting side by side along the side of the building there. But actually, it's opened up to the drainage system so the trap works all the water, collects all the water for their gardens.

Charlaine Clerc:

You know we have ugly plastic containers for that, this is much brighter!

Noreen Simplicio:

So they're made out of concrete, there's a company out of Albuquerque that builds them about when they wanted to build these two, the ones I've seen they built, they have much more of a kind of a base type that I've seen. So when they, the ZYEP, asked what the pot should look like, I told them that it should look like a traditional-style pot. So, the company... I was talking to the company a lot back and forth on the design, the shape and everything. They really did a good job. It's all concrete. It's really really heavy and there's like a spigot right there, I think that spigot should have not been there. Well, you could have just used a pump to take the water out. Because the spigot kinda... I don't like the spigot being there. [Show a picture of her working on the pot] That was me on the final day that I completed it. So instead of signing on the bottom like the usual pots, like I usually sign all my pots on the bottom of the pot, I didn't want to do that on this one because I didn't want the names to show because it was gonna affect the design so we all signed it, all the kids that helped. We sign it on the inside. That's why I was inside, taking the picture. it holds a lot of water; When I got contracted to do it, I was like "oh my god what did I get myself into, I don't know if I can do this."

Charlaine Clerc:

Is it because of the big design like that?

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, I've never... This is my first ever large piece I've done like that. But once, we started working on it, it was like painting just like a regular pot. The hardest part was designing down here because I had to lay on my back, that was the hardest part.

Charlaine Clerc:

So what kind of paint did you use for this pot?

Noreen Simplicio:

It's a regular exterior paint. But it was hard because the surface was not smooth, it's bumpy. So when you make a line it's started going in those little bumps there; so you have to constantly... So, I started on May 27th and completed it on November 11th, so about six months off and on. I wasn't there every day but actually... [shows the picture with her students working on the pot] So these are my students, Davis was really helpful. He was the most that spent a lot of time helping me, kind of completed [the project]... He helped with the kids... They came in when we put a base coat on it and they waited for me to put all the design in. And what the kids did was they colored all the sections. [Shows another picture] So this is the same pot. My nephew kind of fixed it. I had some t-shirts printed with the project's name and I gave it to the kids. When it did rain, in July, the pot was full of water. It was a lot of work, I was so happy once I was done. I'm also working on a larger mural for a long time. It's based on...I'll show you. [shows the picture of the multimedia middle place artwork]

Charlaine Clerc:

Is it with pottery designs?

Noreen Simplicio:

It's clay and wood.

Charlaine Clerc:

Oh, it's a multimedia kind of work!

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah. I have it at the house, the first phase of it, it's at the house. But unfortunately, I'm here till six, about 6:30 ish if you don't mind coming over. This is my grandson [shows his picture]. He's an artist, he loves to paint, he loves to play with my clays. And he builds things...

Charlaine Clerc:

So, it's nice, you see that he's interested!

Noreen Simplicio:

This is actually his father's work. My son is an amazing potter but he rather worked for somebody else! This is maybe like three years ago...

Charlaine Clerc:

So these are the traditional colors...

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, these are the same ones I use.

Charlaine Clerc:

Because in Acoma, there is this bright blue popping up right now, a new color, but here it's stable.

Noreen Simplicio:

That's another one of his pieces, he's only been potting for I would say... Well actually, I started teaching him when he was five, off and on he'd do it. He's never really been a full-time potter, he just does it when he wants to. I keep telling him "you should paint more." So right now, he's thinking of leaving his job. They are gonna come back, he's waiting for his wife to finish her degree. She's gonna be a teacher. She's almost done, she'll be done this coming year, May and then they're gonna move back. Hopefully. Well, he said he's tired of his job, he just wants to chill. And they just got married a couple of months ago, okay,, so... My son is pretty responsible. I love this pot [showing her pot with frogs.]

Charlaine Clerc:

Oh, it's so cute, it's a couple of frogs! I love the peach color, it is quite nice!

Noreen Simplicio:

That's actually the natural color.

Charlaine Clerc:

So this is clay! It's really smooth.

Noreen Simplicio:

I have a friend, a couple of doctors that I know here in the village. They became my friends and a couple of days ago, they came by and said that they wanted to give their friend, my other friend doctor, they wanted to give her a birthday gift but they want it to be meaningful and be like a really super experience for her so they came to ask if I could teach her a session to make her own pot. Because she's a fan of my work.

Charlaine Clerc:

It's a gift to be taught by someone you admire.

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, so they asked if I could teach her a class. I said well let me think about it so I'm still thinking about it because right now it's not a good time. This is a drawing that I did for my mural project.

Charlaine Clerc:

Oh, it looks fragmented!

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, I just... I don't draw on paper. One day I was just doodling and this is what came up with. I'm trying to paint some cards and, I don't know, maybe a coffee mug or something. I don't know. It was something with it I'm trying to look for the mural... To see some of the kids working on the pot! This is actually my stepgrandson and just this kid came to visit me every day when I was out there. This kid, he would just sit there and watch me, and I said do you want to help and he goes "yeah, but can you give me something if I help?" He would ask me every day because he knew I took a cooler full of snacks and stuff like drinks, apples, or whatever. So, he knew there was food in my cooler. Okay so he would come and say "I want to help but can you give me a snack if I help you?" That was every day! He would come and help a little bit, then I would give him a snack, and off he goes. It's kinda sad though. And then I did a snail project with the kids. We did a snail project that was really cool. So that was our base coat [on the big water pot]. We had to put a base coat on it just to kind of try to smooth the surface out. It didn't work well.

Charlaine Clerc:

Would it be possible to sand concrete?

Noreen Simplicio:

It's possible. This is what it looked like [showing the raw concrete pot]; it was gray-like. So, this is the clay site [in Pia Mesa], this is a lot of clay, it's kind of like a chalky material. So, I took my whole family up there and that was on my birthday. They asked me so "what do you want for your birthday" and I said "just come help me get the clay," so we all went up to get clay. That's cool I made them work because you have to go down quite a ways to dig it and then carry it back up.

[Talking about her mural project] It's probably towards the end but it's pretty amazing how it came out in the first phase of it. And I don't know where I got my idea for it, it just like one day it was there. The ZYEP was looking for local artists to do mural projects and I just said "I'll do one" and then I told them my idea and they're like "how big is it gonna be" so I was thinking it small scale and then everybody said, "do it like a mass, do like a mass masterpiece" and so it turned out to be eight feet by eight feet. So, it's huge so I have to do it in sections, and I got the first part of it done and I've got other parts built for the second phase but... With all that's going on right now, I just go through that section where I can just punch in. [This project] it's really awesome, it's almost the same symbol as you saw on this bear here.

Charlaine Clerc:

The Middle Place.

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah, I use that symbol to create... So, this whole thing is like a journey symbol. And right here, it's based on our migration history. So right here in the center is a painting that's done on a wooden disk and it's a painting of Ribbon Falls. So that's where our journey started. We came out from Ribbon Falls, did the journey, and our people did the journey looking for the Middle Place. That's the way history

goes, the story. It's not a story, it's actually history. So as the journey goes, there's right there, there are little cliff dwellings indicating that our people settled in some places like Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon, Walnut Canyon, and all these different places. So, I was trying to simulate that idea into it. So, when I decided to use the spiral symbol, I said "how am I gonna decorate it." And so, when you go visit places like dwelling, sometimes you'll find pot shards indicating that we people live there. And you probably saw a lot of that in *Hawiku* when you were out there? So, I decided to use that as a way to decorate the spiral. And then somebody said "well, are you gonna pick the pot shards from a dwelling" and I was like "no" because it's illegal so I don't want to go to jail! So, I said "we're gonna make them" and I'm gonna have community people, the youth and adults, and whoever wants to help me with it. So that's how the whole mural, the first phase of it started. I had to get clearance through the Zuni school district to be able to go into the school and have the kids make them, so what I did was I took slabs of clay, natural clay, I just rolled it out on a rolling machine through slabs of clay and gave every individual kid a piece of clay and toothpick. I said this is what I want you to do, just cut me a shape so I took samples of pot shards so that they'll know what to do. So that's how I got them to... I wanted a specific size but I knew I worked with 750 children. Even though you tell them, you give them directions, you know not everybody's gonna follow directions. So, we had the children cut them out and I was there at the school for like three weeks and oh my god! I mean I had to commend the teachers because after the three weeks I was exhausted! I was like "I can't do this" you know! But they did really really well and they loved it! And they cut them, they put like all the natural colors on, some of them were able to design them, but we ran out of time. It was only three weeks. I didn't want to rush everything. Because of the way it was set up was that I had to work with all the kids in the school.

Charlaine Clerc:

So you had to start all over again for each class.

Noreen Simplicio:

Each class was like 45 minutes in 7 classes. Yeah, so by the time the kids from way on this side of the school walk to my classroom I would lose like 30 minutes! Just them walking to the classroom, getting them settled, putting their bags and jackets away...I literally had 15 to 30 minutes, it was quite tiring. But we got it done! We were able to cut all those and so for three weeks we didn't get them done. So, I said "okay, what do I do?" So, I took all the pot shards to middle school. I stayed there for a bit. They still didn't get them done. So, I went to the high school, they didn't get there. So, then I reached out to the community people and just distribute it.

Charlaine Clerc:

And people who wanted to give it back, gave it back! It's awesome!

Noreen Simplicio:

Yeah! Even our governor! So, I was supposed to have it done during the grand opening of the [Artz gallery] building to the public. You know they were kind of upset with me because it was contracted and they upset with me and I'm like "you

have no idea what I've been through" This is the first time something like this has ever been done. They kept asking me "is it done," because the big funders of the buildings were coming, and they wanted it to show off. "I'm not doing it for the funders," I said. I got mad and I said "I'm not doing it for the funders, I'm doing it for our people, so I'll show what I have done!" So I took it I showed it the day of the event and everybody was like "oh it's done, it's done!" I said "no, it's not. It's done when I say it's done."

Charlaine Clerc:

So you're still working on it?

Noreen Simplicio:

I'm still working on it, especially the second phase of it. The second phase of it is gonna be on eight feet by eight feet board, this whole spiral is gonna be mounted on a wall. Eight feet by eight feet board. And along the edges of the board will be designs of pottery as the spiral goes on. I had the clan system, each individual clan system painted by another artist. So, all those are gonna be surrounding the spiral that communicates that journey. So, the journey symbol goes like this and like this and then it comes to this narrow road. And right here on the bottom of the board, I built a whole village scene out of clay and that's indicating the middle place. The journey ends here.

Charlaine Clerc:

It's an incredible thought-through project. Once you're done, I would be honored to see it!

Noreen Simplicio:

I think a lot of the people that were involved in this, they keep asking me "is it done." It will eventually. Here's the clan system on this board and there's gonna be a relief as well. Yeah, so it's been a lot of interesting events. I'm documenting all the hours that I put on and I try to videotape some of the documents, the processes of it. How it develops. I haven't been working on it. I need to though because my mom... My mom wants to see it done. Because she keeps asking me "are you gonna get it done before I leave." This is actually done by another one of the artists here in Zuni too. So that was me showing it and talking about it. That's pretty, that's at the house in my backroom. These two guys are the directors of that youth center. So, there's a specific place. Here's our governor. First, my original thought was to put grout in between like, kind of like a mosaic, but the grout didn't take too well with the painting, so I didn't use the grout but I just painted the whole thing in black. That's me putting it together. I've never worked with wood and I had to really figure it out, and that's how I pasted it on the potshards.

Charlaine Clerc:

So, you placed the shards and thought about how it would look best.

Noreen Simplicio:

I got like, about like right here, I was running low on potshards. It took about 750 pieces. So, it was pretty interesting.

Charlaine Clerc:

Please send me a picture when it's done! I'll show off your work!

Noreen Simplicio:

Like I said I don't know where I got that idea. So yeah if you want to come over later maybe you'll get to see some of my other work too.

Appendix 6 - Ancestral Pueblo to Contemporary Zuni Timeline



Appendix 7 - *Erlebnis* study of the *a'witen/itiwan* colors

Pictorial Register:	Internal Memory Store	Color naming center (Shiwi'ma)	Color naming center (English)
(Perception)	<i>(Memory center)</i> <i>Object 1</i>	<i>(association with objects)</i> <i>Object 2</i>	<i>(Association with objects)</i> <i>Object 3</i>
Yellow	Perceived object	North/mountain lion	Cheerfulness, the sun or illness/cowardice
Erleben	Association proper to the perceived object	North/ <i>Erlebnis</i>	Happiness/warmth / <i>Erlebnis</i>

Pictorial Register:	Internal Memory Store	Color naming center (Shiwi'ma)	Color naming center (English)
(Perception)	<i>(Memory center)</i> <i>Object 1</i>	<i>(association with objects)</i> <i>Object 2</i>	<i>(Association with objects)</i> <i>Object 3</i>
Blue	Perceived object	West/bear	Melancholy/sadness, the sky/calmness
Erleben	Association proper to the perceived object	West/ <i>Erlebnis</i>	Coolness / <i>Erlebnis</i>

Pictorial Register:	Internal Memory Store	Color naming center (Shiwi'ma)	Color naming center (English)
(Perception)	<i>(Memory center)</i> <i>Object 1</i>	<i>(association with objects)</i> <i>Object 2</i>	<i>(Association with objects)</i> <i>Object 3</i>
Red	Perceived object	South/badger	Blood, love, war, sexual desire
Erleben	Association proper to the perceived object	South/ <i>Erlebnis</i>	Warmth/ excitement / <i>Erlebnis</i>

Pictorial Register:	Internal Memory Store	Color naming center (Shiwi'ma)	Color naming center (English)
(Perception)	<i>(Memory center)</i> <i>Object 1</i>	<i>(association with objects)</i> <i>Object 2</i>	<i>(Association with objects)</i> <i>Object 3</i>
White	Perceived object	East/wolf	Light, purity/virginity,
Erleben	Association proper to the perceived object	East/ <i>Erlebnis</i>	Innocence / <i>Erlebnis</i>

Pictoral Register:	Internal Memory Store	Color naming center (Shiwi'ma)	Color naming center (English)
<i>(Perception)</i>	<i>(Memory center)</i>	<i>(association with objects)</i>	<i>(Association with objects)</i>
Multicolor	<i>Object 1</i> Perceived object	<i>Object 2</i> Zenith/eagle	<i>Object 3</i> Not a shade. Perhaps references to Newton's prism, or the rainbow.
Erleben	Association proper to the perceived object	Zenith/ <i>Erlebnis</i>	Many colors together, not a shade / <i>Erlebnis</i>

Pictoral Register:	Internal Memory Store	Color naming center (Shiwi'ma)	Color naming center (English)
<i>(Perception)</i>	<i>(Memory center)</i> <i>Object 1</i>	<i>(association with objects)</i> <i>Object 2</i>	<i>(Association with objects)</i> <i>Object 3</i>
Black	Perceived object	Mole/nadir	Darkness, fear, death
Erleben	Association proper to the perceived object	Nadir/ <i>Erlebnis</i>	Evil / <i>Erlebnis</i>