

Bowl, ca. 1000 – 1150

Mimbres culture

Southwest region

Clay, pigments

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0099

Engaging scenes from the Mimbres' world were painted on the inside of bowls. Images of animals and people as well as sophisticated geometric designs were rendered. The animal images on this bowl may represent a dog, possibly even a family pet.

Jar and Bowl, ca. 1450-1500

Sikyatki village

Southwest region

Clay, pigment

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0770 and T0771

Objects made in the Sikyatki style are considered the premier form of ancient Southwest pottery. Exuberant color, meticulous polishing, and exquisite shape and decoration all distinguish the style from its antecedents. The bowl features a figure like a *katsina*, one of the Pueblo spirit beings who help regulate the forces of nature; the jar's design may allude to a bird.

Pendant, ca. 1200 – 1400

Salado culture

Southwest region

Spiny-oyster shell, turquoise, clam shell, pitch, beaded strings (possibly a later addition)

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0101

The ancient Salado obtained treasured red oyster shells from the distant Gulf of California. The use of ocean shells for personal adornment in the high desert areas of the southwest confirms the existence of well-developed ancient trade routes. Before European contact, many Native Americans traded materials and ideas over long distances. For instance, Southwest trade patterns also involved Mexico, and Mississippians imported materials from the Gulf of Mexico and the Great Lakes. Starting in the 1500s, new European goods were quickly distributed through these networks.

Chief's Blanket, Second Phase, ca. 1865 – 75

Diné (Navajo)

Southwest region

Wool, commercial yarn, organic and commercial dye

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0123

For the Diné (Navajo), weaving is a way of creating beauty and then projecting it into the world. The art had sacred beginnings: it was passed to humankind by Spider Woman, an ancestor who wove the universe from cosmic materials.

In the 1800s, Plains and Southwest people eagerly traded for Diné shoulder blankets; in fact, the Plains may have coined the term *chief's blanket*, the Diné do not have chiefs.

The blankets' stylistic evolution is divided into phases according to design and materials.

Serape, ca. 1875 – 85

Diné (Navajo)

Southwest region

Commercial Germantown yarns with synthetic red, green, yellow, and tan dyes; Native hand-spun yarns in natural white and indigo-dyed blue

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0128

In the late 1800s, traders eager for Navajo textiles to sell to tourists and through catalogues introduced commercially spun yarn dyed in brilliant synthetic colors to Native peoples. Weavers then used the new yarns to produce exceptional serapes called “eye dazzlers,” with complex designs and vibrant colors. This garment exemplifies how Diné (Navajo) weavers creatively synthesized the new and the old.

Necklace, ca. 1900

Dine (Navajo )

Southwest region

Silver, turquoise

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0617

Jar, ca. 1900

Zuni

Southwest region

Clay, pigments

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0455

The Zuni balanced jars like these on their heads in order to carry water. The well was a gathering place where water vessels and their elaborate decoration were visible to all. On this example is a deer whose red heart-line refers to its spirit essence, and a rain bird, whose beak spirals between two stylized wings, the wings' stepped shape and hachure represent rain-filled clouds.

Jar, ca. 1925

Maria (1887 – 1980) and Julian (1885 – 1943) Martinez

San Ildefonso Pueblo

Southwest region

Clay, pigments

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0575

María and Julian Martinez were acclaimed as trailblazers of the modern Southwest ceramics revival, and together created some of the finest Pueblo pottery ever made. She formed the vessels, renowned for their perfect symmetry and flawlessly stone-polished surfaces. Using a yucca-leaf brush, he painted many of the objects with masterful, flowing designs. Their impact on other Pueblo potters was enormous.



Jar, ca. 1905

Nampeyo (ca.1860 – 1942)

Hopi

Hano, First Mesa

Southwest region

Clay, pigments

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0810

This vessel, made by the legendary Nampeyo, has both a billowing fullness and a strong sense of center. Nampeyo pioneered the modern revival of fine Pueblo pottery making, which, after reaching its zenith in the late pre-contact period, had begun to decline. The designs and shapes of ancient Sikyatki-style ceramics inspired Nampeyo. Her work continues to influence Hopi potters today, and some of her great-granddaughters carry on the tradition.

Manta, ca. 1915 – 1935

Hopi

Southwest region

Cotton, wool

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0108

The ornamentation of this manta, an ancient form of cloak or shawl, features abstract butterflies and rain clouds, symbols of fertility and renewal. In the past, women routinely wore these shoulder garments, which were not always embroidered; some still wear them on special occasions, including dances.

Headdress, ca. 1890 – 1910

Rio Grande Pueblo

Southwest region

Wood, paint, cord, hide

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0781

Pueblo men and women wear elaborately painted wooden headdresses at ceremonial dances and festivals that honor the cycles of the growing season. Stylized cornstalks adorn both sides of this headdress; the stepped outline at the top symbolizes clouds that carry precious rain to often-parched Pueblo territory.

Hemis Katsina, ca. 1900 – 1920

Hopi

Southwest region

Cottonwood, pigments

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0428

*Katsina* spirits, enacted ceremonially by masked, costumed men, annually visit Pueblo villages in order to bring blessings of many kinds. *Katsina* dolls teach children about these life-bringing benefactors. Here, corn sprouts from the headdress, which also references clouds and rain through its stepped shape and rainbow. The dolls—particular specialties of the Hopi and Zuni—are also made for sale to tourists and collectors.

Kilt, ca. 1900 – 1915

Tesuque Pueblo

Southwest region

Commercial tanned leather, pigments, brass, copper and tin cones

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0711

Men performing in the elaborate ceremonial dances of the pueblos wear short kilts.

Above a multicolored border that represents a rainbow, a lightning-shaped *avanyu* (feathered serpent) slithers or flies across the length of this example. The tin cones at the lower edge may reinforce the *avanyu*'s connection to plant fertility: when moving, they sound like falling rain.

Shoulder Bag, ca.1850 – 70

Pueblo

Southwest region

Buffalo hide, deer hide, porcupine quills, horsehair, linen thread

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0830

Saddlebag, ca. 1880

Apache

Southwest region

Hide, trade cloth, ochre, pigment, metal, cord

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0764

Basket, ca. 1910 – 20

Apache

Southwest region

Willow, devil's-claw pods, yucca root

Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. T0469