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Fowler Museum to Host Exhibition of Extraordinary Late 19th Century Weavings

Treasured Textiles from the American Southwest: The Durango Collection®

Opens September 13, 2015



Third Phase Chief Blanket. Diné (Navajo), circa 1875. Weft faced plain weave, handspun wool in natural colors with indigo blue, raveled red trade cloth or bayeta, and commercial wool yarn. The Durango Collection®, Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado. 1965:19001

The Fowler Museum at UCLA is pleased to present thirty-eight extraordinary nineteenth-century textiles from The Durango Collection® — a collection known for its high quality historic Southwest weavings. The exhibition showcases many of the collection’s signature pieces, including magnificent examples of the famous Diné (Navajo) First and Second Phase “chief blankets.” Among the most emblematic garments are several made by Pueblo peoples including; a Hopi boy’s blanket woven by a male relative, a beautiful indigo-dyed twill-woven Zuni woman’s dress, and a man’s embroidered shirt from Jemez pueblo. Historical photographs from the period offer visitors insights into the lives and artistic techniques of the weavers who created these textile masterworks. *Treasured Textiles* will be on display from September 13, 2015 to January 10, 2016.

Treasured Textiles traces the emergence of three great weaving traditions that developed in the highly contrasting landscapes of the Southwest. The history began over 1000 years ago with the Ancestral Puebloans (also known as the Ancient Ones, or the Anasazi), who worked with native cotton on an upright loom. In the 1500s, the Spanish entered the Southwest introducing sheep and the horizontal treadle loom to the region. The Diné (Navajo) did not weave when they migrated into the Dinétah, the Navajo homeland, sometime prior to 1500. By the 1700s, however, they became skilled weavers trading prized textiles across the Southwest. By the nineteenth century, weavers from all three groups – Pueblo peoples, Diné (Navajo), and Hispanic settlers– were producing exceptional works of art, influencing one another while developing their own characteristic, mature styles. All of these rich and vital textile traditions persist to the present day.

The Diné (Navajo) works are notable for their early dating such as the aforementioned First and Second Phase “chief blankets.” One Diné (Navajo) blanket comes complete with the story of the U.S. Army officer who used it as part of his military equipment. The oldest textile in the exhibition, a Saltillo serape dating to 1800, shows the intricate diamond patterning that later served as a source of inspiration for Diné “eyedazzler” weavings, while other early Hispanic serapes with subtle striped patterning, resonate with Pueblo and Diné (Navajo) styles of the same period. These and other examples illustrate how closely entwined the three traditions became as they flourished side-by-side in the nineteenth-century Southwest.

Most of the textiles in the Durango Collection® date from about 1860 to 1880, a time of tremendous change with the coming of the U.S. military, settlers from the eastern states, the railroads, and new trade opportunities. Despite the different experiences of the three cultural groups, their weavings reveal a continual exchange of materials, techniques, and ideas. The historical import of these works and their artistry and workmanship, which remain highly regarded today, make these textiles true treasures of the American Southwest.

The Durango Collection® of Southwest Textiles

The Durango Collection® is a comprehensive grouping of textiles and related items that represent 800 years of weaving in the American Southwest. The Durango Collection® is part of the museum collections at the Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, in Durango, Colorado. It was assembled by Mark Winter, owner of the historic Toadlena Trading Post in New Mexico and by the late H. Jackson Clark, founder of Toh-Atin Gallery in Durango. A portion of the collection was later acquired by Richard and Mary Lyn Ballantine of Durango, who in the late 1990s, along with Mark Winter and his family, donated it to Fort Lewis College.

Treasured Textiles from the American Southwest: The Durango Collection® has been adapted by the Fowler Museum and the Museum at the Center of Southwest Studies from the exhibition *Masterpieces of the Durango Collection®: Native Blankets from the Early American Southwest*, developed by the Center of Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado, in partnership with the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Support for the exhibition is

provided by the Donald B. Cordry Memorial Fund at the Fowler Museum, the Estate of Caroline D. West, and the Fowler Museum Textile Council. Additional support comes from Carolyn and Charles Knobler, Michael Rohde, Dena Marienthal, and the Antique Tribal Arts Dealers Association (ATADA) Foundation.

The Fowler Museum at UCLA is one of the country's most respected institutions devoted to exploring the arts and cultures of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA Arts, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$12 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call 310 825-4361 or visit fowler.ucla.edu.

Public Programs

Sunday, October 4, 1pm and 2pm

Fowler OutSpoken Talks

Textiles and Paintings from the American Southwest

Presented in conjunction with the 7th annual Good Food Pie Day, the Fowler celebrates art of the American Southwest with two fascinating talks by Jeanne Brako, curator of collections at The Center for Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, and Jim Enote, Executive Director, A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center. At 1 pm, Brako looks at the ways designs, materials, styles, and uses of Pueblo, Diné (Navajo) and Hispanic textiles have followed changes in the Southwest's historic and social landscape. At 2 pm, Enote explores notions of mapping through the Zuni Art Map Project in which contemporary Zuni artists depict how they see their own history, their ancestral migrations, their ancient homes, and the parts of nature that sustain them.

Thursday, October 8, 12pm

Culture Fix

Roy Hamilton on American Southwest Textiles

Treasured Textiles presents extraordinary weavings from the Durango Collection®, highly regarded for the quality of its works from the Southwest. In this gallery talk, join Fowler Senior Curator Roy Hamilton as he looks closely at the commonalities and differences among the three textile cultures on view—Pueblo, Diné (Navajo), and Hispanic—as demonstrated by the fine details in their work.

Sunday, November 8, 1pm–4pm

Colloquium

From Trading Posts to Today: The Commodification of American Indian Arts

This afternoon program pairs two speakers who discuss how diverse Native American artworks have circulated in commercialized systems. Kathy M'Closkey, author of *Swept Under the Rug: A Hidden History of Navajo Weaving* (2008), chronicles the historical background evidenced by trading post archives while Jim Enote of the Zuni Nation exposes the development of "pseudo-ceremonial" Zuni

works of art. The program concludes with a screening of *Weaving Worlds*, a documentary film that highlights the untold stories of artists and dealers involved in the making and selling of Navajo rugs. The film presents a compelling portrait of the economic and cultural struggles that Diné (Navajo) weavers face in a time of increased globalization.

More related programs will be announced online at fowler.ucla.edu.