



FRIENDS OF ETHNIC ART

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FEA Newsletter

February 2011

Navajo Blankets of the Classic Period (ca. 1800 – 1865)

A Lecture by Tyrone Campbell

Sunday, February 27, 2011 – 10 a.m.

Marin Center, 10 Avenue of the Flags, San Rafael

The Navajo did not always weave. In the middle of the 17th century, they had begun sheep herding and gathering, carding, and spinning their own wool. By the late 17th century they learned to weave from their neighbors, the Pueblo Indians. But while among the Pueblos men were the weavers, it was the Navajo women who wove. The weaving skills of the Navajo craftswomen surpassed those of the Spanish and the Pueblo craftsmen within just a few decades, and Navajo blankets became prized possessions desired by the wealthier Indians and Spanish throughout the West.

Although worn by the Navajo, the blankets were also commercial items, traded to the Ute, Arapaho, Cheyenne, and other Indians of the West. By day they served as coats, and by night as blankets. The textiles were woven so tightly that they were practically waterproof; and they were far lighter than buffalo skins. They were also more colorful and were valued for their beauty. Several varieties of textiles were produced, including serapes, mantas, women's dresses, and the famous chiefs' blankets. The latter were called "chiefs' blankets" by both the Indians and the traders because they were so expensive that only chiefs or other wealthy individuals could afford them. They are still known by that name. Campbell notes that in 1860 such a blanket cost between \$100 and \$150, at a time when men were making between \$2.50 and \$5.00 a week. A blanket, then, would represent a year's wages. A house could be bought at that time for \$200. Campbell's talk will focus on early weavings of the Navajo, when the products of their looms were still both being worn as clothing and used as trade items.

Tyrone Campbell is President of Tyrone D. Campbell, Inc., and is a noted author, lecturer, consultant and dealer in antique Navajo and Pueblo weavings. Campbell's publications in the field include *Historic Navajo Weaving 1800-1900—Three Cultures – One Loom*; *Eyedazzlers and Contemporary Counter Parts*; *The Navajo Tradition, a Survey of Germantown Weaving 1880-1915*; *Timeless Textiles: Traditional Pueblo Arts 1840-1940* and *Navajo Pictorial Weaving 1880-1950*. He currently resides in Scottsdale, Arizona.



Navajo serape, ca. 1840-1860. Hearst Collection A.5141.42.168. Natural and indigo-dyed wool, and raveled commercial yarn dyed with cochineal, 171.5 X 131 cm.

Olmec! Upcoming Events Not to Be Missed

Olmec Colossal Masterworks in San Francisco

Treasures from Mexican National Collections on view at the de Young
February 19 to May 8, 2011

Considered the "mother culture" of Mesoamerica and recognized as America's oldest civilization, the people known today as the Olmec developed an iconic and sophisticated artistic style as early as the second millennium BC. This exhibit features 140 objects drawn primarily from Mexican national collections with additional loans from over twenty-five museums. Included in the exhibition are colossal heads, a large-scale throne, and monumental stelae, in addition to precious small-scale vessels, figures, adornments and masks. *Olmec* brings together for the first time new finds and monuments that have never been seen by American audiences and reveals new scholarship on Olmec culture and artifacts.

The Olmec exhibition builds upon a unique and expansive history of cooperation between the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and Mexico. FAMSF's relationship with Mexico, catalyzed by an unexpected and large bequest of Teotihuacan wall paintings in the late 1970s, has resulted in a series of collaborative exchange projects, among them the Teotihuacan murals conservation project and exhibition *Teotihuacan: City of the Gods* (1993), *Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya* (2004), and loans to Mexico of American paintings, African art and works by Henry Moore. Most recently, FAMSF loaned fifteen objects from the Oceanic collection to the exhibition *Moana: Cultures of the Pacific Isles* at the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.

Symposium

Saturday, February 19, 2011, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Koret Auditorium

Tickets are \$8/general, \$5/members, available at the de Young admissions desk or online.

A series of speakers explore current advances in Olmec studies. After an introductory lecture outlining the issues of the day, four archaeologists describe exciting new discoveries.

10:00-10:15 a.m.: Introductions and announcements by Kathleen Berrin, Curator-in-Charge: Africa, Oceania and the Americas.

10:15-11:00 a.m.: Sara Ladrón de Guevara, Director, Museum of Anthropology, Xalapa: "Among Jaguars and Serpents: Olmec Art and Iconography."

11:00-11:45 a.m.: Archaeologist Ann Cyphers, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México: "The Real Dirt on San Lorenzo."

12:00-1:30 p.m.: Lunch break

1:30-2:15 p.m.: Archaeologist Christopher Pool, University of Kentucky: "Mounds, Monuments and Misadventures at Tres Zapotes."

2:15-3:00 p.m.: Archaeologist Susan Gillespie, University of Florida: "The Ecstasy and the Agony: La Venta Excavations."

3:00-3:45 p.m.: Archaeologist David Grove, University of Florida: "Forty Years of Archaeology on the Olmec Frontier."

Other Olmec-related Events:

At the Gould Theater, Legion of Honor

Thursday February 17, 2011 – 10:00 a.m.

"Olmec: Colossal Masterworks of Ancient Mexico." Virginia Fields, Senior Curator of Art of the Ancient Americas, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

\$3/members, \$4/general. Museum admission is required for the lectures.

At the Mexican Consulate, 532 Folsom St (Between 1st and 2nd Streets)

Thursday, February 24, 2011 – 6:00 p.m.

"ArtPoint: The Evolution of Mexican Art: From Olmec to Today." Panel discussion and tequila tasting. The evening begins with a cocktail reception, tequila tasting, and Mexican buffet at 6:30 p.m. The discussion starts at 7:30 p.m.

Advance tickets: \$15 ArtPoint members / \$20 non-members. At the door: \$20 ArtPoint members / \$25 non-members. Please note that no one under the age of 21 will be admitted.

At the de Young

Friday, February 25, 2011 – 6:00 p.m.; Free

A family event featuring Chocolate and Other Culinary Gems of the Americas

In Wilsey Court, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Marimba music

In Piazzoni Murals Room, 6:00-8:45 p.m.: Cacao presentations including a demonstration of the process of transforming the cacao bean into a chocolate beverage; an explanation of how to decipher a cacao glyph from the classic to post-classic eras of Maya civilization; and a live painting demonstration recreating important cacao-related art of Mesoamerica.

In the Koret Auditorium, de Young

Saturday, February 26, 2011 – 1:00 p.m.; Free

Docent Lecture: "Olmec: Colossal Masterworks of Ancient Mexico," Marsha Holm.

Friday, March 4, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

Olmec Lecture by David Carrasco, The Neil L. Rudenstine Professor of the Study of Latin America at Harvard and editor-in-chief of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*.

Saturday, April 30, 2011 – 10 a.m.; FEA-Sponsored Event; Free

Lecture by John E. Clark: "Olmec Rituals and Beliefs"



Jade artifacts have provided critical direct and indirect evidence for reconstructing parts of Olmec rituals and beliefs. This presentation surveys the range of Olmec jade artifacts and their functions and meanings, with a focus on jade axes and their non-utilitarian uses. Jade objects were placed in special offerings and burials. Others are depicted on stone monuments or inscribed with special depictions themselves. These objects furnish durable evidence of ancient shamanistic practices, beliefs in animal soul companions, autosacrifice or bloodletting, human sacrifice, and gods and other supernatural creatures. The few items recovered in archaeological context provide special insight into ancient ritual practices and beliefs.

John E. Clark received his Ph. D. in anthropology from the University of Michigan in 1994. He is professor of anthropology at Brigham Young University and was, for several years, director of the New World Archaeological Foundation. The main focus of his research has been the Olmec culture. Besides numerous publications, he co-edited with Mary E. Pye the highly regarded book *Olmec Art and Archaeology in Mesoamerica* (2006).

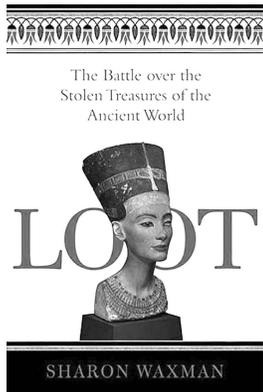
VOLUNTEER TO TABLE FOR FEA AT THE FEBRUARY EVENTS?

We are still looking for FEA members to staff tables at the tribal arts shows in February. All that is required is for you to sit at the FEA table at the entrance to the show, with FEA brochures and information on hand, and tell people about FEA if they ask. For this three-hour task you get FREE ADMISSION to the show and delightful conversation with your fellow table staffers and show attendees. (On Friday and Saturday at Fort Mason, the shifts overlap.)

At Fort Mason, the tabling hours are from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Friday, the 11th; 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday the 12th; and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday the 13th. For the Marin show, the hours are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday the 26th, and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday the 27th. Note these are the overall times, not the shift times, which would last at most three hours. Share your enthusiasm for our wonderful organization!

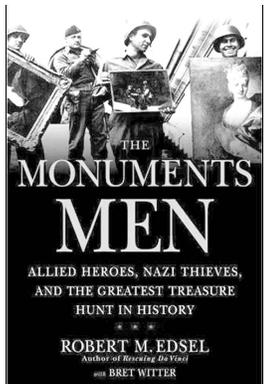
Interesting Reading – Reviewed by Marsden Blois

Loot: The Battle Over the Stolen Treasures of the Ancient World, by Sharon Waxman. Published by Henry Holt and Co., 2008.



Ms. Waxman is a former cultural correspondent for the New York Times. Her book deals with the current controversial topic of the repatriation of ancient cultural objects back to their countries of origin. She focuses on some of the great world museums (the British Museum, the Louvre, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Getty Museum in Los Angeles) and their holdings that came from countries now aggressively trying to retrieve them, namely Greece, Italy, Egypt and Turkey. Her writing is highly readable and entertaining. She describes and discusses many specific items, individuals and institutions, revealing the complexity of the issues. I found the book gave a balanced and thoughtful summary of the various viewpoints. I think you will find this a wonderful read even if you thought you knew the landscape and had made up your mind on the Elgin Marbles. It is a timely offering as evidenced recently in the high profile criminal trial in Italy against Marian True, the former curator of the Getty. The proceedings in this case ended after five years with a non-judgment because the statute of limitations had run out.

The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History, by Robert Edsel. Published by Center Street, 2009.



This is a readable and fascinating account of the little-known effort by the Allies to protect valuable artistic landmarks as the Allied armies headed to Berlin after the D-Day invasion. The book also describes how the Allies traced, recovered and returned to their rightful public and private owners the great art treasures of Western Europe that the Nazis had systematically amassed and transferred to Germany during the war. This was all done by a group of soldiers (most of them museum curators in private life) who numbered only twelve for all of Europe and who had essentially no funds or staff or equipment at their disposal. The suspense heightens as these men track trainloads of great art objects, such as Rembrandt and Vermeer oil paintings, Renaissance altar pieces and Michelangelo sculptures, which ended up stored in deep salt mines in Austria. Interestingly, well before the war the Nazis had started to send agents

into the rest of Europe to survey all public and privately held art for later confiscation. Hitler intended for the best pieces to end up in a huge Hitler Art Museum near his birthplace; Goering had to give Hitler the right of first refusal before he could then add to his own immense collection. Even though after the war every European country signed a treaty that all such items would be returned to their pre-war owners, to this day much has yet to be returned, as institutions and families wrestle over these objects. Just in the last year, and only after protracted litigation, a family in Southern California was able to recover a number of oil paintings by Austria's most famous artist, Gustav Klimt, valued at about \$200 million, from a major Austrian art museum.

Do you have opinions to share? Have you read an ethnic art book or seen an exhibit recently that irked you with its lack of discernment, or inspired you with its beauty and insight? How would you like to write about the experience for an FEA newsletter? We are always interested in your ideas and contributions. Experienced and respectful editing is available if you would like assistance with setting down your thoughts. Please contact the newsletter editor, Carol Paxson, at paxson@polytope.org, or talk to any FEA Board member. We look forward to hearing from you!

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

Please note: Although we have done our best to provide accurate time and date information, please check before you go in order to avoid disappointment.

The San Francisco Tribal and Textile Arts Show

Opening Preview: Thursday, February 10, 2011, 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. (benefits the Departments of Textiles and the Art of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas at the de Young Museum)

Show: February 11-13: Friday & Saturday 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Fort Mason Center, San Francisco

http://www.caskeylees.com/SF_Tribal/Preview.html

Marin Art of the Americas Show

Opening Preview: Friday, February 25, 2011, 6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. (benefits the local charity *Homeward Bound of Marin*).

Show: February 26 & 27, 2011: Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Sunday, February 27, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Marin Civic Center, 10 Avenue of the Flags, San Rafael

<http://www.marinshow.com/>

The San Francisco Arts of Pacific Asia Show

Opening Preview: Thursday, February 3, 2011, 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. (benefits the Education Programs of the Asian Art Museum Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture)

Show: February 4, 5, & 6, 2011: Friday & Saturday, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Fort Mason Center, San Francisco

http://www.caskeylees.com/SF_Asia/SF_Asia.html

At the de Young Museum

Questions of Provenance: A Mini-Symposium

February 10, 2011, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Koret Auditorium; \$10 for the general public, \$5 for FAMSF members

This event includes three talks:

“The Law and Ethics of Collecting the Arts of Africa and the South Pacific: The Importance of Provenance”—Barbara Hoffman, arts lawyer, New York

“Art Laws and Social Policy: A Swinging Pendulum”—Kate Fitz Gibbon, cultural heritage lawyer

“Provenance: The People Behind the Lists, Ledgers, and Labels”—Hermione Waterfield, freelance researcher

The Worldwide History of Dress

February 12, 2011, 10 a.m., Koret Auditorium; free to Textile Arts Council members, \$5 for museum members and students with ID, \$10 for non-members

The Textile Arts Council presents Dr. Patricia Rieff Anawalt, Director of the Center for the Study of Regional Dress at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History. Dr. Anawalt will draw from her most recent book surveying dress from Neolithic plant-fiber skirts, ancient Egyptian linen shifts, and classical togas, through Mongolian shamanic robes, Japanese kimonos, and Indian saris, and on to 19th-century Tyrolean dirndls, contemporary African ceremonial attire, and today's Middle Eastern burqas. She will show images of local people in local clothing as well as historical paintings, wood-block prints and other artworks, and monumental carvings, friezes, murals, mosaics, and pottery depicting traditional clothing.

Bedouin Weaving of Saudi Arabia and Its Neighbors

March 19, 2011, 10 a.m., Koret Auditorium; free to Textile Arts Council members, \$5 for museum members and students with ID, \$10 for non-members.

Joy Totah Hilden will give an illustrated lecture on Bedouin weaving, how it is used and how it is evolving with the changes in Saudi society. She will share photos of vivid weavings of many types and origins, as well as of the people who wove and used them, and share examples of these extraordinary textiles.

At Other Venues:

Cantor Arts Center, Stanford

Vodoun/Vodounon: Portraits of Initiates

Closes March 20, 2011

This photo exhibition provides a glimpse into the practice of modern-day vodou in the republic of Benin. It features 25 diptychs by the Belgian photographer Jean-Dominique Burton. A documentary video, *VOODOO, the Origins*, plays alongside the artworks. A lecture entitled “Gods Without Green Cards” will be delivered by Donald Cosentino, Ph.D., on Wednesday, March 2, 2011, at 5 p.m.

Oakland Marriott City Center, 10th & Broadway, Oakland

Bead Society of Northern California: Bead Bazaar 2011

Saturday, March 5, 2011

<http://www.beadsocietyofnorcal.org/bazaar.html>

And Further Afield:

Fowler Museum at UCLA

Central Nigeria Unmasked: Arts of the Benue River Valley

February 13, 2011 – July 24, 2011

The Benue River Valley is the source of some of the most abstract, dramatic, and inventive sculpture in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet compared to the majority populations living in northern and southern Nigeria, the many and diverse groups flanking the 650-mile-long Benue River—and their fascinating arts—are far less known and studied. This exhibit will travel to the Stanford Cantor Arts Center in 2012.

If you have events you would like to have included in the FEA Newsletter, please send information to the newsletter editor, Carol Paxson, paxson@polytope.org, or to Friends of Ethnic Art, P.O. Box 192430, San Francisco, CA 94119-2430. We will include the information as space allows.

Admission to FEA Events: Unless otherwise noted, lectures and museum admission are free of charge. Bring a friend!

Membership: FEA welcomes those who are interested in ethnic art to join us. In recognition of continuing difficult economic times, you may join in the membership year September 2010 through August 2011 *at no expense*. Simply send your name, address, phone, and email to our President and Membership Chair, Jo Floyd, jo.floyd@gmail.com, or mail the information to the address above. We use phone and email only as an efficient way to contact you personally about FEA events.

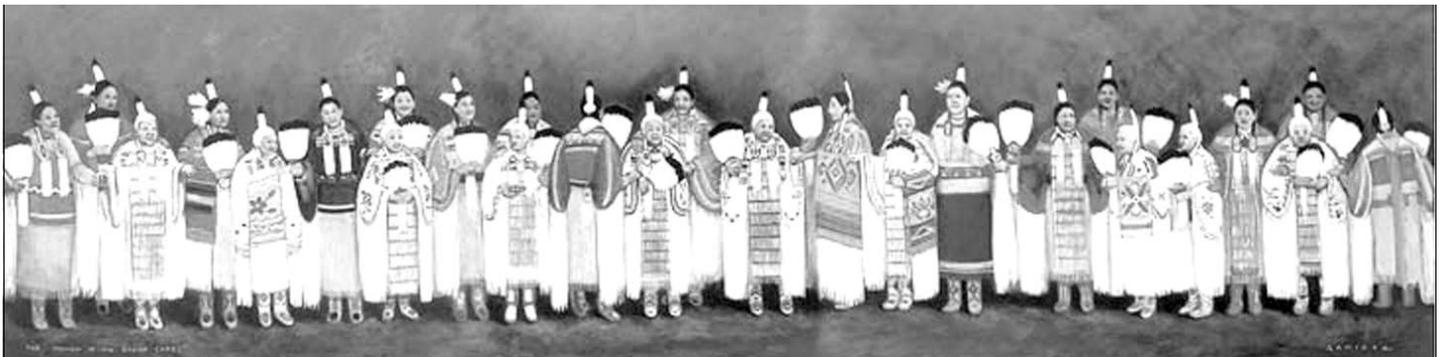
Address Change? Please let us know by sending a postcard to the FEA address (above) or an email to Jo Floyd at jo.floyd@gmail.com.

Friends of Ethnic Art, founded in 1974, provides a focal point in the Bay Area for those interested in the traditional arts of Africa, Oceania, Central Asia and the Americas. FEA is a non-profit, educational, open-membership organization that offers illustrated lectures by noted speakers, social events and other programs to expand awareness of human expression in these traditional native arts. FEA has cooperative relationships with museums, universities and galleries in Northern California, as well as with noted academics and collectors worldwide. Our membership includes scholars, museum professionals, artists, dealers, private collectors and other enthusiasts drawn to this field. FEA is dedicated to the continued advancement of education about and appreciation of the traditional arts of Africa, Oceania, Central Asia and the Americas.

MEMBER BENEFITS:

- A full annual calendar of illustrated scholarly lectures
- Insider views of museum exhibits and curator-led tours
- Visits and field trips to private collections, museums and galleries in the Bay Area and beyond
- Annual Ethnic Art Auction and Party
- Member newsletter with reviews of our lectures, highlights of upcoming events, news of special programs and ethnic art related activities
- The opportunity to make new friends with similar interests at informal FEA social events, in FEA social networks, by volunteering at FEA activities, and by working with the FEA Board of Directors

All FEA membership dues and income support the full range of FEA educational, social, and special interest activities and grants.



"Women of the Great Lakes" by Daniel B. Ramirez



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