



Accession #: 2011.5.37

Artist: Jane Osti

Title: *Woodland Spirits*

Date: 1998

Nationality: Native American (Cherokee)

Medium: Ceramic/Pottery

Size: 13.5" high; 5.5" diameter (at the mouth)

Donor: Sonia and Stanley Cohen

Additional works by artist in collection? Yes



Artist's Biography

After attending Oaks Mission High School in Oklahoma, Jane Osti earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Science in Education from Northeastern State University, also in Oklahoma. Osti minored in Indian Studies and she had always been interested in working with clay. Meeting Anna Mitchell during her years in college, however, served as her true inspiration for becoming involved with Native Cherokee pottery. A master potter and Cherokee National Treasure, Mitchell was the first to create traditional Cherokee pottery in Oklahoma since the Native American removal, also referred to as the *Trail of Tears* of the early 1800s. Osti herself won the esteemed title of Cherokee National Treasure in 2005. Through their work as both creators and teachers of native Cherokee pottery, Osti and Mitchell hope to preserve and promote Cherokee culture. Currently, Osti creates and teaches Cherokee pottery in her studio and gallery in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, located near the Cherokee Tribal Complex. Osti hopes that through teaching others methods for creating Cherokee pottery they will learn about and appreciate Native Cherokee life and culture of the past as well as promote the longevity of contemporary Native Cherokee art.

Artist's Statement

"My passion and connection to clay is from the heart. I believe it is passed on to me through ancestral memory. I'm grateful to wake up every day and touch a part of this beautiful earth that allows me to re-create forms from the past, as well as create them in new ways." - *Tahlequah Daily Press*, April 5, 2011

Contextual Information

In 2005, Jane Osti was awarded the Cherokee National Treasure Award. Founded in 1988, this award recognizes exceptional Cherokee citizens for their knowledge and preservation of Cherokee culture. It was created to highlight those members who have dedicated their lives to the revival and protection of various Cherokee practices that might otherwise be lost to future generations. The Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, with a National Treasure advisory committee, selects the winner. Along with Anna Mitchell, Osti is one of only two potters to have received this award. Most recently, in 2011, Osti became a member of the advisory committee.

Related Terminology

The *Trail of Tears* was the result of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which President Andrew Jackson enacted. Several native tribes, including the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee-Creek, and Seminole were forcibly relocated from their homelands to Indian Territory in what is now eastern Oklahoma. Thousands of Native Americans died due to exposure, disease and starvation along the trail.

Media Description

The **coil process** allows for a strong base in order to create larger ceramics. After wrapping rope-like pieces of clay around a flattened bottom, thumbs blend the coils. More primitive traditional tools are also used. The artist cleans and shapes the inside walls with smooth oval rocks while a thin and flexible paddle, drawn upward, thins the exterior without scraping the surface.

References

- Fite, Renee. (5 April 2011). "Osti's Pottery Deeply Rooted in Culture." *Tahlequahdailypress.com*.
- Noland, Travis. (12 July 2011). "Cherokee Nation seeks National Treasures Nominations." *nativetimes.com*.

“Cherokee Stamps”

Activity Lesson Plan: K-5



Jane Osti Paddle Stamping (2006)

Session Activity: Many Native American groups, including the Cherokee, often rely on symbols to represent emotions, ideas, or stories. These symbols can be seen throughout their visual forms, including pottery, jewelry, and paintings. In Jane Osti’s *Woodland Spirits*, the circular spiral design could represent longevity and the continuation of life, an aspect of Cherokee ideology to which the artist feels connected. Students will be able to connect to their own culture as well as that of the Cherokee through creating personal symbols for “Cherokee stamps.” Many traditional Cherokee artists create stamps in order to decorate their ceramics with repeating and symmetrical patterns. Students will create their own stamps with their own symbols. Each symbol should represent an emotion, idea, or story to which the student feels connected.

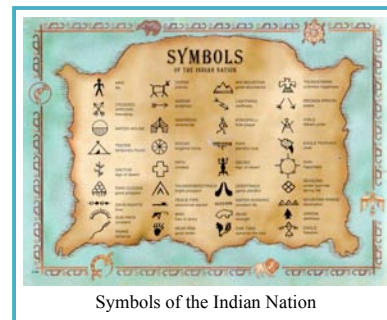
Objectives:

1. Students will create their own symbols that represent personal emotions or stories.
2. Students will create stamps in order to better understand Cherokee culture.

Activity Procedure:

1. Explore various Native American and Cherokee objects in order to become familiar with a selection of Native American and Cherokee symbols.
2. Using the Native American images as a guide, students will create various corresponding symbols and meanings on paper. Each student will draft several symbols and associated meanings and choose his/her favorite.
3. Once finalized, students will draw or trace their symbols onto the rubber. Caution students, the image will become reversed once stamped onto a surface.
4. Students will carefully carve their images and stamp their symbols onto paper.
5. Discuss as a class the meanings of these symbols and the reasons students created them. How do these symbols reflect an aspect of American culture as Osti’s spirals reflect an aspect of Cherokee culture?

Materials: rubber or erasers, carving tools, pencils, paper, ink.



Sun: happiness



Seasons: Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer



Bear Paw: good omen

For more information on Cherokee symbols and meanings: <http://www.mballev.com/symbols-and-meanings.html>. On creating stamps: <http://www.letterboxing.org/kids/kidstamp.htm>

Sunshine State Standards K-5

Big Idea: Organizational Structure

Enduring Understanding 2: The structural rules and conventions of an art form serve as both a foundation and departure point for creativity.

Benchmark Code VA.1.O.2.1: Create imagery and symbols to express thoughts and feelings.

Sunshine State Standards 6-12

Big Idea: Historical and Global Connections

Enduring Understanding 1: Through study in the arts, we learn about and honor others and the world in which they live.

Benchmark Code VA.912.H.1.4: Apply background knowledge and personal interpretation to discuss cross-cultural connections among various artworks and the individuals, groups, cultures, events, and/or traditions they reflect.

“Cherokee National Treasure”

Activity Lesson Plan: 6-12

Session Activity: Jane Osti was awarded the title of Cherokee National Treasure in 2005. This award is given to those Cherokee Nation members who promote and preserve Cherokee culture throughout their lives. In this activity, students will be able to choose a National Treasure and research the ways in which that person promotes and preserves Cherokee culture. Students can decide to focus on an aspect of Cherokee culture that the National Treasure promotes, the media in which the national treasure works, or the way traditional Cherokee culture is translated into a modern society, amongst other things. After researching, students will present their findings to their peers in 10-15 minute presentations with images.

Objectives: 1. Students will gain research and presentation skills. 2. Students will be able to choose themes in which they are personally interested in order to gain knowledge and awareness of another culture, society, or artistic medium. 3. Students will learn of Cherokee culture and the way that it is perpetuated in contemporary society.

Activity Procedure:

1. From the list of Cherokee National Treasures, students will choose persons to research. They will use various tools from the Internet to library texts to interviews. *For a list of Cherokee National Treasure awardees, refer to http://cherokeeculture.org/home/national_treasures.*
2. Each student can focus on a theme of his/her own choice, ranging from artistic medium, contemporary reception, or a specific aspect of Cherokee society that is tied to the student’s National Treasure.
3. Students will formulate brief, about 10-15 minute presentations on their topics. They can present in any way they wish, but images are required. Formats can include: demonstrations of media or technique used by the National Treasure; a powerpoint presentation with images of artworks based on the technique of the National Treasure, with commentary; lecture with images of Cherokee culture that relates to the ideology of the National Treasure; informational lecture discussing the ways in which the chosen National Treasure promotes and preserves an aspect of Cherokee culture, such as language or pottery; Skype interview with the National Treasure.

References

“Cherokee Arts & Humanities Council,” <http://cherokeeculture.org/home>.
“Cultural Tidbits,” http://www.chalagi.com/web%20pages/cultural_tidbits.htm.
Power, Susan C. *Art of the Cherokee: Prehistory to the Present*. Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2007.