



TITLE: *Woodweave Bowl*  
ARTIST: Jacquie Stevens/b. 1949  
DATE: 1999  
SIZE: 19 inch diameter  
MEDIUM: ceramic and woodweave  
ACCESSION # : 2009.8  
Additional works in the collection by the artist?  
Yes \_\_\_ No X



#### ARTIST'S STATEMENT

"[E]ach pot has its own life, personality, character, and form – and that is what set me free. Pottery is like people, every one is different and not perfect. I thought about this and decided it was an important idea. So I developed a new way, an unconventional way, of looking at form."

#### ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Jacquie Stevens was born in 1949 to the Winnebago tribe in Nevada and raised by her grandparents. She later attended the Institute of American Indian Art in New Mexico. While there she studied under Otellie Loloma, a Hopi potter. Stevens is grateful for her mentor's teachings. Loloma was known as one of the greatest teachers in the history of Native arts education. Stevens believes that everything she needs to "share with the world is conveyed through the language of [her] pots." She places great importance on the representation of her heritage in her pottery.

#### DONOR

Sonia and Stanley Cohen of Tallahassee donated the *Woodweave Bowl* when they bequeathed a sizable portion of their art collection to the Museum of Fine Arts at Florida State University. Included in this donation were sculptural works by Joe Ben, Jr., Henry Mitchell, Donald Sultan, Carlos Alfonzo, Walt Wooten, and Purvis Young. The Museum's collection now numbers approximately 5,000 pieces.

#### CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Jacquie Stevens uses only traditional Native Southwest American techniques. This process includes finding and digging natural clay and mica, coiling her work, and pit-firing the pottery with cow dung and "cedar" chips. Her work is innovative because she combines her pottery with other traditional materials such as woodweave, leather, beading, and stones. She enjoys experimenting with the forms and materials she uses, as well as with the firing techniques, allowing "fire clouds" to create a variety of shadows on her pottery.

#### MEDIA DESCRIPTION

The *Woodweave Bowl* is not part of a series but is a perfect example of the style in which Jacquie Stevens works with experimental elements. It exemplifies the interplay between utilitarian and aesthetic objectives, as well as Stevens' tendency to combine traditional vessel making materials, in this case basket weaving and pottery. This interplay between utilitarian and aesthetic objectives is a current art historical issue with which both artists and art historians are grappling. The line between what is art and what is craft is increasingly blurred, making it harder to distinguish between what is a strictly utilitarian item and what is artwork. In correlation with the blurring between art and craft, art historians must face issues of categorization. Art historians must now find a way to categorize these new art objects which blend art and craft.

#### REFERENCES

- Trimble, Stephen. *Talking with the Clay: The Art of Pueblo Pottery in the 21st Century*, Sante Fe, NM: School of American Research, 1987.
- Harris-Koizumi, Nozomi, "Stevens Pot," Art 284: Design in Living Things, <http://blogs.vassar.edu/designinlivingthings/stevens-pot/>.
- Peterson, Susan, "Pottery by American Indian Women, The Legacy of Generations: The Avant-Garde," The National Museum of Women in the Arts, <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/waaw/peterson/Stevens.html>, 1997.
- Schaaf, Gregory, "Art from Earth: Four Master Potters," Native Peoples Magazine, <http://www.nativepeoples.com/article/articles/113/1/Art-from-Earth-Four-Master-Potters/Page1.html>, 1969.

#### RELATED TERMINOLOGY

- Coil Method** – A method of pottery construction in which thin strips of clay are stacked to build the form of the pot.
- Cedar Chips** – In terms of Native American pottery, this term usually refers to wood chips created from Juniper or Mesquite, which are both harder woods than cedar.
- Micaceous Pottery** – Pottery containing flakes of mica. This creates a glittering effect on the pottery.

Completed: Spring 2011, Sarah Gonzalez



A typical utilitarian pot vs.



Bonnie Belt, *Wave Vase*, 5" x 4," underglazed and smoke-fired ceramic.

### DISPLAYING HERITAGE THROUGH ART, Art Lesson Plan: K - 5

**Session Activity:** Jacquie Stevens is a contemporary artist who explores and merges the differences between the realms of craft and art. While pottery has traditionally been viewed as craft, it is clear that Stevens regards her work as art objects to be observed and not used. Stevens places a strong emphasis on expressing her heritage through her work. This activity will be an opportunity for students to discuss the differences between craft and art, as well as examine the way an artist can express him/herself through artwork.

#### Objectives:

1. The students will discuss Stevens' work in relationship to the differences between craft and art.
2. The students will discuss the concept of heritage and the way a person's heritage and life can be shown in artwork.
3. The students will create small clay cups or pots, as art, in which they will express their heritage.

**Materials:** clay, paint

Although this is a utilitarian object, the potter's Spanish heritage is still shown through use of color and pattern.



General contemporary Spanish pottery sold on the internet based on traditional Spanish patterns.

#### Terms:

**Craft** – A trade or occupation requiring special skill, especially manual skill (books, pottery, metal tools, utilitarian items).

**Visual Art** – A work considered to have been created primarily for aesthetic purposes and judged for its visual qualities and meaning (painting, sculpture, drawing, architecture).

**Heritage** – Something that comes or belongs to a person by reason of birth as well as familial and cultural background.

#### Activity Procedure:

Have the students discuss the differences between a craft or utilitarian item and an art object by showing them a number of utilitarian items such as kitchen ware, flower pots, etc, and art objects by artists such as Bonnie Belt, Carly Waito, Eva Hild and Alissa Coe.

Have the students discuss heritage and the way a person's heritage or other aspects of his/her life can be shown in artwork. How does Jacquie Stevens show her heritage through both the aesthetics of her pottery and her pottery creation methods? Does she use certain materials, colors, or forms to reveal her heritage? What are some other ways to show heritage?

Have the students discuss different methods of showing their heritage if they were to create their own pottery. What shapes, colors, images and materials would they use to convey the idea of their heritage to other people? For example, if the student has a Caribbean heritage, he/she may want to use bright sunny colors associated with the Junkanoo Festival on New Year's Day in the Bahamas.

Ask students to think about these concepts and then create pieces of coil pottery that are to be seen as art objects that express something about themselves. Have students base their designs on research about their various backgrounds.

Allow students to present their pottery to the class and have them explain why their works are art pieces. Have them explain their expressions about themselves and their heritage through the works of art.

#### Sunshine State Standards: K-5

Visual Arts: Creation and Communication

Standard 1: The student creates and communicates a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas using knowledge of structures and functions of visual arts.

Visual Arts: Cultural and Historical Connections

Standard 1: The student understands the visual arts in relation to history and culture.

Visual Arts: Aesthetic and Critical Analysis

Standard 1: The student assesses, evaluates, and responds to the characteristics of works of art.

#### Sunshine State Standards: 9-12

Cultural and Historical Connections

Standard 1: The student understands the visual arts in relation to history and culture.

Aesthetic and Critical Analysis

Standard 1: The student assesses, evaluates, and responds to the characteristics of works of art.

Visual Arts: Applications to Life

Standard 1: The student makes connections between the visual arts, other disciplines, and the real world.



Bonnie Belt, *Wave Vase*, 5" x 4," underglazed and smoke-fired ceramic.

### ART VERSUS CRAFT, Art Lesson Plan: 9 - 12

**Introduction:** There are a growing number of artists, like Jacquie Stevens, who choose to elevate typically regarded craft items into the sphere of fine art. Some of these artists include book artists such as Su Blackwell and Brian Dettmer, as well as a number of ceramic artists such as Bonnie Belt, Carly Waito, Eva Hild and Alissa Coe. Discuss with the students the differences between art and craft and the importance of representing one's heritage within a work of art.

**Objectives:** The students will explore Stevens' work as well as that of other artists working with media typically regarded as craft.

#### Discussion:

Students will discuss Stevens' work and the way it relates to the concepts of art vs. craft and heritage. They will look at the way Stevens works with media typically used for craft items to create art objects.

Students will compare and contrast the artwork of Jacquie Stevens with that of another artist (Su Blackwell, Brian Dettmer, Bonnie Belt, Carly Waito, Eva Hild, Alissa Coe, or any other artist the teacher or students wish to discuss which fall into the parameters of art vs. craft, or rather the blurring of the difference between the two). For this discussion, students can compare and contrast the media used, the color, pattern, technique, and usability of the objects, as well as any other topic related to the art vs. craft distinction.

**Activity:** Each student will research and write an essay on one of the listed topics.

1. The current issue of art versus craft.
2. Other artists who elevate craft techniques to create art.
3. Other Native American artists, inclusive of a comparison and contrast of their work with Jacquie Stevens' work.



Su Blackwell, *Birds of the Open Forest, Blue*, artist book, 2006.