



Touring Art of the Southwest

Preston Duwyenie
(born 1951)
Hopi (American)

Palhikmana (Water Drinking Maiden)
Ca. 2016
Micaceous clay, silver

This object sheet is meant to provide you with information about the specific artwork and to help in developing your tour of the exhibition. This information is focused on how the artwork relates to the specific themes of the exhibition. These activities are intended to help you facilitate conversation with visitors as you explore the exhibition.

Pronunciation Guide:

Preston Duwyenie: press-tin dew-wee-nee

Palhikmana: pole-eek-ma-na

Micaceous: my-kay-she-us

Blending Contemporary and Traditional

Inform: Duwyenie is a contemporary sculptor. In the 20th century, indigenous pottery in the Southwest transformed from a utilitarian product into a sculptural form for the art market. Duwyenie showcases his contemporary sculptural aesthetic in the choices he makes about materials, form, and surface texture.

Do: Look closely at the top of the sculpture to notice what choices the artist has made regarding surface texture and the form of the opening. Ask people to share what they notice (accept all answers- there is no meaning; these choices point to him being a contemporary artist, dealing with sculpture in new ways).

Inform: Duwyenie uses the traditional medium of micaceous clay. Micaceous slip is applied as a surface treatment to the sculpture. Three silver ingots (pieces of metal cast into a shape), cast using a mold of cuttlefish bones, are inlaid into the body of the sculpture.

Inform: Duwyenie uses traditional symbolism in the form of Palhikmana (translated as *Water Drinking Maiden*, a Hopi spirit being) Do: point out the silver figure on the pot.

Inform: Duwyenie also continues to engage with tradition by using abstraction in his work. He simplifies the figure of Palhikmana into an abstract form. The technique of abstraction is a traditional artistic practice.

Inform: The artist was also inspired by the birth of his daughter. As a father, he hopes that his daughter will grow to be a good woman. The sacredness of women is seen in Palhikmana, a female spirit associated with

fertility, rain, butterflies—all things vital to life. The multilayered and abstracted symbolism speak to the modernity of the piece.

Symbolism of the image

Inform: The three silver inlaid pieces (called ingots) form the head, torso, and legs of an abstraction of Palhikmana, a female spirit associated with fertility, rain, and butterflies. Do: point out the silver figure on the pot.

Inform: Palhikmana's iconography includes an arcing headdress (referencing the rainbow that typically adorns her headdress), while the stepped pyramidal forms (illustrated at right) on the headdress, at the bottom of the lowest ingot, and near the lip of the vessel represent clouds, symbolizing the continued prayers for rain and moisture. Do: point to these on the pot.



Sense of Place

Do: Look closely at the texture of the silver inlay.

Ask: What does it look like? (Some possible answers include: waves, ripples, sand dunes)

Inform: The artist calls this effect "shifting sands" as those repeated lines reference the rippling of sand in the desert. This allusion to nature brings to mind a sense of the Southwest landscape.

Inform: The artist achieves this texture by casting the silver in a mold of cuttlefish bones.

About the Artist:

Preston Duwylene (born 1951) Hopi, Reed Clan. Preston started around 1979 making carvings, sculpture, paintings, graphics, pottery, textiles and jewelry; his hallmark is a silhouette of a mother carrying her baby on her back. Preston lives between his Hopi village in Hotevilla, Third Mesa, AZ and his wife's home in Espanola, NM.

The artist says about his work: " I feel the need to challenge the established world of art and ultimately to make unique contributions. Above all, I want to encourage cultural innovation, offering alternatives in artistic expression through experimentation in various techniques and mediums."

(From <https://www.adobegallery.com/gallery/28131>)

Related Pieces: Other examples of black on black pottery in the Mid 20th Century Gallery (Duff Gallery)



Margaret Tafoya
(1904-2001)
K'apovi
(American)
Bowl
Ca. 1935
Clay



Maria Martinez
(1887-1980)
Po'woh Geh Owingeh
(American)
Plate
Ca. 1940
Clay