

Navajo Sand Paintings



Navajo Indians

- Largest tribe of North American Indians
- Long ago they lived in Northwestern Canada and Alaska
- Over 1,000 years ago they traveled south and reached the southwestern United States
- Reservation has over 140,000 people with 16 million acres



Navajo and Their Art

- Traditionally, the Navajo were shepherds
- They moved the sheep from place to place depending on where the grass was best
- But they created many different kinds of art
 - Baskets
 - Pottery
 - Blankets
 - Sand painting



Sand Painting

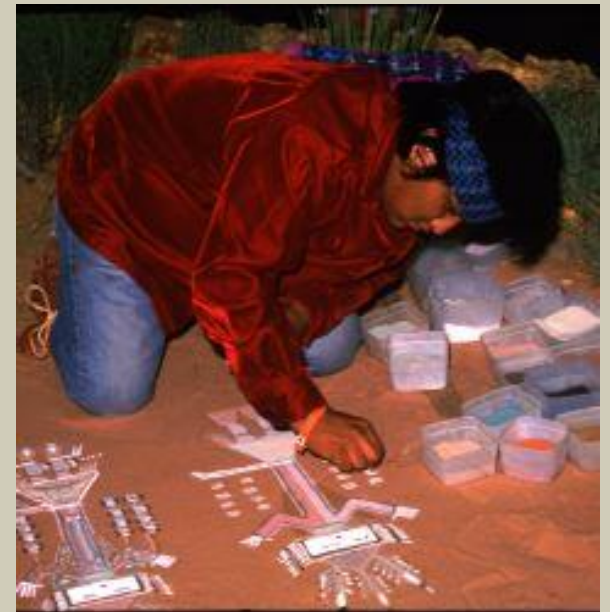
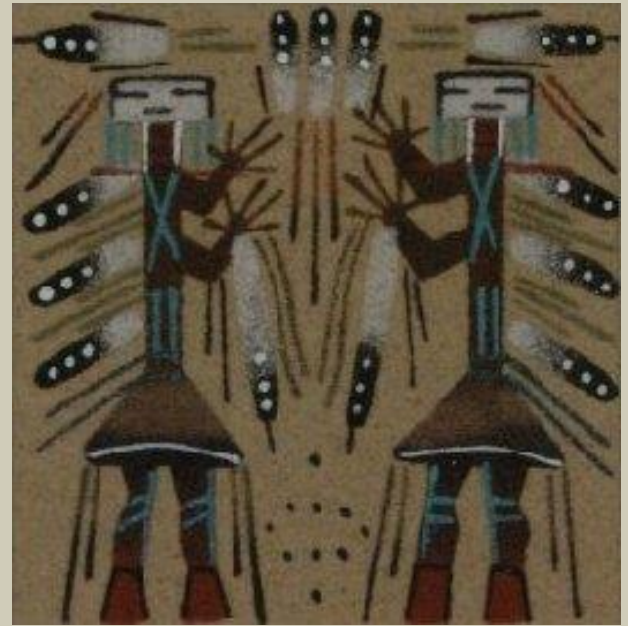
- Also called dry painting
 - Crushed rocks and dried crushed plants
- Traditional colors were red, white, blue and black.
- There are 600 to 1000 different traditional designs for sand paintings
- More than 30 different sand paintings may be associated with one ceremony.





- Began as a spiritual healing system rather than art for arts sake
- Called "places where the gods come and go"
- Colored sand would be put on the floor of their house. It would stay up for a day then be destroyed.
- If done incorrectly...bad things might happen such as getting sick or crops not growing

- Paintings are for healing purposes only. Many of them contain images of the Holy People.
- While creating the painting, the medicine man will chant, asking the Holy People to come into the painting and help heal the patient.
- They view the paintings as spiritual, living beings to be treated with great respect.



Sand Paintings as Permanent Art



- 1960 sand painting became a more permanent form of art
- The Navajo began putting designs on pieces of wood that could be hung up.
- They also put the designs on pottery and wove them into blankets

Art Project

- We will make our own Navajo sand paintings
- Cut out image of the bird. Glue on paper plate.
- When you are called up, put glue on the places you want color and then sprinkle colored sand on top. Shake off the excess.
- When your glue has dried, raise your hand and I will come around to spray it with hairspray to set.

