

Whistles from behind the screen announce the arrival of the Hamatsa (danced by an initiate), who enters through the central hole in the screen in a flesh-craving frenzy. Wearing hemlock, a symbol of the spirit world, he crouches and dances wildly with outstretched arms as attendants try to control him. He disappears but returns again, now wearing red cedar and dancing upright. Finally tamed, a full member of society, he even dances with the women. Then the masked bird-dancers appear—first Raven-of-the-North-End-of-the-World, then Crooked-Beak-of-the-End-of-the-World, and finally the untranslatable Huxshukw, who cracks open skulls with his beak and eats the brains of his victims. Snapping their beaks, these masters of illusion enter the room backward, their masks pointed up as though the birds are looking skyward. They move slowly counterclockwise around the floor. At each change in the music they crouch, snap their beaks, and let out their wild cries of “Hap! Hap! Hap!” Essential to the ritual dances are the huge wooden masks. Among the finest are those by Willie Seaweed (1873–1967), a Kwakwaka’wakw chief, whose brilliant colors and exuberantly decorative carving style determined the direction of twentieth-century Kwakwaka’wakw sculpture (FIG. 27–20).

27–20 ATTRIBUTED TO WILLIE SEAWEED KWAKWAKA’WAKW BIRD MASK



Alert Bay, Vancouver Island, Canada. Prior to 1951. Cedar wood, cedar bark, feathers, and fiber, 10 × 72 × 15# (25.4 × 183 × 38.1 cm). Collection of the Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, Canada. (A6120). The name “Seaweed” is an anglicization of the Kwakwaka’wakw name *Siwid*, meaning “Paddling Canoe,” “Recipient of Paddling,” or “Paddled To”—referring to a great chief to whose potlatches guests paddled from afar. Willie Seaweed was not only the chief of his clan, but a great orator, singer, and tribal historian who kept the tradition of the potlatch alive during years of government repression.

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Credit: Courtesy of the UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, Canada

The Canadian government, abetted by missionaries, outlawed the Winter Ceremony and potlatches in 1885, claiming the event was injurious to health, encouraged prostitution, endangered children's education, damaged the economy, and was cannibalistic. But the Kwakwaka'wakw refused to give up their "oldest and best" festival—one that spoke powerfully to them in many ways, establishing social rank and playing an important role in arranging marriages. By 1936, the government and the missionaries, who called the Kwakwaka'wakw "incorrigible," gave up. But not until 1951 could the Kwakwaka'wakw people gather openly for winter ceremonies, including the initiation rites of the Hamatsa society.

## The Southwest

The Native American peoples of the southwestern United States include, among others, the modern Puebloans (sedentary village-dwelling groups) and the Navajo. The Puebloans (living, for example, in Hopi, Acoma, Zuni, and a series of pueblos along the Rio Grande in New Mexico) are heirs of the Ancestral Puebloans (former Anasazi), Hohokam, and Mogollan cultures (see Chapter 13). The Ancestral Puebloans built apartmentlike villages and cliff dwellings whose ruins are found throughout the Four Corners region of New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and Utah. The Navajo, who arrived in the region sometime between 1100 and 1500 CE, developed a semisedentary way of life based on agriculture and (after the introduction of sheep by the Spaniards) shepherding. Being among the very few Native American tribal groups whose reservations are located on their actual ancestral homelands, both groups have succeeded in maintaining the continuity of their traditions despite Euro-American pressure. Today, their arts reflect the adaptation of traditional forms to new technologies, new media, and the dominant American culture that surrounds them.

## The Pueblos

Some Pueblos, like those of their ancient ancestors, consist of multi-storied dwellings made of adobe. One of these, TAOS PUEBLO (FIG. 27-21), is located in north-central New Mexico. Continually occupied and modified for over 500 years, the up-to-five-story house blocks of Taos Pueblo provide flexible, communal dwellings. Ladders provide access to the upper stories and to insulated inner rooms entered through holes in the ceiling. Two large house blocks are arrayed around a central plaza that opens toward the neighboring mountains, rising in a stepped fashion to provide a series of roof terraces that can serve as viewing platforms. The plazas and roof terraces are centers of communal life and ceremony, as can be seen in Pablita Velarde's painting of the winter solstice celebrations (SEE FIG. 27-23).



Taos, New Mexico. Acetate negative, 1947. © 1979 Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas. Bequest of the artist (P1979.208.698).

Laura Gilpin (1891–1979), an American photographer of the landscape, architecture, and people of the American Southwest, began her series on the Pueblos and Navajos in the 1930s. She published her work in four volumes of photographs between 1941 and 1968.

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Credit: © 1979 Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, P1979.208.698.

## Ceramics

Traditionally, pottery was women's art among Pueblo peoples. Wares were made by coiling and other hand-building techniques and then fired at low temperature in wood fires. The best-known twentieth-century Pueblo potter was Maria Montoya Martinez (1887–1980) of San Ildefonso Pueblo in New Mexico. Inspired by prehistoric pottery that was unearthed at nearby archaeological excavations and by the then-fashionable Art Deco style, she and her husband, Julian Martinez (1885–1943), developed a distinctive blackware ceramic style notable for its elegant forms and subtle textures (FIG. 27–22). Maria Martinez made pots covered with a slip that was then burnished. Using additional slip, Julian Martinez painted the pots with designs that interpreted traditional Pueblo and Ancestral Puebloan imagery. After firing, the burnished ground became a lustrous black and the slip painting retained a matte surface. By the 1930s, production of blackware in San Ildefonso had become a communal enterprise. Family members and friends all worked making pots, and Maria Martinez signed all the pieces so that, in typical Pueblo communal solidarity, everyone profited from her fame within the art market.



New Mexico, c. 1942. Ceramic, height  
18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" (47.6 cm)  
, diameter  
22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" (57.1 cm)

. Museum of Indian Arts and Culture/Laboratory of Anthropology, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe. Gift of Henry Dendahl.

Credit: Museum of Indian Arts and Culture/Laboratory of Anthropology, Santa Fe.

## The Santa Fe Indian School

In the 1930s, Anglo-American art teachers and dealers worked with Native Americans of the Southwest to create a distinctive, stereotypical "Indian" style in several media—including jewelry, pottery, weaving, and painting—to appeal to tourists and collectors. A leader in this effort was Dorothy Dunn (1903–1991), who opened an art studio known as