

Mimbres:

Black On White



Iconography and Symbolism

Mimbres

Culture: Mogollon

Dates: ca. AD 1000-1150

Location: Mimbres Valley, NM

Material: Ceramic

Classic Mimbres Black-on-white pottery is painted in geometric or figural decorative styles. The latter style often features whimsical or strange composite creatures. The Mimbres painting tradition is recognized as one of the high points of Native American art.

Resource:

Submitted by: a Getty TeacherArtExchange list member: <http://www.incredibleart.org/Files/mimbres.htm>

MIMBRES POTTERY: PERIODS AND STYLES



200 A.D.	Pottery production begins in the Mimbres region
Early Pithouse Period 200 - 550 A.D.	Rough, unpainted greyware utilizing coiled construction techniques, local clays and volcanic temper. Pot shapes often mimic basketry designs.
Late Pithouse Period 550 - 1000 A.D.	Pottery painting traditions develop in Mimbres Valley and Mogollon regions, including Mogollon Red-on-Brown & Three Circle Red-on-White.
Style I 750 - 900 A.D.	Non-figurative, repeating patterns covering entire inner surface of bowls.
Mimbres Boldface Black-on-White (Mangas) 750 - 1000 A.D.	Radial designs are sometimes split into four or more divisions. First stylized animal motifs appear. Composition emphasizes negative space.
Style II 900 - 1000 A.D.	Style I and Mangas traditions continue, with greater precision and increased figure-ground ambiguity. Fine lines and hatch marks at bowl rims.
Style II 900 - 1000 A.D.	Region population peaks at 5000. Bowl designs feature finely detailed drawings of human or animal figures in a white center surrounded by banding and/or geometric patterning. Some polychrome pottery produced.

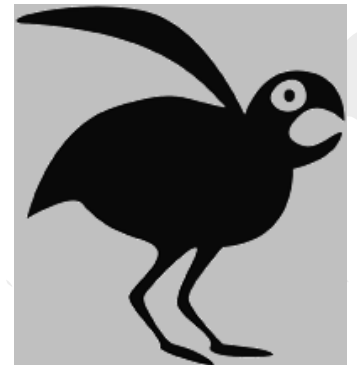
The American Indian culture known as the Mogollon lived in the southwest from approximately AD 150 until sometime between AD 1400 and AD 1450. The name Mogollon comes from the Mogollon Mountains, which were named after Don Juan Ignacio Flores Mogollón, Spanish Governor of New Mexico from 1712-1715.

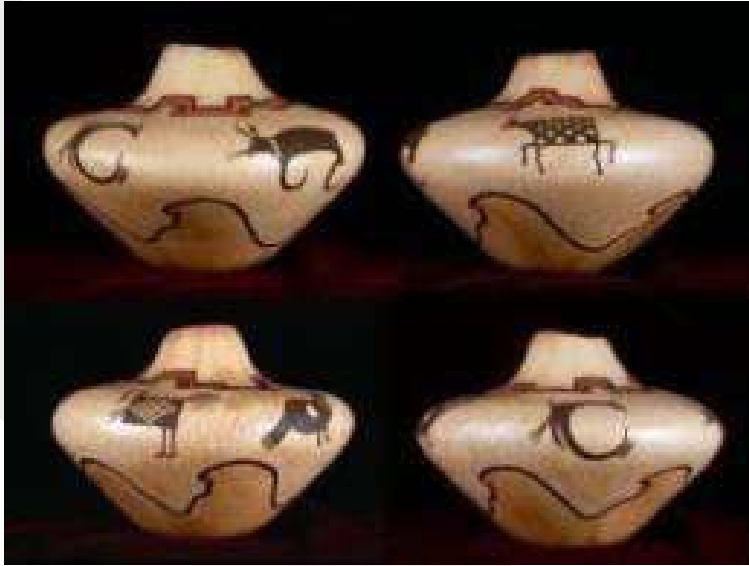
Characteristics of Mimbre Pottery

- Triangles and circles are the most common shapes used
- Variants include diamonds, squares, crosses and spirals
- Use of fine and consistent lines to form a balanced arrangement
- Structural motifs tend to begin at the center of vessel reaching outward and or framing the base of the bowl
- Non-objective designs are usually split into four or more sections radiating from the center of the bowl
- Radiating sections are subdivided and filled with triangle based formation

Symbolism of Mimbre Pottery

- Jagged triangular motifs recall lightning
- Curvilinear and spiral designs may refer to water
- pottery depicted all types of animals including fish(8%), bats, lizards(15%), frogs, rabbits(26%) and turtles
- Highly stylized, details are often emphasized
- Celestial occurrences and mythology were also interpreted through symbols





Other common designs are also found on other types of vessels



Animal Imagery



Religion and Ceremony

Mimbres buried their dead indoors underneath their living quarters. Mimbres bowls were found in burials, placed over or near the head of the deceased. Bowls were ritually punctured or broken prior to interment.

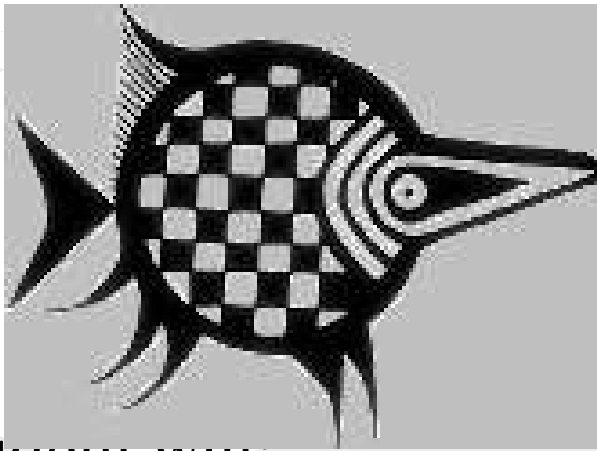
Siapu, considered the place of emergence from the underworld, is represented along with images of men. Mimbres have religious ties to other cultures such as Meso-America and the Katchina are demonstrated in similar imagery and depictions of the same symbols



Sketchbook Assignment

Handout:

Research symbols and their meanings. Download or sketch 3 symbols that represent you or a overall emotion you connect to. We will use these to develop an original design for the surface decoration of a project. DO NOT use obvious, trite, cliché', or copyright designs, dig deeper. Include the meaning of each symbols and how it relates to you. Include these in your sketchbook. See handout for examples.



Project Objectives

Student will:

- Design a symbol to use as a radial motif onto a bowl or vessel.
- Create 10 sketches with a final image on paper that is used to inscribe the design into the surface.
- Demonstrate good craftsmanship through the final appearance and construction of the pot/bowl.
- Will demonstrate techniques and a building process that displays:
 - Control of media-- demonstrates good craftsmanship.
 - Design with specific function in mind- container, teapot, etc.
 - Emphasize good design- unity, rhythm, form, and balance.