Figure 1. This photograph of a young Nampeyo, about 15 years old, was taken in 1875 by William Henry Jackson, a member of the Hayden Survey. Jackson and his men were fascinated by the gentle manners and perfect poise of their hostess, Nam-pe-yo (Jackson 1947:228).

Creator: National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, neg. no. 4844-10

Producing
"Generations in Clay"
Kinship, Markets, and Hopi Pottery

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In November 1992, "Hopi" or Canalle, Nampeyo, a 28-year-old great-great-granddaughter of the famous potter Nampeyo, was profiled as one of two Hopi potters destined to carry on her ancestor's tradition (Jacka 1995). While women in the First Mesa villages on the Hopi Reservation in northeastern Arizona have made pottery for trade or sale to the outside world at least since the turn of the century, only in recent decades has some of it come to be appreciated as American Indian art. Marketplace discourse uses language such as the "destiny" of named artists and the "blessing of the Nampeyo family." This language both constructs the value of Hopi pottery as art and obscures the social networks through which it is produced (Montana and Montana 1977, cf. Myers 1991).

I will show in this article how specific marketing practices have led to the genealogical reckoning of a Nampeyo "potter dynasty," now extended to five generations of potters subsequent to Nampeyo. This genealogical reckoning has been produced and canonized in various media from the end of the 19th century to the present. Today, genealogies can be found prominently displayed on Hopi pottery for sale in shops as a guarantee of its authenticity. The canonization of the Nampeyo lineage in various media has structured the market for Hopi pottery in ways that create a demand for specific, named potters and particular styles of work. Furthermore, Western cultural values, which define objects as art and isolate individuals as artists, work against local First Mesa values of producing social persons.

Potters and Traders (1890–1920)

Decorated Hopi pottery of the 19th century was principally produced in the village of Walpi, the oldest Hopi village on First Mesa (Figs. 2, 3). Nampeyo, the best known First Mesa potter of the 20th century, was born to a Tewa mother and a Hopi father around 1890 in Humaki, or Haos, the village settled in the late 17th century by Tewa immigrants from New Mexico. Thus, Nampeyo and her matrilineal descendants are of Tewa descent. Yet they and their pottery have been

Figure 2. The Hopi area in northeastern Arizona (see also map on p. 3).
“the Sikyatki Revival style of pottery decoration was an instant success with the traders”

Figure 3. Polacca polychrome jar, c. 1870. This style of pottery-bearing jars was the most popular product of the Hopi market in the late 19th century. It was characterized by vibrant colors and geometric designs. (Photo courtesy of the Heard Museum.)

Nampayo was born in 1880 in the village of Walpi, where her father, a potter, taught her the craft. She soon became skilled in making pots, and her work was highly prized by collectors. In 1923, she moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she opened a studio and began experimenting with new techniques. She is known for her use of bold, geometric designs and vibrant colors, which were popular among collectors of Native American pottery.

Figure 4. Protosilicate and prehistoric pottery with contemporary wares and photographs displayed in Thomas Kean’s curio room, ca. 1903. Kean opened his trading post near First Mesa in 1875. (Photo by W. H. Jackson.)

Through her associations with Kean and others, Nampayo had both direct and indirect access to pottery recovered from Sikyatki and encouraged to use them. She often adapted the style, and according to Fish, she found a better market for ancient than modern ware. Nampayo’s work was widely praised by collectors and artists, and she is considered one of the most important early 20th-century Pueblo potters.
she was out there, just one of those marketing things that happen. And in when (tourists) came in to trading posts in Great Canyon or Palauca, they would ask for Nampeyo’s pottery. Interview with William Bruce McGee, owner of McGee Beyond Native Tradition Gallery in Holbrook, Arizona, October 21, 1992.

The success of marketing named pottery was evident.

Pride and Price in Art (1920–1960)

With the invention of Santa Fe’s Indian Market (1922), Gallup’s Intercultural Indian Ceremonial (1922), and the Museum of Northern Arizona’s annual Hopi Craftsmen exhibit (1930; see articles by Eaton and Weatherhite, this issue), outlets for the sale of Indian handicrafts became more diversified. Marketing also became more restricted in the 1920s and 1930s, as standards and criteria for the evaluation of Indian arts were established. Other fairs and exhibitions followed that became important outlets for Hopi pottery (Heard Museum Guild, 1955; Scottsdale National, 1961; Pueblo Grande, 1976), but the first markets remained the most prestigious of the judging venues.

In the 1920s, with Nampeyo’s eye failing but the demand for her pottery soaring, other members of the family painted for her, including her husband and her daughters Annie and Fannie. In fact, some First Mesa potters whom I have consulted claim that Lewa was the painter. Nampeyo encouraged her daughters to continue producing pottery as a way to make a living (Maxwell Museum 1974, Monahan and Monahan 1977). Traders, as mediators between producers and consumers, even encouraged her offspring and in specific ways.

Traders continued to play an important role in the promotion of Indian crafts by selling pottery to fairs and markets. They often served as “spokesmen” for individual artists by signing works in pencil with the artist’s name and conveying to the artist what kinds of objects were recognized in the form of ribbons and cash. Traders always provided ready cash or trade for objects. Potters could bring work at any time and not have to wait for fair dates, not be concerned about whether or not their work would sell at a fair. This role of traders remains important even today in Nampeyo’s market.

The period following World War II saw the institutionalization of evaluative criteria for Indian art. Some consider that, as a result, pride of workmanship was achieved on a more widespread basis. Members of Nampeyo’s family, especially Fannie, were already thought to take pride in their work. Along with criteria of technical and aesthetic accomplishment came higher prices for works that met these criteria. Thus an equivalence between “excellence” and “price” was established in the sale of Indian handicrafts.

In 1958, the Keams Canyon trading post was taken over by the McGee family, who also purchased the Palauca store from Tom Pauza. The McGee continued buying from Nampeyo, especially Fannie who began signing pots “Fanny Nampeyo.” Following her mother’s death in 1942. In 1947, the McGee family hired Byron Hunter to work at their stores, at first during summers and in 1963 on a full-time basis at the Palauca store. A paved road to and across the Hopi reservation provided direct access to First Mesa, inducing greater tourist travel to the Hopi villages than had been achieved by railroad. Guidesbooks (such as Hopkins’s 1963 Complete Guide to the Southwest) oriented tourists to the sights of the Southwest that were easily accessible by road.
reached by car, including its indigenous inhabitants. Byron Hunter continued to work with the Nampeyo, especially Faustina and her daughters, critiquing the quality of the work they brought in, as did Bruce McGee who was trailed by Byron Hunter.

In conjunction with guidebooks, Arizona Highways, a publication of the Arizona Department of Transportation, promoted tourism in the state. Issues featured photographic essays, lavish color, of the landscape and its inhabitants. Beginning in 1960, the magazine produced special issues on Indian crafts. Along with coverage of prizes awarded at fairs and markets came profiles of individual artisans, their work (often photographed with a prize-winning ribbon), and the traders and galleries that represented them, including the Byron Hunter Trading Post and McGee's Indian Arts (Fig. 11). Photographs by Ray Manley and Jerry Jacks accompanied texts written by anthropologists, archaeologists, and museum personnel, as well as staff writers. Arizona Highways became the primary medium for promoting the sale and consumption of items produced by Arizona Indians.

By this time, buyers were differentiated into those purchasing curios and souvenirs and those seeking Indian art, i.e., quality work of specific artists as defined by market outlets and publications. Nampeyo's pottery was defined as art, and due to the promotion she received she was known as the greatest Indian potter maker alive (Kramer 1989:534). The steady supply of Nampeyo pottery was assured by both traders' encouragement of her offspring to "care on the tradition" and by the media of tourism.

In 1974, Arizona Highways began a Collector Series and produced two pottery issues, one on polychromes and one on contemporary pottery. These issues were but two examples of a profusion of such publications which appeared during that decade. The prehistoric pottery issue featured excerpts of Fowke's Bureau of American Ethnology reports and a discussion of the beginning of the Sylva's revival by Nampeyo (Stacey 1974:38-39). The publication then served to relay what was by now the myth that the revival resulted solely from Nampeyo's artistic talent. Although contemporary pottery issues featured the work of various Hopi potters, preeminence among them were "the potters and four generations of the Nampeyo family" (Stacey 1974:20-21). The issue also included promotions for the forthcoming exhibits featuring Nampeyo and her descendants, one devoted exclusively to the Nampeyo family.

In the 1970s, exhibits devoted to the Nampeyo or featuring Nampeyo and her descendants were organized by museums or cultural centers (Museum of Northern Arizona 1975, Muckenthaler Cultural Center 1974, Maxwell Museum 1974). Pottery by Nampeyo and from 16 to 27 of her descendants was included. These exhibits were often accompanied by catalogues that included genealogies of the Nampeyo family, both creating and demonstrating the continuity of this pottery tradition (Fig. 12; Collins 1974, Maxwell Museum 1974).

During this decade, the newest generation of potters included Hsi, who was 10 years old in 1974. The daughter of Destra Quiltkivas, Hsi is also the granddaughter of Annie and Willie Healing's daughter Rachel, who as a small child accompanied her mother on demonstrations at Hopi House. In turn, this was a period when Destra herself was receiving considerable attention in the media, including recognition in the collector's issue of Arizona Highways (Stacey 1974:8) and a profile in American Indian Art (Montith and Montith 1977). Thus, this new generation of artist-potters was composed of the offspring of the first potter to produce a commodity for public consumption, now defined as an art form.

Hsi, then, was socialized into the practices and institutions of marketing pottery from the outset. By the 1970s, the marketing of pottery had become good business, with pots commanding "impressive prices" and receiving "recognition as works of art." With four generations of experience in market practices preceding and preparing her, it is not surprising that the offspring of a Nampeyo descendant whose own reputation would be encouraged to "care on the tradition.

The education of the public by various media fostered brand-name buying, and a "consumer-direct" trend began, the consumer/collector could go directly to the source, that is, the potter, without the mediation of a trader. Nevertheless, traders were still actively structuring the market. Any member of the family who wanted to make pottery was encouraged to do so, and Nampeyo pottery began to saturate the marketplace. By 1983, Nampeyo potters were featured in an exhibit held, significantly, in an Albuquerque gallery, rather than an anthropology museum. Hsi was among them. By now she was nearly 20 years old. This exhibit catalogue's genealogy lists 64 Nampeyo descendants and allies (persons related by marriage), including the offspring of Nampeyo's male descendants (notably those of Tom Polacca, Fannie's son) along with the offspring of her female descendants (Anthony 1985). The market was recognizing descent indiscriminately, that is, according to Euro-American bilateral rather than Hopi matrilineal criteria. Even male relatives by marriage were encouraged to make and sell pottery.


The Nampeyo dynasty of potters has been critically evaluated and shaped by dealers and the media. In the last decade, Gallery 10 in Scottsdale, for example, an elite gallery with branches in New York City and Santa Fe, instituted...
annual Hopi shows in 1994 (Fig. 13). In 1996, the gallery mounted a series of exhibits defining new trends in Native American art which included Hopi pottery. "Tributes of the Western Native Americans," "All That's Really Worthwhile in American Indian Art," Imagery from the Hopi Mesas, "A Mouth of Amauntment." In these exhibits only certain members of the Nampeyo family were featured, notably Deanna and Camille (Hopi) Quoyakwa and Tom, Gary and Carla Palacas, along with other Hopi artists. In the same year, Arizona Highways released its "New Individualists" issue, profiling Deanna and Tom, along with Rodina Huma, a Hopi-Tewa potter from Hano, and Al Quoyakwa (Jacks 1966).

While marketing strategies instituted by dealers and the media were encouraging specific Nampeyo potters to refine their work and to develop more individualized styles, the market was also opening up to other potters. Many of these (such as Rodina Huma) have won prizes at Indian Market. Others, such as Helen Naha (Feather Woman) and Joy Navasie (Frog Woman), both First Mesa potters of Tewa descent, had won prizes and were featured in tourist publications such as Arizona Highways and Boy Madison's Collecting Southwestern Indian Arts and Crafts (1970). The Navasie and Nahas have begun to receive media attention and some genealogical reckoning (i.e., expectations for the next generation), but not to the extent of the Nampeyo family. It still remains the case that no other potters have received as much attention as Nampeyo and her offspring. A significant recent publication profiling the work of individual artists features the work of five living Nampeyos, two deceased Nampeyos, and four other Hopi potters (Jack 1998).

The primary means for potters to gain recognition is through dealers and to have collectors seek out their work with the intention of publishing it in a "book" (i.e., photographed in the field) or appearing in a gallery advertisement in American Indian Art. The person responsible for accomplishing this kind of publication is the dealer. Prize winning, of course, is another important means of achieving recognition. Both work together to create and build an individual's name as an artist in the marketplace.

The Work of Pottery Production and Social Recognition

The work of becoming a named artist is not easy, as it involves social networks and values from differing cultural systems that often conflict. Many potters have inadvertently severed relationships with dealers by complaining when they did not feel they received a "fair" price for their work, which is what they considered to be adequate compensation, however ill-defined the conceptual and practical standards. As a result, the artist may feel that a beginning potter's work needs to start out at a lower level and be built up gradually through his efforts (which are primarily male), developing some consistency to the product. Dealers also attempt to control the volume of an individual's work at any given time, so as to build and keep its value high. Potters not familiar with these and other market practices are often immersed in dealers who do not accede to their requests for pricing or other considerations.

Nampeyo was the first Hopi potter to become a named artist. Her name was given her by the women of her father's matrilineage in part because of her social identity constructed through Southwestern kinship networks. Whether conscious or not, in allowing this name to be commoditized and promoted she pre-chorded the recognition of the larger work of pottery production that was recognized at First Mesa, especially among the Hopi women of her father's matrilineage. At the time Nampeyo learned to make pottery, potters worked collectively to produce their wares. Pottery thus objectified valued social relationships while sharing with individuals out of one's matrilineage was both important and necessary for households to function. By engaging in social networks of a different cultural system with different values, Nampeyo's actions negated the values of the First Mesa community. At First Mesa, widespread networks are recognized in constructing social power (Watters 1978). Many have commented that her lack of knowledge with her husband and the women who taught her and her household to paint and shared their pottery knowledge with her contributed most importantly to her work. This no doubt accounts in part for the criticism she received from Wolf women.

At First Mesa the work of an individual, when it is recognized, is specific to that individual and does not carry through generations. Individuals decide for themselves when and how they will begin to take up pottery and whatever they do for their living. (Women and men now may encourage their daughters or sons, but only after these individuals have demonstrated their own interest in the work. This is true also for Wosi, who, after becoming trained in wet clay, decided to return to First Mesa to make her living by pottery (Jacka 1992). Nevertheless, interest in pottery was also encouraged by the social relations of the marketplace, with which she is now fully familiar. She can and does claim the Nampeyo name. But the "generations in clay" of which she has been selected to be the contemporary representative is a product of Western art market practices and discourse.

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Figure 13. Gallery 10 in Scottsdale, Arizona, was founded in 1975 to provide an environment for showing "significant American Indian art." These small Hopi pots, along with baskets and miniature pottery from other Southwestern pueblos, are displayed in a locked case. Information is not included in the display, but the gallery maintains an extensive library of published works on Indian art for consultation.