

OFF THE CUFF

JUST BRACELETS

BY DEXTER CIRILLO, PH.D.

Bracelets have been part of Native jewelry at least since the prehistoric Hohokam of southern Arizona fashioned some of the first wristwear out of Glycymeris shells almost 2,000 years ago. They gathered shells from the Gulf of California for their own use and for trade to the Anasazi and Mogollon peoples. The Anasazi soon decorated the shell's hubs with turquoise mosaics, launching a tradition of shell and turquoise jewelry that continues today at Santo Domingo Pueblo in New Mexico.

By the mid-18th and early 19th centuries, Native jewelers were making bracelets out of hammered brass and twisted copper wire, having acquired metals from Spanish explorers, traders and pioneers. By the end of the 19th century, silversmithing had spread from the Navajo to the Zuni, Hopi and Rio Grande Pueblo tribes.

Bracelet styles have run the gamut from the hand-hammered bracelets of the Navajo First Phase jewelry (1868–1900) to works inlaid with multiple stones in abstract and pictorial designs. In the 1970s, Charles Loloma (Hopi) revolutionized Native jewelry with his 3-D “Height” bracelets, introducing sculptural inlay into jewelry. By placing stones at jagged right angles to their metal base to mirror the rough topography of the Southwest, Loloma inaugurated the contemporary era of Native jewelry.

In the 21st century, Native bracelet styles are myriad. The metal is the medium, textured by tufa casting or stamped with geometric patterns. On curved planes, jewelers depict pueblos, ceremonial dances and the humblest of insects. Sophisticated lapidary equipment allows artists to tell stories in stone. Materials come from the world over, yielding countless color combinations. From classic to sculptural styles, contemporary Native jewelers craft bracelets that reflect their personal and cultural experiences.

The following pages feature notable artists offering exciting innovations within the genre of bracelets.

Opposite: Jody Sue Lazaro wears bracelets (top to bottom) by Richard Chavez (San Felipe Pueblo), Michael “NaNa Ping” Garcia (Pascua Yaqui) and Cheyenne Harris (Navajo/Northern Cheyenne). Necklace by Cheyenne Harris. Jewelry courtesy of Faust Gallery.





DAVID NEFFER



TAM MACHING



COURTESY FAJET GALLERY

KERI ATAUMBI

Keri Ataumbi (Kiowa) is a conceptual artist who brings the full range of her life experience to her jewelry. Born on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming in 1971, she grew up in a multicultural and artistic environment, meeting different tribes at her mother's trading post and learning about metalwork from her father, a renowned sculptor. In 1991 she moved to Santa Fe, earning a degree from the Institute of American Indian Arts in 1996 and a BFA in painting from the College of Santa Fe in 2003. Between her studies, she pursued her passion for landscape gardening, developing a successful business that would later influence her jewelry designs. "I'm fascinated with nature," she says. "Focusing on other species instructs one in life." In 2001 Ataumbi began making wearable art jewelry inspired by the natural world and her Kiowa heritage. Her work has been featured in exhibitions including *Contemporary Jewelers* at the Heard Museum in Phoenix in 2007.

Ataumbi is represented by Shiprock Trading Company and the IAIA Museum Shop in Santa Fe; the Heard Museum Shop, Phoenix; and Four Winds Gallery in Pittsburgh. She also shows at the Santa Fe Indian Market. Contact: 505/690-5875 or e-mail ataumbi@earthlink.net

AARON BROKESHOULDER

Aaron Brokeshoulder (Choctaw/Shawnee/Santo Domingo Pueblo) was barely 10 when he began learning silversmithing techniques from his father, Lorenzo B. Coriz. Part of an extended family of jewelers at Santo Domingo Pueblo, Coriz had studied at the Institute of American Indian Arts from 1965 to 1968 with Charles Loloma, later passing his knowledge on to his son. After graduating from the Santa Fe Indian School in 1991 and taking art and business courses at Albuquerque Technical Vocational Institute from 1991 to 1993, Brokeshoulder began his career making fashion jewelry, such as ear cuffs and medicine-wheel hair ties. He soon developed his signature style of embedding hand-cut beads within grooved channels in his jewelry. Based in Albuquerque, the 36-year-old artist alternates between his Pueblo and Plains heritage for his themes.

Brokeshoulder has won many awards and shows his jewelry at annual regional Indian markets, including the Eiteljorg Museum Indian Market and Festival in Indianapolis; the Red Earth Festival, Oklahoma City; the Heard Museum, Phoenix; and Native Treasures and the Santa Fe Indian Market, Santa Fe. Contact: www.abrokeshoulder.com

TERRENCE CAMPBELL

Terrence Campbell (Tahltan) was born in Prince Rupert, British Columbia, in 1956. Before moving into jewelry in his 20s, he was a painter and a wood carver, studying with several master carvers, including his sister, Dale Campbell. In 1991, the siblings traveled to Hong Kong as part of a Canadian festival to exhibit their art and to raise a 30-foot totem pole they had carved. The designs that Campbell carved in wood translated easily to his silver and gold jewelry. In 2002 he moved to the Southwest, where he studied tufa casting with Ric Charlie (Navajo) and lived for several years on the Navajo Reservation. "That experience definitely influenced my jewelry design a lot," he says. "The Tahltan and the Navajo are both Athabaskan-speaking tribes, and I feel a real kinship with the Navajo." While his designs are rooted in his heritage, Campbell is the first Northwest Coast jeweler to carve and cast in tufa.

Campbell's jewelry can be seen at Faust Gallery and Waddell Trading Company in Scottsdale, Arizona. Contact: 520/233-2132

From top: "Iron and Magnet Beetle Cuff" by Keri Ataumbi. Iron, 24k gold, earth magnets, conflict free diamonds, oxidized sterling silver. "Links to the Past" by Aaron Brokeshoulder. Sterling silver, Mediterranean coral. 5.5" x 2". "Raven Bracelet" by Terrence Campbell. Tufa cast, coral and turquoise.

JUST BRACELETS

RICHARD CHAVEZ

Over the four decades of his career, Richard Chavez (San Felipe Pueblo) has introduced a painterly style into Southwestern Indian jewelry. He is well known for his minimalist approach to design. He uses only three to four colors in a given piece, and his shapes reflect the clean lines of Scandinavian design—principles of “less is more” that he absorbed during his architectural studies at the University of New Mexico in the 1970s. Chavez turned to jewelry in 1975 and taught himself silversmithing by reading *Indian Silversmithing* by W. Ben Hunt. Like the fine writing pens he collects, the 60-year-old Chavez prizes good design and excellent construction. “If you make something,” he says, “you have to do quality work.” His museum exhibitions include *Totems to Turquoise* (American Museum of Natural History) and *Changing Hands I* (Museum of Arts and Design).

His work is carried at Shiprock Trading Company and through Martha Hopkins Streuver in Santa Fe; at Waddell Trading Co. in Scottsdale; and Four Winds Gallery in Pittsburgh. He also shows at the Santa Fe Indian Market. Contact: ric@chavezstudio.com

THOMAS CURTIS, SR.

Thomas Curtis, Sr. (Diné) has lived in the remote area of Dilkon, Arizona on the Navajo Reservation his entire life—a stone’s throw from White Cone, where he was born in 1942. Reared in a traditional way, Curtis grew up watching his grandfathers forge jewelry in the old style. By age 12 he was making his own jewelry. “When I grew up, there were only dirt roads,” he says. “We traveled with a wagon and horses.” From his uncle who repaired the wagons, Curtis learned blacksmithing techniques and how to make his own tools and stamps. Well known for his meticulous stampwork that has won him many awards over his long career, Curtis says, “Every day, I look from the ground to the sky and from right to left. I look at the natural world—the plants, birds, clouds and sky—for my designs.”

Curtis’ work is carried at Sedona Indian Jewelry and Garland’s Indian Jewelry in Sedona, Arizona; and Packards and Shiprock Trading Company in Santa Fe. He also shows at the Santa Fe Indian Market. Contact: 928/657-3317

From top: Bracelet by Richard Chavez. 18k white gold bracelet with Edwards black jade, white jade, and red coral. 1” w. Bracelet by Thomas Curtis, Sr.



JAMES J. CHAVEZ / CHAVEZ STUDIO

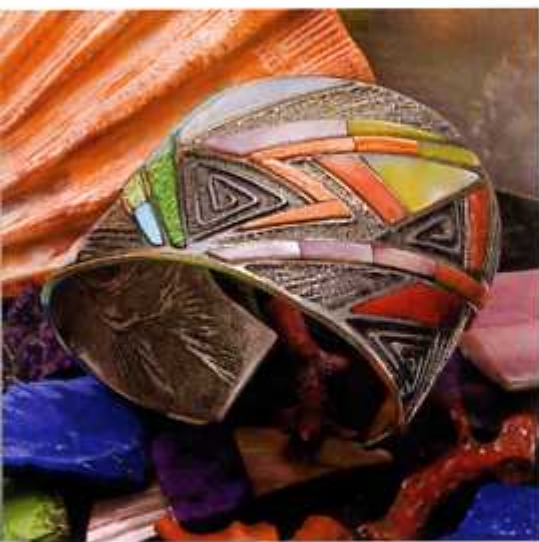


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MARIAN DENIPAH & STEVE WIKVIYA LARANCE

Marian Denipah (Navajo/San Juan Pueblo) and Steve Wikviya LaRance (Hopi/Assiniboine) are a husband-and-wife team who dig their own tufa on the Hopi Reservation for their elegant contemporary jewelry. Denipah holds a BFA in painting and photography from Northern Arizona University. She began making jewelry in her 30s, when she and LaRance moved to Flagstaff, Arizona in 1990. There she shared a studio with Ric Charlie and studied tufa casting with him. LaRance, who learned traditional Hopi arts from his grandfather at Moenkopi, began his career as a sculptor in marble and alabaster. An arts consultant, he studied political science and business at NAU. Their recent jewelry incorporates Tahitian pearls and gemstones in tufa. In 2008 they demonstrated tufa casting at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts.

In Arizona, their jewelry is carried by the Heard Museum, Phoenix; the Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff; Faust Gallery, Scottsdale; and Garland's, Sedona. Gathering Tribes in Berkeley, California and Shiprock Trading Company, Santa Fe, also carry their work. They also show at the Santa Fe Indian Market. Contact: 928/607-5127 or e-mail dlineart@aol.com



SAM WINKLER

MICHAEL "NANA PING" GARCIA

Throughout his life, Michael "NaNa Ping" Garcia (Pascua Yaqui) has had a dual career as a jeweler and a businessman. A third-generation jeweler, he began making jewelry at age 14, helping two uncles with piecework for traders. By his 20s, Garcia had mastered the basics and moved from Arizona to Albuquerque. With a business degree from the University of New Mexico, he opened two successful offset printing companies in 1977, one at Nambe Pueblo, his wife's tribe, and the other in Santa Fe. He received his Tewa name NaNa Ping, which means "Aspen Mountain," from his wife's grandfather. Since 1991, Garcia has been a full-time artist with an international following, making frequent trips to Australia, Japan and other foreign shores. He is known for his beveled contemporary inlay and the high quality of stones he uses. An advocate for the arts, Garcia was recently elected president of the board of the Indian Arts and Crafts Association (2009–2011).

His jewelry is available at Packards in Santa Fe and Garland's in Sedona. He also shows at the Santa Fe Indian Market. Contact: 505/603-4148 or e-mail nanaping@aol.com



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

ROBERT GRESS

Robert Gress (Crow), known as Buffalo Man to his relatives, grew up in a family of bead workers on the Crow Reservation in Montana. In 1983, after studying at Montana State University, he moved to Santa Fe to study at the Institute of American Indian Arts, receiving his associate's degree in 1987 in two- and three-dimensional art. At IAIA he took a jewelry class with noted jewelry historian Millard J. Holbrook, who encouraged him to translate the geometric and colorful designs of Crow beadwork into jewelry. Adept at multiple inlay techniques, Gress creates contemporary mosaic jewelry that has garnered many awards in the Southwest and in his native Montana. In 2006, his jewelry was included in the Museum of Arts and Design's exhibition Changing Hands II. An advocate for reviving traditional Crow art, the 46-year-old Gress returns frequently to Montana, where his current project is building art studios for Crow children.

His jewelry can be seen at IAIA's Museum shop in Santa Fe and at www.nativeart.com. He also shows at the Santa Fe Indian Market. Contact: 505/929-4022 or e-mail medicinetail@hotmail.com



DAVID RYAN SHAW/ARTIST

From top: "Pueblo Rainbow Bracelet" by Steve Wikviya LaRance and Marian Denipah. Tufa cast set with turquoise, red coral, pink coral, mother of pearl shell, lapis, sugilite and gaspiate. Bracelet by Michael "NaNa Ping" Garcia. 18k. gold bevel inlaid with natural Mediterranean coral and sugilite from South Africa. Bracelet by Robert Gress. Sterling silver, lapis lazuli, sugilite, turquoise, coral, chrisapraise, buffalo horn. 1.5" w.

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CHEYENNE HARRIS

A fourth-generation jeweler, Cheyenne Harris (Navajo/Northern Cheyenne) recalls enrolling in jewelry and metalsmithing at Northern Arizona University armed with tools from her mother, grandfather and great-grandfather. "I inherited traditional Navajo teachings and silversmithing techniques from all of them," she says. From her father's Northern Cheyenne family in Lane Deer, Montana, she learned another worldview. After graduating in 1987, Harris taught at the Institute of American Indian Arts for a year before taking graduate courses in architecture and interior design at Arizona State University and later enrolling in a MFA program in artisanry/metalsmithing at the University of Massachusetts in North Dartmouth. The recipient of a fellowship from the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts in Santa Fe in 1994 and three grants from the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Isle, Maine, Harris is renowned for her contemporary designs and mastery of metals. "My work is a reflection of traditional and non-traditional experiences and techniques. I continually try to expand the definition of Native American art," she says.

Her jewelry is available at Faust Gallery, Scottsdale, and Lovetts Gallery, Tulsa, Oklahoma. She also shows at the Santa Fe Indian Market. Contact: Faust Gallery, 480/946-6345

DUANE MAKTIMA

During his studies at Northern Arizona University in the 1970s, Duane Maktima (Hopi/Laguna Pueblo) also interned at the Museum of Northern Arizona, where he met a docent from Denmark. "She had an extensive collection of exquisite contemporary jewelry from Scandinavia," he recalls. Through their friendship, Maktima developed an appreciation for the pure lines of Scandinavian design, an aesthetic that has informed his jewelry for three decades. He also explored the museum's vast Native American art collections, beginning a lifelong study of his own Hopi and Laguna Pueblo cultures. Following his graduation in 1982, Maktima moved to New Mexico. A master metalsmith, he has been at the forefront of technical innovations in the jewelry field, such as hollow-forming and the hydraulic press, interpreting cultural motifs in highly sophisticated jewelry. Among many awards, he received the Distinguished Alumni Award from NAU in 1990. His museum exhibitions include the American Museum of Natural History's 2004 *Totems to Turquoise*.

Maktima's jewelry can be seen at Garland's in Sedona and Bahti Indian Arts in Tucson, Arizona, and Santa Fe. He also shows at the Santa Fe Indian Market. Contact: www.duanemaktima.com

From top: Bracelet by Cheyenne Harris. 14k gold, 1/4-karat diamond, high-grade Morenci turquoise. Bracelet by Duane Maktima. Sterling silver and 14k gold applique, inlaid with stones, technique hollow formed.



COURTESY FAUST GALLERY



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

JUST BRACELETS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARILYN R. ZIEGLER, WRIGHT'S INDIAN ART



THE HOUSE OF LYNDON TSOISIE, INC.

KEN ROMERO

In 1994, Ken Romero (Taos Pueblo/Laguna Pueblo) developed his Pueblo Design Inlay[®], for which he is well known. He cuts and polishes dozens of stones, inlaying them in a channel at different angles to resemble a pueblo. "Although I live in Albuquerque," Romero says, "I come from both Laguna and Taos. I feel very secure because I always have a home to go to. My village scenes are about family." Romero turned to jewelry when he was 29, in 1985. Prior to that, he studied painting, receiving degrees from the Institute of American Indian Arts in 1977 and the California College of the Arts in 1979. Of his shift to jewelry, he says, "Inlay jewelry is wearable art. I like that part of me is going out into the world." Included in the museum exhibitions *Totems to Turquoise*, *Changing Hands I* and *Pueblo 3D*, Romero's jewelry is on permanent display at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (www.indianpueblo.org).

Romero's work can be seen at Wright's Indian Art, Albuquerque; and Tony Reyna Indian Shop, Taos Pueblo, 575/758-3835. He also shows at the Santa Fe Indian Market. Contact: ken-romero505@comcast.net

LYNDON TSOISIE

For Lyndon Tsoisie (Navajo), jewelry is inseparable from sculpture. "When I create a piece of jewelry," he says, "I think about how it would look sitting on a table." Born in Ft. Defiance, Arizona, in 1968, Tsoisie studied jewelry with Tommy Jackson (Navajo) at Tohatchi High School, New Mexico. Following graduation, he worked for a jewelry manufacturing company in Gallup before wholesaling his own designs in 1990. Acknowledging the influence of Hopi jewelers Charles Loloma and Verma Nequatewa, whose work he first saw in the book *Southwestern Indian Jewelry*, Tsoisie traded in a stereo system in 1994 for a lapidary machine and began teaching himself stonecutting. "I never knew Indian jewelry could look like that," he recalls. Today, Tsoisie is an award-winning jeweler, renowned as well for his fabricated silver and gold vessels intricately inlaid with semi-precious stones. Asked about his ultimate goal, Tsoisie admits he would love to make a box for England's royal family.

Waddell Trading Company in Scottsdale and Urban Spirit Gallery in New York City carry Tsoisie's work. He also shows at the Santa Fe Indian Market. Contact: 505/879-0413 ☞

Dexter Cirillo is author of Southwestern Indian Jewelry (Abbeville Press, 1992) and Southwestern Indian Jewelry: Crafting New Traditions (Rizzoli International, 2008), among many publications. She holds a Ph.D. from the City University of New York Graduate Center. This is her first article for Native Peoples. Contact: www.dextercirillo.com.



Jody Sue Lazaro wears bracelets (left to right) by Michael "NaNa Ping" Garcia, Terrence Campbell and Steve Wikviya LaRance. Opposite, top; "Golden Moments of Aspen at San Geronimo Feast Day at Taos Pueblo" by Ken Romero. 18k gold, Mediterranean Corsican red coral and Sleeping Beauty turquoise. Bracelet by Lyndon Tsosie. Tufa cast and sheet sterling silver, tufa cast and sheet 18k gold, North American turquoise, coral, lapis, charoite and ebony.