

AKIMEL DUA'KIK

SPIRIT OF THE RIVER



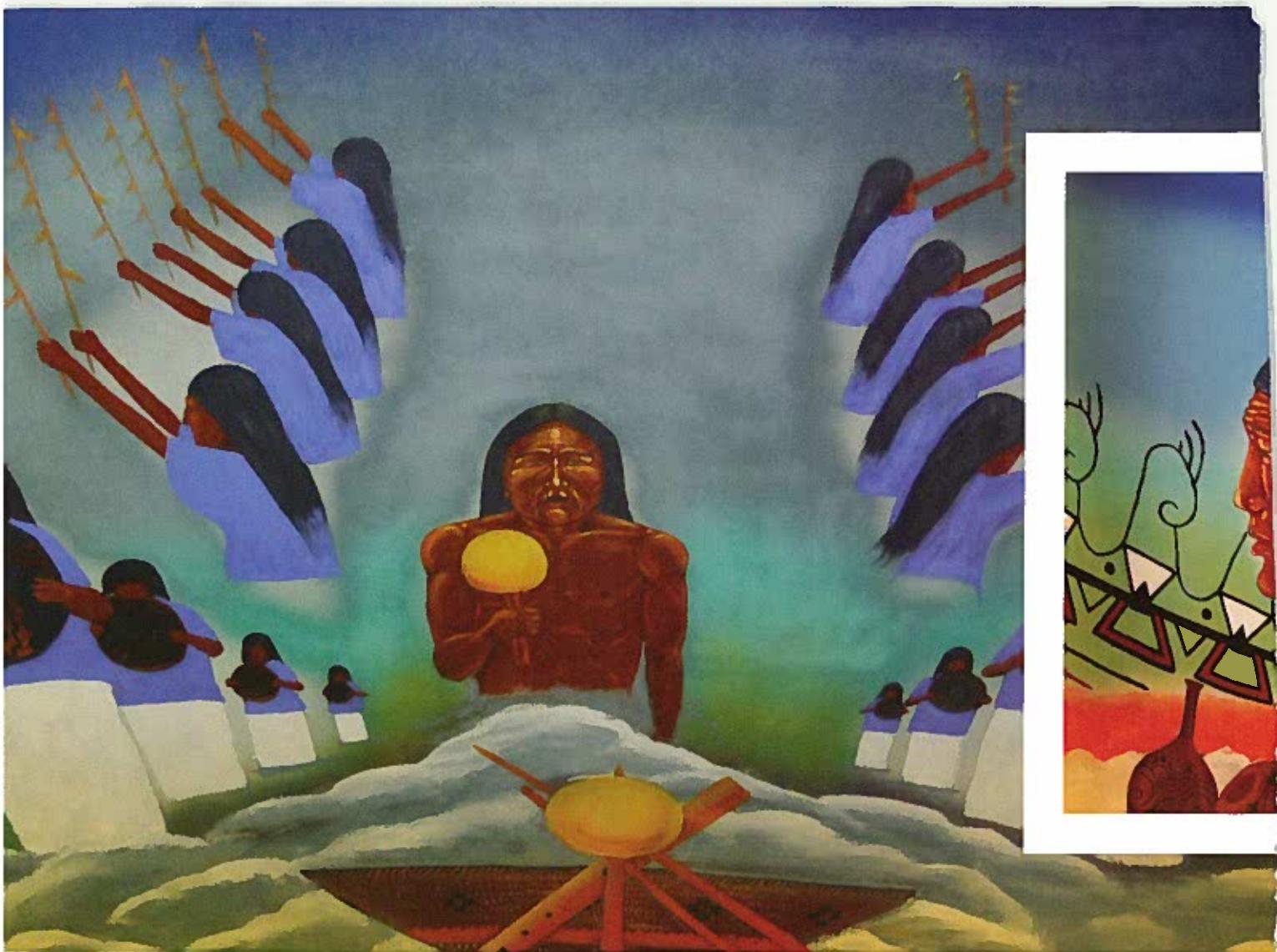
**WATER FLOWS AGAIN
ON THE GILA RIVER
INDIAN COMMUNITY**

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**ART IS EVERYWHERE:
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

The Official Publication of the Gila River Indian Community and Its Enterprises

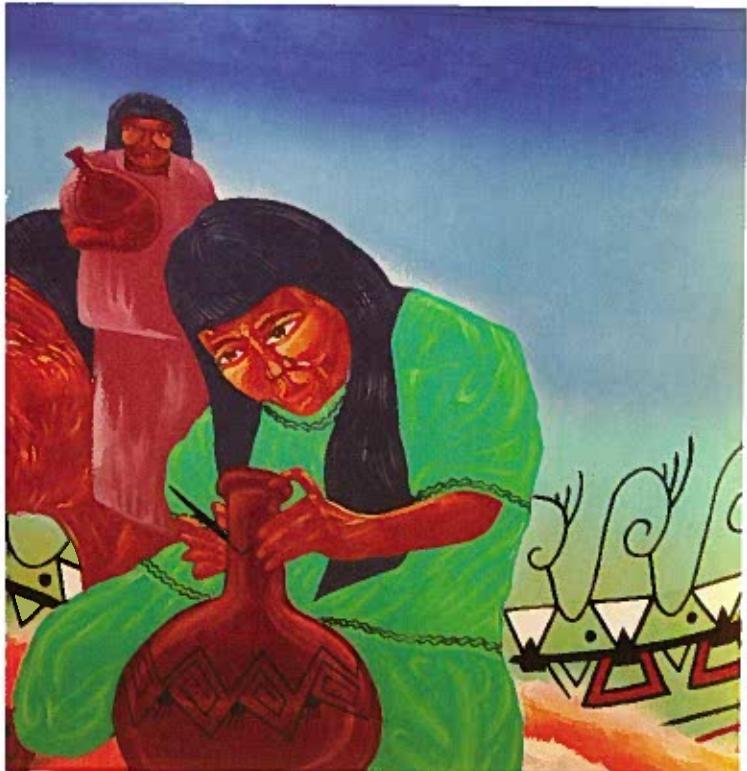


THE FUTURE IN ART

By Julie Lemerond

TRADITIONAL TRIBAL ART FUSES
THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

CHANCES ARE, WHEN DECIDING WHERE TO STAY for your trip to Phoenix, you chose Wild Horse Pass for its luxurious accommodations, state-of-the-art amenities, and award-winning restaurants, golf course and spa. The traditional Native American art scene celebrated throughout the Resort and area was probably not the first thing on your mind. Yet, the immersion of traditional art with practical function will no doubt linger with you long after your visit, and beckon you to come back once again.



A Maricopa pottery artisan.

This land stretching along the banks of the Gila River is home to both the Pima (O'otham) and Maricopa (PeePosh) Tribes. Each Tribe celebrates its own heritage in traditional arts and crafts, with the Pima specializing in basket weaving while the Maricopa have honed their craftsmanship in pottery. Examples of both types of art are displayed throughout the Resort, highlighted in the hallways, restaurants, guest rooms and expansive lobby area. In fact, nearly every square inch of the Resort has been kissed with a touch of these traditional arts, and what may appear to be a commonplace design is often overlooked artistry.

Take a deeper look around your guestroom. The headboards at the top of each bed are engraved with symbols of either the Pima or Maricopa Tribe, depending on which wing of the resort you are located in. The bedspreads designed by local artisans reflect symbols from the Tribes. Saguaro cactus ribs are displayed in the walls along the windows. Each room has a photograph depicting a traditional art scene, while the paintings and drawings adorning the walls are created by local Tribal artisans. Even the most minute details, such as the tile work surrounding the bathtub, or

ORAL TRADITION

The oral tradition so prevalent in Native American culture is presented to Resort guests in the form of "Storytelling and Song" throughout the winter months. Every Tuesday through Saturday from 6 to 7 p.m., guests are invited to gather around the fire-pit outside with Pima and Maricopa storytellers and listen to tales of Native American legends. One of the featured storytellers is Tim Terry, a Pima artist whose work is sold here in the gift shop. Shell jewelry and his calendar sticks, which is a Native American way of telling time, are just a few of his talents.

the Devil's Claw (a plant and basket-weaving material) handles on the nightstands, are all examples of how the Gila River Indian Community's artistic traditions shape the aesthetics of the Resort.

In our world of ever-increasing technology and globalization, keeping the time-honored traditions of yesterday continuing on in future generations, easily distracted by today's fast-paced society, is one virtue the Pima and Maricopa elders emphasize to their children. They do this by integrating the needs of today's economy with the well-worn traditions and tools of the past.

Whether it is providing sustenance from the student gardens for the Resort's restaurants to creating artwork to adorn its hallways, tribal youths are continually aware of maintaining the ever-present sense of history and Tribal traditions and the importance of maintaining these values and practices. A recent resurgence of traditional arts and

PURCHASING ART

The woven throw blanket lying at the end of each Sheraton Wild Horse Pass bed is hand-woven and designed by Amil Pedro, a local artisan whose work is seen throughout the Resort. These throws are available for purchase in the gift shop, and \$5 from each purchase will be donated to the artists' fund: The Amil Pedro Foundation gives Tribal youth the opportunity to learn more about traditional arts in their community.

Other types of art available for purchase include watercolor paintings, jewelry, gourd paintings and calendar sticks.

Visit the Bluebird gift shop to see the unique offerings currently for sale.

cultural practices, or cultural renaissance if you will, has swept through the Gila River Indian Community, and has been encouraging the young people of the Tribe to learn about and thus protect the sanctity of their history.

Dorothea Sunn-Avery, a Maricopa pottery artisan, spent her entire life learning from generations before her about the craft. "My Grandmother taught me how to mold and polish when I was a girl, and my Mother taught me even more...how to bake the pottery outside, design it, polish it, everything," she says. Sunn-Avery is passing along the craft to her 13-year-old daughter Hilda, who has shown an interest in learning the traditional work and creating classic Maricopa pottery. She has another daughter who helps out with the process as well.

Another local Maricopa artisan, Yolanda Hart-Stevens, is both the recipient of traditional teachings and is now passing on tradition to future generations. With her mother's side of the family hailing from the Maricopa Tribe, she learned quite a bit about the art of pottery as well as intricate beadwork from her mother. But it was not until a bit later in life that she answered the call to pick up where her elder generation left off, and a distant relative soon became her teacher and life-long mentor.

"Daisy Simms was a relative of mine, and she was world-renowned for her beadwork. I started working with her, and she became a mentor to me," says Hart-Stevens. "The basis of Native American culture has a strong emphasis on oral tradition. I learned everything I know from just sitting with her and talking. She never showed me how to do any of the beadwork, never drew it out with pencil and paper. We would just sit and talk, then I would go home and practice," she reminisces.

Hart-Stevens is now continuing this tradition by working with Tribal youth at the Boys & Girls Club as a Community-based artist. She will be featured in an upcoming documentary made for PBS. Entitled "Off the Rack," the show will discuss today's society and the ever-present need to obtain things quickly and easily. "Sure, you can go into a store and buy a book about how to do this beadwork," she agrees. "But when you do that, you lose the connection between people as opposed to sitting and communicating and learning from each other." ■

