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Hopi Bird And Sun Face In Zuni Jewelry



Synopsis

Delve into the fascinating origins and contemporary interpretations of Sun Face and Thunderbird/Hopi Bird designs. This thorough study was undertaken to establish the identities of 33 Zuni artists and their interpretations of these traditional designs from the 1940s through the 1960s. Their mosaic stone and shell inlay pins, bracelets, bolo ties, and other ornaments appear in over 190 color photos that display subtle variations indicative of each master's work and distinctive style. Also introduced are important but forgotten artists, such as Harry Deutsawe and Raphael Homer. It also features two intriguing variations of Sun Face designs, such as Sun Face with Horns and Sun Father and His Twin Sons. Detailed analysis explains the changes and connections among early and recent makers and their individual styles, materials, and designs.

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Customer Reviews

Toshio Sei has collected Zuni fetishes and antique mosaic jewelry for nearly two decades. He retired as a social and developmental psychology professor and is now a professor emeritus of Yamaguchi University. He and his wife live in Ube, Yamaguchi, Japan.

If you are interested in Zuni jewelry, you have very few resources. My 1st resource was a Facebook group Toshio started, bringing in many of the collectors in the Zuni fetish group, which is my main interest in collecting. However, once you see the magnificent works of the Zuni jewelers, it is hard not to get the collecting bug. I have several fetish necklaces from contemporary artists, but

venturing into some of the older inlaid pieces was daunting, especially with so many fakes out there. This book takes Toshio's experience as a collector, not only of Zuni jewelry, but also of Zuni lore about their artists, to address more characters in the Zuni world. Toshio is an avid collector so he goes about finding these things the way any other collector does...by searching everywhere & buying good deals. That doesn't mean he is trying to create higher markets for his collection, but he is validating our collections by giving us updated information from the wonderful & reticent Zuni people. Prices in books are just for guidance, but in the real world, you may find a piece overpriced in a high-end gallery or you may find a good deal at Goodwill, like I did. If you are a collector & a Zuni-phile, you'll love to have Toshio's books in your lap as you browse through ebay & you'll love learning about the great artists of Zuni. The pictures are fantastic & the guidance on differentiating the works is excellent & unparalleled.

Nice little informative book with plenty of illustrations. A must-have for the Zuni-phile collector! And at a very reasonable price.

The second volume of this set covers two more common designs in historic Zuni jewelry making. Probably the two most people are familiar with. Once again great photos and useful information about these beautiful works of art.

Great guide for purchasing Zuni jewelry. Buy all three. Text is a bit repetitive but helpful. No more to say.

Great learning tool & history, Toshio Sei is a humble guy in his search for the truth in Zuni Jewelry

He Continues To Create His Personal Market For His Zuni Jewelry Mr. Sei continues an excellent endeavor in trying to identify Zuni artists from the past who rarely signed their work. He divides his second book into designs based on Hopi Bird and Sun Face. It isn't entirely clear why the Thunderbird has been changed to Hopi Bird by Mr. Sei, but the bird was used extensively in Zuni jewelry, whatever it is called, and with a wonderful amount of artistic variation. There is a certain inconsistency in this volume: several pages are used for almost identical, fairly simple, pieces which are not identified, while an identified artist of more complex work might be assigned much less space. Despite this small flaw, there is a wonderful array of pieces depicted, which provide much pleasure to see. As with the previous volume, Mr. Sei brings his entire collection to Zuni and asks

the Zuni people to identify who made his pieces. So, the same problems continue from the first book in the second, in that some people tell him what he wants to hear, sometimes there is some fault in memory, and sometimes there are cultural reasons not to reveal everything to a non-Zuni. He also sometimes attributes based on one anonymous informant. For these reasons there are inevitable errors, which should lead to many future corrections, but the corrections haven't come as the mistakes become more and more apparent and the years go by. Despite the frequent mistakes in attribution, there are also some important breakthroughs in identification, which makes the book of special value. Mr. Sei has succeeded in identifying a few artists who were previously unknown. Also, consistent with the previous volume, Mr. Sei continues to only publish his own collection in his book (other authors about Native American jewelry use many other sources than their own collections), and while he has, by and large, purchased at very low prices, he appraises his own collection at much higher pricing than anyone can validate. In the US, it is not considered to be ethical to appraise ones' own items, and if one does, one should be able to validate the pricing through recorded sales. One could use what one paid, (he paid a tiny fraction of what he values them to be in his books) or an average of several similar documented recorded sales. In this arena there is often a gap between asked prices and actual sales prices and it is the sales prices that an appraiser would ordinarily use. But Mr. Sei provides none of these for evidence of the pricing he attributes, and in order to justify the high prices he sets, it would provide validation to his claims if he would substantiate that pricing. I'm suggesting he might consider doing that in future volumes to provide some credibility to his appraisals, but he has never done that, and now there are four books published in this series. This was the second book. Sadly, some of his apologists say that the publisher requires pricing, but a perusal of other books from this publisher proves definitively that the publisher doesn't require pricing from all the authors and certainly doesn't require that the pricing not be documented or that it be so much higher than has actually occurred. This pricing is one of the few contributions to the book by Mr. Sei himself (he says he gathered all the artistry attributions from his often anonymous informants, leaving the pricing to his own contribution to the volumes) and I think it is ethically problematic. By publishing pictures of his personal collection alone, his collection is enhanced in value. Readers often try to buy similar items to his and that alone will cause the prices to rise, because they are authenticated by being in a book. Also, without regard to published pricing, there may be competition to own a piece similar to the author's, so the value of his personal collection would be enhanced. Therefore his published pricing may be viewed as icing on the cake, setting a standard as this author does, usually very much higher than the actual prices being paid on eBay, where he does most of his own shopping. In this volume, too,

there's a problem with English usage which could easily be solved by using a copy editor, but this is not a minor issue; no publisher I've known would allow these mistakes in English in a published volume. Lest you think that the copy editing issue is truly minor, look at page 30, the first sentence of which reads: "This is a smaller Hopi Bird bolo which looks hotter in color sensation because of a lot of red parts." This is so much gibberish that even my best typo reading skills can't turn it into intelligible English. What does it mean? Books are supposed to be written for the readers, not for personal preening. This is not a unique example of text that is unintelligible in not only this second book but all his published books. Why is there no improvement? Perhaps because no one wrote an honest review, until now. One must wonder doesn't he pay for a copy editor if his publisher doesn't provide one? In my day I was provided a fact checker as well as a copy editor, and I believe Mr. Sei's work would be greatly enhanced by both. As time goes by, more and more mistakes in attribution come to light and Sei does not correct them in subsequent volumes. For example, pages 53 through 55 are devoted to the magpie design and he attributes them all to John Lucio. John Lucio did not create this design and none of the pieces are his. Work has been done interviewing families by Dr. Ernie Bulow which properly identified the artists as Lucy Ceshu and her first and second husband. Quincy Panteah was the first and Teluli Tsabetsaye the second and it is possible to distinguish which of the three made each piece, but John Lucio wasn't involved at all in the magpie design. One has to wonder where Mr. Sei got that incorrect attribution; he says he interviews families but if so without any cross checking because the information is freely available, as Dr. Bulow has found. That is one example of several mistakes in the volume. And these mistakes have permanent consequences. A perusal of eBay reveals that the magpie is being sold as John Lucio's work even now, years after the correct artist has been identified. Mr. Sei never published the corrections even though he has been aware of them for years. Books have a permanency, the consequences of which can be unfortunate. All the incorrect information in Mr. Sei's books is certainly at variance with their purpose, especially as it goes uncorrected, year after year. I'd hoped that bringing the importance of corrected editions to his attention would lead to that advance but it has not; there are new volumes released but no corrected editions of the original volumes. The new volumes perpetuate all the mistakes of the old ones. However, all collectors do gain and can use his book as at least one valuable resource for a beginning understanding and identifying what they have of Zuni jewelry. And the author sheds an important light on the Zuni culture. More work can be done now to identify their works of art because Mr. Sei has enhanced interest in owning, buying and understanding Zuni jewelry. This book is a valuable tool; it is a good service providing impetus to the quest to identify the old handmade and wonderful pieces which were rarely signed. The illustrations

in the book add considerably to the available resources. I do recommend this book to anyone interested in the subject, especially keeping my proscriptions in mind about all of the aspects of the enterprise.

Toshio Sei has spent many years traveling to Zuni to find out which artists made the pieces in his collection and has shared some of that information with us in his books. With great pictures and an explanation as to how he came to identify each piece, this book is a must have especially for anyone just starting to learn about Zuni jewelry. He does not mess around and cuts straight to the chase. This is a beautiful piece, this is who made it and this is how I know. Turn the page and there is another wonderful example of work with the same detail. You can't go wrong buying this book because it can only help you identify and appreciate Zuni inlay jewelry.

The second book in Sei's projected series delivers again! Lost artists are rescued from oblivion. Variations on important artistic themes are explored. I am seldom moved to review a book, but Toshio Sei is giving Zuni jewelry a long needed revision and spotlight. I can't wait for the rest of the series.

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