

# COSMIC DUST

BEAD/FIRSTNATION/ENVIRONMENT JUSTICE RELATED WORKS  
SPANNING TRADITIONAL THROUGH EXTREME EXPLORATORY

## CHAPTER 2 ROSETTES & NECKLACES

*All I ever wanted was to be loved  
The universe to its utmost immensity  
As art loved me & is me*

OCTOBER 2022

INTRODUCTION TO 'COSMIC DUST;  
A VISUAL ARTIVISTIC AUTOBIOGRAPHY' PROJECT

When I first began this book project, my thought was to my catalog my beadwork and related arts. As I proceeded along the journey of this study, I found that my beadwork expanded into 'installation' projects and that these projects called for a personae to express aspects of the concepts and politicalities attached to the beadwork. This progression launched naturally and more thoroughly into covering related works in his/herstory, familial, tribal, political, current areas. I found myself covering far greater ground than I had expected. As this project grew, in unexpected ways and volume, I decided it would be best to divide the book into 'book chapters'. As I proceeded further on the path of exploring and chronicling... I found that my works were very cohesive and yet diverged in ever expanding and deepening ways. I discovered that the beadwork projects blossomed into performance, storytelling, character/personae pieces and 'actions' rooted in 'JUSTICE' themes. All sorts of actions, on the front-line, on stage, on page, in video, music, movement as well as visual arts, writing and in my core 'being'. The process of this 'book' surprised me no end, reflective of this life we live.

This project, I feel speaks to and honors SURVIVAL OF CREATIVE SPIRIT in ALL of US, as and well expresses an incredible *tenacity of female spirit*, prevailing against hard odds. Spirit transcending destructive forces into beauty and heart.

For me, this whole project is an act of appreciation and gratitude to CREATRIXSTER, our SACRED SPIRITS and to all of you, all who have helped, supported, encouraged, nurtured, taught, shared, inspired, loved me, themselves, any being... in any and all ways, all the ACTIVISTS, ARTIVISTS, who give themselves to easing suffering in this world, who sacrifice themselves for understanding, the environment, love, empathy and compassion, kindness. There are so many characters and stories in these pages, I hope you find a piece of yourself and lots of courage somewhere in these pages.

My grandmother, Minnie Nicholas (full-blood Chiricahua Nde' 'Apache'), began my training when I was a tot. She handed me a pen & a pad to write in, a brush to paint with and a needle to wield beads with. She, herself, was a painter and beadwork artist, who taught me all she knew. I would sit beside her working with my beads as she worked creating beautiful loom and rosette pieces; a place and moment of utmost peace and contentment. She and I had a profoundly empathic relationship, she was a quiet, shy person, very humble, in her light...so was I. She gave me the acceptance, space, trust to be curious, open, explore, be playful and fearless. My father was a visual artist, my mother & aunt were aficionados of jazz, swing dance & clothing creation. My mother was a highly creative person who studied all the time, striving to

improve herself, find self-awareness, consciousness and growth. She learned all the words to all the original Jazz songs, singing them to me frequently. (forthcoming: a written autobiography). I received degrees from many arts schools while extensively, continuously seeking additional private training (dance, music, voice, movement & more). My influences in the arts have been vast. I send great appreciation to all the many teachers & friends who have contributed their gifts to my work & being.

There's a story I tell about a traditional walking stick I produced for Bob Haozous (one of our tribe's master artists). It relates the process of creating the cane (from an original age dilapidated walking stick owned by Geronimo, which I was able to visit in museum archives in Oklahoma and examine first hand) with a trip dear friend, Navajo-Hopi ceramicist, Nathan Begay, his brother and I took down then back up the Grand Canyon. We walked down easily, enjoying vast, colorful views of the striated earth formations around us. We rested a minute by the flowing waters of the Rio Grande River, then began our 10-mile trek back up the steep incline. Nathan cautioned me "Whatever you do, don't look up." I took heed, allowed myself to be present in each step, no destination, just process. As we walked along, many a weary traveler, sat by trail side, staring up, paralyzed by the daunting task of reaching the rim above, exhausted and unable to take another step. They awaited a burro who would eventually rescue them and carry them to the snow-covered plateau above. Step after step, some hours later my feet touched the snow covered rim. The cane took all summer to finish, I did not look up, I immersed myself in the meticulous process of stitching...one tiny bead after the next...bead by bead, step by step. A process that slowly revealed a wonderous beaded replica of Geronimo's original cane. I was humbled by the beauty of the original bead designer's color choices, patterns, genius...I learned so much in the process of recreating that person's amazing work. This Cosmic Dust project has been equal to both those journeys in forcing my being to focus and be totally present, in challenging my abilities towards growth and in manifestation of something far beyond myself. All of these journeys carried me such vast distances within myself and the world.

My tribe, the Chiricahua Nde' lost over 90% of our people just 100 years ago to genocide holocaust. We're the group Geronimo and Cochise are from. (I'm a direct descendant of Cochise.) We were punished relentlessly for *never surrendering* to invading colonial forces, there was an 'EXTIRMINATION' order against us by the US government. Our children were then taken from us and forced into boarding schools, where our's had the highest death rate in those schools. My particular family was extremely abusive. My mother was raped when she was two, causing devastating injury to her psyche. As well, she suffered other abuses during her life, including being bullied by her siblings and my father. Among others, my aunt bullied her, my grandmother & I. She and my aunt bullied me. While I was very little, my mother having no

boundaries, was sexually inappropriate in close proximity to me, extremely loud sex in a room near where I was, with doors open, many times, it terrified me. I was molested beginning at the age of 4, by my grandmother's best friends' husband (a pedophile who during his lifetime was found to have molested many little girls, including my cousin and his own little granddaughter), a Soix Native. Depravity knows no race etc., I was molested by a variety of people of all genders and ages etc. including two teen-aged girls when I was 6 and 7, and my best friend's older brother when I was 11, my cousin, who under the guise of giving me a blessing, put his hands over my head, behind my back, under my arms, fondling my breasts in the process,,in front of his wife. She and I looked at each other...her maybe some sort of denial...me...just confounded and hurt. All of these among others. I was raped the first time I had actual sex at the age of 15, again when I was 18 and unfortunately again when I was in my 40's by a prominent performance artist, whom I trusted, and had no reason to believe would do anything like this and, a person whome I requested mentor me. My sexuality was completely hi-jacked as was my self-confidence. I became suicidal and like my mother, a 'sex and love' addict, using sex to anesthize and as a weapon against myself.

Trauma, intergenerational trauma, trauma...many and varied forms of violation of sanctity of being. I suffer from PTSD, experiencing anxiety and panic attacks (& awful nightmares) When I was younger I was clinically, chronically suicidally depressed, this seriously infringed on my abilities to connect, be present and access 'love', within/without.

I was also the first light skinned child (honey colored skin, Irish red hair) in my extended Native family group and encountered a great deal of counter-racism...resulting in huge dose of 'IDENTITY CRISIS', 'imposter syndrome'. I had a terrible self-image, body-image issues. I did not recognize myself in the mirror, who looked back at me was not who I thought myself to be. I was embarrassed to be 'white' a perpetrator of atrocities against my people, the people I loved, so unreconcilable. I was raised with Apache people, I always thought I looked like them, but the way Apache's responded to me did not corrolate with how I saw myself.

I was deeply bonded with my grandmother, who left when I was 13 to take care of my szphorenci uncle. I had heavy abandonment issues due to this rupture in connection, I never understood, emotionally, why or how she could have left me there with my abusive mother. Later in life I have been able to under/innerstand.

The message I received from others was that I was hideous and deserved mistreatment. I expressed that ingrained negative message at every chance. I was self-destructive, confused, lost, deeply injured. Because I had had the love and trust with my grandmother and because we had often attended Chiricahua sacred ceremonies where we were blessed by our Sacred Spirits I was able to care enough for myself to leave my mother and her pedophile husband, not allow them to destroy me completely, soul murder me and to be on my own when I turned 16..

My mother was a terrible alcoholic as well, as was my father, whom she left when I was two, due to his abuses of her. When he was in a drunken rage he would call her "DIRTY INDIAN!"...cliché 'Irish drunk? She had transferred her addiction to alcohol to an attachment to the pedophile, who pursued me from the age of 15 until I was in my late 20's when I was no longer accessible. He did ultimately molest my little sister by he and my mother.

On my own, alone in San Francisco, I was sure I wouldn't make it to 18. Every year thereafter I was amazed to still be alive. About a decade ago I cut ties with my abusive aunt and her enabling daughter, who now is involved in counseling support for her traumas...my prayers for her wellbeing answered. And, a few years ago I was finally able to cut ties with my mother and her enabling daughter, who is now involved with a supportive group of people, helping her with her issues and traumas, the omni-verse is wonderous!

I am no 'victim' I always fight back. With the help of kind people, friends, 12-step, support groups, therapy, ceremony, yoga, meditation, arts, boundaries, the viserality and truth of my own body and being...I find myself a mature womxn, an elder, a matriarch, a culture bearer for my tribe; full of joy; happy, happy to be alive and grateful to be who I am. Truly astounding. Despite everything predators, abusers, oppressors have done to destroy me...this spirit I am exists. And, beyond all the horrors...I have done wonders with this existence...

MY EXISTENCE IS RESISTENCE.

As Native people:

OUR EXISTENCE IS RESISTENCE

Lalalalalalalaaaaalaaaaaa!!!!

My works reflect, resonate this as you will soon see.

Regarding the works: In my works, at times, the projects are separate entities unto themselves, reflecting only one area of training, at other times everything coalesces into multi-faceted projects. The first third of this chapter book series explores simple into elaborate aspects of many forms. And, as I do love experimentation, exploration, play, discovery & PROCESS this exploration is often highly surprising. I dispense with this 'easier to more complicated' structure in the rest of the book due to the sequence of related works and time periods of pieces overlapping in a highly random form.

In this chapter set, I am endeavoring to pronounce the momentum from object-based work into performance arts, inundations and performance (which also involves intricate costuming aspects). I am not a 'Jack of All Trades', but have actually mastered many forms. I work in a spiral which is ever building upon the tier below...sometimes writing, performance and singing, sometimes singing, painting, beading, etc....carrying each discipline to the next level of discovery when revisited.

The 'COSMIC DUST' book chapter series represents about three fourths of my work. Many works were not documented and some documentation has been lost over the years. My apologies for the condition of some of the photos, this is all that is available at this time. Additionally, forthcoming is the third portion of this series which will cover the vibrant DRAWINGS, PAINTINGS, PRINTS, BOOKS etc. that I have produced during my lifetime...over 1,000 pieces.

MANY OF THESE WORKS ARE PART OF OUR CHIRICAHUA WARM SPRINGS TRIBE OF NEW MEXICO's and other collections. Many are owned by other individuals who bought or traded for them. I have also gifted a great many to various people. Personally, I retain only my ceremonial pieces and some installation bits.

I am LED by a muse who paces me at the speed of a lighting ball creatively, perpetually expanding the 'petty me' into a universe far beyond the reaches of my tiny self. I enjoy this process immensely.

To honor existence, myself and all who struggle against oppressive, destructive forces and to honor all my friends and supporter and all who have contributed positively to my being...it brings me the greatest joy be able to share with all of you, the fruit of who I am in this 'Cosmic Dust a Visual Artivistic Autobiography' project. There are so many, many **STORIES** and **CHARACTERS** in these chapters, I hope you find a bit of yourself, **courage. light**, love, love love...love to the fish in the sea, love in the kaleidoscopic forms of the clouds in the sky, love through the pain, love to breathe and live by...curiosity, play, focus...positive manifestations...borne of love. May this visitation bring you light, life...pleasure, discovery, peace...courage, Cranberry sauce to all!

Thank you for witnessing!

Love to all.

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MY MOTHER CAROLINE ZUREGA & AUNT MARY ZUREGA  
@ 2022 Chirichua Warm-Springs Nde' Apache Ceremony, Apache, Oklahoma

## CHAPTER INTRO:

Loom & Rosette stitches are great places to begin learning the ins & outs of bead work. They're not excessively complicated & render wonderful results. This is where my grandmother, Minnie Nicholas (full-blood Chiricahua Nde' 'Apache') began my training.

## HOMAGE to MINK

Wood & Seed Beads, Mink Paw,

Leather, Felt

35 inches

Rosette: 4 inches diameter



# THE GREY

Seed & Glass Beads,  
Leather & Felt

40 inches

Rosette: 4 inches diameter



## ORANGE HAIRTIES

(left)

Japanese Cut Glass Beads

## PUEBLE HAIRTIES

(below)

Seed & Glass Beads,

Leather & Felt

Rosettes: 2 1/2 inch diameter



# BIRD FLYING & BIRD LANDING

Seed Beads, Leather, Felt

Rosettes: 5 inch diameter

(Owner: Janeen Antoine of American Indian Contemporary Arts & KPFA)

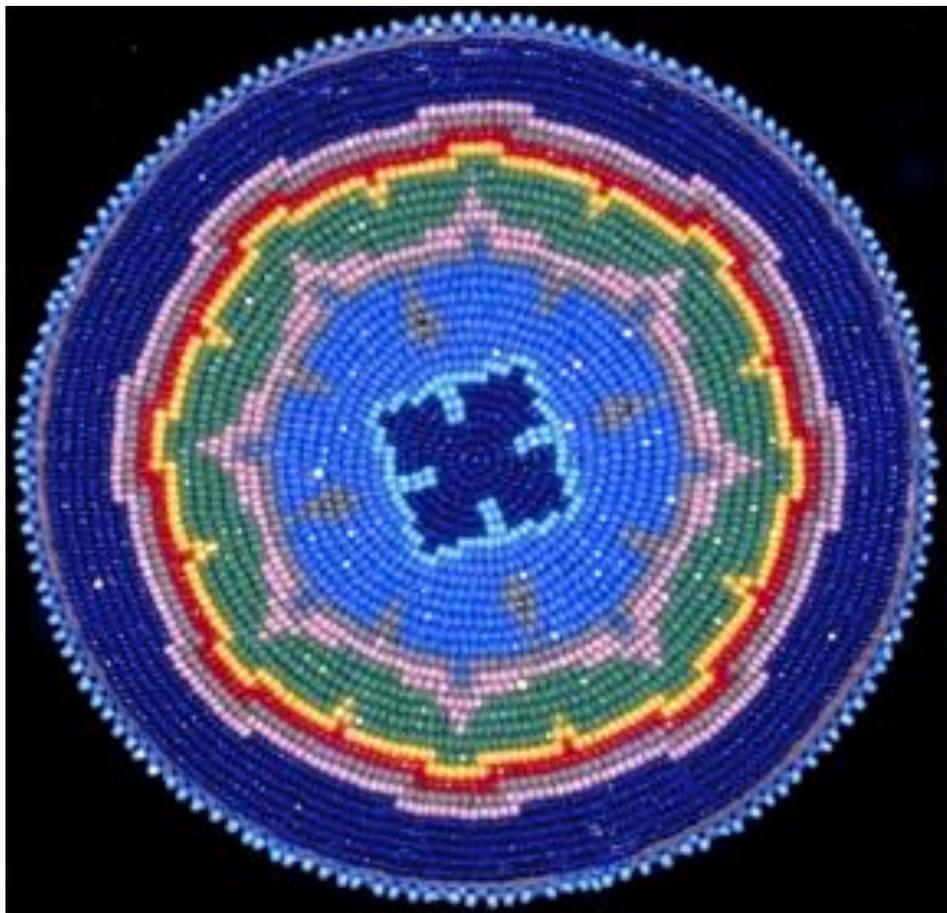


# MEDITATION

Cut Glass Beads,

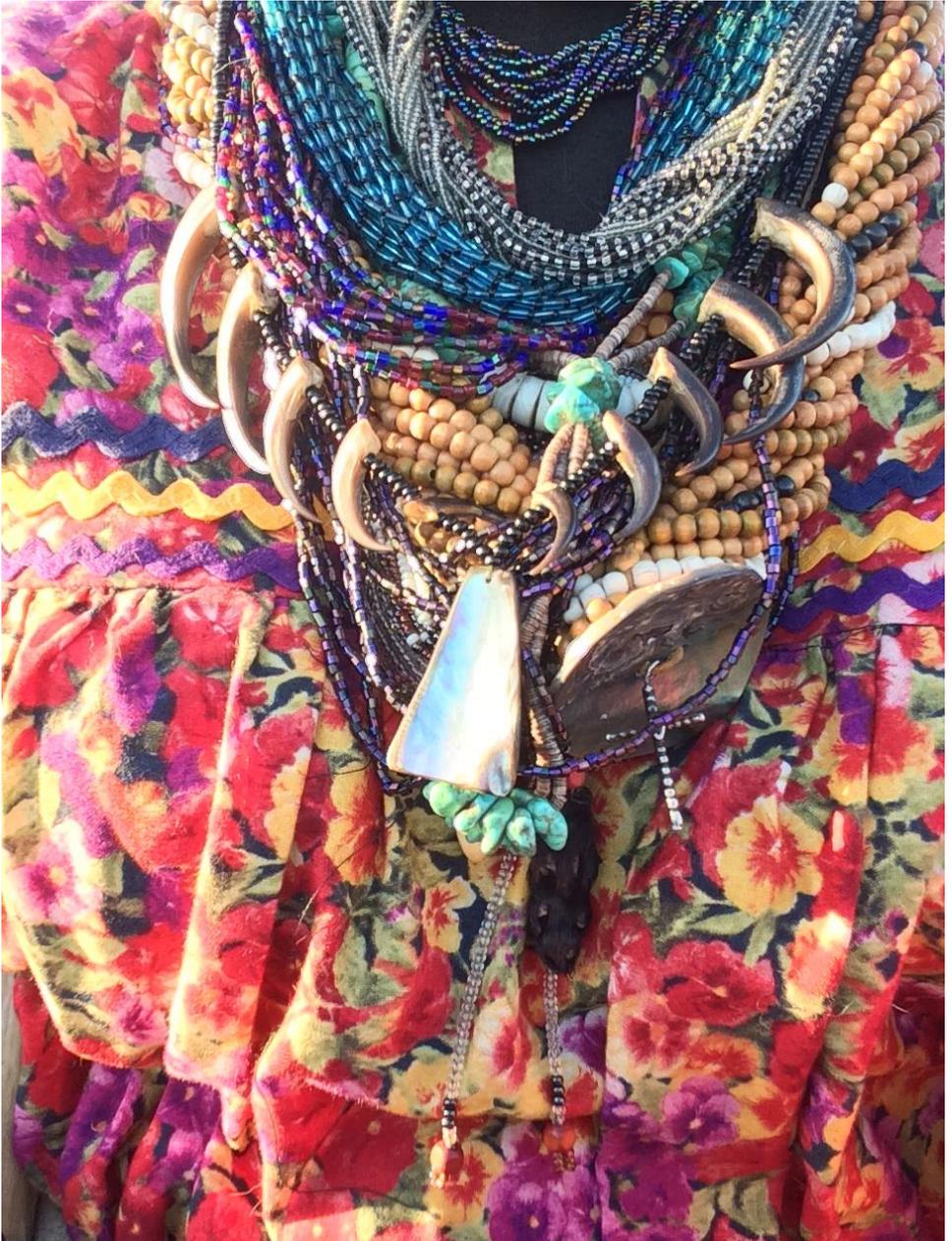
Leather & Felt

Rosettes: 6-inch diameter



## CEREMONIAL NECKLACES

Cut Glass, Seed, Wooden Trade Beads, Eagle Claws,  
Turquoise, Abalone, Silver, Shell, Coral Heishi  
Leather & Felt



## EAGLE CLAW

Glass Beads,

Eagle Claws,

Abalone, Leather

25 inches



# NDE' CEREMONIAL NECKLACE

Grandmother's Aunt Bessie Gooday's Wooden Trade Beads

Wooden Trade Beads, Abalone, Silver

22 inches



# STILLNESS

Seed, Glass & Bone Beads

40 inches

Rosette: 4 inches diameter



# TRADITIONAL PLAINS NATIVE CHOCKER

Glass, Bone, Metal Beads, Abalone

16 inches



## MINI INUNDATION NECKLACE

Cut Glass, Seed, Turquoise

42 inches

I used every stitch and bead invention that Presented an opportunity; Peyote, Piling, Wrap, Loom Bead Weaving, Brick & more. I really had fun letting the beads lead me.

(Owner: Jim Waddell of Blue Gem Turquoise Mine)





# RECTANGLE

Seed Beads, Metal Belt Buckle, Leather

4 x 2 ½ inches

(Orientation: horizontal)

(Owner: Vincent Zurega)

z



# SQUARE

Seed & Glass Beads

Rosette: 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches



# INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN INDIAN ARTS ICON

Cut Glass Beads

Rosette: 5 1/2 inches diameter

This is one of only two pieces where I've used an existing design. My credo is to only do original invented works of my own design and creative inspiration. This and the one on the following page were requested by very special people, therefore I made an exception...with wonderful results, good practice!



## TRADITIONAL CROW DESIGN

Vintage Crow Beads

Rosette: 5 1/2 inches diameter

This is one of only two pieces where I've used an existing design. My credo is to only do original invented works of my own design and creative inspiration. This and the one on the preceding page were requested by very special people, therefore I made an exception...with wonderful results, good practice!

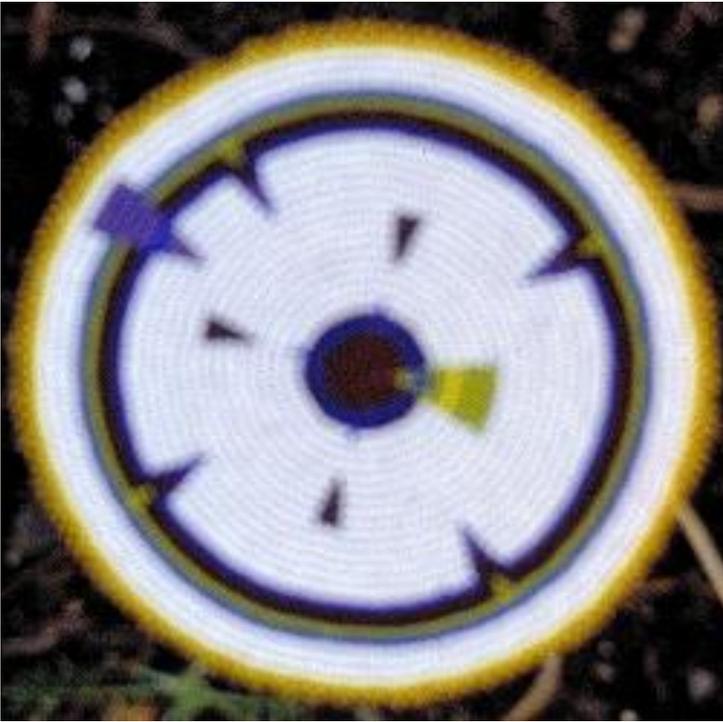




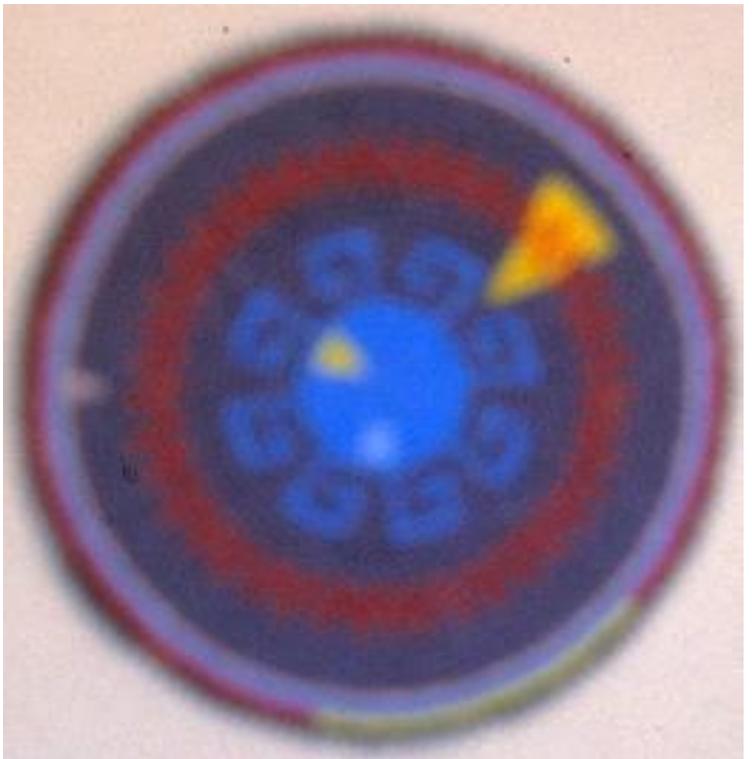
**PLAY**  
Plastic & Wooden Beads  
Rosette: 3-inch diameter  
With elaborate edging stitch



**SPIN**  
Seed Beads  
3 1/2 diameter



TRIANGLES  
Cut Glass Beads  
Rosettes:  
6 inches diameter





(Previous page)

## ILLUMINATION

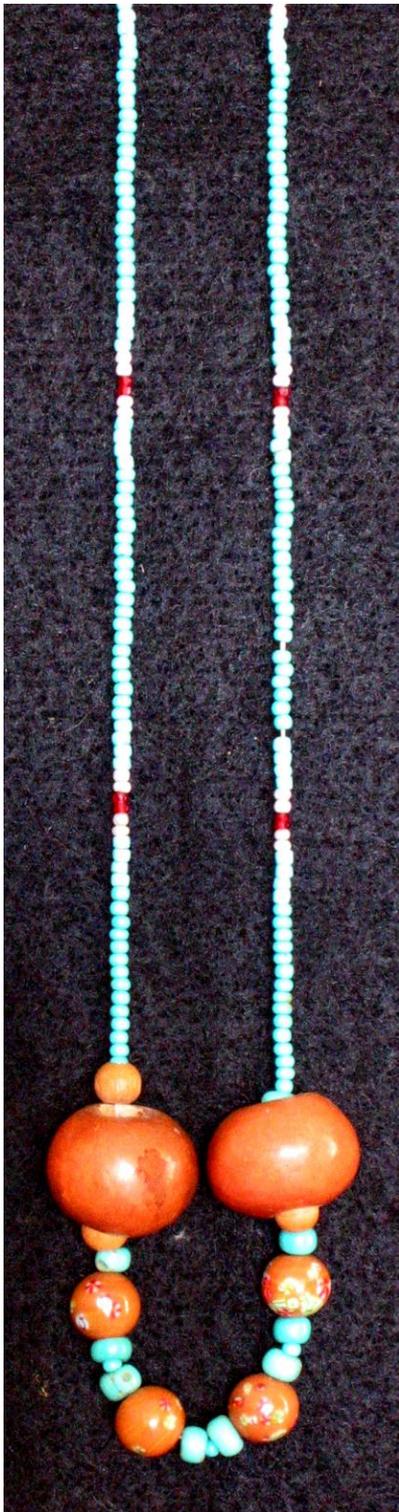
Cut Glass, Glass & Bone Beads

23 inches

Rosette: 5 x 6 inches

Water Bird design, won first place awards at Anadarko Indian Fair...  
went on to greater, more illustrious destinations.

This piece was delivered to President/Prime Minister Fidel Castro just before he  
died by Janeen Antoine of American Indian Contemporary Arts, it now housed in  
the Cuban Government collection.



## SIMPLE

Cut Glass, Seed &  
Handmade Ceramic Beads

30 inches

The ceramic beads in this piece were created

By Master ceramicist

Nathan Begay

art: sprinkles of cosmic dust

a culture that knows that each of us is a cosmic being,  
that each of us is the universe...& that the universe expresses itself through love  
& Love is art... the universe is art... & Art sparkles from each of us...  
i am art, art is me, | am the cosmic realm

I am SACRED SPIRIT  
PRESENT NIW  
in body & being, feeling & healing  
within/without, seen/unseen, now/ininitely

special acknowledgements to my/our partial funders:  
Our Tribe; The Chiricahua Warm Springs Nde' Tribe of New Mexico  
Aka Fort Sill Apaches  
Center for Cultural Innovation,  
& Peter J. McIntyre, John & Maxine Zaro  
To all my teachers & guides especially Michael Leeland Darrow  
(Chiricahua Nde' Apache Tribal Historian/Cultural Expert/Member)

MINI WICHONIE, WATER IS LIFE  
& To all who helped me/us to survive  
OUR EXISTENCE IS RESISTENCE  
LALALALLALLALALALAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!

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THANKS FOR SUPPORTING LIVING ARTMISTS; WE KEEP LIFE LOVING

## DECOY GALLERINA: SHORT BIO 2022

**STATUS & ORIGINS:** Rebel Irish/Chiricahua Nde' ('Fort Sill' Apache; the group Geronimo & Cochise are from), Matriarch/Elder, Culture Bearer, Two-Spirit, Cross-Platform/Cross-Genre Life Long Artist & direct descendant of Cochise

Raised in San Francisco/New Mexico/Apache/Oklahoma

**STYLES:** Psychedelic Stomp to Deep Traditional works

**GENRES:** Beadwork master, costuming, painter, installation and performance art, video, lyricist, composer, writer, performance artist, actress, singer, dancer, visual artist, perpetual student

**MEMBER:** Chiricahua Warm-Springs Nde' (Apache) Tribe of New Mexico, Theatre Movement International, Radical Medicine, Idle No More, Member/Curator Komotion Int'l SF, more...

**TRAINING:** Nde' ceremonies, several decades study and research in Chiricahua cultural aspects with Tribal Historian, Cultural Expert, Linguist & tribal member; Leland Michael Darrow, extensive private training in music, dance, arts & training with Nde' Grandmother Minnie Nicholas in writing, beadwork, painting and with mother Caroline and aunt & Mary Zurega in costuming, music appreciation and San Francisco 'Live Culture'

**INFLUENCES/TEACHERS:** diverse Bay Area culture, Leland Michael Darrow, Jill Parker, Rene Yanez, BadUnklSista, Rudradeep Chakrabarti, Charles Justin Hoover, Guillermo Gomez-Pena, Janeen Antione; American Indian Contemporary Arts Gallery, Black Panthers and their artist; Emory Douglas, American Indian Movement and Richard Oakes, AIM WEST; Tony Gonzales, La Pena, Standing Rock Red Warrior Camp, Pennie Opal Plant & Isabella Zizi; Idle No More, Upward Bound, Oakland Intertribal FreindshipHouse, Leonard Peltier, Alanon, Ceremony, David Solnit, Norm Sands, Annie Sprinkle, Malaquias Montoya, Juanita Barry, Phil Foss, Santa Fe Opera, Steven Paul Judd, American Indian Film Festival SF, BAAITS Powwow, First Nation/Indigenous culture and struggles far and wide, many more teachers and inspirations

**BFA DEGREES:** San Francisco Art Institute, California College of the Arts, College of Santa Fe, Institute of American Indian Arts

**PRESENTATIONS:** San Francisco International Arts Festival, Allan Houser Garden Gallery, Santa Fe, Studio 23, Alameda; Displacement Show, High Street Gallery London, DeYoung Museum, IAIA Museum, POWPOWPOW SF, REAL FACES interviews of 500 activists (YouTube), Playwriter/performer of "Homecoming" Chiricahua Nde' Apache Odyssey' and 'Haunting Our His&Herstories; Indigenous Children's Boarding School Experiences', Yerba Buena Gardens First Nation Festival, Berkeley World Music Festival, Ivy Room, Venice Biennale, Counter Pulse Theater, San Francisco Independent Arts Festival, United States Arts and Crafts Board, La Pena, Stork Club, Galeria de la Raza, San Francisco Art Institute, many more...

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