



Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Navajo Nation Museum to Feature Unique Exhibit Called Jo’Jini’

WINDOW ROCK, AZ. – Jo’ Jini’.

These may be the most common two Navajo words that are spoken everyday by the Navajo people.

The English translation of Jo’Jini’ is “That’s What I Heard.”

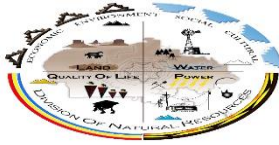
Navajo Nation Curator Clarenda Begay stated, “The words Jo’ Jini’ just came to me one day. We get into conversations and everyone always talks about life.”

Begay wondered, what if objects could talk.

“What if the objects at the Navajo Nation could tell stories of themselves?” she asked. “Viewers can make decision as to where these objects came from. When we hear the word, jini, our eyes get bigger and we become more interested. We form our own opinions. People really want to know more when they hear the word jini.”

Hence, that is the name of the first 2016 Navajo Nation Museum exhibit: Jo’ Jini’ – If These Objects Could Talk,” which will open on January 14th here in the capital of the Navajo Nation.

Begay explained that the Jo’ Jini’ Exhibit was also inspired by medicine men who share traditional Navajo teachings and usually end with the words Jo’ Jini.



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“Often times in ceremonies, the medicine man will start talking and share his teachings and oral stories then end with jini,” Begay described. “This is how we share our cultural teachings and pass them on from one generation to another through oral stories.”

Begay said rather than describing the purpose or origin of each piece of the Jo’ Jini’ Exhibit, she wants the objects to tell their own stories.

In fact, the motto of the Navajo Nation Museum is it is a living and lively place for the Dine’ to foster positive self identity based on Ke’ and cultural teachings that are passed on by our elders.

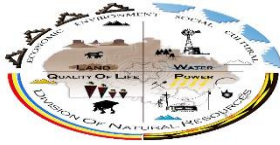
The Jo’ Jini’ Exhibit will feature 60 different contemporary objects that were donated by 25 different donors such as the Navajo artists themselves, and from doctors and teachers who wanted to share their pieces with viewers. It will include jewelry, folk art, pottery, historical items and contemporary pieces.

“We don’t just accept anything and everything,” Begay noted. “Our scope of collections have to be unique and pertain to the Navajo Nation historically and geographically. Sometimes the Navajo people will donate their pieces because they want us to keep them in perpetuity and part of the Navajo Nation collection.”

One such donated piece includes a flag that was flown at Fort Sumner, New Mexico.

A postcard promoting the Jo’ Jini’ Exhibit has a highway at the banner, which Begay noted, “The highway connects the objects with the Navajo Nation Museum and the people. The highway leads home and the Navajo Nation is home.

Since she began working for the Navajo Nation Museum in 1991, Begay said the Navajo Nation Museum was primarily housed with historical Navajo pieces. She soon realized there was a missing link in the collection, which did not include contemporary Navajo art and objects.



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“A lot of our pieces in the Navajo Nation Museum were historical,” she commented. “My goal as a curator is to have a kiosk in the lobby so viewers can see and learn more about all of our collections.”

Navajo Nation Museum Director Manuelito Wheeler, stated, “In honor of a new year, we want to invite the public to our very first 2016 exhibit at the Navajo Nation Museum. We look forward to sharing many new great exhibits, activities, workshops and events with the Navajo people and visitors. We hope the Navajo Nation Museum enriches your knowledge and appreciation of the Dine’ people.”

To learn more about the Jo’ Jini Exhibit and more about the Navajo Nation Museum, contact them at (928) 871-7941 or via the Navajo Nation Museum Facebook page.