



Whirling Logs Special Exhibit Opening June 5

A Symbol in Time Immemorial

We call it "whirling logs." Its presence in Native artwork is largely misunderstood.

Decades of visitors have seen pottery, baskets, and textile displayed throughout our museum, embellished with an instantly recognizable design element. Sight of the "swastika"

symbol commonly leads to the question of why we would display something that evokes such negative memories and emotions from WWII.

For millennia, it had positive connotations associated with the forces of nature, harmony, or good fortune. The contemporary Hopi call it "Mohaveni", and it represents the migrating clans. The intersection of the lines is "Tuwanasveh"- the center of the universe. Indeed, it is a universal symbol which originated in ancient times.

In the ancient language of Sanskrit, "swastika" means well-being. It was common to many people world-wide, including Hindus, Buddhists, and others, as well of the Native people of this continent. Now, 70 years after the Navajo, Hopi, Apache, and Tohono O'odham signed a ban on use of the symbol in protest to the Nazi's misappropriation of it, many Native artists are reclaiming the whirling logs for its original meaning.