

## PORTFOLIO COPY

### BACKGROUND READING FOR PRESENTERS

Pottery and Baskets: 1100-1960

Source: *Picturing America Teacher Resource Book*

This is a different type of painting--there are actually **six** different artists represented by the objects (pottery and baskets) in the painting. Following is a brief background for each. Feel free to talk about just a few, or just briefly mention something from each artist/culture.

#### **Anasazi Cylinder jars, 1100 A.D.**

A thousand years ago, American Indians used plants, bone, skin, earth, and stone to fashion the objects needed for daily life. Besides being useful, the objects, like the jars in the painting, indicate a deep regard for beauty. The clay jars were made in the areas where today are the states of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado. The people who made these jars were farmers. The jars were made by hand; each one is different from the others.

#### **Sikyatki Bowl 1350-1700**

The decorations in the bowl were made by paint that was made by plant and mineral based colors. The main patterns are on the inside, rather than the outside, of the bowl.

The bowl seems to contain the picture of a great reptile, which has a three feather headdress, and its snout and one of its toes stretch to fantastic length.

#### **Maria Montoya Martinez (1887-1980) and Julian Martinez (1879-1939)**

This married couple made pots in the area today known as Santa Fe, New Mexico. The jar is special because it has a black-on-black decoration.

#### **Louisa Keyser (1850-1925) Beacon Lights Basket**

Keyser was part of the Indian tribe known as the Washoe, who lived in the state of Nevada. She began making ceremonial baskets that could be sold for a profit. The baskets were of many different sizes and shapes and colors.

### **Caesar Johnson (1872-1960) Gullah Rice Fanner Basket**

This basket was made in South Carolina. The tradition arrived from West Africa with slaves. The basket in the picture was used by workers as a rice winnowing tray. Rice would be put in the basket, then separated with a tool, so that what was left could be used.

### **Carl Toolak (1885-1945) Baleen Basket**

This basket is made from baleen, which is the stiff part found in the mouth of a baleen whale. Baleen can be light brown to black.

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### ART PRESENTER PROGRAM

#### SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### *Pottery and Baskets*

**There are fewer questions with this painting. However, you may want to point to each object to get the comparisons. That will take longer.**

1. How are these objects similar?

*All are meant to hold something; all are made from natural materials; all are circular; all but one are decorated; all but one were made by American Indians.*

2. If you could touch these objects, how would each feel?

*The clay pots are smooth, possibly cool. The Maria Martinez pot may feel rough in the design area,. The baskets are rough or knobby. The baleen basket has a smooth figure on top.*

3. What kind of materials do you think each of these objects was made from?

*Clay for the pots, animal or plant material for the baskets.*

4. What do you like about each of these pots and baskets?

5. Which ones do you think you would like to have for your own/in your house?  
Why?

6. Why is it important to keep objects from a long time ago and study them?

## **PORTFOLIO COPY**

Kindergarten  
*Pottery and Baskets*

### **ART PRESENTER PROGRAM**

#### **EXTENDED ACTIVITY**

1. Using white paper plates or bowls, decorate them as if they were designs from the past. (reptiles like in the Sikyatki Bowl might be a fun idea to try) Crayons would be best to use, but markers might also work. Encourage students to decorate all areas of the plate or bowl.