



Mexico: Meso-American Indigenous People – The Huichol People

Post-visit Activity: Quick Write

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Use the word bank below to produce a Quick Write describing the culture of the Huichol.

Meso-America

ecotourism

shaman

indigenous

sacred

nature

gourds

art

Sierra Madre Mountains





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See below for information.



The homeland of the Huichols is remote. It is protected from the outside by the difficult access to its communities in remote parts of the Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico. Due to the isolation of its villages, the people have until recently managed to resist all but the most minor modifications from western sources. As a result, their art - synonymous with religious devotion - has remained intact and intensely personal. The medicine man is the shaman who links the community with the "other world" from where their creativity pours forth as a gift from their deified ancestors to be given back as offerings to the gods. Because the Huichol believe God has given them everything including their talents and abilities, pilgrimages are made every year by families as well as single individuals, young and old, to the sacred land of Wirikuta (Huichol)

Their most remarkable form of art are the tablas- "paintings" made by pressing colored yarn into beeswax coating on boards. Tablas range from geometrical to pictorial and depict supernatural animals and other beings. This creativity in religious art is also exhibited in other handicrafts and clothing. Celestial events-solar/lunar eclipses- are often depicted, beaded ceremonial bowls are used with Aztec and other designs.

GOURD BOWLS - Used by shamans as containers filled with important symbols, such as corn, animals, and images of family members. Colorfully decorated, they are carried during ceremonies and prayer for protection, health, and abundance. The symbols themselves represent attributes of different gods and goddesses. They are placed in shrines and sacred sites throughout the Huichol homeland.

National Geographic: Book of Peoples of the World- A Guide to Cultures, pp. 324-325