

**Minneapolis Institute of Arts
Accessions Proposal**

Curator: Joe D. Horse Capture

Department: Art of Africa and the Americas

Date: July 25, 2012



1. Description and Summary of Object:

Loan Number: L2012.71

Artist/Maker: Melissa Cody, Diné (Navajo), Southwest region

Title/Object: *Deep Brain Stimulation*

Date: 2011

Medium: wool

Dimensions: 40 x 30 ³/₄ inches (101.6 x 78.11 cm)

Signed, marked or inscribed:

Country of manufacture: USA

Vendor/Donor: Melissa Cody, Phoenix, AZ

Credit Line: The Patricia and Peter Frechette Endowment for Art Acquisition

Present Location: MIA

Price/Value: \$

2. Artist, Style, and explanation of the proposed object:

Melissa Cody is a young Diné (Navajo) weaver who comes from a family that has been weaving for four generations. Consequently, she is acutely aware of historic Diné weaving styles, which can often be traced from one generation to the next, and from one region to another. Formally educated at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Cody is also keenly aware of the theory and practice of contemporary art. For her own work, Cody uses designs and techniques from historic Diné work, but masterfully riffs on traditional patterns by introducing new colors and design elements. In doing so, Cody is at the forefront of this next shift in Diné weaving. She is not reproducing historic designs, but re-inventing them.

3. Condition:

Excellent. A full condition report is on file in the Registration department.

4. Provenance:

Purchased directly from the artist.

5. Related Objects:

There are many contemporary Diné weavings in private and public collections throughout the United States. Cody's textiles are represented in several private collection and the Navajo Nation Museum, Window Rock, AZ; Heard Museum, Phoenix, AZ; Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe, NM.

6. Complements the existing collection:

The MIA has a growing collection of historic Diné textiles, but very few works by contemporary Diné artists. The most recent acquisition in this area is a tapestry created by Edith Yazzie (2011.50).

7. Plans for exhibiting:

This work (and the Edith Yazzie tapestry) will be installed in the Native American art gallery (G259) during the annual rotation in June 2012.

8. Why do you recommend the object?

The design and technical artistry of this work make it an excellent example of how a generation of young Diné weavers is reinterpreting historic work to reflect their own contemporary taste, knowledge and experience. This work would be a great addition to our permanent collection because of its high level of quality, excellent design, and the insight it provides into the evolution Diné textiles.

The MIA has a growing collection of Diné weavings that are mostly historic. The weaving under consideration illustrates the change of weaving designs by this tribal group. Melissa Cody is part of a group of young weavers who use their traditional weaving knowledge, which they learned from their parents and grandparents, and combine it with their formal art education. The result of this combination is work that uses historic designs as a base, but also incorporates innovative patterns and designs. In this example, *Deep Brain Stimulation*, Cody's experiments with the historic Germantown style of weaving that is defined by bright colors of synthetic dyes that was introduced to the Diné. In this work, Cody uses a series of interlocking diamonds (a common motif seen in Germantown work) that change in size as they move from one end of the weaving to the other. The designs are divided into three vertical sections, and the diamonds overlap, while the entire work is held together by a series of crosses, known as Spider Woman designs among the Diné. The weaving appears to have optical depth because of the progression of the size of the diamonds and the "overlay" of the crosses.