

Basic Detail Report



Rug

Date

c. 1900

Primary Maker

Navajo

Medium

Wool and pigment

Description

This Navajo wool rug is characterized by its high contrast central motif of a cross surrounded by four triangles. The origin of this piece is unidentified, but triangles, diamonds and crosses all held important meaning within Navajo culture, the first two representative of the Navajo homeland, and the latter synonymous with the whirling log or swastika. There is some evidence that the design was inspired by early sand paintings, but this has yet to be substantiated. Swastikas were important to the Navajo

as both a symbol from their Night Chant, a healing ceremony, and as a visual representation of the phrase, “successfully attaining a ripe old age by daily spiritual renewal according to the universal beauty of the cosmos.” This usage was probably done at the behest of Western traders interested in using Asian symbols in stimulating the purchase of rugs on the East Coast.

Dimensions

82 × 54 in. (208.3 × 137.2 cm)