

Basic Detail Report



Rug

Date

c. 1911

Primary Maker

Navajo

Medium

Wool and pigment

Description

This is a Navajo rug which dates to approximately 1911. By 1900 Navajo rugs were woven with naturally pigmented wool, with red being the only exception. The border suggests that the weaver was influenced by the transitional period, where strong borders were added for the eastern markets these textiles were bound for. Earlier Navajo textiles tend to have endlessly expanding designs. However, many transitional blankets or rugs adopted the use of commercial cotton string, whereas this textile makes use of hand spun wool yarns. As for the swastika motif, despite its modern connotations it has been an auspicious symbol for at least thousands of years. For the Navajo, it was a figurative representation of the 'whirling logs,' a commonly depicted sand painting from the Night Chant and together with an axis with two legs—where the swastika instead has four—forms a visual pun of the Navajo mantra, "successfully attaining a ripe old age by daily spiritual renewal according to the universal beauty of the cosmos." It too was used more prevalently as a direct result of traders.

Dimensions

38 × 58 in. (96.5 × 147.3 cm)