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The Virtual Coe *Being together while being apart...*

December 17, 2021

*You can't take it with you,
so give it all away...*



Nani Chacon at the Unveiling, Coe Center, 2021

At this time of year, when the days are short and the nights are long, we feel the pressure building around holiday gifting and the passing of another year. We offer you this reminder of sharing, generosity, and love from the inspiring Nani Chacon (Diné/Chicana).

Nani recently [completed her monumental mural](#) titled, *You can't take it with you, so give it all away*, on the exterior of the Coe's new Project Space. This past weekend, Nani and the Coe officially unveiled the mural to our community, friends, and family. In her introduction to her work, Nani spoke of the common experience between artists who are constantly opening themselves up and consciously parting with their labors

of love and creativity, and collectors like Ted Coe, who, after acquiring so much, realized that the most significant action he could take with his collection was to give it all away.

This mural visually captures the Coe's ongoing work that merges an emphasis on its impressive collection of global Indigenous art from across time, with immersive, artist-driven projects centering the voices of leading local and regional Indigenous artists. Nani's process in creating *You can't take it with you...so give it all away* began with hands-on work in the Coe collection. Through these visits, Chacon chose to focus her vision for the mural on an aesthetic, cultural, and material dialogue between two baskets—one contemporary and one historic.



For Chacon, these two baskets, created by Elsie Stone Holiday (Diné) in the 1990s and an unknown Seneca maker in the late 1800s, respectively, capture a sense of continuance across time and space. In featuring two larger-than-life Native women holding the baskets in light and love, Chacon captures the generational significance of making and fostering these art forms.

We hope that, in the midst of your own holiday hustle and bustle, you can take a moment to come by and step into the light and space that Nani has created to share with our community.

Nani Chacon speaks about the mural [preview clip], 2021. Video by Keith Grospeck.

The path of corn...



Scratch...scratch...scratch... Sweat rolls down her face as her arms push the rock against the jaguar's stone back, grinding the cooked maize kernels further into a fine pasty purple pulp. Ocean waves can be heard in the background, a faint sweet scent from a nearby papaya tree, sun shining bright, as she pushes the kernels further into the metate. With the fire steadily burning low, fresh seafood or mariscos brought from a recent fishing trip will certainly complete the menu with the corn tortillas. Her diet, based on corn, beans, squash, fishing, hunting wild animals, and many more foods, were typical of these abundant tropical lands. Meanwhile, the stone jaguar keenly approves with its large oval eyes gazing from across the fire pit. Its small rounded ears are listening to the fire on the hearth; its large semicircle nostrils are inhaling mouth-watering smells; as its protruding jaws and upper lip part showing teeth drawn inside, as if letting out a long sawing roar sound before a meal or a kill.



From the looks of this particularly worn metate, the embellished jaguar head and its raised platform on three pegged legs demonstrate a certain ceremonial purpose, possibly made out of volcanic stone, as commonly found in the rich [Nicoya](#) cultures during this time period. For this purpose, it may have been made to accompany the deceased into the afterlife or used to make delectable, fermented corn drinks for sacred ceremonies.

Some say the “Nicoya” name comes from the Nahuatl word to summon Tezcatlipoca, their god of night, represented by the sacred jaguar—as seen as the headpiece of this burnished piece. The archetypal jaguar, to this day, is present in many painted Chorotega ceramic iconography, being portrayed in [various forms, qualities, and styles](#).

Read more [HERE](#).

Artist Unknown (Chorotega), *Metate*, c. 1000 AD. Stone, 10.75 x 27.75 x 13 in. PC0008



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