



The serape, or blanket, became an important type of weaving for the Navajo people. Historically, these distinctive garments found their roots in the mid-19th century, primarily between 1840-1860. Inspired by Mexican ponchos, particularly the Saltillo blanket, Navajo weavers infused their unique cultural elements into the design. Serapes are known for their bright colors and lively patterns that follow traditional designs. The motifs, shapes, and colors of these serapes resonate deeply. The geometric patterns evoke a sense of harmony and balance, while the vibrant color palette symbolizes the spiritual significance embedded in every thread. A typical one might have lines going sideways and shaped like diamonds, and some are even called "radio-wave" patterns because they look rare. These designs show the unique styles of Native Americans in the Southwest, combining different weaving traditions from both Native and Hispanic communities. Other traditional designs inspire the Serape shown above, there are multiple patterns, shapes, and colors to create this Serape. The blanket is woven using different techniques backstrap, where you attach one end of the loom to a fixed object and the end of the strap is worn around the weaver's waist; the weaver then adjusts the tension of the tread to create patterns and design. Pedal loom is a technique where the weaver uses a foot pedal that allows a wider and faster production. Tapestry weaving is a technique used to create symbols by interlacing colored threads. The fibers used are a mixture of cotton and agave cactus fibers that are dyed naturally with materials extracted from fruits and insects. This design is a symmetrical design different from many other traditional serapes.

Citation

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