



San Jose Museum of  
**Quilts &  
Textiles**

## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### COMTEMPORARY NAVAJO WEAVING

#### Exhibit Showcases Work of Mother and Daughter Master Weavers



Setting Sun by Ellen Begay



Interplay of Colors  
by Lucy Begay



Ellen Begay and Lucy Begay  
with *Vision Quest* by Ellen Begay

SAN JOSE, Calif., December 14, 2009 – Opening February 16 and on view through May 2, 2010 is a new exhibition *Navajo Weaving in the Present Tense: The Art of Lucy and Ellen Begay*. This will be the first retrospective exhibition of contemporary textile art by Navajo weavers Lucy Begay and her daughter Ellen. Drawn primarily from the private collection of Gary Beaudoin, the exhibit features approximately eighteen, one-of-a-kind artworks woven by Lucy and Ellen over the past twenty years.

Gary Beaudoin, the collector and advocate of their work says, “This is a great American story, likened to the quilts of Gee’s Bend. The Begays weave to carry on the tradition passed down by Lucy’s mother and they try to create something new with every piece. Their interest is in being creative in the context of the traditional life they lead; the act of weaving is a centering activity and an expression of a balanced life.”

The Begays’ work is strongly rooted in and draws inspiration from what has become known as the Burntwater Navajo rug weaving style, one of the last regional styles to evolve in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This style combines the bordered, central geometric designs of Granado and Two Grey Hills with rich vegetal colors combined with natural sheep’s wool. The Begay’s work stands on its own as visually commanding and complex, contemporary fiber art. Their skilled weaving technique and handling of perspective, scale and color is as sophisticated as academically trained studio artists who’ve chosen to work in the fiber field. These two artist-weavers bridge the traditional Navajo approach to weaving to a compelling contemporary vision.

Curator Deborah Corsini says, “The Begays are masterful technicians and artful designers. Their work is a refined mix of complicated graphic patterning, elegant symmetry, and strong value contrasts. The intertwined variations of border elements serve as a framework and contain the visual tension within the piece. Their work is powerful, visually striking and a continuation of the rich legacy of Navajo weaving as it continues to evolve in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

### **Exhibition-Related Programming:**

Join us for the panel discussion *Navajo Weaving in the Present Tense*, with collector Gary Beaudoin and Navajo weaver Brenda Spencer; Saturday, February 20, 2010 from 1 – 3pm \$15, \$10 members and students. Tickets available at [www.sjqiltmuseum.org/calendar](http://www.sjqiltmuseum.org/calendar) or call 408.971.0323 x14.

San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles was the first museum in the United States dedicated to quilts and textiles as an art form. In 2005 San Jose Mercury News named the Museum one of the top 10 attractions in San Jose. Museum and Museum Store hours are: 10:00am-5:00pm Tuesday through Sunday; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission is \$8.00 general; \$6.50 students and seniors; and free to museum members and children under 13. Admission is free on the first Friday of each month. The San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles is located at 520 South First Street in downtown San Jose. For more information, call 408-971-0323 or visit [www.sjqiltmuseum.org](http://www.sjqiltmuseum.org).

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Editor’s Note: For available images go to: [www.sjqiltmuseum.org/primg\\_spring10](http://www.sjqiltmuseum.org/primg_spring10) or request via email at [pr@sjqiltmuseum.org](mailto:pr@sjqiltmuseum.org)