

***I was born in Shiprock, NM. I am from the Hooghanłani (Manyhogans) and To'di'chi'nii (Bitterwater) clans. My maternal grandfather is of the To'ahgleenii' (Waters Flow Together) clan and my paternal grandfather was Kisaní (Hopi). This is the way I am a Diné woman.***

My maternal grandparents are from the San Juan Valley and Huerfano, NM, and my paternal grandparents are from *Kinbeto*, New Mexico. My family has always lived in the area of northern New Mexico; it is the place of our roots. For generations, my family has planted their crops, grazed their livestock and built their homes in the place we call *Totá*, or Farmington. As a life-long resident of this area, I have watched the physical decline of the flora and fauna, and too, the ill health affects that have come to plague my *Diné* people.

The health of the land has changed. A thickening yellow-gray cloud of carbon dioxide pollution has continually grown in girth over the years. Our valley, once full of huge strapping cottonwood trees, now stores dry trees. The valley is dying and the people who have settled here daily inhale filmy polluted haze, and exhale tainted mercury, nitrogen oxide, and carbon dioxide breath.

Inspiration for this art show is derived from my ancestors, my *Diné* elders, and Elouise Brown. It is the *Diné* elders who have made the decision to stand up against Sithe Global Inc. and their proposed plans to build Desert Rock. On visits to the *Doodá* Desert Rock resistance camp, I have seen the love that these elders have for their land. In their eyes, the teachings of *Diné* ancestors reverberate as they talk of the respect and care for the land, *Nahasdzáán shimá*, our mother earth.

“Once upon a time” our *Dine'* leaders cared, too, but many current tribal leaders have turned their backs on *Diné Bi Keyah*, Navajoland and have set a death sentence to their People; the same People they are suppose to work in service for; all for the material want of money. President of the Navajo Nation Joe Shirley Jr., has stated that this investment will be an “added value” project, but can the money made buy back clean air?

This proposed power plant has already negatively affected the *Diné* mentally, spiritually, and soon physically. On behalf of the *Doodá* Desert Rock elders, I would like to take this time to say *ahe'he*, thank you for caring and choosing to be a part of this show. With your gifts of creativity, you have taken a stand for the earth! And, for the *Diné* elders who are being ignored. Keep walking in a good way.

- Venaya Yazzie, *Diné* / Hopi Artist