

NEW MEXICO

JUNE 2007

MAGAZINE

FOLLOW THE TRAIL TO HORSE HEAVEN



10 TURTLES
AND A TORTOISE
THE SECRET LIFE OF A
BUFFALO SOLDIER
TAOS SOLAR
MUSIC FESTIVAL

DIVERSIONS

ARTS | CULTURE | BOOKS | MUSIC | MEDIA



Rene Setaro's colorful 10-by-10-inch sewing basket is made of bamboo reed and wood. She markets her work at the Common Thread, which is the retail gallery of the Southwest Women's Fiber Arts Collective.



Julie Wagner's 11-by-18-by-12-inch fiber art piece titled, Pannonica, is made with oil transfer drawings on paper sticks.



Nancy Corrigan's 8-by-4-inch fiber arts piece is sold through the Tomé Art gallery.

28 NEW MEXICO | JUNE 2007

ARTSCAPES

BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Fiber Arts Trails

New state guide now available

"THERE'S A TREMENDOUS VITALITY in the fiber arts of New Mexico," says Lisa Trujillo, a weaver who, with husband, Irvin, has owned Centinela Traditional Arts in Chimayó since 1982.

Vitality ... energy ... traditional ... contemporary ... touchstone. You bear a lot of words describing the fiber arts scene throughout New Mexico, and it's not just about Río Grande and Chimayó weaving or Navajo rugs. It's knitting and braiding, basketry and crochet, embroidery and bookmaking, collage and needlework, mixed media and spinning, lacework and quilting, even sculpture—across the state.

This spring, the state arts council—New Mexico Arts—introduced a guide featuring rural fiber arts destinations across the state, directing travelers on arts loop trails to studios, galleries, farms, mills and shops. The guides are available at state visitor centers and chambers of commerce.

The 2007 version of the Fiber Arts Trails has 71 stops throughout 18 counties, representing hundreds of artists. From the historic Toadlena Trading Post, known for the Two Grey Hills style of Navajo weaving, to Betty Reynolds' contemporary and traditional quilts at Percha Creek Traders Co-op in Hillsboro. From Johanna Terrazas' traditional Río Grande weavings at Terrazas Traditional Arts in Chama to Deming's Galeria 200, which represents five fiber artists, including Barbara Littlefield and her machine stitched, embroidered and quilted wall hangings

incorporating colored pencil drawings. From the weaving training center Tapetes de Lana, with locations in Mora and Las Vegas, to the Magdalena Arts Inc. Gallery, where Isabel Thomas of Alamo Navajo Reservation says she started weaving in 1960. "Before that, I helped my mother with the yarn, washing the wools, dying the wools. I've always liked it. It helps me relax my mind."

In El Rito, Julie Wagner has been working at her studio since 1981, drawn by paper's "flexibility, its translucency and its absorbency." She likes creating three-dimensional forms, and loves making books.

"It is a way to tell a story or present a timeline or sequence," she says. "I often encrust the covers with dirt and objects I find around El Rito."

Program coordinators hope the trail will grow. After all, "There doesn't seem to be an end to it," says Diane Bowman, a tapestry weaver and executive director of the Española Valley Fiber Arts Center.

This nonprofit center was formed a decade ago to teach fiber arts and serve as a "business incubator" for artisans.

"It started out because everybody had neighbors who had looms stored out on the porches and in the garage or somewhere that they had inherited, and no one in the family knew how to weave," Bowman says. "That got people to thinking that there was a danger that the traditions here might be lost, and they wanted to do something."

From starting out in a parish hall, the center—now

Below, left—Julie Wagner's El Rito studio will be one of the many destinations listed on the new Fiber Arts Trails. Below, right—R.T. "Bob" Davis, a weaver, works at one of the looms to make Río Grande-style blankets at the Española Valley Fiber Arts Center. His own studio, R.T. Davis, Shepherd and Hand Weaver, in nearby San Pedro, is also listed as a stop on the Fiber Arts Trails.



www.nmmagazine.com | JUNE 2007 29

RATON ARTS

The Old Post Gallery located in downtown Raton on historic First Street is the venue for the arts in northeastern New Mexico and southeastern Colorado.

View the finished works that make New Mexico art famous around the world.

UPCOMING SHOWS

JUNE & JULY • Invitational Art Show: New Works by New & Familiar Artists

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER • Contemporary Art

SEPTEMBER • International Art Show

OCTOBER • Photo Exhibit: "Celebrating Day of the Dead/Halloween"

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER • Old Post Christmas

The Raton Arts and Humane Council is funded in part by the Winchell Foundation, New Mexico Arts, a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts, New Mexico Department of Tourism, Volunteer State Art Federation (VSAF), the McCune Foundation, and the City of Raton Lodge's Tax

For more information, please call (505) 445-7052 or visit 145 S. 1st Street, Raton, NM 87740

DIVERSIONS

ARTSCAPES

with almost 400 members—has grown to a 6,400-square-foot building in Española's historic district. It houses a studio, research library, rental space, store, gallery, information center and school.

"We do everything," Bowman says. "We've always tried to maintain that emphasis on the traditional, so we teach Río Grande weaving, cochila embroidery and natural dying, and we have some Navajo weaving here. We want to continue and promote the traditional art forms, but we also have a lot of contemporary classes."

The same can be said of the Southwest Women's Fiber Arts Collective in Silver City. "We are truly a collective," co-founder Charmaine Wait says.

The nonprofit collective was established in 2005 as a network to help rural women fiber artists gain skills and financial independence.

"I started weaving 20 years ago," says Wait, "and like a lot of rural fiber artists, I found myself living 25 miles from Silver City, weaving and wondering how to find a way to sell this. Most fiber artists live in rural areas, so we wanted to bring us together."

With more than 120 members, the collective organizes shows, provides outreach programs to women and children through teaching fiber arts and has its own retail shop, The Common Thread.

Similarly, the Tomé Art Gallery opened about 10 years ago, manager/weaver Greg Schwitz says, "because the area was so rich in traditional and contemporary artists who had nowhere local to display and sell their works."

Today, the gallery represents more than 40 artists, most from Valencia County, with an emphasis on fiber arts—traditional and contemporary, pottery and jewelry—ranging from Virginia Casades Clark's straw appliqué depictions of saints and religious symbols to Nancy Corrigan's sewn and embroidered dolls and masks.

Tradition is also important at Centinela Traditional Arts, even if the Trujillos' work is more contemporary.

"Maintaining traditions is really important because, if nothing else, the techniques are great," Lisa Trujillo says. "They have a vocabulary all their own. There isn't anything like that in other tapestry weavings."

There's probably not much like the three-dimensional sculptures Glerieta



One of Carla Gomez's weavings that was made at Tapetes de Lana.

artist Richard Solomon makes using exclusively plant materials.

The self-taught Solomon got the idea more than 20 years ago while living in upstate New York, when he found some grasses in a field and asked himself, "How can I make my way in the world with this beauty?"

For more than 15 years, he has been making his way in Glerieta, spending 30 to 40 hours on a small piece to more than 150 hours on a large sculpture. "My passion," he says, "is my connection with the plant world."

The range of fiber art throughout the state has surprised Wait. "There's just an amazing amount of fiber art here," she says. "There's the traditional that's done up in the Río Grande Valley and then in the north with the chumo sheep and the cochila embroidery. But then there are all these people who come to New Mexico because it's an art mecca, who have settled all over the state, and so they bring their traditions with them. All fiber arts are being done in the state." **MM**

For more information: www.nmfiberarts.org, New Mexico Arts (800) 879-4278 or (505) 827-6490.

Johnny D. Boggs is an award-winning Western novelist based in Santa Fe. His latest novel is *Northfield*, due out in June from Five Star.

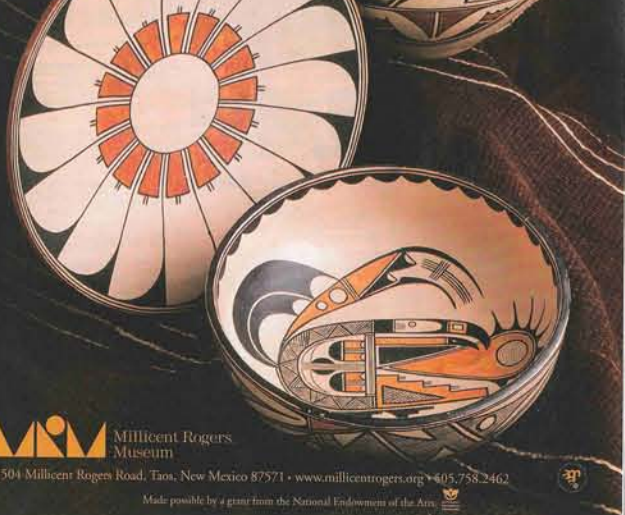
30 NEW MEXICO | JUNE 2007

BEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

Millicent Rogers Museum

1956-2006 • Celebrating 50 Years

Extended through August 2007



Millicent Rogers Museum

1504 Millicent Rogers Road, Taos, New Mexico 87571 • www.millicentrogers.org • 505.758.2462

Made possible by a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts