

Harwood Museum of Art Announces Panel Conversation on Preserving Hispanic Arts and Culture in Northern New Mexico

This free community dialogue is part of the Harwood's Centennial celebrations.



José Rafael Aragón, *Nuestra Señora del Refugio de los Pecadores (Pescadores)*, c. 1840, santo – retablo painted wood, Overall: 14 15/16 x 11 5/8 in. (38 x 29.5 cm), Gift of Mabel Dodge Luhan



Irving Rusinow, Taos County, New Mexico. *Girls do woodwork in the N.Y.A. shop in Taos.*, December 1941, photographic print. Department of Agriculture. Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Division of Economic Information. (ca. 1922 – ca. 1953). Still Picture Records Section, Special Media Archives Services Division (NWCS-S). National Archives at College Park.



Image of conservation in progress on a bulto of St. Thomas by Jose Rafael Aragon in the nave of St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Cordova. Image courtesy of Victor Goler.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—Taos, NM—On Wednesday, September 20, the Harwood Museum of Art of the University of New Mexico will host a distinguished panel of experts for a conversation about preserving Hispanic arts and culture. Early Spanish and Mexican settlers produced functional and devotional artworks that continue to be an integral part of life today in Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado. This panel of artists, conservators, journalists, and community stewards will share recent projects aimed at preserving these vibrant traditions.

The panel will be moderated by Alicia Romero, the new Curator of History at the Albuquerque Museum. Joining her will be Gustavo Victor Goler, conservator and artist specializing in devotional art; Carmella Padilla, a journalist exploring the intersection of art, culture, and history; Angelo Sandoval, generational native of Cordova and current Mayordomo of Saint Anthony's Catholic Church; and Luis Tapia, a Chicano sculptor and a 2023 recipient of the prestigious National Endowment for the Arts' National Heritage Fellowship. Complete biographies of each panelist are included below.

"The Harwood is honored to host this formidable panel of New Mexicans. Each brings a unique combination of personal history, professional experience, and passion for their life's work expanding on the legacy of

generations before them.” Gwendolyn Fernandez, Curator of Education and Public Programs at the Harwood Museum of Art.

The panel will be held in the Arthur Bell Auditorium at the Harwood Museum of Art on Wednesday, September 20 at 6pm. Admission is free. \$5 donations encouraged. The Museum will remain open for attendees to view the Harwood Centennial Exhibition for 30 minutes following the conclusion of the program. Tickets are available online at harwoodmuseum.org/events-calendar or in-person on the day of the event.

The Harwood Museum of Art, located at 238 Ledoux Street, “brings Taos arts to the world and world arts to Taos.” Visitors are welcome Wednesday through Sunday from 11am-5pm. For more information, call (575) 758-9826 or visit harwoodmuseum.org.

This program is supported in part by New Mexico Arts, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, and by the National Endowment for the Arts.



For media inquiries, contact:

Gwendolyn Fernandez
gfernandez1@unm.edu
575-425-1705

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About the Harwood Museum of Art

The Harwood Museum of Art is an internationally recognized cultural destination with Taos’s historic downtown. Among the museum’s 6,500-objects is an important collection of Hispanic works covering a broad range of Northern New Mexico’s artistic traditions including religious and devotional art, woodwork and furniture, tinwork, and historical architectural. Selections from the permanent collection of Hispanic Traditions are always on display at the Harwood Museum in the Hispanic Traditions Gallery. The permanent collection includes art by notable historical and contemporary artists including: José Rafael Aragón, Max Luna, Patrociño Barela, Nicolas Herrera, and Gustavo Victor Goler.

The Harwood Centennial creates a moment to reflect on the museum’s legacy, a chance to share a deeper understanding of the museum’s past, an opportunity to give a voice to the less-known stories from its communities, and an intention to build a creative future.

Harwood is engaging in a multi-faceted programming that will cement the museum’s role as a steward of Western art history, including a major exhibition, publication, portfolio, events, and educational programming

designed to warmly welcome its own community and visitors from far and wide. Harwood's greatest assets will be polished and on full display, offering a dynamic chance for guests to understand the evolution of one of the Southwest's oldest museums. Harwood's long-standing stewardship of nationally recognized art and artists make it a resource for those exploring Taos' artistic relationship to the wider world. The Centennial will herald the ways in which Taos has been a cross-roads for artists for millennia, and how it will continue to do so in the future.

About Alicia Romero

Alicia Romero was born and raised in Albuquerque, though she calls Northern New Mexico home as well, with her family roots in Santa Cruz de la Cañada, Sombrillo, Hernández, and Cuyamungue. Romero received her BA and Master's in History from UNM and her Ph.D. in History from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Romero is the new Curator of History at the Albuquerque Museum and leads the history program charged with caring for over 30,000 historical objects in the collection. She continues the work of updating and maintaining the current permanent history exhibition, *Only in Albuquerque*, and curating new exhibitions that feature the history of Albuquerque and the city's connection to national and international narratives. Romero will build on her track record of curating exhibitions that feature depth of research, diverse perspectives, and a dynamic approach to telling and contextualizing stories that connect the past and present.

Most recently, Romero served as Head Curator at the New Mexico History Museum in Santa Fe, where she curated exhibitions exploring the history of New Mexico Magazine and a selection of the Larry and Alyce Frank Collection of Santos in the Palace of the Governors. Her research areas, both inside and outside of the museum, include labor history, Albuquerque's historic neighborhoods, popular culture, memory studies, 19th-20th century Mexican and New Mexican history, and immigration history since 1848.

About Victor Goler

Gustavo Victor Goler grew up in a family of art conservators in Santa Fe, NM. In 1986, he opened a small conservation studio specializing in the conservation of devotional art from Latin America and New Mexico. In 1988 he joined Spanish Market in Santa Fe NM as a devotional carver where his high level of craftsmanship and innovative design have garnered him over many awards. His work as an art conservator has exposed him to historic New Mexico Santos in churches, museums, and private collections. Goler's in-depth research into the history of the cultural arts and early Santos and Santeros of New Mexico have elevated him as an authority on the subject. He has been a professional artist for the past 36 years, and he continues to research and work as a conservator. Goler has had the opportunity to educate and mentor artists and students of all ages. His efforts across the state have been recognized by such awards as the Distinguished Achievement Award, Master Award for Lifetime Achievement and The Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts.

About Carmella Padilla

Carmella Padilla is a journalist, author and editor who explores intersections in art, culture and history. She has published extensively in newspapers and magazines, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *American Craft* and *El Palacio*, and has written several books, including *The Work of Art: Folk Artists in the 21st Century*; *El Rancho de las Golondrinas: Living History in New Mexico's La Ciénega Valley*; *Low 'n Slow: Lowriding in New Mexico*; and *The Chile Chronicles: Tales of a New Mexico Harvest*.

Padilla's 2015 book, *A Red Like No Other: How Cochineal Colored the World*, created in conjunction with an exhibition she co-curated at the Museum of International Folk Art, won the College Art Association's 2017 Alfred H. Barr Jr. Award for distinguished scholarship in art history. In 2017, Padilla edited *Borderless: The Art of Luis Tapia*, exploring the art and life of Tapia, a pioneering New Mexican Chicano sculptor.

Most recently, in 2021, Padilla contributed to Gustave Baumann's *Book of Saints*, a limited-edition book in collaboration with Tom Leech and the Palace of the Governor's Press. The book, which Baumann unsuccessfully sought to publish throughout his lifetime, features Leech's prints of Baumann's woodcuts of historic New Mexican santos, original writings by Baumann, Mary Austin and Peggy Pond Church, and a contemporary essay by Padilla.

A native Santa Fean and multigenerational New Mexican, Padilla is a recipient of the New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts and the Santa Fe Mayor's Award for Excellence in Literary Arts. She is currently at work on a book highlighting the historic makers and movements in twentieth-century New Mexican furniture.

About Angelo Sandoval

Angelo Sandoval is the mayordomo of the San Antonio de Padua Church in Cordova, New Mexico. He is the *Padres Unidos Fatherhood Program* Coordinator at Las Cumbres Community Services. Angelo was born and raised in Cordova and grew up attending mass and celebrations in his historic church and community. He became an Hermano of La Hermandad de Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno as part of the Penitente community at an early age. Angelo along with his uncle, Master Santero Jerry Sandoval who is also a mayordomo and Penitente, are prominent figures within their church. Both understand the historic and cultural value of their community and have been involved in maintaining those traditions. Although the Saints and Altars within church are loved and valued by the community, decades have gone by without special attention directed to the condition their Santos. Angelo along with other mayordomos decided it was time to proceed with efforts to protect and care for their church. These efforts have led to the conservation of the famous Santos at the San Antonio de Padua Church. Angelo's initiatives have created a greater interest in preserving cultural activities and the conservation of other historic churches across northern New Mexico.

About Luis Tapia

Luis Tapia is a Chicano sculptor who for over 50 years has reinterpreted the 400-year-old legacy of Catholic devotional art in New Mexico as a modern form of cultural and social commentary.

Tapia was born in Agua Fría, a small village just outside of Santa Fe, New Mexico, one of the oldest Hispano communities in the U.S. Today, he is known for transforming the "traditional" New Mexican art of saint making,

recasting hallowed religious themes and artistic techniques to address and express current social and political issues, including immigration, addiction, identity, racial injustice, crime and pedophilia in the Catholic Church. Though initially controversial, his bold, provocative, often humorous approach elevated Tapia as a trailblazing contemporary sculptor whose works reflect his activist roots and his belief that tradition is alive and evolving.

At 73, Tapia's work remains rooted in a local landscape that transcends global, cultural and ethnic borders. His sculptures have been widely collected and exhibited in public and private collections. He has received many honors for his life's work, including the New Mexico's Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, the state's highest artistic honor. In 2021, he was named an inaugural Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellow, one of 15 artists nationwide recognized for innovation and excellence in contemporary sculpture and painting. And in late September in Washington, D.C., Tapia will receive the prestigious National Endowment for the Arts' 2023 National Heritage Fellowship. The award is the nation's highest honor in heritage arts, recognizing artistic excellence, lifetime achievement, and contributions to the cultural and artistic heritage of the U.S.