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EVERY JULY on a certain Sunday, the archbishop of Santa Fe, New Mexico, tours the Plaza after Mass to douse artists and their creations with holy water while waving incense. It's not the summer heat that necessitates the blessings, but Spanish Market—the oldest and largest showcase of devotional art in the United States.

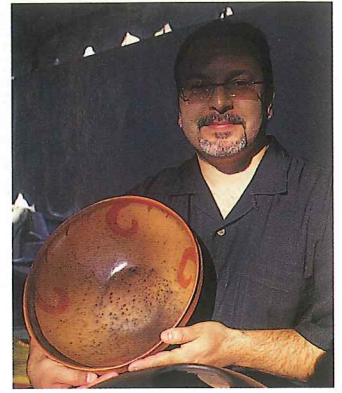
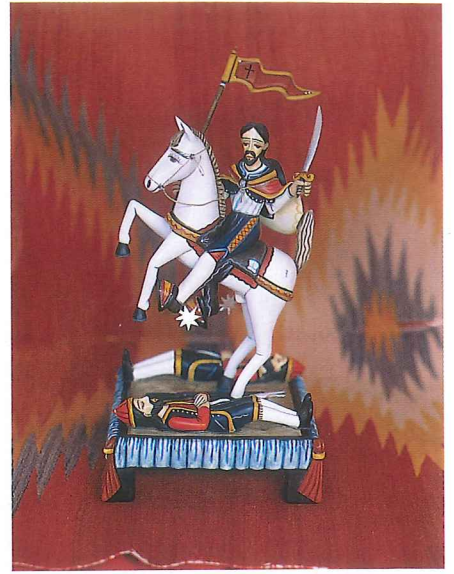
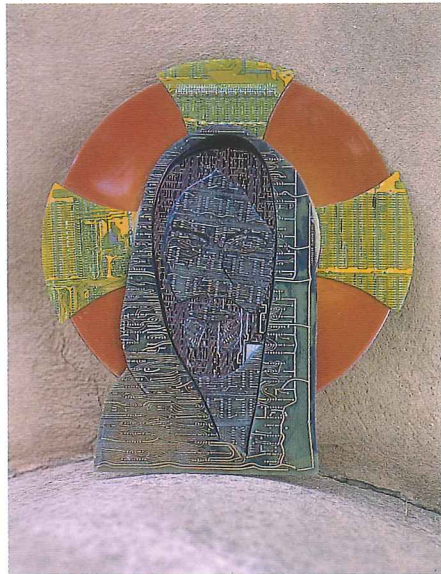
In Santa Fe, the city of Holy Faith, religious art is not just on display in churches. Spanish Market, to be held July 24 and 25, celebrates the work of both traditional and contemporary artists with a two-day outdoor festival where museum curators, private collectors and tourists purchase new works of art that have grown out of the Spanish Colonial tradition. Much like Santa Fe's annual Indian Market (see *Western Interiors and Design*, July/August 2003), Spanish Market is a draw for those looking to acquire award-winning pieces.

The artists come early, and as they set up their booths in the scant sunlight, colorful objects begin to emerge from boxes and bubble wrap. Everything from silver filigree and hand-carved wood furniture to mirrors and sconces adorned with tinwork is unpacked. The majority of artists sell wood santos, or saints. Images are typically depicted on panels or altarpieces known as *retablos*, or as three-dimensional figures called *bultos*.

Santa Fe Spanish Market

A look at the country's most celebrated festival of contemporary Spanish Colonial art

above: Collectors, curators and tourists flock to Santa Fe's Plaza for Spanish Market, a two-day outdoor showcase of devotional art held in July. above left: A *bulto* by Charles M. Carrillo.



clockwise from top left: Artist Armando López in his booth; one of Marion C. Martinez's circuit-board artworks; *Santiago*, a bulto of Saint James by David Nabor Lucero; Jacobo de la Serna with one of his ceramic bowls; *La Alma de la Virgen María*, a retablo by Alcario Otero; one of López's cat angels, made from corn husks, cattails and other natural materials; a bulto of the Virgin Mary by Otero.

Spanish Market began in 1951 and has evolved into two markets, one committed to traditional work and another focused on contemporary expressions. The Spanish Colonial Arts Society, a nonprofit organization founded in 1925, produces the Traditional Spanish Market. About three hundred artists, including children, participate every year. Each artist must document his or her Hispanic heritage and must also employ traditional materials and processes in order to be included in the traditional market.

Contemporary Hispanic Market, on the other hand, began in 1986 as a modern art companion to its traditional counterpart. The contemporary market does not require the same documentation of ancestry and also permits artists to use any methods, materials or techniques. Produced by El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe, the contemporary market has blossomed into a showcase for almost 150 artists who create everything from fiber arts and paintings to sculpture made of reclaimed materials.

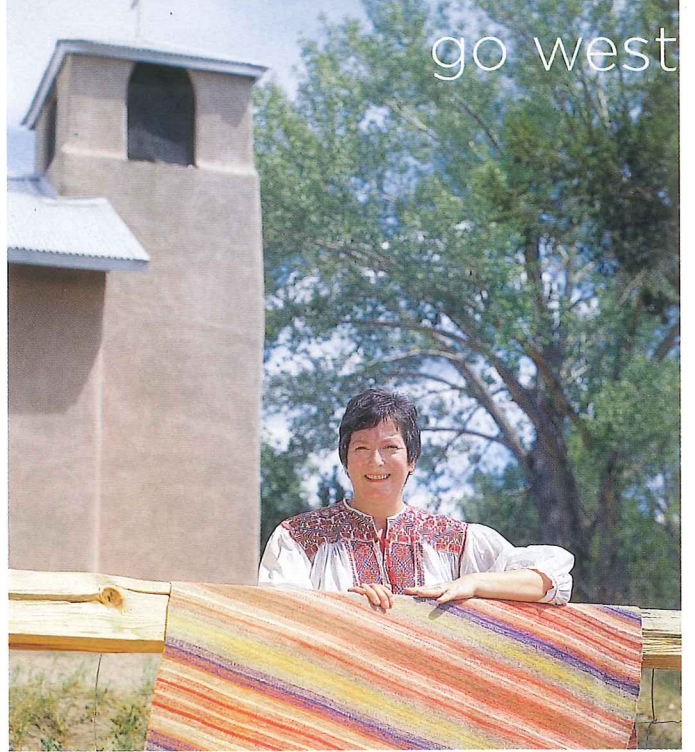
"It's evident that the evolution of the market has brought about an enormous growth of interest in Spanish Colonial arts," says Bud Redding, director of Spanish Market. "What I see is a real renaissance, which could be attributed to the artists' enthusiasm, pride and fervent desire to embrace their cultural heritage." Over

the past two decades, some artists have been relearning historic art forms once popular in the region, including filigree, hide painting, *colcha* embroidery and ironwork.

The work by artists who show in the traditional market is rooted in the Spanish Colonial heritage of New Mexico and southern Colorado. Top artists take their research seriously, studying historical works in museum vaults or examining art history books for inspiration. That is especially the case with *santeros* and *santeras*, whose art flows from the study of old forms combined with innovative research into the lives of saints. Close attention to the story line of each saint, told through the details of the figure's hair, dress or props, is what draws collectors.

By 8:45 A.M. on Saturday, the first day of Spanish Market, Gustavo Victor Goler has sold out. Goler, a *santero* who started carving saints as a teenager, learned the craft while working in his family's conservation and restoration studios.

"I'm really into research and working with obscure saints," he says, sitting behind a bulto of Saint Apollonia, the patron saint of dentists. *Santa Apollonia*, the first piece to sell at Goler's booth, is depicted in the martyrdom of flames, in one hand holding pliers that clutch a tooth and in the other hand a palm leaf. The piece



clockwise from top left: Marion C. Martinez with *Madre de Dolores*; Rita Padilla Haufmann outside her Tesuque compound with a weaving based on the traditional banded Rio Grande style; jeweler and silversmith Lawrence Baca holding one of his monstrances; furniture maker Anthony E. Martinez with a handmade door and chest.

was carved by hand and made from Malaysian jelutong. It features delicate hands, hair, and folds in the robes, meant to capture that fleeting moment before her death.

“The biggest honor for a saint maker is to create something for a church, because then it’s an active piece,” Goler explains. Many of the churches and cathedrals in New Mexico feature work by historic and contemporary santeros, and Santa Fe’s Santa María de la Paz is no exception. Inside a chapel devoted to Saint Joseph are two bultos by Goler and a fourteen-foot-tall altar screen painted by Charles M. Carrillo. A santero, Carrillo worked on the project with Jimmy Trujillo, who did the straw appliqué, and Roberto

Montoya, who carved the altar screen. Carrillo also created the retablos for the fourteen stations of the cross in the main church.

Carrillo is something of a living encyclopedia of saints. An anthropologist by training, he has created a database of eleven thousand images of New Mexican saints that he uses to research his work. He has exhibited at Spanish Market since 1980, and every year collectors and fellow artists converge on his booth. Carrillo has also helped to revive historic methods of artistry, including the use of homemade pigments and imported colors.

Crowds at Marie Romero Cash’s booth typically must post their names on a sign-up sheet. Once she’s ready to begin selling her



Juan López in his booth with one of his silver filigree crosses.

funky retablos, bultos and diorama-like creations, she works her way down the list as buyers stand with open checkbooks at the ready. Last year, despite being ninth in line, Cathy Wright, director of the Taylor Museum at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, was able to purchase two orbs. Wright, who has been buying at the market for much of the past two decades, selects works for the museum's collection of contemporary Spanish Colonial art.

"Marie has been innovative in finding new ways to depict santos or scenes from the Bible," Wright explains. "That's what a lot of the artists are doing now—instead of depicting just the saints that are popular in New Mexico, they're looking hard to find new Bible stories or saints to interpret."

While santos continue to be a mainstay of Spanish Market, there are master furniture makers, potters, weavers and jewelers also selling award-winning work. Nearly every year Anthony Martinez produces incredibly accurate historic pieces of furniture such as chests, *trasteros* (storage cabinets), tables and chairs modeled after objects in museum collections. The works are fashioned using traditional materials like pine, gesso, water-based paint and antique iron hardware. "When I do one of these reproduction pieces, I picture myself in the seventeenth or eighteenth century and try to do as much by hand as I can," Martinez says.

Despite a somewhat stormy relationship with the Traditional Spanish Market, the Contemporary Hispanic Market has been growing since 2000. One of the top contemporary artists is Marion C. Martinez, who creates retablos, bultos and crucifixes, as well as sculpture, bolos, pins and earrings from reclaimed computer parts. Her work often mixes old and new technologies, combining wood with a menu of high-tech materials, including circuit boards, laptops, ribbon cable, computer wire and disk drives. "All of my art symbols come from within the roots of the Hispanic culture," Martinez explains. Some works, like her *Matachine* headdresses, reflect the fusion of Hispanic and Native American cultures.

For weaver Rita Padilla Haufmann, who participates in the traditional market, the first step is always to create her signature stocking icon in the lower right-hand corner of all her weavings. The trademark recalls her ancestors, who were listed as stocking knitters on an 1823 census and who lived in the same Tesuque compound where Haufmann and her family reside today.

Despite the family tradition, the artist is self-taught. She has been instrumental in reviving historic Hispanic weaving motifs, including the banded Rio Grande-style designs of her reversible weavings. This pattern consists of five bands with shuttlework stripes. Often the bands are separated by Saltillo designs such as diamonds, crosses or other symbols. Haufmann uses techniques from the Spanish Colonial era. For example, she weaves with a Hispanic loom and utilizes Churro sheepswool that she hand-washes, cards, spins and dyes. Her color palette is also colonial in origin: She uses native plants, roots and cochineal bugs to create many shades of red.

On the second day of Spanish Market, Haufmann is holding one of her weavings. Dozens of other artists carry crucifixes, bultos and retablos, and everyone is lining up to have the works blessed during Sunday Mass inside St. Francis Cathedral. Afterward, the archbishop leads the procession outside, and devotion shifts to celebration as trumpets from a nearby mariachi band herald the artisans' arrival on the Plaza. ←

Santa Fe's Summer 2004 **Spanish Market** will be held July 24 and 25. Both the traditional and the contemporary markets host previews to give patrons an opportunity to see works and meet artists in advance of the weekend rush. The preview for the traditional market takes place in Santa Fe's Sweeney Convention Center on the Friday evening prior to Spanish Market. The contemporary preview, which is typically set up two weeks before the market, is held nearby in El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe in the Santa Fe Railyard.

artists to watch

Traditional Spanish Market ceramics and pottery

Jacobo de la Serna
Aurora Sanchez

furniture

Anthony E. Martinez

jewelry, silverwork and filigree

Lawrence Baca
Bo López
Juan López
Ramón José López

retablos and bultos

Charles M. Carrillo
Marie Romero Cash
Gloria López Córdova
Gustavo Victor Goler
Felix López
Arlene Cisneros Sena

straw appliqué

Diana Moya Lujan
Jimmy E. Trujillo

tinwork and reverse glass painting

Verne L. Lucero
Jimmy M. Madrid

weaving

Mónica Sosaya Halford (colcha)
Rita Padilla Haufmann

Contemporary Hispanic Market circuit-board art

Marion C. Martinez

fiber art:

angels, saints, altars
Armando López

jewelry

Michelle Tapia

painting, printmaking

Michael Vigil