
TOURING *Art of the Southwest: 1800 - Present*
Ongoing

This introduction emphasizes experiential inquiry-based learning by asking questions to help visitors think about the exhibition. Expertise on every work is not necessary, however object sheets have been provided for this exhibition that allow you to facilitate more content rich discussions on selected objects. Please integrate these discussions into your tour as time allows.

Begin With Visitors:

- ASK: *What factors may influence changes in art over time?*
- Inform:
 - These galleries are organized around time periods of artistic production that were marked by important events in Southwest history: the 1840s, the 1930s, and contemporary times.
 - **1840s** (Blessing Gallery) – Through the 1840s, the region was in transition from Mexican to American state power.
 - **1920s/30s** (Duff Gallery) - In the 1920s and 1930s, a regional identity developed that was based on art and culture, supported artist colonies, museums and tourism...
 - **Contemporary** (East Events South of Duff) ...Contemporary art in the Southwest is an outcome of this culture-based economy that flourished throughout the twentieth century. Indigenous and Nuevomexicana/o artists were encouraged to continue producing traditional forms of art for sale, but it is evident in these galleries that artistic experimentation prevails.
- **Use the object sheets provided to guide discussion on specific objects in the galleries. Try to facilitate on at least one object in each gallery.**
- Direct visitors to: Walk through the exhibitions and notice similarities and differences in the artworks between galleries.
 - ASK: *What have the artists chosen to emulate from the past? (i.e. Where do you see similarities?)*
 - Possible Answers: Catholic figures and themes (Our Lady of Guadalupe), symbols (the cloud, cross, dove), landscapes, technique (coiling), medium (wood, clay, metal, wool)
 - *What factors may influence continuity in art?*
 - *How have the artists innovated? (i.e. where do you see change?)*
 - Possible Answers: carving rather than painting (bultos), stylistic/graphic choices, ceramic techniques (polishing, relief, vessel shape/color, ingots)

IF VISITORS WANT MORE INFORMATION

Concept of Exhibition

Introductory Wall Text

Art of the Southwest: 1800 to the Present Selections from the Permanent Collection

Artists connect to historical traditions centuries deep, yet they are also agents of cultural change in their own time. We see this as experimentation—with new materials, ideas and methods—and then as mastery that establishes the standards of an art form. This exhibition presents art by indigenous, Nuevomexicana/o and other diverse artists from a broad region known as the Southwest—an area often defined by its ethnic makeup. Artworks are brought together from these multiple communities to show how artists respond to social change and create a dynamic cultural continuity.

The galleries are organized around time periods of artistic production that were marked by important events in Southwest history: the 1840s, the 1930s, and contemporary times. Through the 1840s, the region was in transition from Mexican to American state power. In the 1920s and 1930s, a regional identity developed that was based on art and culture, supported artist colonies, museums and tourism. Contemporary art in the Southwest is an outcome of this culture-based economy that flourished throughout the twentieth century. Indigenous and Nuevomexicana/o artists were encouraged to continue producing traditional forms of art for sale, but it is evident in these galleries that artistic experimentation prevails.

The Fine Arts Center's collection was founded in celebration of the art of indigenous and Hispana/o communities, as an effort to preserve folk art—objects intended for community use or other local purpose. These exemplary pieces in the museum's permanent collection can be appreciated solely for their artistic qualities or historical value, but there is often cultural significance embedded by the artist. Since this cultural layering in the artwork may not be familiar to all, we provide an entry to the cultural context of the art where appropriate, while also respecting cultural sensitivity for living communities.

Polly Nordstrand (Hopi)
Curator of Southwest Art

Object Labels

Thelma Grass

Diné

Blanket (Storm Pattern)

1975

Wool, natural and aniline dyed

NEA Museum Purchase Plan Matching Grant 1974–1975, 7791

In the late nineteenth century, traders encouraged Diné weavers to use a design format that resembled rugs with a boarder and central panel. These rugs were sold to a non-Native market for home decoration. The “storm pattern” was first documented in a trader’s catalog in 1911. The pattern gained symbolic meaning with use but may have originated as a marketing tool. The “storm pattern” is the center box with zig-zag lines extending from the corners—representing the four directions, however weavers have the freedom to interpret the pattern as they like with additional designs.

David P. Bradley

Ojibwe/Lakota (born 1954)

The Married Woman

1980

Lithograph

Museum Purchase Fund, FA 1990.14.3

David Bradley is known for his satirical depictions of life in the Southwest, especially around issues of materialism. In this print we see a young wife admiring her diamond ring. She wears a dress elaborately adorned with elk teeth—a sign of her wealth and high status. Her house is decorated with art including a Navajo wedding basket and a Pueblo wedding vase. Yet Bradley expresses a sense of humor by including the cinder block shelves and scrawny coyote-dog. His irreverent combinations poke fun at the woman’s pride.

Rudy Fernandez

American (born 1948)

Destruction by Fire #4: Fall from Grace

1995

Mixed media, lead, wood, paint, ceramic

Museum Purchase Fund, FA 1996.10

Rudy Fernandez uses the traditional Mexican folk art form known as a *retablo* (a painting for devotional prayer) to present a very personal expression of his life experiences. By doing this he asserts his connection to his cultural heritage, while also remaining an individual. According to his personal symbolism, the cactus is a representation of a person's true self. Although he carved these with a smooth texture, in reality a cactus has sharp, barbed thorns. He sees people as maintaining a hidden guardedness with which they protect themselves. The three hearts in the lower portion of the frame signify: intimate love, love of family, and the love of friends—the artist identifies all three as sustaining him throughout his life.

Eulogio Ortega

American (1917–2017)

Zoraida Ortega

American (Ca. 1918–2012)

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (Our Lady of Guadalupe)

1989

Wood, tempera, acrylic paint

Museum Purchase Fund, TM 1996.10

The Ortegas had a personal devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of their home town. Their family built a personal chapel dedicated to the saint in gratitude for Zoraida's recovery from cancer. Eulogio and Zoraida worked together on religious art based on their extensive study of Spanish Colonial art and as an expression of their faith; Eulogio carved and Zoraida painted. They participated in the living tradition of their community by imitating older masterworks, yet their brightly painted version makes a slight diversion from the past that reflects their own artistic vision.

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith

Salish, Shoshone, and French Cree (born 1940)

Untitled

Ca. 1980s

Pastel on paper

Gift of Dr. Melvyn and Roberta Klein, FA 2017.18

This image combines two important themes present in many of Smith's series works: the horse and the landscape. The horse has personal, cultural and historical references for the artist. Introduced by the Spanish in the 1500s, horses have become an integral part of many indigenous cultures. Deeply concerned with Native land claims, Smith places the horse in this landscape as a reminder that indigenous people adapted to invading peoples and, despite the detrimental effects of colonization, Native cultures have evolved in significantly positive ways.