

**IN EVERY ROOM** A STORY OF THE ART

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLECTION OF LA FONDA ON THE PLAZA



**La Fonda**  
On the Plaza

*No matter what the surface subject appears to be,  
I hope to convey to the viewer something of my  
feeling of the endless chain of time.*

Agnes Sims, (1910-1990)  
*Artist*

The highlights of La Fonda's art collection are featured on the pages of this book. Many of them are located in public spaces within the hotel. To view more of our art collection, including the pieces that are located in private rooms, please visit our website. We hope you enjoy the view.



View the collection online at  
[lafondasantafe.com](http://lafondasantafe.com)



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Mary Jane Colter (1869-1958), who had been designing hotels and interiors for the Fred Harvey Company since 1902, worked with John Gaw Meem and is responsible for many of the decorative elements, including the mural by Dorothy Stauffer at the San Francisco Street entrance, so loved by visitors today.

*Dorothy Stauffer*

*"Untitled", 1948/1949*

*Fresco*



## INTRODUCTION

The story of the artists and the story of the art that graces the halls of La Fonda on the Plaza—the oldest hotel in the country's oldest capital city—begins at the time of its acquisition by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway and its first years as a Harvey House in the 1920s. Opened in 1922, the hotel was erected on a site that has housed a *fonda*—or inn—reputedly since 1610. The AT&SF Railway acquired the hotel in 1925, and the following year leased it to the Fred Harvey Company, which operated La Fonda for over 40 years.

La Fonda's art collection began during the hotel's earliest days of construction. The property has grown considerably since Sam and Ethel Ballen bought the hotel in 1968. The couple continued the

tradition of showcasing Native art, supporting local artisans and Santa Fe's famed Indian Market, acquiring work by Native American and other artists for the hotel. Still owned by the family, this tradition continues today, with acquisitions of work by contemporary Native American artists such as Mateo Romero, Marla Allison and Tony Abeyta signaling the future direction of collecting at La Fonda.

The practice of commissioning and collecting original art begun by the railroad and continued by the Ballens provides an exceptional experience for hotel guests and visitors alike. Not only does original artwork hang in every room but all of it has a connection to the people who designed, built, and owned the hotel, a collaboration that has made La Fonda a sought-after destination for over 90 years. This book highlights only a few of the artists and their stories.

The railroad came to Santa Fe in 1909 with the arrival of the first AT&SF Railway train on a spur line from nearby Lamy. The rise of train travel to the Southwest brought about a rise in the need for services. Just as the journey west had been treacherous before train travel, food and lodging had been primitive before the arrival of Fred Harvey (1835–1901). Harvey immigrated to the United States from England as a teenager. He saw the need for “eating houses” and, later, for lodging along the expanding rail routes. In 1878, under an agreement with AT&SF Railway, he opened his first establishment along the Santa Fe tracks in Florence, Kansas. At its peak, the Fred Harvey Company operated 84 establishments between Chicago and Los Angeles. Because of the quality of food and service he offered, Harvey became known as the “Civilizer of the West.”

Harvey was also an innovator in cultural tourism. He pioneered the printing and sale of postcards to promote his hotels and restaurants, and he hired attractive, respectable young women known as the Harvey Girls to staff them. In 1926 the Fred Harvey Company introduced train travelers and hotel guests to the wonders of Native cultures through Indian Detours, a tour company that was based at La Fonda.

The AT&SF Railway  
commissioned Gerald Cassidy  
(1879-1934) to create paintings  
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Southwest in railroad stations  
across the country. Eleven of  
Cassidy's commissioned  
paintings (recently restored  
to their colorful brilliance)  
continue to hang  
throughout the hotel.

*Gerald Cassidy*

*“Santiago”, 1922 (left)*

*Casein on Paper*

*“The Eagle Dancer”, 1922 (right)*

*Casein on Paper*





Willard Clark's woodcuts graced everything from menus to "Do Not Disturb" signs.

When William Haskell Simpson became the general advertising agent of the AT&SF Railway in 1900, he had an idea: commission artists from the East to paint the landscape and people of the West and use their work to promote travel to the area. In 1907 the railway put out its first calendar featuring a Southwestern-themed painting. The tradition continued until 1993, and the calendars have become collectors' items. Original art and quality reproductions have been used to promote the Southwest for over 100 years, drawing tourists and artists to the region and creating one of the most important art economies in the country.

The AT&SF Railway commissioned Gerald Cassidy (1879–1934) to create paintings that could be reproduced to promote travel to the Southwest in railroad stations across the country. Eleven of Cassidy's commissioned paintings—recently restored to their original colorful brilliance—hang throughout the hotel. The Fred Harvey Company commissioned other artists including Olive Rush, Paul Lantz, Arnold Rönnebeck, and Willard Clark, whose woodcuts graced everything from menus to "Do Not Disturb" signs. Later, art by Native American artists such as Harrison Begay, Julian Martinez, Tomás Vigil, and Romando Vigil entered the collection.

The hotel's distinctive appearance is attributed to its architect Isaac Rapp (1854–1933), who had developed a style that was an idiosyncratic blend of Spanish, Pueblo, and Moorish elements. John Gaw Meem (1894–1983), the principal developer of the Pueblo Revival style, was hired by the Fred Harvey Company to design a significant addition to La Fonda in 1926. Mary Jane Colter (1869–1958), who had

been designing hotels and interiors for the company and the AT&SF Railway since 1902, worked closely with Meem and is responsible for many of the decorative elements so loved by visitors today.

Colter attended the California School of Design in San Francisco. Her four buildings at the Grand Canyon (Hermit's Rest, Desert View Watchtower, Lookout Studio, and Hopi House) which were built for the Fred Harvey Company, were declared National Historic Landmarks in 1987. She also designed the Bright Angel Lodge located at the South Rim of the canyon. The vernacular buildings look as if they have always been part of the landscape.

In the book *From Every Window: A Glimpse of the Past*, chronicling the history of La Fonda, Barbara J. Harrelson notes that Colter brought her interest in working with local artists and craftspeople to the project in Santa Fe as well. "Special touches include hand-crafted chandeliers, tin and copper lighting fixtures, and colorful tiles and textiles," Harrelson writes. "Hand-carved, hand painted furniture and other ornamentation by local artists add individual character and charm."

In 1976 La Fonda's original courtyard was enclosed to create the restaurant, La Plazuela, designed by architect William Lumpkins (1909–2000). A 2009 renovation of the space by architect Barbara Felix and interior designer Dierdre Wilson followed Mary Jane Colter's original ideas and involved collaboration with local craftsmen just as Colter had done.

The creation and renovation of La Plazuela recreates an atmosphere that is similar to the ambience of the hotel's early days. The story of the art and the story of the artists are part of La Fonda's living history. ♦

*Willard Clark*  
*Woodcut*  
*ca. 1930s*



CHAPTER ONE



THE ART OF THE 1920s



La Plazuela appears on John Gaw Meem’s 1928 plans as the “Patio”, the open air meeting place, performance space, and center of Santa Fe’s social life for over 50 years. Today, the light-filled enclosed space continues as a hub of activity.

One of La Plazuela’s most striking characteristics is its painted windows that follow the original style developed by Mary Jane Colter and Olive Rush. La Fonda’s original restaurant, the New Mexican Room, which was located directly east of the Patio, was also decorated with murals by Olive Rush. It is believed that she also created the original murals located at the Old Santa Fe Trail entrance.

Olive Rush (1873–1966) first visited Santa Fe in 1914 after graduating from the Boston Museum School. She was given a solo exhibition of her art at the Palace of the Governors—the first woman to have a one-person show in New Mexico. She moved here permanently in 1920 and, in addition to being an active participant in Santa Fe’s growing art scene, created murals for the Santa Fe Public Library and the Post Office.

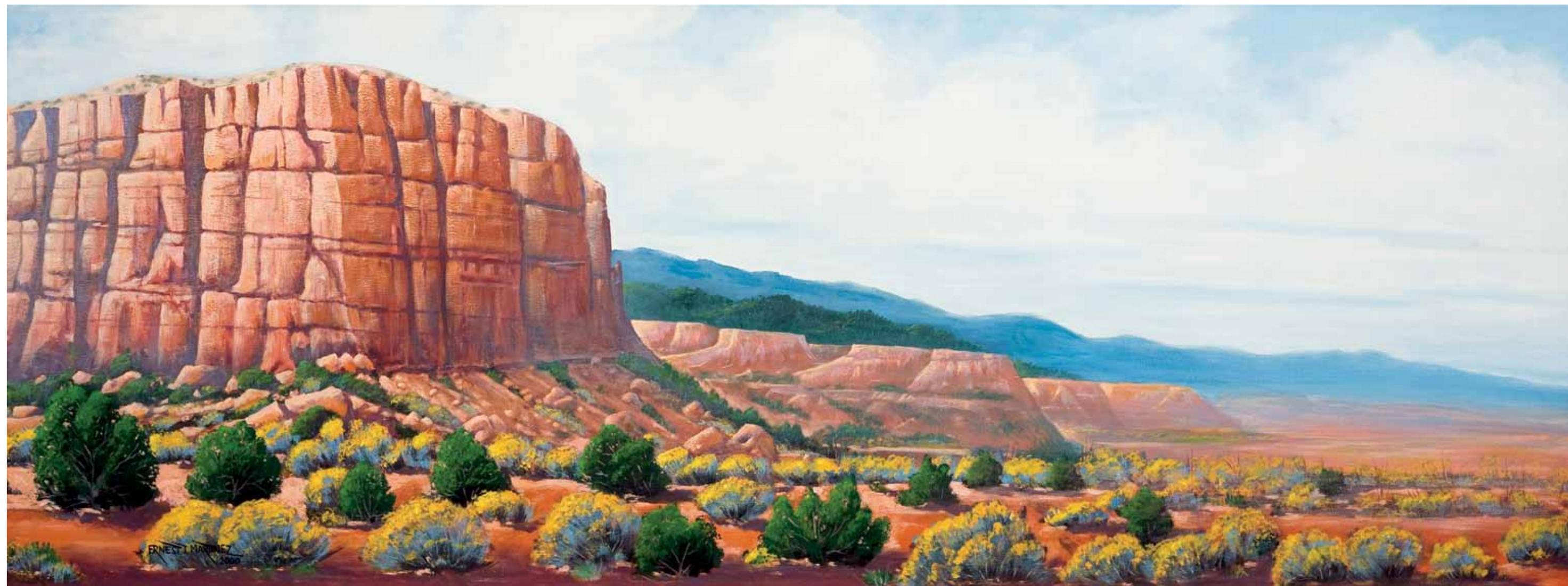
Ernest Martinez, a La Fonda employee for more than 50 years, painted over 400 of the restaurant’s windows. His work can be seen throughout the hotel, from framed paintings to decorated light switches and the painted pillars in the parking garage. He won the Santa Fe Mayor’s Recognition Award for Excellence in the Arts in 1996.

Stepping into the Portal from La Plazuela, guests see one of Arnold Rönnebeck’s major contributions to La Fonda’s decor—a large terracotta panel above the fireplace. Rönnebeck (1885–1947) incorporated symbols and characters from Zuni and Hopi tribal stories, many of which can be seen again throughout the hotel in the work of other artists. The central figure, for instance, represents Shalako, a famous Zuni Pueblo kachina dance that celebrates the end of the old year,

La Fonda’s painted windows, created in the style of Mary Jane Colter and Olive Rush, are one of La Plazuela’s most striking features. Over 400 windows were painted by Ernest Martinez, a La Fonda employee for over 50 years.



*Ernest Martinez*  
*Acrylic on Glass*



The work of Ernest Martinez can be seen throughout the hotel from framed paintings to the painted windows in La Plazuela to the decorations around light switches and on pillars in the parking garage. He won the Santa Fe Mayor's Recognition Award for Excellence in the Arts in 1996.

*Ernest Martinez*  
*"Untitled"*  
*Oil on Canvas*

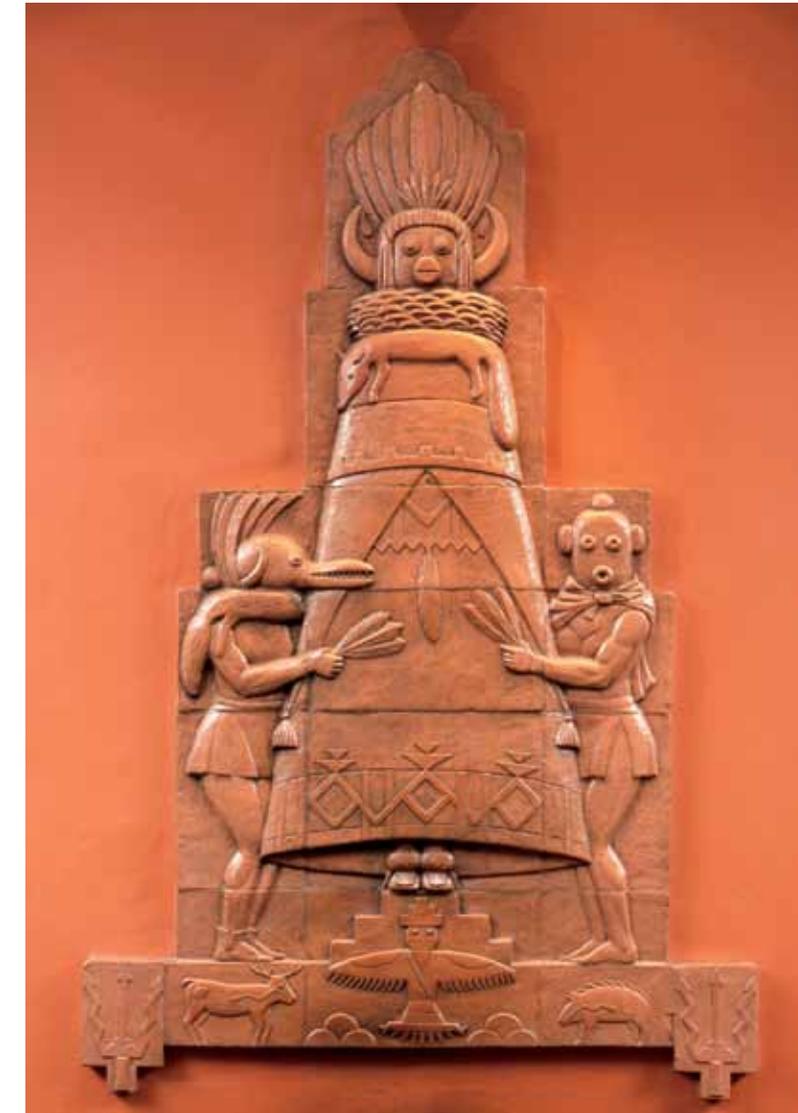
the beginning of the new. It offers prayers for rain, abundance, propagation of plants and animals, good health for the community, and blessings on new houses—a fitting symbol for the then newly opened hotel. To the right of the central figure is a mudhead or koyemsi, a magician or clown whose task is to bring humor to the kachina ceremonies and sometimes make a statement about proper and improper behavior. To the left is Nata’aska, one of the disciplinarian ogres whose purpose is to reinforce the Hopi way of life to children. Beneath the figures are symbols representing lightning, rain clouds, and an eagle—important elements in the practical and spiritual life of the Pueblo peoples.

Rönnebeck was born in Germany and studied in Paris with many important sculptors, including Auguste Rodin. After moving to the United States in 1923, he produced Modernist lithographs of New York City. Modernism rejected straightforward realism in favor of simplified forms that depict the energy of its subjects. In New York, Rönnebeck joined the Steiglitz Circle, which included Georgia O’Keeffe and other major artists of the time. Encouraged by Marsden Hartley to visit New Mexico, he came to Taos in 1925 to visit Mabel Dodge Luhan at her artists’ enclave. Rönnebeck fell in love with the region and with Louise Emerson, whom he met at Luhan’s. They traveled through Colorado on their honeymoon, and Rönnebeck gave an auspicious lecture at the Denver Art Museum. As a result, he was offered the position of art director, which he held until 1931.

Although he was known primarily as a printmaker, Rönnebeck’s bas-reliefs at La Fonda are some of his best work. Directly behind the fireplace on the Portal is another fireplace in the Santa Fe Room (known originally as the Indian Lecture Lounge). Across from it is a banco with a terracotta frieze. The Santa Fe Room fireplace bas-relief and the frieze continue Rönnebeck’s Modernist interpretations and stylized symbols of Native American life.

The large terracotta panel above the fireplace is one of Arnold Rönnebeck’s major contributions to the décor of La Fonda. Rönnebeck (1885-1947) incorporated symbols and characters from Zuni and Hopi tribal stories, many of which can be seen again throughout the hotel in the work of other artists.

*Arnold Rönnebeck*  
*“Untitled”*  
*Terracotta Panel*





The panels in Rönnebeck's terracotta frieze above the banco in the Santa Fe Room depict Modernist interpretations of Native American life.

*Arnold Rönnebeck*

*Terracotta Frieze*





Although he was known primarily as a printmaker, Rönnebeck's bas-reliefs at La Fonda are some of his best work. The fireplace relief in the Santa Fe Room continues Rönnebeck's Modernist interpretations and stylized symbols of Native American life in the same vein as the frieze above the banco on the opposite wall.

*Arnold Rönnebeck*  
*Bas-relief*

On the walls of the Santa Fe Room are some of La Fonda's most cherished treasures—paintings by artist Gerald Cassidy that were commissioned by the AT&SF Railway for reproduction as promotional materials like posters and post cards. Newly cleaned of "trail dust" and cigarette and fireplace smoke, the paintings hang throughout the hotel.

Cassidy was born in Covington, Kentucky, and began studying with Frank Duveneck at the age of 12. Duveneck, also a Covington native, later taught Joseph Henry Sharp and Walter Ufer, who would become members of the Taos Society of Artists. Cassidy was diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1899 and soon thereafter moved to Albuquerque to enter a sanitarium.

He kept at his art, inspired by the landscape and the people of the Southwest. Recovered, he moved to Denver and then, in 1912, to Santa Fe. Here he met Edgar Lee Hewett (1865–1946), founder and director of the Museum of New Mexico and a man who would have a major impact on the region's artistic growth. At the time, Hewett was also organizing the New Mexico Building for the Panama-California Exhibition in San Diego to be held in 1915. He commissioned Cassidy to create murals for the pavilion, one of which received a gold medal and the grand prize, contributing to Cassidy's growing fame both here and abroad.

Cassidy was commissioned by the Federal Public Works of Art Project to create several murals in Santa Fe. Working in an enclosed studio space heated by fire, he became increasingly ill from exposure to carbon monoxide and turpentine fumes and, in 1934, succumbed. Stacia Lewandowski, author of *Light Landscape and the Creative Quest: Early Artists of Santa Fe*, quotes an article in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* that outlines Cassidy's last hours: "He was awake most of the night last night, talking most interestingly to his wife on art, philosophy and life. This noon she was pouring him some coffee when he said 'that's enough,' and expired instantly."

The AT&SF Railway made 36" x 24" reproductions of Cassidy's ten portrait paintings in La Fonda's collection, and many of them can still be found on the collectors' market. The subjects range from conquistadors to Native Americans to Kit Carson. They also include the dramatic *Shalako: The Giant Messenger*, whom we met in the Portal. The AT&SF Railway commissioned *The Four Corners Map* that now hangs above the banco in the Santa Fe Room. The painting was originally displayed in a space designated by John Gaw Meem as the "Courier Lounge," which was the headquarters of Indian Detours. The Harvey Girls, who were trained as couriers, studied the history, culture, environment, and archaeology of the area and conducted personal tours of the Pueblos. When the map was cleaned in 2012, it was discovered that some place names had been painted over and replaced. The painting that had been commissioned as a marketing tool has now become a very valuable work of art.

There are many details on *The Four Corners Map* that intrigue the novice and the historian alike. A knowledgeable visitor who recently toured the hotel commented on the group of four people at the lower right of the map, suggesting that one of them could be Estevanico, explorer Cabeza de Vaca's Moroccan slave. Further research revealed that this visitor's hunch might indeed be correct. The two men, along with two other Spaniards, were the sole survivors of a much larger expedition, and together they eventually reached the Rio Grande in 1535. Cassidy had done his homework.

The dramatic and colorful painting *El Tovar* depicts Don Pedro de Tovar at 22 years old, one of the leaders of Coronado's 1539–1542 expedition that was the first to enter what is now New Mexico. The Franciscan monk with Tovar may well be Fray Juan Padilla who accompanied Tovar to the Hopi villages in Arizona.

Another of the dramatic paintings in the series is *The Eagle Dancer*. Native Americans believe the eagle symbolizes wisdom, strength, and power and that it can move

The AT&SF Railway  
commissioned  
Gerald Cassidy to paint  
*The Four Corners Map*  
that now hangs above  
the banco in the  
Santa Fe Room.



Gerald Cassidy  
*"The Four Corners Map"*, 1926  
Oil on Canvas

between heaven and earth. The feathers of the eagle are sacred, and it is an honor for dancers to wear them in their ceremonies.

Like Cassidy, Rönnebeck also included Native American symbols in his work at La Fonda. The panels above the banco depict Deer Dancers, whose movements symbolize the struggle between good and evil, between the sacred deer and the coyote or hunter. Among the multiple figures in the bas-relief, several dancers have spiritually become deer, looking for food while warily glancing about them for signs of danger. Eagle Dancers were also depicted in his design for the banco in the Santa Fe Room. ♦

The AT&SF Railway made 36 x 24" reproductions of Cassidy's ten portrait paintings in La Fonda's collection and many of them can still be found on the collectors' market. The subjects range from conquistadors to Native Americans to Kit Carson.

*Gerald Cassidy*

*"El Tovar", 1922*

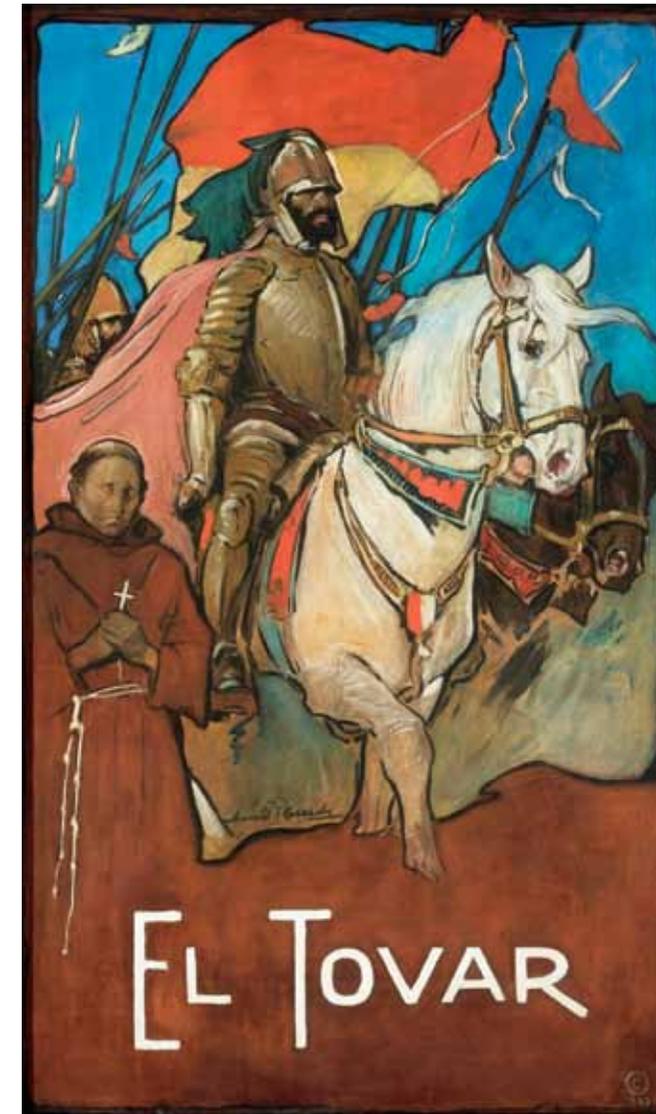
*(left)*

*Casein on Paper*

*"Shalako, The Giant Messenger", 1922*

*(right)*

*Casein on Paper*



CHAPTER TWO



THE ART COLLECTION GROWS



**S**trolling back to the lobby and just before the Concierge Desk hangs a painting of Horace Akin by Jamie Chase next to one of Akin's own paintings. Akin was a playwright, a painter, and an eccentric fixture at La Fonda, where he lived in the 1970s. He hung out in the lobby, fell asleep in the dining room, and hoarded newspapers in his room. Chase captured other colorful La Fonda patrons in portraits that hang throughout the lobby. Prominently displayed near La Plazuela's entrance is the portrait of Judge Lewis R. Sutin, who died in 1992. Judge Sutin used to hold court, as it were, at luncheons in La Plazuela. The tradition of legal luminaries gathering in the restaurant continues today. Primarily a portrait painter at the time he produced the paintings at La Fonda, Chase now paints colorful abstract figures in his Santa Fe studio.

A display case in the Lobby holds one of La Fonda's oldest works of art, linking the collection to the earliest traditions of Spanish Colonial art. When the Spanish first arrived in the area, they trained Native Americans to carve holy images for devotional purposes, since they couldn't bring these images with them from Spain. These artisans were called *santeros* or "saint makers." This *bulto* (a three dimensional figure) of the Virgin Mary with her hands clasped in prayer has been dated to 1820 by a follower of the *santero* Molleno who worked in New Mexico between 1800 and 1850. In an adjoining case is an 18th-century *bulto*, *Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception*, from Bolivia.

On either side of the mezzanine above La Plazuela are murals by Yugoslavian-born Vladan Stiha (1908–1992), who ran a gallery featuring his work at the southwest corner of La Fonda and paid for his gallery and room rent with art. Stiha, like so many artists before and after him, was captivated by the quality of Santa Fe's light. He is quoted in a biographical statement, "The play of light on the terrains of mountain and desert in New Mexico exhilarate the senses. Colors shift and flow beneath cloud sweeps—raising the mind to an understanding for

Jamie Chase captured many colorful figures of La Fonda's past in portraits on display throughout the lobby.



Jamie Chase  
"Maria Benitez" (Detail)  
Oil on Canvas



The bulto at left, of the Virgin Mary with her hands clasped in prayer, dates to 1820 and is one of La Fonda's oldest works of art.

The painting at right, is the work of Horace Akin, who lived at La Fonda in the 1970s.

*Spanish Colonial Bulto*  
1820 (left)  
*Carved Wood, Gesso, Cloth & Paint*

*Horace Akin*  
"Untitled", 1967 (right)  
*Oil on Canvas*



On either side of the mezzanine above La Plazuela are murals by Vladan Stiha (1908-1992) who was born in Yugoslavia and ran a gallery featuring his work at the southwest corner of La Fonda, paying for his gallery and room rent with art.



*Vladan Stiha*  
*"Untitled"*  
*Oil on Canvas*



the inevitable order of nature. The Native Indian commands my respect with his calm dignity; his costumes and rites, the response of unchained spirit.”

Stiha’s murals depict Pueblo families selling their wares in their villages and under the portal of the Palace of the Governors across the Plaza, as well as Pueblo dancers and Native Americans on horseback. The Stiha Room houses a collection of his portraits, including one of his wife, Elena, as well as items from his studio like his palette and a proclamation from the mayor of Santa Fe declaring February 9, 1983 Vladan Stiha Day.

In 1990 the Ballens renamed the ballroom after William Lumpkins who was not only the architect of the original La Plazuela but was also a renowned painter. He belonged to a painting group in Santa Fe that espoused “an art which releases from its creators the deepest springs of vitality and consciousness and which aims to stimulate in others, through deep and spontaneous emotional experiences of form and color, a more intense participation in the life of the spirit,” as quoted in Ed Garman’s book *Vision and Spirit: The Transcendental Painting Group*. Lumpkins is known primarily for his watercolors, a few of which are in the hotel’s collection. Several recent acquisitions of his larger, spirited paintings of Pueblo dances and ceremonies fittingly grace the walls of the Lumpkins Ballroom.

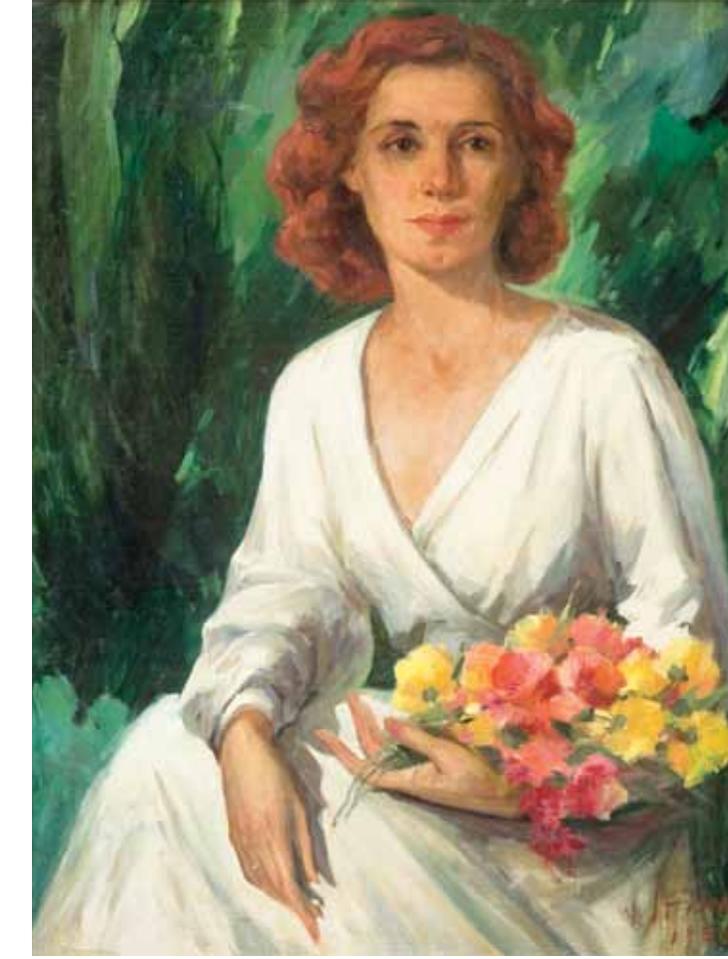
Murals as well as paintings by the painter and illustrator Paul Lantz (1908–2000) are also in the hotel’s collection. Lantz worked in Santa Fe from 1929 to 1939 with Randall Davey. After a bit of travel, service in the Army during World War II, and a period living in San Francisco, he returned to Santa Fe in 1974. He also painted murals at Los Poblanos in Albuquerque, a cultural complex designed by John Gaw Meem.

Agnes Sims (1910–1990) visited New Mexico in 1938. She returned home to Philadelphia, packed her bags, and returned to live here permanently. Santa Fe has that effect on people. She had studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art

The Stiha Room houses La Fonda’s collection of Vladan Stiha’s portraits, including one of his wife, Elena, as well as many items from his studio.

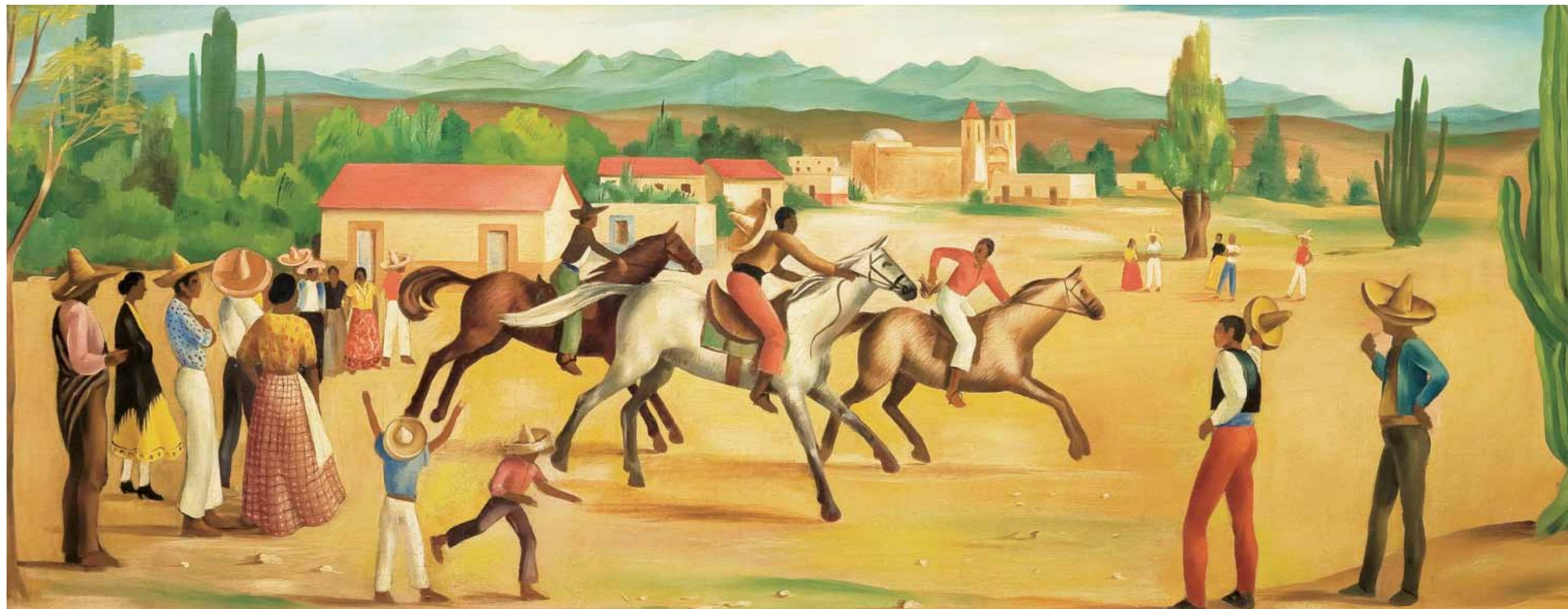


*Vladan Stiha*  
*“Untitled” (left)*  
*Oil on Board*

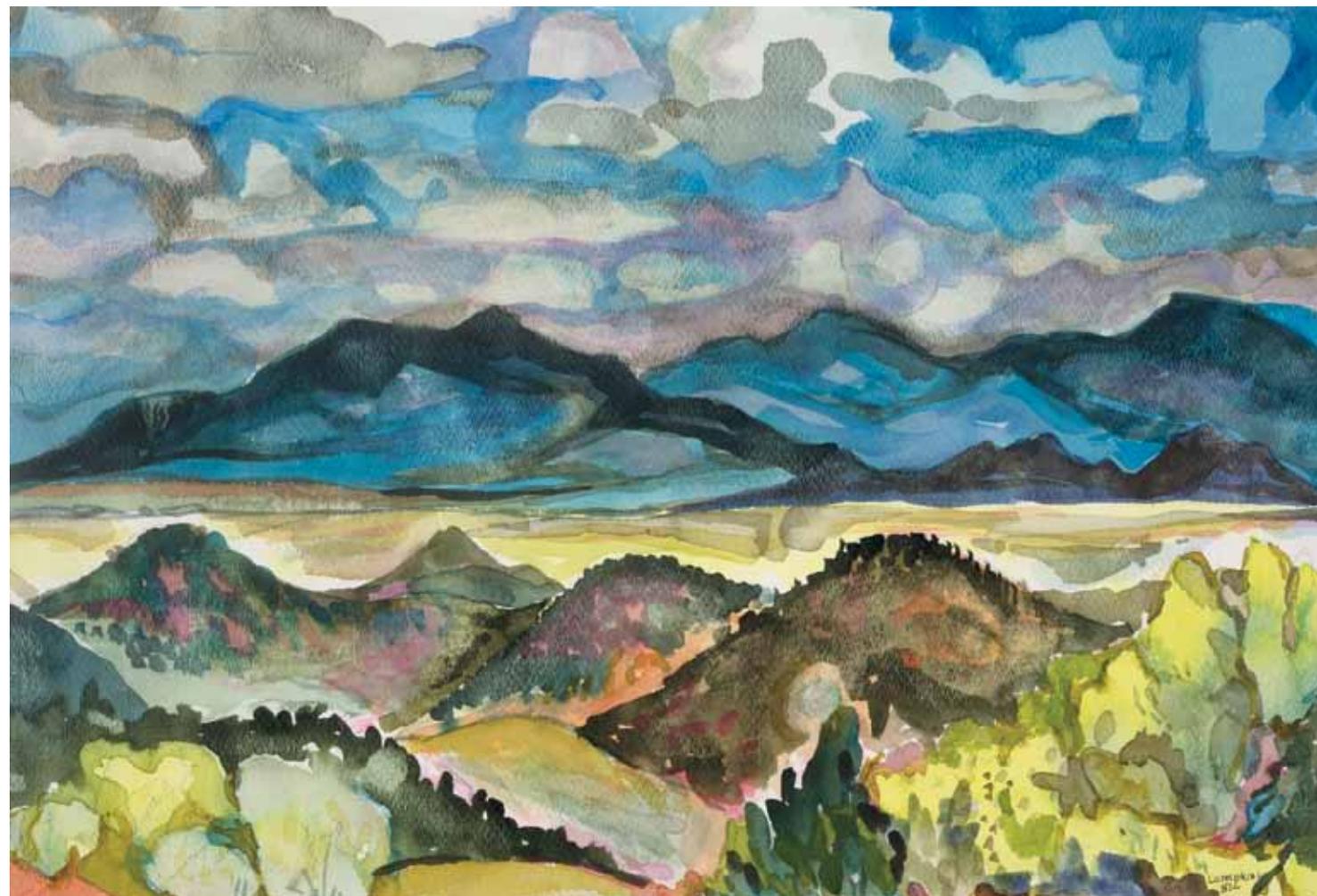


*“Portrait of Elena”, 1953 (right)*  
*Oil on Board*

Paul Lantz (1908-2000) was an illustrator and painter whose murals and paintings are an important part of La Fonda's collection.



*Paul Lantz*  
*"Horse Race"*  
*Oil on Burlap on Board*



William Lumpkins

(1909-2000) was not only the architect of the original La Plazuela but was also a renowned painter. His colorful and spirited paintings of Pueblo dances and ceremonies grace the walls of the Lumpkins Ballroom and his watercolors appear throughout the hotel.

*William Lumpkins*

*“Untitled”, 1981*

*Watercolor*

and the Philadelphia School of Design for Women. She was fascinated by ancient petroglyphs, especially those found in the Galisteo Basin south of Santa Fe, and she recorded them in drawings and photographs. Her paintings are based on petroglyphs but were filtered through her own creative sensibilities.

Van De Witt Copeland (1895–1957) was born in Kentucky and moved to Southern California in 1918. He was a friend of the famed landscape painter Thomas Moran and, like Moran, was known for his paintings of the Grand Canyon. He traveled throughout the Southwest and a painting from his travels is in La Fonda’s collection.

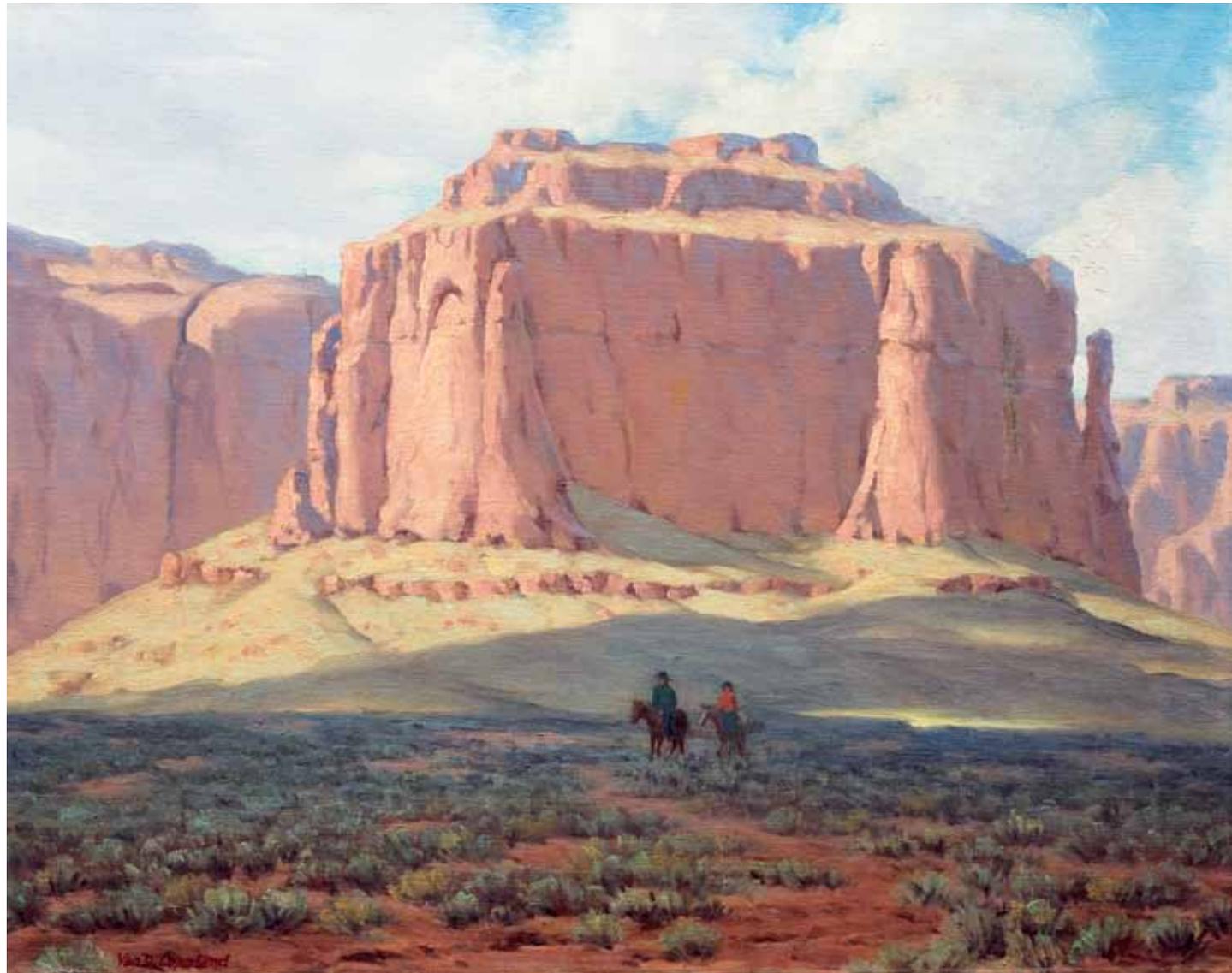
In 1948, nearing 80, Mary Jane Colter was commissioned to design an expansion to the hotel that resulted in a redesign of the entrance. She hired Dorothy Stauffer (1901–1974) to paint a mural along the east wall of the new hallway, which is now the San Francisco Street entrance. A painter, etcher, and muralist who lived for a time in Santa Fe, Stauffer was born in Iowa and studied art at the University of California San Diego and Stanford University. She also studied in Paris, Florence, and at the Art Students League in New York City.

Throughout the hotel are unusual assemblages made of painted and carved “found” wood. Johnathan Kendall (1939–2004) was an itinerant artist who paid for his stay at La Fonda with art. In 2011 Mark Gabriele curated an exhibition of Kendall’s religious carvings in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, and wrote in *Art New England*, “Kendall was Boston’s disowned and displaced son—ejected from his home on his eighteenth birthday by his mother, a Cabot. Or so he says. Some swear he worked ‘to the glory of God.’ Others testify he was an outsider completely devoid of any moral compass. A restless vagrant, he spent some of his time in monasteries, some behind bars—and the rest on the road, passing through state after state in search of a welcome which before long, he’d wear out.” The long relationship between Kendall and the Ballens attests to their willingness to find the good in people. ♦



Agnes Sims (1910-1990) was fascinated by ancient petroglyphs, especially in the Galisteo Basin south of Santa Fe and recorded them in drawings and photographs. Her paintings are based on petroglyphs but were filtered through her own creative process.

*Agnes Sims*  
*"Petroglyph of Horses & Riders"*  
*Oil on Canvas*

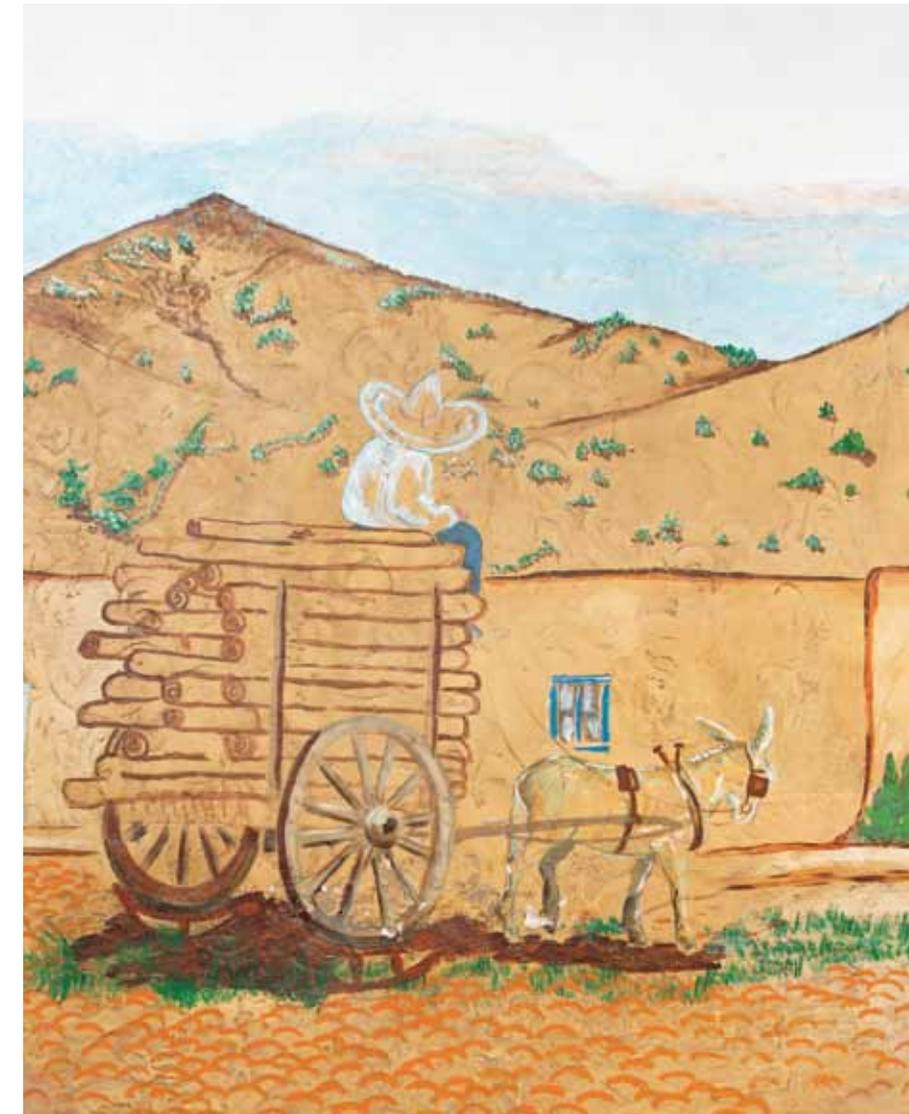


Van De Witt Copeland (1895-1957) was known for his paintings of the Grand Canyon. A painting from his travels is in La Fonda's collection.

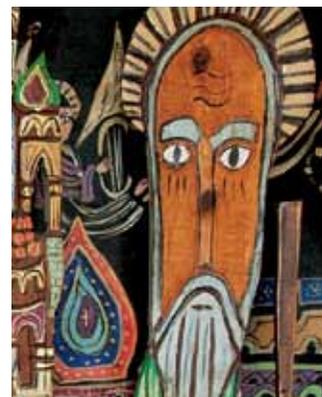
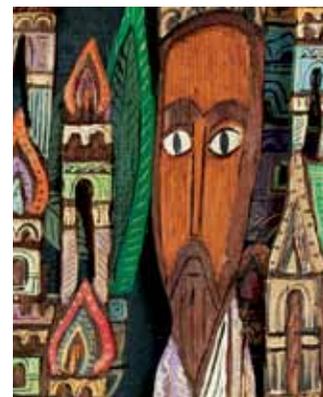
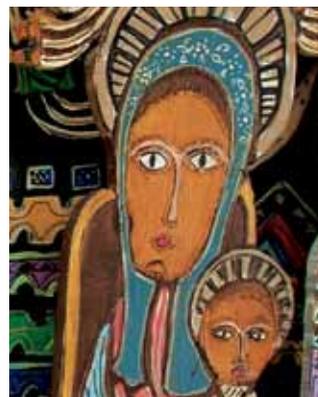
Olive Rush (1873-1966) is believed to have painted the original mural at La Fonda's Old Santa Fe Trail entrance.

*Van De Witt Copeland*  
*"Untitled" (left)*  
*Oil on Canvas*

*Olive Rush*  
*Mural Detail (right)*  
*Mixed Media*



Johnathan Kendall's (1939-2004) unusual assemblages made of painted and carved "found" wood are located throughout the hotel.



*Johnathan Kendall*  
*"Untitled"*  
*Carved & Found Wood*

CHAPTER THREE



NATIVE AMERICAN ART



Some of the first Native American art to enter La Fonda's collection was acquired by Mary Jane Colter. Among early acquisitions were works by Romando Vigil, Julian Martinez, and Tomás Vigil. These artists flourished under the encouragement of Edgar Lee Hewett, a key supporter of Native American art.

Tomás Vigil (1889–1960) was born at Tesuque Pueblo and was known as Pan-Yo-Pin (“Summer Mountain”). Self-taught, he painted traditionally in a two-dimensional style without perspective. In 1927 his work was shown at the former Riverside Museum in New York. A writer for *Forum Magazine* stated “the paintings made a tremendous impression upon the Eastern public, and their spontaneity of conception and real beauty of color, and design, has been praised in the Eastern press.” His paintings, as well as those of Romando Vigil and Julian Martinez from the same exhibition, eventually became part of Brandeis University's collection.

Julian Martinez (1897–1943), called Pocano (“Coming of the Spirits”), was born at San Ildefonso Pueblo and is the most famous of the three. Julian's brother-in-law Crescencio Martinez is known as the father of the Pueblo watercolor movement, and Julian took to the stylized method of painting. Edgar Lee Hewett gave Julian paints and paper to encourage his work, and Julian is credited with bringing Pueblo mythological subjects into easel painting.

Julian and his wife Maria also established a reputation as consummate potters. Immediately after their wedding they went to the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904 where Maria demonstrated pottery making and Julian took part in Native American dances. As their fame spread they participated in the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, and the 1934 Chicago World's Fair.

The talented Hewett was an archaeologist as well as an anthropologist. In his 1908 and 1909 excavations at San Ildefonso Pueblo he unearthed shards of prehistoric

Julian Martinez (1897-1943), called Pocano, was born at San Ildefonso Pueblo. Julian's brother-in-law Crescencio Martinez is known as the father of the watercolor movement among Pueblo artists and Julian took to the stylized method of painting. Julian is credited with bringing Pueblo mythological subjects into easel painting.

*Julian Martinez*  
*“Untitled”*  
*Tempera on Paper*





Romando Vigil (1902-1978), named Tse Ye Mu, was also a self-taught artist. Vigil's style included realism and abstraction. He was commissioned to create murals for the 1933 Exhibition of Indian Tribal Arts at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, DC, and for Mesa Verde National Park.

*Romando Vigil*  
*"Untitled" (left)*

*Tempera on Paper*

*"Untitled" (right)*

*Hand-printed Silkscreen*





Harrison Begay graduated from Dorothy Dunn's The Studio School in 1939 as salutatorian. Dunn's goal was to encourage young Native Americans to develop a style based on the students' native traditions. Although Dunn's approach has since been supplanted, Begay continues to paint in the "Studio Style".

*Harrison Begay*  
*"Untitled"*

*Hand-printed Silkscreen*

pottery. Hewett asked Maria Martinez if she could replicate the ancient forms. He asked Julian to recreate the painted surface designs. Among the pieces Hewett dug up were shards featuring an unusual black-on-black glaze. After much trial and error, Maria duplicated the process of making the pots, and Julian perfected the glossy and matte glazes used to create the designs. The rest, as they say, is history. The couple's life-long collaboration made San Ildefonso a center for Pueblo pottery, and Maria, Julian, and later their children would comprise the most famous Native American pottery-making family in the world.

Romando Vigil's life began auspiciously on San Ildefonso Pueblo's feast day. Vigil (1902–1978) was named Tse-Ye-Mu ("Falling Cloud"), and was also a self-taught artist. Hewett's encouragement brought about the development of a San Ildefonso style of watercolor painting in which the artists depicted their people, the animals they hunted, and the dances they danced in a two-dimensional style similar to that being produced by Tomás Vigil at Tesuque. Romando Vigil's style included realism and abstraction. He was commissioned to create murals for the 1933 Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, DC, and for Mesa Verde National Park. Later he was a painter for Walt Disney Studios. Many guest rooms at La Fonda contain works by Romando Vigil—multiples of several different images brightly hand colored and typical of the San Ildefonso style.

Hand printed silkscreens from Tewa Enterprises established in Santa Fe in 1951 by Harrison Begay also decorate many of the guest rooms. The prints, in editions of 2,000, are not considered "originals," although they were printed by hand in the subtle colors known to be used by Begay and the other artists at Tewa Enterprises. Born around 1914 in the Navajo Nation, Begay is known as Haashké yah Níyá ("Wandering Boy"), and is recognized as the father of 20th-century Navajo art. His mother died when he was seven, and he was sent to an Indian boarding school, eventually running away to return home to herd sheep and study art on his own.

The Santa Fe Indian School was founded in 1890 and it was there in 1932 that Dorothy Dunn began The Studio School. Her goal was to encourage young Native Americans to develop a style based on the students' Native traditions. Harrison Begay became one of her students. Dunn believed the students had innate artistic ability. She taught them to paint in a flat, heavily outlined, and colorful style influenced by the rock, wall, and buffalo hide paintings of the past. She also encouraged them to depict themes from Native American life. Although Dunn's approach may have been appropriate for the time, it was supplanted when the new Institute for American Indian Arts (IAIA) opened in 1962—an organization that fostered broader creative expression. Begay graduated from The Studio School in 1939 as salutatorian, and he continues to paint in the "Studio Style."

La Fonda's corridors, meeting rooms, and guest rooms have always held works of contemporary Native American art, a tradition that expanded when the Ballens took ownership of the hotel. It continues to this day. The Ballens acquired two paintings by Shonto Begay, who was born in the Navajo Nation near Shonto, Arizona.

The largest of his La Fonda paintings is *Since Night's Victory III* (1997). In correspondence with the author, Begay said it depicts the ancient Diné winter's night game *Keesh Je'* or "shoe game." "Only in the winter when the animals are hibernating can you sing and play their games," Begay said. "This particular piece shows kids playing the game." In the early days the night creatures and the day creatures wanted the world to be all night or all day, so they played the game to see who was the most powerful. They hid yucca roots in buried boots and tried to guess which boot contained the root. When dawn came and there was no winner, they realized that both night and day and all the seasons had their place in the world.

Many guest rooms are decorated with hand-printed silkscreens from Tewa Enterprises established in Santa Fe in 1951 by Harrison Begay, who is recognized as the father of 20th century Navajo art.

*Artist Unknown*

*"Untitled"*

*Hand-printed Silkscreen*





Shonto Begay *"Since Night's Victory III"*, 1997 Oil on Canvas

A graduate of IAIA, Shonto Begay is an artist and environmental activist. His paintings vibrate with the energy of nature and with the history and traditions of his people. (left)

Sculptor Upton "Greysboes" Ethelbah, Jr., draws from both his Apache and his Pueblo heritage to create sinuous interpretations of their symbols and images. (right)

Upton "Greysboes" Ethelbah, Jr.  
*"Danza de Matachines"*  
Marble with Granite Base



The ever-influential Edgar Lee Hewett opened the first Southwest Indian Fair and Industrial Arts and Crafts Exhibition on September 4, 1922 in Santa Fe. Today, the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA) sponsors Indian Market, an event that brings over 100,000 people to the Santa Fe Plaza each year. Several pieces in La Fonda's collection have been acquired through SWAIA auctions at Indian Market, of which the Ballens were enthusiastic supporters.

A marble sculpture by Upton "Greystoes" Ethelbah, Jr. (Santa Clara/White Mountain Apache), graces a niche in the Ballen Boardroom on the first floor. Titled *Danza de Matachines*, it depicts a masked dance introduced by the Spanish and still performed today from Peru to Northern New Mexico. Greystoes' first bronze, *Pueblo Corn Dancer*, was judged Best Contemporary Native American artwork at the Colorado Springs Indian and Spanish Art Market in 1999. In 2009 he was awarded First Place in Stone Carving at Indian Market and was named a Living Treasure by the New Mexico Museum of Indian Art and Culture. He draws from both his Apache and his Pueblo heritage to create sinuous interpretations of their symbols and images.

Gregory Lomayesva, son of Hispanic santera Marie Romero Cash and Hopi artist Bill Lomayesva, describes himself as "an American artist with Hopi roots," and says, in his Artist's Statement, "Hopiland is where my father's side of the family comes from ... and I begin most of my pieces with imagery from Hopiland." His masks and wood sculptures in La Fonda's collection have Hopi roots and are embellished by his fertile imagination. A large, colorful mask is displayed on the mezzanine above La Plazuela. The collection also contains a multiple-figure sculpture of three colorful kachinas, six symbolic poles, and two corn stalks depicting a Corn Dance celebrating a bountiful harvest and blessings for rain.

Gregory Lomayesva's masks and wood sculptures in La Fonda's collection are embellished by his fertile imagination. He describes himself as "an American artist with Hopi roots."

*Gregory Lomayesva*  
*"Untitled"*  
*Mixed Media*





La Fonda's collection also contains a set of six small bronzes by Joe L. Jojola of Isleta Pueblo, Thurr-Shun "Sun Rising". His sculptures at La Fonda represent the ceremonies performed by Mountain Spirit Dancers throughout the summer to celebrate the coming of age of Mescalero girls.

*Joe L. Jojola*  
*"Mescalero Apache Mountain Spirit Dancers, Libayé & Maiden" 1999*  
*Bronze*

The collection also includes *Mescalero Apache Mountain Spirit Dancers, Libayé & Maiden*, a set of six small bronzes by Joe L. Jojola of Isleta Pueblo, known as Thurr-Shun ("Sun Rising"). Jojola was born and raised at Isleta Pueblo but has a close relationship with the Mescalero Apache. His sculptures at La Fonda represent the ceremonies performed by Mountain Spirit Dancers throughout the summer to celebrate the coming of age of Mescalero girls.

Mateo Romero, Ryan Singer, and Marla Allison collaborated on an imaginative project for La Fonda. *Rio Grande Pueblo Girl* (2009) consists of three paintings—one by each of the artists—made up of 32 square panels that the artists move around from time to time and from painting to painting. "Paintings move, colors change, arrange, re-arrange," they explained in correspondence with the hotel. "Imagine paint that is in motion, paint that breathes, intuitive, emotional, unfired, and ephemeral. These are some of the ideas that we had as we approached this collaborative painting project."

Mateo Romero was born and raised in California but traces his roots to Cochiti Pueblo through his artist father, Santiago Romero. He was a Ronald and Susan Dubin Artist Fellow at the School for Advanced Research (S.A.R.) and has won many prizes at Indian Market.

Navajo artist Ryan Singer won the first "Adult Smile Award" at the 2008 Indian Market. In a 2011 article in the *Albuquerque Journal*, Singer is quoted as saying, "I've always been kind of goofy, comedic. I guess it's a Native thing, a way of coping with things, like stereotypes and racism."

Marla Allison is from Laguna Pueblo. She is also represented in the collection by her painting *Cottonwood and Deer* (2010) as well as several other works. In her Artist's Statement she says, "My art is what lets me connect the past to my future. My paintings are based on the contemporary, which borrows from

the past. I paint so I remember where I come from. I paint so others can remember where I come from. I paint to be remembered.” She received the Eric and Barbara Dobkin Native Woman’s Fellowship at S.A.R. and finished her fellowship in 2010.

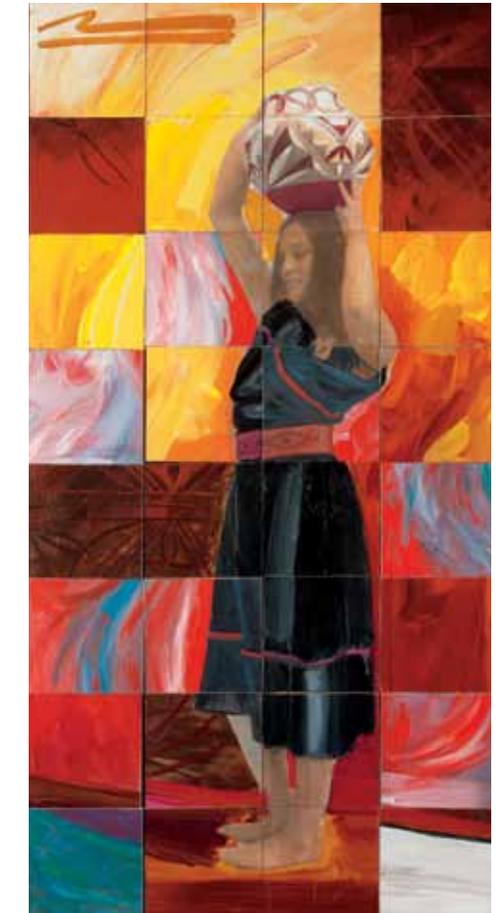
When the hotel’s Fitness Center was expanded in 2002, the Ballens commissioned a mural from Ramah Navajo Nation artists Dallas and Rolland (“Rojo”) Ellsworth who were 14 and 17 years old, respectively. Both brothers enrolled at Eastern New Mexico University, but sadly, Rojo was killed in a bull-riding accident at a university rodeo a year later, before the mural was completed. Dallas finished the mural, and went on to major in graphic design and was student body president.

Tony Abeyta came to Santa Fe when he was 16 years old to study at the Institute of American Indian Arts and has since studied at art centers and universities in Europe and across the United States, receiving his Masters in Fine Art from New York University. In 1992 his painting was featured on the 71st Annual Indian Market poster. Tony was designated the 2012 Museum of Indian Arts and Culture Living Treasure for his work and for his contributions to the community. He combines imagery from his Navajo heritage with a Modernist technique.

One of the latest works to enter La Fonda’s collection is Abeyta’s *Stormy Canyon*, which has its roots in the simplified Modernism that influenced Rönnebeck and vibrates with his own sense of form and color. “I find that art is constantly moving, reinventing and affected by the changes in our culture,” he writes in his Artist’s Statement. The vibrancy of the world around him is reflected in the variety of projects he works on, from “neo modernist landscapes, black and white abstract bio-mechanical charcoal and ink wash drawings, colorful deity paintings with abrupt textures and paint, and now sculpture as well,” he continues. Selections from a series of mixed media works based on traditional masks can be found in various guest rooms.

Mateo Romero, Ryan Singer, and Marla Allison collaborated on an imaginative project for La Fonda. *Rio Grande Pueblo Girl* (2009) consists of three paintings (one by each of the artists). Each painting is made up of 32 square panels which the artists move around from time to time and from painting to painting.

*Marla Allison, Ryan Singer,  
Mateo Romero  
“Rio Grande Pueblo Girl”, 2009  
Acrylic on Wood*





Marla Allison is from Laguna Pueblo, and says, “My art is what lets me connect the past to my future. My paintings are based on the contemporary, which borrows from the past. I paint so I remember where I came from. I paint so others can remember where I come from. I paint to be remembered.”

*Marla Allison “Cottonwood and Deer”, 2010 Acrylic on Canvas*



When the hotel’s Fitness Center was expanded in 2002, Ramah Navajo Nation artists Dallas and Rolland (“Rojo”) Ellsworth, who were just 14 and 17 at the time, were commissioned to paint the mural featured in the new space.

*Dallas and Rolland Ellsworth “Untitled”, 2002*



Abeyta's synthesis of traditional sources and movements in contemporary Native art has been singled out by La Fonda's management as a direction for its future collection. Chairman of the Board, Jennifer Lea Kimball, has played a major role in highlighting the hotel's vast collection, and has spearheaded the restoration of numerous historic works. Reflecting on the collection Kimball states, "La Fonda on the Plaza has evolved into a major fine art destination and because of this, is unique among Santa Fe hotels. Original artwork hangs in each guest room and throughout the hotel's public spaces—offering guests an opportunity to interact with the art at every turn. Continuing Sam and Ethel Ballen's support of local artists, we are committed to expanding and refining our collection of meaningful pieces that compliment both the hotel's history and future." ♦

*Written for La Fonda on the Plaza by John O'Hern.*

*Photography of art by James Hart. Photography of painted windows by Clay Ellis.*

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Tony Abeyta was designated the 2012 Museum of Indian Arts and Culture Living Treasure for his work and for his contributions to the community. He combines imagery from his Navajo heritage with a Modernist technique. The vibrancy of the world around him is reflected in the variety of projects he works on, from neo Modernist landscapes to sculpture.

*Tony Abeyta*

**Mask Compositions**

*Mixed Media*

*My main asset has always been my curiosity.*

William Lumpkins, (1909-2000)  
*Architect, Solar Pioneer & Artist*

  
La Fonda  
On the Plaza



## IN EVERY ROOM :: A STORY OF THE ART

The art collection of La Fonda on the Plaza began during the hotel's inception, and has grown considerably since Sam and Ethel Ballen bought the property in 1968. Paintings by the best Pueblo artists were acquired in the early years and the Ballens carried on that tradition, supporting Santa Fe's famed Indian Market and acquiring work by Native American and other artists for the hotel. Not only does original art hang in every room but all of it has a connection to the people who designed, built, and owned the hotel, a collaboration that has made La Fonda a sought-after destination for over 90 years. This book highlights only a few of the artists and their stories.

*On the Cover: Tony Abeyta "Stormy Canyon", (Detail) Oil on Canvas*



100 East San Francisco Street  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501  
505-982-5511 • 800-523-5002  
lafondasantafe.com

