

UCSD's Grove Gallery kicks off season with showing of new lithographic works from the Tamarind Institute of New Mexico

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SIX NEW MEXICAN ARTISTS WILL SHOW NEW LITHOGRAPHIC WORKS IN A SHOW BEGINNING SEPT. 24 TITLED "SANTEROS: LITHOGRAPHS FROM TAMARIND"

The Grove Gallery at the University of California, San Diego will open its 1991-92 season on Sept. 24 with a showing of two suites lithographs from the internationally famous Tamarind Institute of New Mexico, made by six New Mexican carvers.

The exhibition, called "Santeros: Lithographs from Tamarind," will also feature a selection of three dimensional work. The show will continue through Nov. 2.

There will be a closing reception at the gallery from 6:30-8 p.m., Nov. 1.

The lithographs are the result a collaboration between six highly skilled New Mexican santeros (religious image makers) and three of Tamarind's senior printers, under the supervision of master printer Bill Lagattuta.

The participating santeros are Charles Carillo, Felix Lopez, Ramon Jose Lopez, Eluid Martinez, Anita Romero Jones and Luis Tapia. The printers are Mark Attwood, Julie E. Maher and Cole Rogers.

The project produced two suites of images; each suite includes one print by each artist, title and colophon pages, and an introductory page with an essay by Museum of International Folk Art curator Helen Lucero. The suites are enclosed in handmade cloth-covered portfolio boxes adorned with traditional Hispanic tinwork medallions created by Bonifacio Sandoval, of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The Tamarind Institute invited the six santeros to take part in the project as a way to honor the history of lithography (the lithographic process was invented in 1798) and the New Mexican santero tradition. The santero tradition began when isolated colonialists of northern New Spain (New Mexico) created their own devotional images when they were unavailable from the European markets. The most common of the santero images were retablos (panel paintings and altar screens) and bultos (statues).

With the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821, and the railroad in 1879, the santero tradition dwindled, replaced by more readily available artifacts from the Eastern United States and Europe. It wasn't until the 1920s that a brief revival occurred under a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, a second revival was begun by a group of Hispanic artists in northern New Mexico.

Today, there are more than 50 santeros statewide, and their craft is thriving. Today's artists continue to derive inspiration from the works of early santeros, who took much of their subject matter from small scale prints found in the missals and prayerbooks of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Grove Gallery is open from Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Use Northview Drive or Gilman Drive information pavilions for directions to the gallery and to purchase a parking permit. For information call 534-2021.

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