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A SHOW TITLED "CERAMIC FIGURES OF OCUMICHO"

The ceramic "devils" of Ocumicho attend school, drive buses and sell their wares in the market place. The devils and other ceramic figures are made in the Mexican village of San Pedro Ocumicho. These figures, and a collection of clay whistles, will be shown in a show titled "Ceramic Figures of Ocumicho," from March 4-Apr. 17, in the Grove Gallery, at the University of California, San Diego.

The figures are crafted singly and in vignettes that portray religious themes and day-to-day life in a small village. Originally, women of the community made clay whistles. Today, children make the whistles, and women make the figures known as "Los Diablos de Ocumicho." To the artists who make the devils, they are known simply as "los monos," or the "dolls."

The devil image was introduced by a man from the village, Marcelino Vilente, who liked to make clay figures (so-called "women's work" by men in the village). While in his late teens, he made molds for figures in the forms of dancers, bulls, cowboys, rabbits and owls, to name a few. Later, he devised new "fantastico," or fantasy figures--imaginary animals and devils-- painted in bright colors, which previously had not been used by the women artisans. He is credited with inspiring village artists with new creativity, causing what is now called the era of "Golden Expression," in Ocumicho. He died at the age of 35, in 1968, in a drunken brawl.

The Ocumicho exhibition will coincide, in part, with the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) conference which will be held in San Diego, March 24-27.

More than 40 area galleries and museums will show ceramic works from the Pacific Rim, which is the theme of the NCECA conference. Exhibitions will come from New Zealand, Australia, Nicaragua, Mexico, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, China, Eastern Siberia, Canada and Alaska.

Many of the works in the Ocumicho exhibition are from the personal collection of Karen Heftmann.

The Grove Gallery is open from Tuesday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Parking permits are required on the UCSD campus and may be purchased at the Gilman Drive and Northview Drive information pavilions. For additional information, call 534-2021.

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