

# Straw Appliqué by Della Vigil Gonzales

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Della Vigil Gonzales** was born and raised in Truchas, NM. She moved to Santa Fe, NM, in 1985 and has worked full-time at the Santa Fe Institute (SFI) since 1988. SFI is a private, independent, transdisciplinary research and education center located in the foothills of the *Sangre de Cristo* Mountains. Della works closely with foreign and domestic Nobel Laureates, Fellows, and Jr. and Sr. Scientists.

Della was accepted to participate in the summer and winter Traditional Spanish Markets sponsored by the Spanish Colonial Arts Society in 2008. Her award-winning Art has been on exhibit at the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art, *Santuario de Chimayo* Gift Shop, Gerald Peters Gallery, Collected Works Bookstore, The Shops at Sanbusco, The Cathedral Church of St. John, the Design Studio in the Albuquerque Plaza Hyatt Regency Hotel, and published in a variety of media. Della has mentored adult and youth Spanish Market artists and taught workshops at the Museum of Spanish Colonial Arts and St. Michael's High School.



Della is the owner of **Finally In Print**, a book formatting and graphic design home business. Her clients have published with Addison-Wesley, Oxford University Press, Elsevier, and Knopf. She works closely with author and Pulitzer prize winner, Cormac McCarthy, formatting his books, movie scripts, and screenplays including *The Counselor*, *The Road*, *No Country for Old Men*, and *The Sunset Limited*.

Della now lives in Los Lunas, NM, with her husband John.

## Awards

- 2014 Innovation Within Tradition Award, Spanish Market, Spanish Colonial Arts Society, Santa Fe, NM.
- 2012 Holy Family of the Year Award (together with her parents and sisters), Holy Family Parish, Chimayo, NM.
- 2008-2009 Miguel Chavez Award, for dedication and service, St. Michael's High School, Santa Fe, NM.
- 2008 Best of Show, Traditional Art category, Santa Fe County Fair, Santa Fe, NM.
- 2008 First place, Traditional Art category, Santa Fe County Fair, Santa Fe, NM.
- 1999-2000 Character Counts, for Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship, Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM.

## Media Coverage

- DeWalt, Rob. "Wrapped in Tradition." *New Mexico Magazine*, pp. 21-25. November 2013.
- Stanzione, Nikki. *New Mexico Style*, KASA Fox 2 — [http://www.kasa.com/subindex/nm\\_style](http://www.kasa.com/subindex/nm_style) February 16, 2012.
- Trujillo, Ana Maria. "Appliqué Therapy." *The New Mexican*, January 25, 2011.
- Olmstead, Donna. "Winter Spanish Market Explores Artistic Boundaries: Participants Can Depart from Tradition." *Winter Guide*, Albuquerque Journal, p. 36, November 14, 2010.
- Roberts, Kathaleen. "Market Niche: Appliqué 'Weavings' a Unique Addition to Spanish Market." *Venue*, Santa Fe / North, *Albuquerque Journal*, July 23, 2010.
- Ortega, Art. "Weekend Edition: 59th Annual Traditional Spanish Market." Citadel Radio interview, KKOB, 770 FM. July 17-18, 2010.

Miller, Rachel. "Della Ulibarri: Weaving Sunshine." *Santa Fe Institute 2009 Annual Report*, p. 16. Santa Fe, NM, April 2010.

German, John. "Della Ulibarri Among 2008 Spanish Market Artisans." *Santa Fe Institute Update*, p. 4. Santa Fe, NM, September 2008.

June, Ana. "Painstaking Alchemy: Centuries-Old Tradition Lives on Through Local Artist." *New Mexico Free Press*, July 23, 2008.

### **Memberships**

2013 — 2015	Co-Chair, Artist Liaison Committee, Spanish Colonial Arts Society
2010 — 2015	Member, Artist Liaison Committee, Spanish Colonial Arts Society
2010 — 2013	Member, <i>La Sociedad Folklorica de Santa Fe</i>
2008 — present	Spanish Market Artist and Member, Spanish Colonial Arts Society
2008 — present	Member, Santa Fe Institute Founders Society
2003 — 2010	Chair, Staff Appreciation Committee, St. Michael's High School
2001 — 2010	Member, Parents' Club, St. Michael's High School
2006 — 2008	Member, Booster Club, St. Michael's High School
1999 — 2000	President, Cristo Rey Catholic School Board
1998 — 1999	Vice President, Cristo Rey Catholic School Board
1996 — 1998	Chair, Ways & Means Committee, Cristo Rey Catholic School
1994 — 1998	Member, Cristo Rey Catholic School Board

### **ABOUT STRAW APPLIQUÉ**

Straw Appliqué is straw (hay, corn, wheat) split and flattened; the soft inner pith is scraped off, resulting in very thin pieces of golden straw. Straw is cut, one piece at a time, and glued to wood and sprayed with varnish.

During the 1700s in many of the northern New Mexico villages, gold was a precious commodity and its use on crosses for worship was impractical. The necessity to have crosses and other decorated items that had the look of gold caused the early Hispanics to "invent" a process that adhered straw to wood. One technique was straw inlay or appliqué and another was encrusted straw [1]. It has been referred to as poor man's gold.

Some pieces are devotional and others have impressions of Rio Grande / Chimayo-style Textiles. The eight-pointed star pattern began to appear in Rio Grande weavings in the mid to late 1800s. The five star placement features one star in each corner and one large star in the center. In the Hispanic weaving tradition, these unique and vibrant weavings became known as the "Vallero Star" or "Trampas-Vallero" blankets [2]. Della's great-great grandmother Martina Montoya, from El Valle, NM (hence, the name "Vallero") and her sisters were all involved in the weaving trade.

[1] "A Tradition of Making Straw into Gold." *The Collector's Guide*. June 5, 2006.  
<http://www.collectorsguide.com/fa/fa034.shtml>

[2] "Vallero Star Blankets." *The Collector's Guide*. November 7, 2006.  
<http://www.collectorsguide.com/fa/fa039.shtml>