



**NURA EL SANAA**, a Bedouin weaver, practices on a floor loom in a workshop at Sidreh, a nonprofit organization that works in the Negev Desert in Israel. *Photograph courtesy of Sidreh.* **MATERIALS AND TOOLS** show the basic elements in Bedouin weaving and basketry before they are transformed into objects of functional use. *Photograph © by Dana Waldon Photography.*



**GOLD AND SILVER HOOP EARRINGS** by Ousmane Papa Macina are a down-sized version of a traditional Fulani form of adornment. *Photograph courtesy of Ousmane Papa Macina, Lapidary Magazine.* **OUSMANE PAPA MACINA** is a tenth-generation Mali jeweler who specializes in earrings, bracelets and rings, taking inspiration from Mali's cultural heritage. *Photograph © by Bob Smith.*



**ANGELICA MORALES GAMEZ** lives in the village of Tzintzuntzan in the state of Michoacán, Mexico. Her pottery is known for its *blanco-y-negro* (black and white) stylization. *Photograph courtesy of Barro Sin Plomo.* **FOLKLORIC SCENES AND IMAGES OF NATIVE PUREPECHA WOMEN** decorate the surfaces of her low-fire clay bowls. The artist uses environmentally safe, lead-free glazing materials. *Photograph © by Judith Cooper Haden.*



**TRADITIONAL JEWELRY DESIGNS** show the artist's deft use of silver, enamel and coral made specifically for the Berber women of the Kabylia region of Algeria. **KARIM OUKID OUKSET** is from a multi-generational family of jewelers from the village of Ath Yani, home to a rich metalsmithing tradition. *Photographs © by Joan Soto.*

*Opposite page: TOY TRUCK* of painted metal and mixed media by Haider Ali, Pakistan. *Photograph © by John Bigelow Taylor.* All photographs courtesy of the International Folk Art Market, and published in *The Work of Art, Folk Artists in the 21st Century.*





# INTERNATIONAL FOLK ART MARKET

July 10-12, 2015

**W**ith breathtaking views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, for twelve years annually, Museum Hill in Santa Fe, New Mexico, has transformed itself into a colorful and lively outdoor world marketplace on Milner Plaza. For 2015, some one hundred fifty artists from fifty-seven countries present their handmade crafts to an audience of over twenty thousand visitors. For one weekend in July, the plaza is a vibrant, even overwhelming commingling of artists and an audience eager to partake of the cultural bounty that personal exchanges like this make possible. There are plenty of children's events, dancing, a food bazaar, films, and music, but it is the handmade that is the seductive draw, and rightly so. People are still eager to appreciate and perchance to buy the works of individual craftspeople. The United States itself over the last decades

has experienced an upswelling of just such an interest in craft made by its contemporary artists. So much so that American corporations have in the last years cannibalized the word 'craft' and it is used to define everything from beer to cars. Companies recognized and quickly seized on a powerful zeitgeist of value and authenticity the word communicates. There is a hunger out in the land for that which is real and genuine, and culturally and materially, it now drives for-profit decisions without true attachment to craft's deeper meanings throughout human history.

The legacy of making never quite disappears, although often in danger, especially in our modern era of mass production. Over the millennia and as we increasingly populated the world we learned to produce by hand: making useful and decorative products out of clay, fiber,



COTTON HUIPIL woven by Florentina Lopez de Jesus, Mexico. PAINTED WOOD TABLE by Muhamadali Hamroev, Uzbekistan. MIAO SILVER ALLOY HEADDRESS by the Li Family, China. Photographs © by John Bigelow Taylor.



metal, wood, whatever we could put our hands on, so to speak, in order to engage in the practice of making. As we spread ourselves, we also began to differentiate ourselves, taking on the unique mantle of our particular community, whether Serbian, Chinese, or the untold thousands of cultures that have peopled the earth. This individuation has worked for and against us, a cause for honoring the manifold creative variances of humanity or as a springboard for violence, ripping entire societies apart in the name of us versus them.

It is the celebration of human endeavor within the context of global community by which the International Folk Art Market distinguishes its mission, emphasizing that what we have in common and the connections we maintain are much more important than what separates us. “As work that takes shape in an artist’s two hands, and a legacy of cultural expression shaped by many hands through time,” writes Carmella Padilla, author of *The Work of Art: Folk Artists in the 21st Century*, about the International Folk Art Market, “folk art is at once unmistakably singular and completely connected. It is at its essence an art of connection—to the world’s timeless traditions, to the artists and communities who maintain them, and to the values they represent.”

Since its inception, some seven hundred fifty artists from ninety-one countries have made their way to Museum Hill. Their work has generated more than twenty million dollars in sales, ninety percent of which has gone home with the participants. There are artists who come from developing countries where the average income is less than three dollars a day. The revenue gained over three days is critical and they have returned to their countries and villages to build schools, houses, health clinics, and wells for clean drinking water.

The artists are chosen by a panel of experts from more than four hundred applications for the beauty, quality and authenticity of their work. These artists recognize that their handmade traditions are a means to overcoming poverty, gender inequality, environmental degradation, ethnic conflict, and can be used for political, educational and social advancement. Their participation helps stabilize and perhaps diminish the loss of still extant traditions and cultures.

So the event will retain its vitality and freshness, the artists and their crafts vary over the years, some returning,





**LUIS MENDEZ LOPEZ**, Spain, creates gold and silver filigree jewelry and incorporates pearls and gemstones into his beautiful work. He is from a family of jewelers spanning three generations. *Photograph © by Bob Smith.*

**REBECCA LOLOSOLI**, Kenya, is a leader in the village of Umoja Uaso, where the women make stunning Samburu beadwork. *Photograph © by Judith Cooper Haden.*

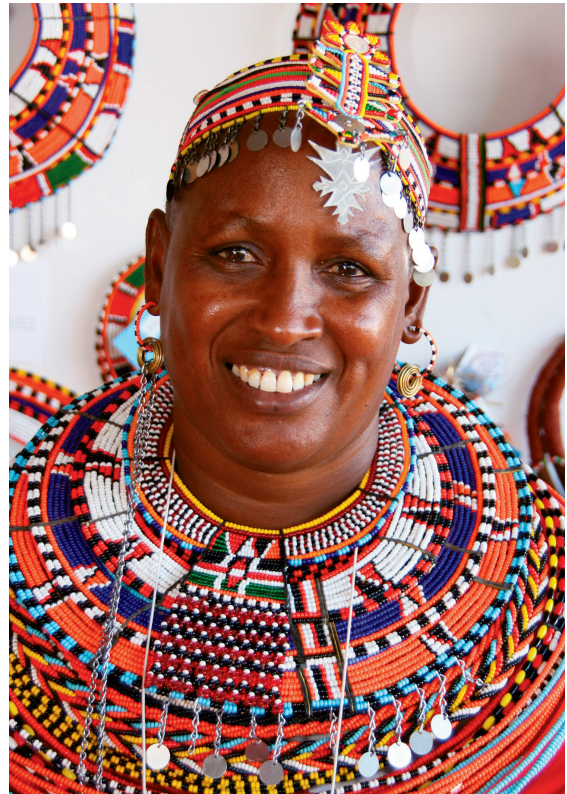
**PABIBEN LAKHMAN RABARI**, India, created the Pabi Bag, a narrow purse, which quickly became popular internationally. *Photograph © by Judy Frater.*



others coming only once. They have included artists like Bedouin Nura El Sanaa who weaves on a floor loom at Sidreh. A nonprofit organization, Sidreh promotes women’s empowerment and economic improvement through the preservation of Bedouin weaving traditions. Ousmane Papa Macina and his family have been making gold and silver jewelry for over ten generations in Mali. Utilizing the symbols of the great Fulani empire, Macina creates graceful designs of twisted gold and silver wire filigree and granulation. Using handmade tools to produce his work, his jewelry is traditionally worn for special occasions and ceremonies.

From the village of Tzintzuntzan, in the state of Michoacán, Mexico, Angélica Morales Gamez makes *blanco-y-negro* (black-and-white) pottery that features folkloric scenes and images of native Purépecha women. Morales participates in the lead-free project, *Barro Sin Plomo*, an organization that encourages artisans to use environmentally safe, lead-free glazing materials. Generations of lead use by Mexican potters gave rise to lung disease and other lead-poisoning conditions in these families. Traditional jeweler Karim Oukid Ouksel is originally from the village of Ath Yani, in the mountainous region of Kabylia Algeria, where the Berber still reside and maintain their cultural identity. Now living in Spain and part of a family of jewelers, he fastidiously crafts silver, enamel and coral into the necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and rings of designs favored by Berber women.

Santa Fe’s International Folk Art Market is such a win/win experience; it is commerce at its most enjoyable and supportive. A veritable pop-up global village of ethnographic arts, the venue brings its own brand of excitement to those who still want to experience (or are new to it) the world’s unique cultures—the individuality of their traditions and way of life, where everything is not yet homogenized and Westernized. Visitors take away not only delight in their purchases but a renewed understanding that world cultures have their own historical narratives and social traditions to celebrate and honor—and that each of us is one part of a beautiful whole. ☐



**SUGGESTED READING**  
**Padilla, Carmella.** *The Work of Art: Folk Artists in the 21st Century.* Santa Fe: IFAA Media, 2013.