

News

Santa Fe, New Mexico is Home for Thriving Artists

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The U.S. southwestern town of **Santa Fe, New Mexico** is home to hundreds of artists. It is the third-largest art market in the United States, after New York and Los Angeles. The town was founded in 1607 by Spanish explorers. It has a rich, cultural heritage and is popular with tourists.

Walk down any street in downtown Santa Fe, New Mexico and art is everywhere. More than 300 galleries line the narrow streets in this town of 50,000.

Joyce Robbins, an **art gallery** owner, says artists started coming to the town from the East Coast of the United States in the late 1800s. "It was just sort of a natural succession of coming for a new imagery--something different. Getting away from what they considered traditional East Coast to the West."

Joyce sells the work of several artists, including abstract landscape painter **Dick Evans**, and his wife, **Susan Stamm Evans**, a sculptor who creates images of women. These New Mexico natives, whose work couldn't be more different, work in separate studios at home.

Dick uses a large house-painting brush to craft his vivid images -- often representations of nature, such as trees, bushes and hills in the wide-open New Mexican desert. "I get a lot of inspiration from nature. I spend a lot of time in nature. I like to be by myself."

He begins with a black background and works quickly -- often finishing his paintings in less than an hour. "I find that when I get into a real fast method of working, things just seem to come out of me a little more easily, and a little more readily. And if I paint slowly, then I start thinking about what it is that I'm doing, instead of just doing it."

Dick says he seldom knows exactly what he is going to paint. But he hopes his art will inspire people to look at nature a little differently. "Occasionally someone will say, 'You know, I was out driving the other day,' or, 'I went up on a hike in the mountains, and I looked at something and I thought, oh, I wouldn't have even looked at that if I hadn't seen your painting last week.' "

In her studio next door, Susan uses clay to craft meticulously detailed female sculptures, which may take weeks to finish. Then they are either cast into bronze or heated into porcelain.

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She says the images do not depict real people, but instead capture a gesture or a moment of a woman's life. They are often pensive and alone -- some with only partial faces. "I think women are a little more open with their emotions," she says. "And since most of my work is so subtle and just dealing with emotions, maybe that's why it's natural I always go back to working with a female figure. The smallest changes in gesture give such a different mood."



Susan says she is not trying to tell a story with her sculptures -- they are more like actors posed on a stage. But she enjoys it when people come up with scenarios.

"I love it when other people who are looking at the work tell me these elaborate stories about what the piece means to them, what the figure is doing, what the figure is thinking, how it's relating."

Joyce Robbins says Dick and Susan's art is popular with customers. "As much energy that Dick brings on this high level with color, Susan is introspective -- like really strong women, but yet vulnerable and real."

Both artists say they are constantly experimenting with new ideas -- Dick drawing inspiration from his frequent trips to the wilderness, and Susan from observing different ways women express themselves.

Dick Evans - http://www.joycerobbins.com/artistIndex.php?artist_id=5&DICK%20EVANS

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