

Expressing the sacred faith and understanding

# Spotlight ON Art

I have two wonderful shows to tell you about that you can see and enjoy for yet another few weeks.

Both these shows relate to our understanding of the Sacred. But just as two sides of a coin bear different images, yet relate to the same measure of money, these two exhibitions provoke emotional response to unseen Spirit in very different ways.



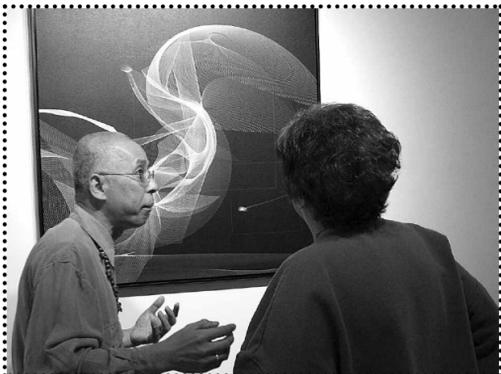
**Cynthia Berresse Ploski**  
Special to The Chronicle-News

The first show, which opened with great festivity, food and Mariachi music May 6 at the Mitchell Museum, is called "A Celebration of Hispanic Art."

It highlights the newly designed permanent exhibit of Penitente artifacts and Santos, devotional objects that take the form of retablos (paintings on wood panels) and bultos (sculptural carvings in the round.)

Penitentes, a religious group that figured prominently in 18th and 19th century Colorado/New Mexico history, were formed as a brotherhood of laypersons serving the pastoral and spiritual needs of rural communities lacking priests. They gathered in moradas or meeting houses, many of which still exist in various states of preservation or ruin today. Several moradas can still be seen within 20 miles of Trinidad.

Although they were suppressed in the late 19th century, partly because of their practice of self-flagellation in Lent and reenactments of Christ's crucifixion on Good Friday, the Penitente Brotherhood reconciled with the Roman



Fumio Sawa explains his drawing process to Kathleen Kelly at the First Street Gallery reception.

Catholic Church in 1947 and remains active today.

One present-day Penitente brother, Reuben Archuleta, a talented author and santero, was present at the opening reception to sign his four published books on the Penitentes and Penitente Art.

The beautiful works of renowned santeros Jose Esquibel and Charles Carillo are on display during the show, which ends May 20. Each piece on display speaks of the pious love for Saints and religious heroes that fills the hearts of devoted Southwestern Hispanic Christians.

Additionally, an exciting exhibit of paintings by Hispanic artists can be enjoyed on the mezzanine level of the Museum, paintings particularly noteworthy for their brilliance of color and sensitive representation of this area's natural beauty.

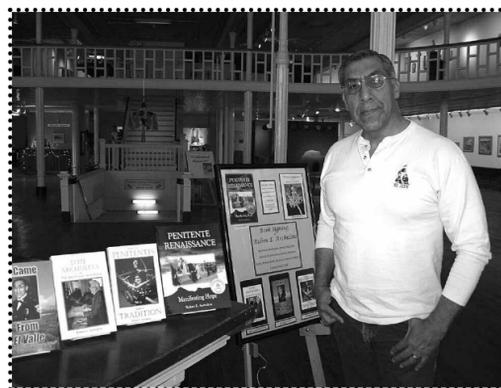
The Celebration of Hispanic Art is really a celebration of Hispanic spiritual devotion in all its historic richness and beauty.

Visitors can enjoy this first show of the Mitchell's 2010 Season during Museum hours, 10 to 4, Tuesdays through Saturdays and Sunday from noon to 4, until it closes May 20.

Call the Museum at (719) 846-4224 for information.

The other face of this artistic sacred coin, which I call "Understanding," is the exhibit that opened May 7 at the First Street Gallery, 150 East First St., and will continue until May 30.

It is the work of Fumio Sawa, and it is as much a spiritual reflection of the future into our reality as the Penitente carvings reflect our past. Fumio employs the technology of today to create conceptual artwork originating within his personal reactions to thoughts, the beauty of nature, light and sound.



Reuben Archuleta, active Penitente, displays his four books on Penitente art and history.

Encountering his large, luminous abstract drawings is like meeting a stunning, commanding emotional presence so mighty that one wonders how it could emanate from this slight wisp of a gentle man. The drawings constructed from lines and swirls on a paper surface speak of struggle, triumph, connections and conflicts as broad and deep as the Cosmos.

In fact, these lyrical abstract drawings evoke an emotional effect similar to seeing the awesome Hubbell telescope photos of galaxies in all their glory. Fumio's early training in Kyoto developed the typically Japanese sensitivity of style one can perceive in the exquisite small watercolors of flowers and wildlife that he says he paints to relieve the intensity of creating his large abstract drawings.

When we think of drawings, we think of small pictures executed in pen or pencil. This is not at all what Fumio creates. He makes magic. Big magic, and without a computer or camera! The process of how Sawa creates these lyrical, emotional, drawings draws me in awe and wonder.



Walter and Fumio in front of an image of their cat, Kyoko.

Imagine yourself attempting to do what he does:

First, you would have to intuit the concept you want to express - inspired, for example, by listening to Brahms' Second Piano Concerto, or thinking about the healing effect of prayer.

(One can glimpse Fumio's inspirations through the poetic titles of his drawings. Here are some examples:)

- "Within Realms of Secrecy and Laughter"
- "The Evolution of Essence and Matter"
- "Enfolded Within the Realms of Harmony and Precision"
- "Eleventh Dimension"
- "Rhapsody on a Theme of Dissonance"...to name a few.

Then you would have to translate your feelings and thoughts about the concept into mathematical equations in your head. (There, 99.99 percent of us would get lost completely.) When the math seemed complete, you would need



Photos by Cynthia Berresse Ploski

Strolling mariachi musicians the Ortega Brothers serenaded Mitchell Museum guests.

to approach a digital drawing board and draw individual directed line segments and vectors of color that represent, on the two-dimensional surface of paper, your multi-dimensional concepts.

Intimidating process, isn't it? But the images that result are gorgeous. You have to see



Charles Carillo's retablo, "San Acacio."

them to believe them. Remember, there is no computer manipulation and no photography used by Fumio to create either his drawings or his watercolors.

Just a spirit, a brain, a heart and a hand.

Now, the next exciting thing: Fumio and his partner Walter have bought the Travel building at 514 West Main St., across from the Trinidad Tire Shop. They plan to make it into a street-front gallery with living space in back, and to move here from their home and gallery in Kansas City sometime in the near future.



Painted bulto "Nuestra Señora de la Merced" by Carlos Santistevan.

We welcome them, and with them, the enthusiasm, love and delight they have in our town of Trinidad. And we look forward to being able to see more of these remarkable art journeys into the world of the Sacred any time we care to stop by the gallery-to-be, near the 4-way stop on Main Street.

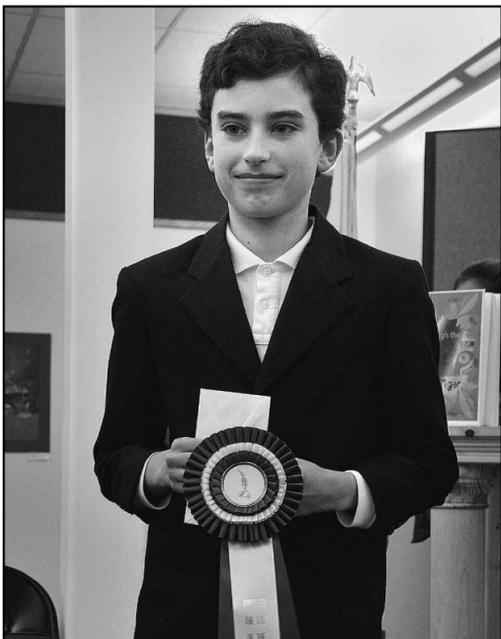
But between now and May 30, please do stop by the First Street Gallery to see this remarkable art, Tuesdays through Saturdays, from 10-3. You will be surprised and delighted. Phone, (719) 846-1441 if you need further information.

The Sacred is part of all our lives. It expresses in many forms, as you can see by these two exhibitions. But just like the facets of a diamond may reflect different aspects of the world around us, they all bear witness to the Light within.

## The Scoop.....

- May 6-20:** "A Celebration of Hispanic Art" Mitchell Museum, 150 East Main St., Trinidad, (719) 846-4224.
- May 7-30:** "The Digital Drawings of Fumio Sawa" First Street Gallery, 150 East First St., Trinidad, (719) 846-1441.
- May 15:** Painting the Model informal workshop, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Mitchell Museum mezzanine, (719) 845-1385.
- May 22-23:** Lorenzo Chavez plein air pastel workshop. Mitchell Museum, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (719) 846-4224.
- May 25-26:** Trinidad Community Chorale free concerts "Frank Sinatra and Friends" 7 p.m. United Methodist Church, Trinidad, (719) 846-1020.
- May 28:** Concerts for Causes "Idgy Vaughn and Will Sexton," A little Catering Company, 916 Arizona Ave., Trinidad, 5:30 buffet, 7 p.m. concert, (719) 846-3901.

## SRO crowd for youth writing awards



Photos by Tim Keller

Jeffrey Brabec took Writer of the Year honors, topping accomplished writers several years older.

By **TIM KELLER**  
The Chronicle-News

The "Through the Eye of the Tiger" 2010 Writing Competition awards show for the young writers of Raton Public Schools played to a packed house in the John Krivokapich Media Center at Raton High School Thursday night. The 100 available chairs filled 10 minutes before the show began. Additional chairs were carried in from classrooms, but many of the approximately 150 people in attendance stood through the show.

Raton Middle School 8th grader Jeffrey Brabec surprised by taking Writer of the Year honors, usually won by an older high school student. His short story was entitled "The Battle That Never Happened." Brabec won 1st place for fiction last year as a 7th grader.

Mrs. Marian Ray's Longfellow Elementary School class won this year's award for Best Class Book.

The Best Fiction Award was split between a pair of first place winners - high school sophomore James Neary and elementary school student Noah

Schoonover, another impressive example of a younger student with enough talent to stand beside much older and more experienced students.

Three young students were each awarded first place honors for their children's books, which were illustrated and published by the high school artists in Students for Students Publishing, the sponsoring organization.

Frances Olguin, Jason Parker, and Bella Sparaco each took home a first place ribbon.

Many other young writers also saw their published books for the first time Thursday night, and the high school illustrators and publishers got to meet, for the first time, the young writers they'd collaborated with.

A highlight of the evening was Gabriella Sparaco's reading of her new children's book, "The Troll Who Ate the Magic Spaghetti", illustrated by Rebeka Henson. Sparaco, holding the book in her hands for the first time, read the story aloud as sponsor Kathy Vertovec held a microphone and Erica Hopper showed Henson's illustrated pages projected on a screen. As she finished the story, Sparaco's face filled with a huge smile and the audience erupted in applause.

The remaining first place awards, for non-fiction and poetry, went to Raton High School senior Hilary Bayliss.



Mrs. Marian Ray's Longfellow Elementary School class won the prize for the year's Best Class Book.

Additional writing award winners were Tyler Vertovec, Daniel Gonzales, Heather Cochran, Mariah Alderette, Julia Shuster, Samuel Bayliss, Amanda Rodriguez, Holly Montano, and Augusta Ahlm.

Additional students seeing their children's books illustrated and published were Tate Wood, Dante Sparaco, Jude Segura, Laynee Segura, Benjamin Sanchez, Antonia Lopez, Brianna Tedford, and Destiny Menchaca.

Thursday night's event also marked the hardbound publication of the annual anthology "Through the Eye of the Tiger", which publishes all the award-winning writings from the preceding year along with winning artworks from the accompanying Youth in Art show. The anthology and the children's books are all available for purchase at Students for Students Publishing at Raton High School, in care of sponsor Kathy Vertovec.



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