

IWONA IWANIUK-BORISENKO

## ART MECCA IN SOUTH WEST

Santa Fe — “The City Different” is the marketing slogan for this art Mecca in South West of the United States. A small city with a population of less than 100,000 people, it is the third art market in USA after the cities such as New York and Los Angeles.

Every day I either walk by a gallery, public art space, museum (nine museums) or an artist selling his or her art on the streets. The most common street artists are Native Americans who come daily from the pueblos to sell their jewelry to the local and tourists. Customers take home a lot of cheap and fake turquoise, but one thing that visitors may not recognize is that souvenir purchase gave them a chance to interact with the Native Americans — the Navajo or other tribes. It is a very rare opportunity, to have a direct interaction with people who are carriers of tradition that is not part of the mainstream.

Art is everywhere in Santa Fe and this is not an exaggeration. Next to the Farmer’s Market, in parallel there takes place an Art Market. There is a whole street dedicated just to art. Canyon Road has the highest concentration of art galleries anywhere in the USA. Banks and hotels have beautiful collection of art. During the International Folk Art Festival artists from all over the world display their skills in art making in the public spaces, including museums, hotels and libraries. Santa Fe has a status of the world capital of Folk Art. The city provides a rare and unique opportunity to witness art. Visitors coming to Santa Fe should expect to be exposed to endless supplies of sculptures, design, decor, local fashion but they are also provided with opportunities to take classes, workshops and art tours, they can take a picture of themselves with street sculptures, beautiful adobe wall compositions of decorative gate and flowers. Beauty is everywhere.

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As a person with no artistic skills but full of appreciation for beautiful things, I have noticed that since moving to Santa Fe, almost by osmosis I started having artistic inclinations. I started buying art (paintings, jewelry), I began to consider having a real painting, actual art (decorative pieces or unique Navajo jewelry) been made by a local artist.. It just confirms that people can be influenced by their environment. Surrounded by the unique architecture of the city, the surrounding nature and omnipresent art, one starts noticing it, one starts wanting to have something beautiful. I remember when I bought my first painting that was made specifically for me – I could only afford a small size. Possessing a piece of art gives an elevated feeling of possessing something precious.

All photos of Santa Fe by Iwona Iwaniuk-Borisenko listed below are reproduced with her permission.





















