

Two Compatible Visions of Place & Time

Their fans didn't realize it at the time, but when Ed Sandoval and Ann Huston met, it was the best thing that could have happened to either of them artistically. Working in separate media, but responding similarly to the vibrations of the northern New Mexican landscape.

Like mountains, skies, country roads and chapels, adobe is a principal theme and subject of both Sandoval's and Huston's work. When they take time for a field day together, they often paint side by side with drastically differing results. While Huston chooses to depict the century-old churches, houses and surrounding pastures in soft, somber pastels, Sandoval's oil paintings make the landscape dance with bright colors and energy. To Huston's absence of human presence, evoking a place's past, Sandoval counters with real people—and sometimes a horse, donkey or dog. Farm workers, a woman stacking wood, an old man walking with a cane—his hallmark *viejito* or "little old man"—all appear in Sandoval's oils. Another familiar icon, an old pickup truck, suggests the 1951 Chevy truck that sits outside their gallery, Studio de Colores near Taos Plaza.

Both artists begin each new piece in the field, sketching. While Ed is comfortable finishing it either plein-air or in the studio, Ann always completes her pieces in her private studio at home, sometimes taking a week or longer. "I have to paint not only the

subject but the peripheral vision that's happening for me," she said. "It's essential to do the first session while standing in front of the subject to get the impact of it, as well as that peripheral sense. Then, in the studio, I impart the peripheral feelings from memory, not intimidated by nature.

Ed almost always adds people and things — Ann removes them. For example, her 1998 piece entitled "The Last Supper" shows an unadorned table and five chairs in an empty room beneath a sparsely depicted picture of The Last Supper on a blankly yellow wall. But the soft, luminous quality of the walls, picture and table convey warmth and human presence rather than loneliness or loss. Ed paints New Mexico's brilliant blue skies with towering clouds, but Ann's skies are rarely blue. "I use the space of the sky to evoke the mood of what's surrounding the *morada* or church," she explained. So my skies contain dark and light and a bit of mystery to describe the landscape and the history of the place."

Sandoval and Huston are endlessly busy and this fall is no exception. They are jointly showing in "Art of the Sangres," a four-person exhibit at the Foothills Art Center in Golden, Colorado, which opened November 7. In the Albuquerque Museum's annual Miniature Show, closing December 7, Huston and Sandoval each have three works. An invita-



tional section of the annual Taos Fall Arts Festival, "Taos Invites Taos," included works of both artists. Both have been selected as poster artist for that show in the past, Ann in 1999 and Ed in 2002. In 1994, Ann's painting won "Best of Show," which included a \$5,000 award.

Thirty original Huston-Sandoval paintings and a number of *giclée* prints will be displayed at the Taos Inn in the center of town as a highlight of the annual Yuletide Festival. "The owners asked that we include some winter scenes," said Ann. "Because they always decorate the inn and restaurant so beautifully for Christmas, we took it as a challenge and we're doing all of the new works with winter or Christmas themes." This meant "feeling" the cold, the winter light, and the snow while painting, say, the San Francisco de Assisi Church in Ranchos de Taos on a warm autumn day with golden-leaved cottonwoods lining the street. The show runs from December 3, 2003, to March 1, 2004.

The work of these two artists can also be seen at the Studio de Colores Gallery, 119 Quesnel Street in Taos and on their web site,

<http://www.taoswebb.com/decolores>

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