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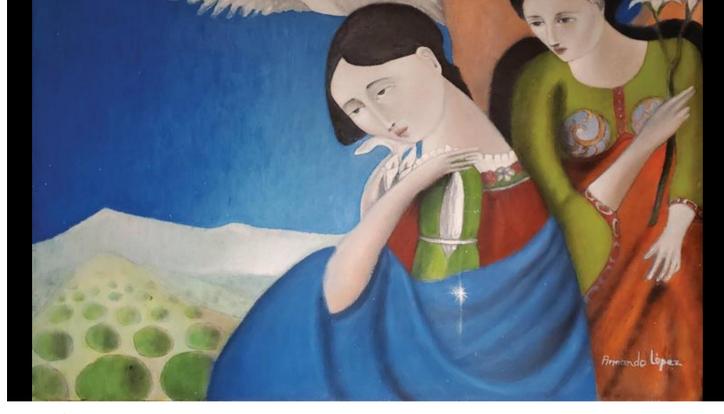
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VISUAL ART

# Ceramics Center Exhibit: "Open for Interpretation"

by Dena Miller Feb 23, 2022 Updated Mar 3, 2022 0



Courtesy image

'La Anunciacion'



There are a lot of reasons to be optimistic these days. For one, winter is on the wane and behind it lies the promise of spring's colorful arrival.

If, however, you are craving a hit of that sunny palette before the calendar page turns then you must plan a visit to the TCC Gallery at the Taos Ceramic Center, where the works of sculptor Andrea Pichaida and painter Armando Adrian-Lopez are featured in an exhibition entitled, "Open for Interpretation."

"The Pichaida and Adrian-Lopez exhibit offers a welcome respite from the dark days of winter with an explosion of color, imagination and uplifting imagery," enthused Jules Epstein who, along with his wife, Georgia, owns and operates the new center. It is, he noted, the first time the celebrated New Mexican artists are being presented in Taos.



The gallery will be hosting an artist reception for Ms. Pichaida on Saturday (Feb. 26) from 4-6 p.m. to which the public is welcome. Light refreshments will be served and admission for all is free. A "Meet the Artists" event has also been scheduled for March 12, from 4-6 p.m., at which both Pichaida and Mr. Adrian-Lopez will be in attendance.

It is difficult to imagine the two artists have never met or shown together before because their works are undeniably synergistic. Vibrant with complementary colors and spirit, "together, the artist's works create a palpable energy in the gallery, a very joyful feeling," noted Mr. Epstein, who is TCC's curator.

"My art is inspired by my life journey as a woman who lives between two worlds — my native Chile and my new home, Santa Fe — and by my perception of nature itself, with its shapes, lines, texture and colors that invite me to create suggestive pieces that aim to speak a universal language, in which viewers can, hopefully, relate to their own experiences," Pichaida explained.

The resulting works, in a palette that weaves together both "high-mountain foliage and otherworldly jungle flowers," are abstract yet approachable; fanciful yet grounded. "In teaching students I often assigned them the exercise of working with the symmetry of a tree branch, or a leaf, because we are human beings and our brains are wired to receive the lessons nature gives us about perception," she mused.

"Just Be" is a piece that, to Pichaida, conceptualizes the quiet joy of "simply being grateful to be alive; to be outdoors; to appreciate nature's beauty." Its dimensionality of shape and movement, and its luminous colors change with the light and the orientation of the viewer. "In it you will see what your heart brings to it."



PREV

Other works carry a more straightforward message. "Our Differences Bring Us Together" is an ensemble of five pieces cast in different hues of clay but inside exhibit the same colors and shapes. "Growing up in Chile there was discrimination based upon class, but not the color of your skin as is seen here," she said. "We truly are all the same inside, and I wanted to address that.

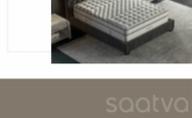
Pichaida was an associate professor, vice chair, and sculpture department head at the Catholic University in Santiago, Chile, from which she received her M.F.A. in 1987.

Her work has won numerous awards for excellence and is held in prominent collections in Chile, Argentina, Germany, Brazil, the U.S., Canada, Spain, and the Vatican. She relocated to Santa Fe in 2010 and found "a new community" of artists when she joined New Mexico Potters and Clay Artists, of which she is now president.

Adrian-Lopez brings a similar aesthetic to his paintings and mixed-media sculptures, one born of his upbringing in Purépecha, a small village in southwest Mexico, and the joy he derives from working with his hands.

"My grandfather was a master of everything," the artist recalled. "He was the only one in our family who could read, so he read to everyone. He was a basket maker but made everything for us with his hands. When I was four or five, I wanted to make dolls just like his, where you could see every little detail. I took one to my mother and she said, 'Nice, but your grandfather's are better.' So she taught me to be better, myself."

Today, his highly collectible mixed media assemblages combine found objects with grasses, sticks, flowers — bits from the Abiquiu farm on which he lives — into whimsical sculptures that pay tribute to his personal history.



But he also sees himself as a spiritual storyteller. "Much of it stems from my interpretation of the native Mexican view of the world and of the New and Old Testaments. The narrative allows me to tell stories in which I am not the sole interpreter; the viewer is also an interpreter. Through this unspoken dialogue an intimacy arises and the space to dream, imagine, contemplate — that, to me, is freedom."

Consider the finesse of Adrian-Lopez's oil painting approach and the joy inherent in his palette, both of which belie the fact he is self-taught. In "La Anunciacion" he offers the viewer a stylized and tranquil tableau, its gentle nod to the mythological enhanced by the moody, luminous colors.

"I apply paint as under painting, then as many opaque layers on top of that [and] many transparent glazes added onto that. This...gives the paintings an inner glow which, in my opinion, helps to communicate the inner world to the viewer," he explained.

Available for viewing through April 2, "Open for Interpretation" is a don't-miss feast for the eyes and a salve for the soul. Make a point of visiting the TCC gallery, located at 114 Este Es Road, Taos. Call 575-758-2580 for more information or visit [taosceramics.com](http://taosceramics.com).



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