

# Documenting the Land

The relationship between artist and place is explored during an exhibition at the Millicent Rogers Museum.

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## EL PRADO, NM

Nine New Mexico artists use their artwork as a lens through which to interpret their homeland during *Southwest Reflections: In Between Shadows of the Land* at the Millicent Rogers Museum.

"This exhibition really looks at New Mexican artists' roles as documentarians and interpreters of the land and their relationships to those lands," says Michelle Lanteri, curator of collections and exhibitions at the Millicent Rogers Museum. "And looking at the variety of interactions and changes in these places, and what kind of journey spawns into aspects of healing, regeneration and transformation." More than 65 works are on display in the exhibition, which is on view now.

Among the nine featured artists are three Native American artists: Will Wilson, Brandon Adriano Ortiz and Lorraine Gala Lewis.



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1. Will Wilson (Diné (Navajo)), *Connecting the Dots: Cameron Chapter Complex 1, Detail, Cameron, Arizona, Navajo Nation, 2020*, archival pigment print, dimensions variable.
2. Brandon Adriano Ortiz (Taos Pueblo), *Two-Tone Amoeba Bowl, 2021*, micaceous clay. Photo credit/collection of Indian Arts Research Center, School for Advanced Research.
3. Lorraine Gala-Lewis (Laguna Pueblo/Hopi-Tewa/Taos Pueblo), *Rattlesnake Effigy (Tularosa 950-1150 CE)*, 2010, clay, natural pigments/stains, acrylic
4. Will Wilson (Diné (Navajo)), *Connecting the Dots: Shiprock Disposal Cell, Shiprock, New Mexico, Navajo Nation, 2020*, archival pigment print, dimensions variable.

Wilson is working on an ongoing series called *Connecting the Dots*, which visitors can explore during *Southwest Reflections*. “It’s really neat,” Lanteri says, “he’s visiting the Navajo Nation where’s from, using a drone camera to document abandoned uranium mine sites and reflect what he’s seeing back to audiences in a really beautiful way. That’s a cornerstone of Navajo art, the concept of ‘Hózhó,’ this concept of beauty. [Yet] he’s talking about such a serious issue...What does this mean in terms of the next generation? This contamination of the land and the health issues that families are dealing with, and also the ongoing issues of all these areas that are superfund sites on the Navajo Nation...He’s looking really closely at their condition.”

Ortiz, who works in micaceous clay, is bringing nine new works to the show, including a seed

jar, a lidded pan and even semi-figural sculpture. “Brandon was one of the first people I thought of [when it comes to the theme of the exhibition],” Lanteri reflects. “With his work, that clay is like bringing the land of Northern New Mexico into the museum itself. It’s this tether between the exact land the museum is on, into this interior space...He’s really amazing with how much he welcomes the fire clouds to his outdoor firing process.” Fire clouds are a coloring event that occurs during the process of firing clay, which create unique markings upon the vessels. While some artists try to avoid this, Ortiz lets nature and earth take over.

Lewis is making pottery that is a direct reflection of the black and white pottery of these very same lands from all the way back to 1000 CE, Lanteri explains. “So she’s taking this ancestral process and interpreting it in a really contemporary way.” The artist kiln-fires her pieces and uses a mix of wood stains, acrylic paint and vegetal pigments. “She’s blending ancestral technologies with contemporary technologies in her work. She’s really bringing that history to life and telling visitors the past is important to our future.”

Additional artists featured in the show include Matthew and Julie Chase-Daniel, Dora Dillistone, Juanita J. Lavadie, Pola Lopez and Collette Marie. *Southwest Reflections: In Between Shadows of the Land* is on view through January 29, 2023. «



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**Southwest Reflections:  
In Between Shadows of the Land**

Millicent Rogers Museum  
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