

Storytellers celebrated at Millicent Rogers

- Teresa Dovalpage
- Updated 4 hrs ago
- [Q](#)



- Courtesy Millicent Rogers Museum

One of the works featured in the Millicent Rogers Museum event is 'Matachines,' a 1991 painting by Picuris Pueblo artist Gerald Nailor.

Who doesn't enjoy a good story? Tales, myths, legends and even jokes are centuries-old ways of preserving tradition and knowledge. Everybody has a grandfather, a grandmother, an aunt or an uncle who shared old tales with them. And these tales will in turn be retold and passed to new generations.

"In the Southwest, stories are not merely told for enjoyment, but can also be parables told for education or deeply spiritual accounts that tell the history of a culture or tradition," said Carmela Quinto, curator of

collections at the Millicent Rogers Museum (MRM).

It is only fitting that the museum, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, has organized an event around storytelling in its many manifestations.

“Storytellers: Teaching Heritage through Song and Story” will be on view from Friday (March 18) through July 17. It will focus on the multifaceted narratives that are conveyed across cultures and through a variety of media.

“The museum is committed to building and cultivating a strong relationship with the local community, and this exhibit strives to honor and respect the vibrant storytelling traditions of the region,” said MRM Executive Director Caroline Jean Fernald.

In Northern New Mexico, storytelling takes on many forms. There are written and verbal narratives – los cuentos de los abuelos – and Quinto highlights their importance. “For communities who do not have a written history, it keeps the heroes and heroines, history and traditions alive for generations to come,” she said. “Storytelling is also a way to connect with the elders of the community, family and one’s own cultural identity.”

The visual imagery is represented in paintings, weavings, pottery and epic poems recited or performed in song and dance. “Our exhibit will pair ... readings, music, art demonstrations and dancing with the ceramics, paintings and textiles on display,” Quinto said.

Sculptures of storytellers, considered symbols of the Native American oral tradition, will be prominently featured. “They are delightful handmade clay dolls that represent the elders who pass on the history and culture to younger generations,” Quinto said.

The exhibit will include two-dimensional images — drawings and paintings — that also “tell a tale.” Among the participants are ceramic artists from Cochiti, Zuni, Taos, Santa Clara and Jemez pueblos. Participating artists include Helen Cordero, Anderson Peynetsa, Stephanie Naranjo and Clifford Kim Fragua. Paintings by Ben Quintana, Max Trujillo, Narciso Platero Abeyta, Gerald Nailor, Pablita Velarde, Albert Looking Elk Martinez and Quincy Tahoma will also be part of the exhibit.

“We want to highlight the variety of visual forms of storytelling,” Quinto said.

There will also be an artist’s demonstration by Taos Pueblo artist Dawning Pollen Shorty on April 2.

The exhibit will be accompanied by bilingual children’s storytelling events at the museum Saturday (March 19), April 9 and May 14.

“We will have books by Jonathan Warm Day Coming, Loyd Tireman, Rodolfo Anaya and Pauline Ts’o,” Quinto said. On April 16, there will be a community music day featuring the traditional music and dancing of Northern New Mexico. More events will be announced at a later date.

The Millicent Rogers Museum is located at 1504 Millicent Rogers Road, off Paseo del Pueblo Norte in El Prado.

Admission is always free to Taos County residents. For more information, call the museum at (575) 758-2462 or visit millicentrogers.com.

Tags