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6.0 Arts and Culture

This chapter covers the existing arts and culture communities that contribute to the distinctive character of Santa Fe. This includes traditional and contemporary artistic and cultural expressions of communities, neighborhoods, and people throughout the region, past and present. Recognizing this complex artistic ecosystem's incomparable diversity, depth, and richness, along with its vulnerabilities, is essential to shaping a future where arts and culture continue to thrive in Santa Fe.

6.1 Key Findings

The arts are deeply woven into the fabric of Santa Fe, profoundly shaping the city's identity, sense of place, and economy in tangible ways. Santa Fe's creative economy generates significant economic impact, contributing over \$1 billion annually and supporting thousands of jobs across galleries, museums, performance spaces, nonprofit organizations, and artisan markets.¹ Beyond its economic importance, the arts play a critical role in defining Santa Fe's character, from its adobe architecture and vibrant public art to its renowned markets and festivals that celebrate Indigenous, Hispanic, international, and other traditional and contemporary artistic practices. The city's longstanding commitment to creativity fosters a distinct sense of place that attracts artists, creatives, residents, and visitors from around the world, reinforcing Santa Fe's identity as a cultural capital and a center for innovation, tradition, and community pride. In 2005, Santa Fe was named one of the first seven United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Creative Cities in the world and the first in the United States, specifically for its distinction in Crafts and Folk Art. The art economy momentum continues with the redevelopment of the Midtown campus, the former home of the Santa Fe University of Art and Design. This redevelopment is advancing an arts-themed community hub of industry, including film, a new movie theater, live-work studio spaces, dining, and entertainment.

While Santa Fe's arts and cultural scene is robust, substantial challenges persist in ensuring equitable support for emerging artists and integrating contemporary expressions with traditional forms. In 2021, the Culture, History, Art, Reconciliation, and Truth (CHART) Initiative launched a series of community dialogues, seeking to foster mutual understanding and recommend forward-looking solutions through a grassroots process.

“Santa Feans value the arts and their place at the heart of community life; Residents believe that the arts have a unique ability to express diverse identities, cultures, traditions, and perspectives; Citizens see inequal, geographical distribution of public art (and the funding/revenue associated with it) in the city and county; Residents believe that the “tricultural myth” is not reflective of the current population of Santa Fe, marginalizes certain residents, and misrepresents the community; Some art, particularly in the form of monuments, requires new and considered attention and assessment that includes an inclusive public process; Controversies about monuments (particularly the Soldiers Monument/“Obelisk”) have deeply wounded the Santa Fe community

¹ <https://www.giarts.org/article/economic-importance-arts-and-cultural-industries-santa-fe-county>

while also encouraging us to address deeply-rooted problems; and the arts have a unique ability to promote truth, healing, and reconciliation.” (CHART)

Prominent and emerging cultural institutions alike have and must pursue creative opportunities to improve outreach and programming for underrepresented communities, including Indigenous populations and low-income residents. Initiatives focused on broadening public access to arts education, as well as enhancing the accessibility of events and venues, will help foster a more inclusive cultural environment for the city.

Additionally, the economic stability of Santa Fe’s art scene, particularly for galleries, small arts organizations, and independent artists, presents a challenge. Paradoxically, Santa Fe’s longstanding reputation and identity as an art city have fueled displacement of artists through gentrification. While artists and art scenes are sometimes taken for granted as a defining feature of Santa Fe life, rising costs of living, housing, and studio and creative space have strained the ability of local artists to find or maintain affordable studio, rehearsal, and performance space. Opportunities to support and sustain the creative economy lie in implementing programs, creative housing and art space solutions, City partnerships to support local artists, as well as economic development initiatives.

Technology presents both opportunities and threats to artistic production and promotion. Collaborations between cultural institutions, technological innovators, economic development, and educational centers could present new opportunities for arts and culture within the city and provide innovative and inclusive experiences for locals and tourists. At the same time, the rise of artificial intelligence poses significant risks to the making of original art and fairly compensated creative work. Continued investment in hands-on arts education, real-life art spaces, ethical digital platforms, and thoughtful community engagement will be crucial for sustaining Santa Fe’s cultural vibrancy and addressing the evolving needs of its artistic community in an era of intense technological, political, and climate change.

The existing institutions, festivals, and community-driven initiatives play an essential role in shaping Santa Fe’s identity as a cultural center. The daily presence of art fosters a strong sense of place, belonging, and inspiration, making arts and culture a foundation of civic life in Santa Fe. Expanding inclusive creative placemaking throughout the city, from art in public places to community gatherings, and addressing challenges such as accessibility, economic sustainability, and the evolution of technology, will be crucial for ensuring the city’s art scene remains dynamic and inclusive.

6.2 Visual Arts

Santa Fe has long been recognized as a leading center for visual arts, shaped by Indigenous, Hispanic, and many other traditional and contemporary artistic traditions. Museums, galleries, and public art initiatives play a significant role in preserving historical art forms while also providing platforms for emerging artists. This section explores the major artistic institutions and initiatives that define Santa Fe’s visual arts scene.

6.2.1 Museums

Santa Fe is home to more than a dozen museums; most are clustered near the downtown Plaza or on Museum Hill, with contemporary spaces for SITE Santa Fe and the Vladez Contemporary anchoring the Santa Fe Railyard District. The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, the New Mexico Museum of Art, and the New Mexico History Museum hold major, definitive collections in their respective areas. The presence of institutions, including the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA), the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (MIAC), and the Wheelwright Museum, along with the Institute for American Indian Arts and the Sundance Native Lab, signify a strategic effort to honor and promote Native art through both historical and contemporary lenses, celebrate Indigenous creativity, and develop sustainable livelihoods for artists, making Santa Fe a beacon for Indigenous art and culture globally.

6.2.1.1 Museum Hill

Museum Hill is a major cultural destination that brings together five renowned institutions: the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, the Museum of International Folk Art, the Nuevo Mexicano Heritage Arts Museum, the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, and the Santa Fe Botanical Garden. Located on a hilltop just southeast of downtown, Museum Hill offers visitors a varied exploration of global, Indigenous, and regional art and history. The site also includes a café and gift shops, making it a well-rounded destination for education, leisure, and shopping. Museum Hill plays a vital role in Santa Fe’s identity as a center for arts and culture, offering access to diverse collections and exhibitions that reflect the area’s rich heritage and global artistic traditions.

6.2.1.2 Museum of Indian Arts and Culture

MIAC serves as a comprehensive repository of Native American material culture, with a collection encompassing approximately 80,000 archeological, ethnographic, and fine art objects. Additionally, the museum curates over 10 million artifacts from nearly 12,000 archeological sites across present-day New Mexico, underscoring its role in preserving the region’s Indigenous heritage. Established in 1987, MIAC addresses the need for adequate exhibition facilities to showcase these extensive collections. Its mission emphasizes culturally sensitive presentations of Southwestern Native American cultures, developed in close collaboration with Native communities. MIAC attracts over 65,000 visitors a year, with 30 percent from New Mexico, 50 percent from other states, and 20 percent from international locations.

6.2.1.3 Museum of International Folk Art

Another notable institution is the Museum of International Folk Art, which focuses on global folk art and includes significant collections from Hispanic communities. Founded in 1953, the museum houses over 135,000 artifacts, making it the world’s largest collection of international folk art. The Hispanic Heritage Wing, opened in 1988 and renovated in 2009, spotlights Hispanic folk art from New Mexico and beyond.

6.2.1.4 Nuevo Mexicano Heritage Museum

The Nuevo Mexicano Heritage Museum (formerly called the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art) is a significant institution dedicated to Hispano art forms. Operated by the Spanish Colonial Arts Society, the museum is housed in the historic Laboratory of Anthropology Director’s Residence, a 1930 Pueblo Revival-style building designed by John Gaw Meem. The museum’s collection

encompasses traditional arts from the Spanish colonial period to contemporary times, reflecting the enduring influence of Spanish culture in the region.

6.2.1.5 Institute of American Indian Arts and Museum of Contemporary Native Arts

The MoCNA, operated by the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), is the country's only museum for exhibiting, collecting, and interpreting contemporary Native art. Its collection comprises over 9,500 artworks created since 1962. MoCNA is at the forefront of contemporary Native art presentation and strives to be flexible, foresighted, and risk-taking in its exhibitions and programs. MoCNA is located in the heart of downtown Santa Fe.

The museum's focus on contemporary works challenges traditional narratives that often confine Native art to historical contexts. MoCNA fosters a discourse that acknowledges the evolving nature of Indigenous cultures and provides Native artists with a platform to engage with current social, political, and cultural themes.

MoCNA's affiliation with IAIA enhances its educational impact. IAIA is the only educational institution globally dedicated to the study of contemporary Native American and Alaska Native arts. Today, IAIA continues to grow on its stunning 140-acre campus, offering more and more certificate, undergraduate degree, and graduate degree programs, and MoCNA continues to expand its renowned collection of over 9,500 artworks, curating numerous progressive and innovative exhibitions, both traveling and at MoCNA's location in downtown Santa Fe. The IAIA sits on the homelands of the Pueblo nations.

6.2.1.6 The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum

The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum is the largest repository in the world of one of the most significant artists of the twentieth century. In addition to the main museum campus in Santa Fe, the O'Keeffe Museum maintains O'Keeffe's two homes and studios in northern New Mexico, a research center and library, and a variety of collections relating to O'Keeffe and modern art. The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, currently located at 217 Johnson Street, is building a new, larger museum and campus downtown near the Plaza, which is set to open in 2028.

6.2.1.7 SITE Santa Fe

Established in 1995, SITE Santa Fe is a nonprofit contemporary arts organization renowned for its commitment to showcasing cutting-edge art. Since its inception, SITE has presented 12 Internationals (formerly known as biennials) and over 90 exhibitions, featuring works by more than 800 artists from around the globe. Notably, approximately 20 percent of these artists are based in New Mexico, reflecting SITE's dedication to supporting local talent. The institution also offers diverse public and educational programs, including artist talks, film screenings, and collaborations with Santa Fe public schools, thereby enriching the community's engagement with contemporary art. Its location makes it a key anchor in the Railyard District.

6.2.1.8 New Mexico Museum of Art and Vadem Contemporary

The New Mexico Museum of Art, established in 1917, houses a collection exceeding 20,000 artworks, encompassing paintings, photographs, sculptures, and more. In September 2023, the museum expanded its contemporary art offerings with the opening of the Vadem Contemporary annex. This new space is dedicated to showcasing contemporary works, providing

artists with a platform to present innovative pieces that reflect current artistic trends and societal themes. The Vladem Contemporary has a distinctive and impactful visual presence and is a key anchor in the Railyard District near the Santa Fe Depot.

6.2.1.9 Poeh Cultural Center

Located north of Santa Fe city limits at the nexus of the Pojoaque and Nambe valleys, the Poeh Center emphasizes cultural preservation and revitalization through the arts and cultures of all Pueblo People, with a focus on the Tewa-speaking Pueblos of Nambe, Pojoaque, San Ildefonso, San Juan, Santa Clara, and Tesuque. In addition to stewarding the Smithsonian Di Wea Powa Collection and showcasing contemporary artists in the Roxanne Swentzell Tower Gallery, the Poeh operates and manages the Pathways Indigenous Arts Festival, Native Artist Showcase, Pojoaque Farmers Market, Poeh Marketplace, and Poeh Arts.

6.2.2 Galleries and the Arts Economy

Santa Fe's contemporary art scene is vibrant and diverse, attracting artists and art enthusiasts from around the world. Galleries and other arts experiences throughout the city exhibit works that challenge traditional boundaries and explore innovative mediums. This dynamic environment fosters artistic exploration and positions Santa Fe as a hub for contemporary art expression.

6.2.2.1 Canyon Road Arts District

Canyon Road is a historic art district in Santa Fe, boasting over a hundred art galleries and studios. These establishments exhibit a wide array of art forms and mediums, from popular forms to cutting-edge contemporary works, and serve as a hub for both local and international artists. The district's evolution from a residential and studio area to a bustling art commerce street has long been considered emblematic of Santa Fe's transformation into a significant center for contemporary art.

6.2.2.2 The Railyard District

This revitalized area around the historic Santa Fe Depot is home to several galleries, museums, and arts offerings, including El Museo Cultural, the Violet Crown Cinema (rebranding as Sky Cinemas in summer 2025), the Jean Cocteau Cinema, dozens of contemporary galleries, and public art installations in Railyard Park.

6.2.2.3 Other Arts Districts

As historic arts neighborhoods in Santa Fe have become gentrified out of affordability, lively arts scenes have sprung up in neighborhoods across Santa Fe. The Baca District, adjacent to the Railyard District, is home to galleries, design centers, and numerous design businesses. At the nexus of Lena Street and Second Street, galleries display international and local fine art, and scores of studio spaces hold artists working in every medium. Nearby industrial Pacheco Street is a growing destination for galleries, art centers, and studios. The Siler-Rufina District is host to Santa Fe's innovative Siler Yard live-work space for artists and accompanying gallery, along with several other galleries and arts nonprofits. The Southside of Santa Fe is increasingly drawing artists for its relative affordability of housing and studio space.

6.2.2.4 Meow Wolf

Originally founded as a “do it yourself” (DIY) art collective in 2008, Meow Wolf is now an arts entertainment powerhouse known for creating immersive, interactive art installations. With backing from acclaimed author George R.R. Martin, Meow Wolf opened the "House of Eternal Return" in 2016 in Santa Fe, an elaborate art installation that has become a major attraction. This initiative exemplifies the innovative spirit of Santa Fe's contemporary art scene, blending art, technology, and narrative to create unique experiences. Santa Fe's flagship Meow Wolf location has grown into an anchor for the emerging arts and culture district along Siler Road and Rufina Street, bringing visitors and economic investment to the evolving industrial area. Today, Meow Wolf has spread beyond Santa Fe and has satellite locations in several major cities across the United States.

6.2.2.5 Santa Fe Children's Museum

The Santa Fe Children's Museum is an educational and recreational space located just minutes from downtown. Designed for children of all ages, the museum features interactive indoor and outdoor exhibits focused on science, art, and imaginative play. Facilities include hands-on science displays, an art studio, a performance space, a large outdoor garden and play area, and classrooms for workshops and camps. The museum emphasizes creativity, exploration, and learning through play, offering programs that support early childhood development and science, technology, engineering, and math education. As one of the city's key family-friendly attractions, the Santa Fe Children's Museum plays an important role in fostering a love of learning and community engagement among Santa Fe's youngest residents and visitors.

6.2.3 UNESCO and Heritage, Crafts, and Folk Arts

The United Nations created UNESCO in 1945 to promote world peace and security through international cooperation in education, arts, sciences, and culture. Formed 2005, the global Creative Cities network, UNESCO's flagship city program to honor and connect cities that recognize creativity as a strategic factor of sustainable development, honored Santa Fe as one of the first seven UNESCO Creative Cities in the world, and the first U.S. city to be designated a Creative City for its extraordinary accomplishments in Crafts and Folk Art.

For centuries, arts of diverse and intersecting traditions have flourished in the Santa Fe area, including pottery, textile arts, tin and metal work, woodwork, straw applique, dance, music, and traditional foodways, passed down through generations of families and communities. Northern New Mexico, from its villages and pueblos to the hub of Santa Fe, has an unparalleled richness of arts traditions that run centuries deep. Local Pueblo and Hispano/Latinx artists in particular are renowned nationally and internationally for their art forms. Working within these heritage arts, northern New Mexico-based artists are also doing innovative work, merging traditional practices with present idioms and future visions, from ceramics to weaving, beadwork to clothing design, film to murals, and more.

However, certain irreplaceable traditions are becoming endangered as seasoned practitioners age out, economic pressures divert new generations toward more reliably compensated forms of work, and climate change affects many land- and water-based practices. To sustain and perpetuate these forms, culture bearers and heritage arts practices require particular attention and support.

Economic development support could include adult apprenticeship programs and business development in heritage arts traditions, contracting artists to teach workshops and classes and to offer demonstrations and lectures for tourists and the general public, support for artists to attend fairs and artist exchanges, and assist with portfolio development. Education could include workshops and apprenticeships for local schools, youth, and adults, and cultivating the next generation of collectors. Heritage preservation might take the form of collaborations with local artists, museums, and cultural organizations to encourage and document intergenerational transfer of knowledge, and researching climate resiliency solutions to the challenges caused by changing environments for practices rooted in sensitive local ecosystems.

These rich traditional arts not only root us in what our cultures have always been, but also who we are now, and who we will continue to be, building on long-held traditions alongside new ones.

6.2.4 Public Art

Public art initiatives in Santa Fe enhance the city's cultural landscape by integrating artistic works into communal spaces. Programs facilitated by the Santa Fe Arts and Culture Department aim to reflect the community's diverse heritage and values. These efforts not only beautify public areas but also promote civic engagement and cultural awareness for residents and visitors.

In 1985, the governing body passed an Art in Public Places ordinance whereby 1 percent of the cost of capital construction projects, whether new construction or renovation, is set aside for the acquisition of art. In 2006, under the leadership of then-Mayor Larry A. Delgado, the percentage dedicated to public art increased to 2 percent.

Implementation of the Art in Public Places Program is the responsibility of the Santa Fe Arts and Culture Department, whose staff serve as program liaisons and managers for public art projects.

Art in Public Places is an interdisciplinary and collaborative process that reflects the diverse spectrum of beliefs, cultural heritage and tradition, and artistic expressions in Santa Fe. They are cultural resources created through community engagement meant to support resilient, vibrant, and livable neighborhoods. All commissioned artwork becomes a part of the city's permanent Public Art Portfolio. Since its inception in 1985, the Public Art Portfolio has served as a valuable cultural resource for the community of Santa Fe. Consisting of more than 100 artworks, the Public Art Portfolio represents a variety of media, styles, and themes. Public art can be found in civic buildings, along the Santa Fe Rail Trail, at the Santa Fe Regional Airport, and in public parks and spaces. Murals play a significant role in the public art realm, beautifying buildings, celebrating neighborhood character and cultural heritage, and engaging youth in creative placemaking. The democratic, grassroots, and community-engaged nature of mural arts point toward opportunities for significant expansion of mural work for community benefit.

The City's goals for the Art in Public Places Program are to:

- Enliven the visual landscape
- Honor Santa Fe's unique historical and cultural heritage, as well as reflect its present vitality

- Involve the community and increase community engagement in the arts
- Broaden the recognition of Santa Fe as an arts center
- Foster economic development

6.2.5 Other

Beyond institutional settings, Santa Fe's visual art scene thrives through community-driven projects and local artisans. A number of art collectives provide essential space, resources, and support to artists, especially those working in the margins and the counterculture, and have been major contributors to Santa Fe's growing mural scene. These grassroots initiatives are especially important to developing local youth artists, supporting emerging and noncommercial artists, and reinforcing strong community networks and resource-sharing for under-resourced artists. The vulnerabilities of these collectives and DIY groups are that they are often underfunded and rely on personal investments of labor, time, and resources that generate tremendous impact but low compensation, putting contributors at risk of eventual burnout, disengagement, and loss of institutional knowledge. Building strong networks and collaborations with other institutions, both established and emerging, along with City departments, will help preserve and sustain the work of these community-embedded groups and keep Santa Fe's arts and cultural scene vibrant, locally engaged, genuinely inclusive, and globally relevant.

6.3 Performing Arts

Santa Fe's performing arts landscape is distinguished by a range of institutions that contribute to its cultural richness. Key among these are the Santa Fe Opera, the Lensic Performing Arts Center, and other notable entities that together create a vibrant artistic community.

6.3.1 Santa Fe Opera

Established in 1957, the Santa Fe Opera is a cornerstone of the city's performing arts scene, renowned for its innovative productions. It has garnered international acclaim for its innovative productions and commitment to both classic and contemporary operatic works. The company operates in a unique open-air theater, designed to integrate the natural landscape into the audience's experience. The Santa Fe Opera's mission is to advance the operatic art form by presenting ensemble performances of the highest quality in a unique setting with a varied repertoire of new, rarely performed and standard works. The Santa Fe Opera's programming strategy includes a mix of standard repertoire and lesser-known works, attracting a diverse audience and contributing to the cultural tourism sector in Santa Fe. The Santa Fe Opera has a dedicated staff position for commissioning and producing New American works.

6.3.2 Lensic Performing Arts Center

The Lensic Performing Arts Center serves as a cultural hub, hosting a diverse array of performances, including theater, dance, and music. Its programming reflects Santa Fe's commitment to artistic diversity and community engagement, offering residents and visitors access to high-quality cultural experiences. The Lensic's role extends beyond entertainment; it

functions as a community gathering space and supports educational initiatives, strengthening social cohesion within Santa Fe.

6.3.3 Dance and Theater

6.3.3.1 Dance

Dance flourishes in numerous forms in Santa Fe, drawing on global and regional traditions, as well as contemporary choreography and performance. The Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, with its dual home in both Aspen, Colorado, and Santa Fe, has shifted its mission from company performances to presenting diverse productions and making significant impacts through educational and community programs, including ballet and Folklorico classes. Entreflamenco holds the acclaimed El Flamenco Cabaret with world-class dancers from Spain and New Mexico. The National Dance Institute (NDI) of New Mexico brings dance education to public K-12 schools, with the opportunity for advanced students to join their pre-professional company. NDI also sponsors artists in residence and employs practicing dance artists. Indigenous dance traditions are practiced at every pueblo in the region, and hoop dancing is taught and performed through the Lightning Boy Foundation and the Poeh Center.

6.3.3.2 Theater

A number of theater companies call Santa Fe home, from the traditional to the avant-garde, performing a range of work from Shakespeare to musicals to contemporary plays to immersive experimental work. The Santa Fe Playhouse is the oldest continuously running theater west of the Mississippi River. The longstanding Teatro Paraguas presents bilingual performances and children's theater, along with flamenco, music performances, and poetry readings in an intimate black box space. The innovative Exodus Ensemble tailors its genre-smashing, fourth-wall-breaking experiences to unexpected venues around the city. Theater companies have proven to be innovative and resourceful in locating rehearsal and performance space, but the urgent need persists for stable, dedicated spaces and a range of theater capacities to accommodate audience and company capacities.

6.3.4 Music

6.3.4.1 Classical Music

Classical music, including contemporary work, has found devoted audiences in Santa Fe, with several large and small organizations dedicated to the form. Since 1973, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival has showcased classic and new music and offers annual performances that attract both national and international artists. Founded in 1982, the renowned 24-voice Desert Chorale holds a major summer choral festival, commissions new compositions annually, and offers free community workshops and mini-concerts. The Santa Fe Symphony and Youth Symphony present a repertoire of classical music and, along with providing financially accessible classical instrument education, run a robust Youth Mariachi Program.

6.3.4.2 Popular Music

Lensic 360 programs music in all contemporary genres in venues around Santa Fe, from hip-hop to jazz to rock to folk, from the Plaza to the Railyard District to parks and bars, often in collaboration with local arts nonprofits. Indigenous Ways brings contemporary Native musicians to festivals and

venues. DIY local venues stage shows by independent bands out of warehouses and industrial spaces. Latin and Norteño music have a strong and widespread audience base. Small and midsized venues, many of them located near the geographic center of Santa Fe, include bars, breweries, and a handful of reclaimed underground industrial spaces, help sustain the vibrant and intimate music scene in Santa Fe.

Music recording and production also have a strong home in Santa Fe. Recording studios include the cooperatively owned Frogville Studios and Decibel Foundry, the latter of which offers recording, mixing, mastering audio restoration, live streaming, and video production to the robust Santa Fe metal scene.

6.3.5 Other

Circus arts, cinema, cultural storytelling, new media, and other hard-to-classify arts round out an innovative and diverse performing arts ecosystem in Santa Fe. Serving thousands of youth every year, Wise Fool New Mexico aims to ignite imagination, build community, and promote social justice through performances and hands-on experiences in the arts of circus, puppetry, and theater. Currents New Media stages an international annual art and technology festival that supports twenty-first-century forms and innovation. LittleGlobe's cultural storytelling initiatives engage community members in audio and video storytelling programming. Numerous storymaps initiatives have integrated place-based histories with digital and visual augmentation. Notable movie theaters in Santa Fe include the Jean Cocteau, the Sky Cinemas/Violet Crown Cinema, and the Center for Contemporary Arts. One of the few remaining small independent cinemas in the Santa Fe area, the Jean Cocteau was reopened in 2013 by acclaimed fantasy and science-fiction author George R.R. Martin as a vibrant, eclectic movie house that serves as a cultural mainstay for Santa Fe. The Violet Crown Cinema is a modern multi-screen theater in the Railyard District, showing current mainstream and arthouse films in an updated space. The nonprofit Center for Contemporary Arts Cinema shows first-run independent and foreign films.

6.4 Cultural Events and Festivals

Santa Fe's cultural events and festivals play an important role in sustaining and promoting the city's unique heritage. Arts and crafts markets provide economic benefits to artisans and also serve as educational platforms, fostering appreciation for Indigenous and Hispanic art forms. Cultural celebrations—such as the Fiesta de Santa Fe, the Honoring Native Nations Pow Wow, Juneteenth, and Pride—reinforce community identity and continuity, while events like the International Folk Art Market and the Wine and Chile Fiesta highlight Santa Fe's openness to global influences and its evolving cultural landscape. Collectively, these events contribute to the city's socioeconomic development by attracting tourism, encouraging local entrepreneurship, and enhancing Santa Fe's status as a cultural hub.

6.4.1 Markets

Annual markets play a pivotal role in the City's cultural calendar. These events not only provide economic opportunities for artists and serve as platforms for cultural exchange and education, they also attract visitors globally and reinforce Santa Fe as a cultural destination.

6.4.1.1 Santa Fe Indian Market

Established in 1922, this annual event is organized by the Southwest Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA), colloquially known as the Santa Fe Indian Market, and is recognized as one of the most prestigious Indigenous art markets in the world. It is also the largest juried Native art show in the world, attracting over 1,000 artists from more than 200 tribal nations across North America. SWAIA offers Native artists opportunities to showcase their work, sustaining cultural heritage and contributing to the local economy. This annual event generates upwards of \$160 million in revenue for artists and the local community, underscoring its significance as a major economic driver. Each August, over a thousand Indigenous artists from various tribes showcase their work, including jewelry, textiles, pottery, and fine art. The market not only generates millions in economic impact for artists and the City, but also prominently centers Native cultures and traditions for a vast audience.

SWAIA's Mission:

"To bring Native arts to the World by inspiring artistic excellence, fostering education, and creating meaningful partnerships."

6.4.1.2 Traditional Spanish Market

Since 1926, celebrated annually in July at the historic Santa Fe Plaza, this event highlights the artistry of Hispanic artists from New Mexico and Colorado. It focuses on traditional Spanish colonial art forms, such as tinwork, retablos, and weaving, preserving and promoting the region's Spanish heritage. The market also includes live music, dance performances, and regional cuisine, offering a comprehensive cultural experience. It is the oldest and largest juried art show of its kind in the country.

6.4.1.3 International Folk Art Market

Since its founding in 2004, the International Folk Art Market (IFAM) has evolved into the largest international folk art market of its kind, hosting approximately 150 artists from more than 60 countries every July, with up to 20,000 attendees. IFAM seeks to provide a space where folk artists from across the globe can gather together, learn, and sell. The IFAM helps artists sustain their livelihoods, preserve their cultures, and support their families. IFAM's year-round programming includes education, mentorship, and pop-up seasonal markets.

6.4.2 Festivals

6.4.2.1 Fiestas de Santa Fe

The Fiesta de Santa Fe is one of the oldest continuous community celebrations in the United States, dating back to 1712. It commemorates the Spanish reconquest of Santa Fe in 1692 by Don Diego de Vargas following their expulsion in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Held annually in early September, the fiesta includes religious processions, such as the Novena masses and the procession of La Conquistadora, reflecting the city's deep-rooted Catholic traditions, as well as secular community parades like the Children's Pet Parade and the Historical/Hysterical Parade.

6.4.2.2 The Burning of Zozobra

Initiated in 1924 by artist William Howard Shuster, Jr., this annual event features the burning of a giant marionette effigy also known as "Old Man Gloom." Standing over 50 feet tall, Zozobra symbolizes the hardships and anxieties of the past year. The ritual burning is believed to dispel these collective woes, offering a sense of renewal to attendees. The event has evolved into a significant spectacle, drawing large crowds and incorporating music and dance performances. This fiery farewell to summer represents the release of the city's pent-up anxieties and gloom and hope for a better future. The event takes place in Fort Marcy Park in the heart of Santa Fe and is held on the Friday of Labor Day weekend. The 2024 event marked the centennial burning of Zozobra, drawing in well over 50,000 people. This event's growing popularity has sparked concerns over impacts on traffic congestion and on nearby neighborhoods, as well as a fear that it is becoming commercialized and losing its distinctive Santa Fe identity. This event is a fundraiser for the Kiwanis Club of Santa Fe. Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time. Over the years, Zozobra has given back \$2.1 million to help the children of the community grow and thrive.

6.4.2.3 Honoring Native Nations Powwow on the Plaza

Inaugurated in 2023, the annual Honoring Native Nations Powwow takes place on the Plaza on Indigenous People's Day. Tribal nations from around the continent convene to celebrate Indigenous joy and cultural resilience. Powwow dancing, music, vendor booths, and a parade of nations are all part of a full day of events.

6.4.2.4 Santa Fe Pride

On the last Saturday in June, following a month of LGBTQ+-oriented activities, the downtown area bursts with rainbows for the annual Pride parade and celebration, and the Plaza and surrounding streets fill with booths of vendors and services. Pride draws thousands of Santa Feans alongside attendees from all over New Mexico and beyond to a city long known for its strong support, artistic culture, and legal protection for queer and trans people.

6.4.2.5 Juneteenth

Inaugurated in 2022, Juneteenth on the Plaza has swiftly established itself as a hugely popular community event, drawing a diverse and multigenerational crowd from Santa Fe and all over New Mexico to celebrate Black culture and liberation, past, present, and future. Artisans, food vendors, community services, and other booths line the Plaza walkways, while a lineup of local and renowned national musicians bring the crowds to their feet around the bandstand.

6.4.2.6 Lowrider Day on the Plaza

Inspired by the New Mexico History Museum's 2017 exhibit on the art of the lowrider, the organization New Mexico Lowrider and Arte Culture hosts an annual gathering on the Plaza, showcasing the best lowriders throughout the state, as well as out of state, with beautiful paint jobs, customized interior and exterior, art work, hydraulics, and wheels. Local entertainment and a family-friendly atmosphere draw hundreds of people to admire this iconic, regionally cherished art form and carry its cultural significance from generation to generation.

6.4.2.7 *Día de los Muertos*

On November 1, Día de los Muertos brings as many as 20,000 people together on the Plaza to honor a festive decoration of the Plaza. This event is one of the most colorful in Santa Fe, with papel picados (colorful traditional banners), hundreds of marigolds, and inflatable alebrijas (colorful Mexican folk art sculptures that depict fantastical creatures, animals, people, and objects). A group of traditionally decorated ofrendas (altars), including an oversized community altar on which all are welcome to place mementos, is complemented by a digital ofrenda for submissions streamed live at the event. Informative videos provided by the Mexican Consulate help educate and inform participants, and performances and live celebrations include traditional and contemporary Mexican and Latin music, traditional folkloric dances and theater performances, an Aztec blessing of the ofrendas, and a candlelit parade led by four mojigangas (traditional Mexican puppets) inhabited by Wise Fool New Mexico.

6.4.3 Other Events

In early May, Indigenous fashion design takes over Santa Fe with multiple fashion week events showcasing the innovative work of Native designers, and drawing national media coverage. The Southside Feria boosts entrepreneurship and celebrates culture in Santa Fe's Southside with a yearly festival that takes over the outside of the Fraternal Order of Police, hosting 40+ Southside vendors, live music, business resources, food, family games, and activities. The Santa Fe Wine and Chile Fiesta, held in September, celebrates the region's culinary scene by pairing local cuisine, particularly dishes featuring New Mexico's renowned chile peppers, with wines from around the country. It includes cooking demonstrations, wine tastings, and guest chef events. Upon their initiation in 2024, momentum instantly gathered around the Canyon Road Summer Walks, a monthly car-free evening on Canyon Road throughout the summer that welcomes locals to return to wander the city's original "Main Street" and enjoy family-friendly entertainment, cultural storytelling, artmaking, browsing, and community gathering. The season culminates in a Canyon Road Halloween Walk replete with costumes, haunted houses, and playfully spooky entertainment for all ages.

The events listed here are non-exhaustive, and there are many other small community events, festivals, and celebrations that contribute to Santa Fe's rich sense of place and community identity.

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