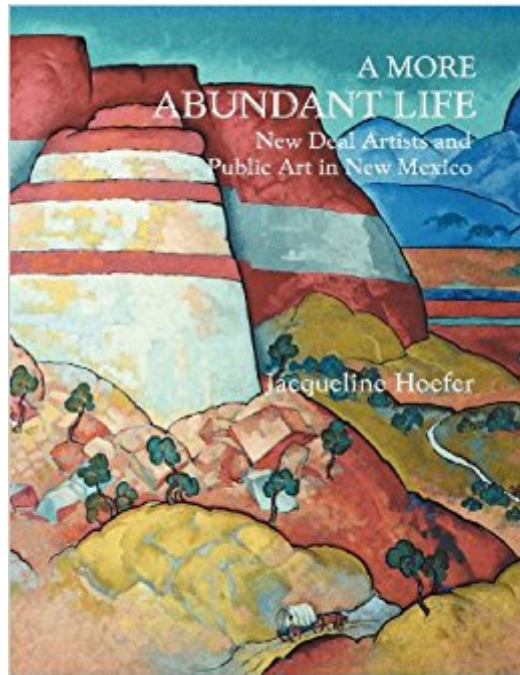




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A More Abundant Life: New Deal Artists and Public Art In New Mexico



Synopsis

Artists began coming to New Mexico in the late nineteenth century. They came from everywhere, from Maine to California and a few from Europe. They were attracted by the dazzling New Mexican landscape, the hospitality of town and village life, and very important, the Indian and Hispanic cultures that had shaped the artistic imagination of New Mexico for centuries. From an artist's point of view it was a rich mix, and between art and odd jobs, they managed to make a living. Until the Great Depression of the 1930s. Then, as the artist Louie Ewing said, 'the jobs ran out.' No matter what you were willing to do, there was no work, and nobody was buying pictures and pots. Help came from Washington. New Deal planners offered artists jobs to 'beautify' the community. Almost immediately, artists in New Mexico picked up their brushes and chisels, and for almost ten years, between 1933 and 1943, signed onto Federal programs. How did artists, traditionally loners, like working for the government? When the Santa Fe artist William Lumpkins was asked, he said: 'We thought it was heaven on earth to be paid to paint.' Fortunately, many New Deal artists had the opportunity to speak for themselves. In state-sponsored interviews they tell us in their own words what the New Deal art programs meant to them. Their rich interpretations of that experience and a selection of the work they produced is what this book is about. Artists whose work is beautifully reproduced in this informative book include Josef Bakos, Patrocinio Barela, Oscar and Charles Berninghaus, Emil Bisttram, E. Boyd, Manville Chapman, Ruth Connely, Regina Tatum Cooke, Fremont Ellis, Louie Ewing, Joseph Fleck, William Penhallow Henderson, Victor Higgins, Nils Hogner, Allan Houser, Odon Hullenkremer, Peter Hurd, Raymond Jonson, Gene Kloss, William Lumpkins, Maria and Julian Martinez, Ila McAfee, Helmuth Naumer, B.J.O Nordfeldt, Sheldon Parsons, Eliseo Rodriguez, Olive Rush, Juan Sanchez, Howard Schleeter, Eugenie Shonnard, Will Shuster, Walter Ufer, Theodore van Soelen, Pablita Velarde, Harold West, Brooks Willis and others. The book shows paintings, pottery, rugs, woodcarvings, sculptures and more.

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Customer Reviews

"One of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal 'alphabet agencies' designed to bring relief during the Great Depression was the Public Works of Art Project, or PWAP, later metamorphosing into the Federal Art Program of the Works Progress Administration, or WPA. The purpose of these federal programs was to employ professional artists to decorate buildings and parks throughout the country. In New Mexico there were significant numbers of artists in Santa Fe, Taos, Albuquerque and elsewhere who were employed in the New Deal art programs. Virtually all the professional artists in New Mexico at the time participated in the program. This is their story, superbly illustrated and straightforwardly written. After covering the history of the various New Deal art programs the work of the artists with their thumbnail sketches is presented in 104 pages. Oral histories of three of the New Mexico New Deal artists are presented next: Gene Kloss, Eliseo Rodriguez and Pablita Velarde; as collected by Sylvia Loomis, of the Archives of American Art, in 1964, and Kathryn A. Flynn, grand dame and tireless promoter of New Mexico New Deal art, in the early 1990s. A final section offers further references on the artists whose work is illustrated in the book. The whole package is well executed and will serve as a good reference to New Mexico artists active 1934-1943. Canon artist Patrocino Barela, 'the star of the WPA Art Program in New Mexico,' the author offers, was the last New Mexico artist removed from the payroll. One minor omission is data on Boris Deutsch, an artist who worked in New Mexico for the Department of the Treasury's Section of Painting and Sculpture, and who produced the mural Indian Bear Dance in 1940 that graces the lobby of the post office in Truth or Consequences." --Charles Bennett, New Mexico Magazine, January 2004 --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

JACQUELINE HOEFER's publications include *Imagining the Garden*, a book of poems; *Weather Songs*, three poems set to music by Lanham Deal; and critical essays on contemporary writers, among them, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter and Norman Mailer. Her latest book is *Night in a White Wood, New and Selected Poems*. Mrs. Hoefer received a Ph.D. in American literature from Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, and in the early 1960s taught at the University of California, Berkeley, and at San Francisco State University. In 1967, she joined her husband Peter

Hoefer in starting Hoefer Scientific Instruments, a San Francisco company specializing in producing instruments for biological research. After Peter Hoefer's death in 1987, she carried on as chief executive officer. She is currently an editor for Sunstone Press.

A story of a unique time and place where colorful cultures blended to create a magical display of public art that is unique to the New Mexico region. As a big fan of the New Deal projects that include much of the rustic lodge-type architecture in our National Parks, this book has expanded my understanding of these projects to include the fine arts and the culture of those who created it. The New Mexico region, under the direction of an artist with a good spirit, was able to thrive in a unique and spectacular manner unlike any other. Read the book and enjoy the excellent color plates.

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