



EVENTS RELEASE

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Manuel López
“Olor de leña - The Scent of Wood”
March 31 to April 28, 2011

High resolution images available.

Santa Fe, NM, Feb. 23, 2011 — Santa Fe Community College’s [Visual Arts Gallery](#) presents “Olor de leña - The Scent of Wood,” an exhibition by Manuel López of Chilí, New Mexico. The show features more than 30 figurative carvings, bultos and retablos produced by López during the past several decades. The exhibition runs through April 28. The exhibition is marked by the following special events:

- An opening reception takes place 5 to 7 p.m., Thursday, **March 31**, in the Visual Arts Gallery on the SFCC campus, 6401 Richards Ave. Local musician and SFCC Governing Board member Chris Abeyta will perform traditional and original music.
- Artist Manuel López will present a gallery talk on his work from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday, **April 8**, in the Visual Arts Gallery, Room 701.

For more information, call (505) 428-1501.

For more than 30 years, López has created figurative carvings, bultos and retablos from his home in Chilí, New Mexico. Self-taught, López began carving after being encouraged by his brothers Félix and Alejandro. Never seeking commercial representation, he has produced work for his own interest, often gifting or trading pieces to friends and family. His early work in wood and stone employs a dramatic expressionistic style reminiscent of the sculptor Patrocino Barela from Taos.

Born in Santa Cruz, New Mexico, Manuel grew up in a large, close-knit family. As a youth, he worked on the family farm, learning a range of skills requiring manual dexterity. He credits this time as being formative to his abilities as a carver. Manuel joined the Marine Corps in 1966. His

service in Vietnam, for which he was awarded the Purple Heart, affected him deeply and challenged his long-cherished belief in a “higher power.”

Although he completed a degree in business administration, a decade of living and working in Albuquerque did not fulfill his need for a meaningful life. Manuel purchased a home near Chilí, just north of Española, where he has the freedom to live the life of contemplation and creativity required to express his sense of personal values. As an artist he seeks to incorporate the best qualities of humanity and reflect them in his work. Lopez says he hopes to influence people’s lives by the way he lives and what he does. He calls his work a lifelong “learning experience,” through which he seeks both personal expression and beauty of form. He begins each carving without a preconceived subject or narrative, an approach that allows the meaning of the work to come from inside him. Many of his works embody or illustrate the human values for which Northern New Mexican Indo-hispano culture is best known for: humility, reverence, hard work and familial unity. Each piece, he says, is alive and tells its own story. As a body of work, all of the pieces tell Manuel’s life story and belief in divine guidance.

In addition to work owned by family and acquaintances, his work can be found in the collections of Santa Maria de la Paz Catholic Community, Santa Fe; the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe; the Maxwell Museum, Albuquerque; the Albuquerque Museum; and the Collection Real, Madrid, Spain. He is also a member of “La Escuelita,” a group of Northern New Mexico artisan carvers, who draw inspiration from carving and occasionally exhibit work together. Original members of “La Escuelita” include Ben López, Leroy López, Felix López, Manuel López, Jose Griego, Luisito Lujan, Tim Roybal, Clyde Salazar, Olivar Martinez, Olivar Rivera, and Alberto Baros.

About Santa Fe Community College

For more than 28 years, Santa Fe Community College has served as the gateway to success for individuals and our community. The College provides affordable, high-quality educational programs that serve the social, cultural, technological and economic needs of Santa Fe’s diverse community. More than 15,000 students are served each year in its credit, noncredit and adult basic education programs.

Offering more than 72 degree and certificate programs, SFCC caters to the academic, career and personal-enrichment needs of local residents, businesses, government and public service organizations. More than 274 full-time and 587 part-time employees are employed by the college. For further information, visit www.sfcc.edu or call (505) 428-1000.

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