

Millicent Rogers Museum Exhibit Highlights Significance of Corn in Southwest Native American Art, August 19, 2017-February 18, 2018

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For Immediate Release

Just in time for harvest, the Millicent Rogers Museum is featuring a new exhibit titled *Corn: Sacred Giver of Life*. The exhibit highlights the significance of corn to Southwest Native American art, and includes historic and contemporary textiles, paintings, pottery, jewelry, and more.

***Corn: Sacred Giver of Life*—The exhibition centers on the theme of corn and its importance to the variety of Native American cultures and communities in the Southwest. *Corn: Sacred Giver of Life* focuses on images of corn in art, reflecting its cultivation and utilization by Navajo, Pueblo and Hispanic communities of the region. In addition to its importance as a food source, corn has played a role for many tribes as sacred corn pollen or cornmeal used as ritual adornment and spiritual offerings. Pueblo and Hispanic communities along the Rio Grande continue to cultivate corn as a staple food and for ceremonial Feast Day celebrations. Images of corn can be found in textiles, pottery, and paintings depicting corn dancers and examples of each will be exhibited in the show. Hopi and Navajo jewelry from the renowned collection of Millicent Rogers is also included to demonstrate the variety of ways in which corn is used as ornamentation. The majority of the works included in the exhibit are from the museum's permanent collection, and demonstrate the long history of artistic representations of corn that continues today. This exhibition additionally reveals how cultures throughout the Southwest share common bonds through corn by noting the use of corn imagery in some Hispanic religious art objects.**

Artists featured in the exhibit include: potters Crucita Calabaza, Elizabeth Polingaysi Quoyawayman, Sharon Reyna, Nellie Nampeyo, Margaret and Luther Gutierrez, Grace Medicine Flower, Camillo Sunflower Tafoya, and Lawrence Namoki, painters Bernardo Nieto, Pablita Velarde, and J.D. Roybal, as well as historic and contemporary baskets, katsina tihu, and weavings by Navajo and Hopi artists.

Curator Carmela Quinto states “Corn is such a significant part of food and Feast Day meals in Hispanic and Native American traditions in New Mexico. It’s also important to ceremonies in Pueblo communities, and is used in anything from dances to private religious practices at home. It’s the lifeblood of the Southwest.” The museum’s store will also feature books and artworks that demonstrate the significance of corn, such as historic Navajo wedding baskets, jewelry, and contemporary katsina tihu Corn Maidens. Store Manager Nancy Colvert notes “A number of old Navajo baskets in the museum’s store retain the residues of blue corn meal that were used in various ceremonies and are harder and harder to find for collectors. We also have a wonderful Corn Maiden classic-style katsina by Randy Brokeshoulder who has been a consistent award winner at the Indian Market.” Executive Director Caroline Jean Fernald adds “We always align our special exhibits with items in the museum’s store, and we have a great reputation for only carrying authentic, quality items that are often purchased directly from the artists. In regards to the exhibit, I grew up in the Midwest surrounded by corn, so I feel right at home with our new show.”

The Millicent Rogers Museum is open daily from 10-5 (MST). In line with the museum’s mission to support the local community, admission is always complimentary to Taos County residents. Visit www.millicentrogers.org or call (575) 758-2462 for more information about the museum, admission prices, special events, holiday and seasonal closures, and special exhibits.