

AFFA What's Up - October 2024



Greetings Friends. I wonder how many of you used the link in last month's newsletter to read about the Josefina Aguilar family? It was a great article about a very talented family doing their best to carry on the traditions of the Mexican artisans that work with clay. I had added some photos and comments about my visit several years ago to the family's compound outside of Oaxaca, but when edited for distribution they were cut due to space. So, I will add them to this newsletter. The first member of the Aguilar family that I met was Josefina's son Demetrio. I helped host him when he came to Austin for a demonstration and sale of his art at the Turquoise Door. I admired his art and bought several pieces, the largest being a nativity with figures and animals. It has become my most treasured Christmas item. Years later, I heard that Josefina was losing her eyesight, so I sent a contribution towards her medical costs but the treatment was too late to save her sight. When I went to Oaxaca, I was fortunate enough to be able to visit the homes and workplaces of several of my favorite artists. When I walked into Josefina's compound,



Demetrio Garcia Aguilar and me



This is the entrance to the family's work and sale space.

Demetrio saw me and he gave me a big smile and walked over to greet me. "Austin" he said, and I said "Yes, Austin." When I asked for his mother, he told me she was there, sitting in a corner. He walked me over to her and told her I was the lady from Austin. She smiled and said welcome and thank you. I wished I could have purchased many large pieces but since I knew I would be limited in what I could carry on the plane, I settled for a couple of small pieces.



Nativity by Demetrio Garcia Aguilar, at Christmas I set it up in a manger with fairy lights.



A message from the AFFA President, Amalia Rodriguez Mendoza.

Hi everyone!

We've got some exciting news to share! IBC Bank in Austin is interested in showcasing the awesome *Three Musicians* sculptures by Patrick Owen Davis from Houston right in their lobby. We'll let you know the date soon, but there's a reception planned so you can come check out the exhibit. One of Patrick's cool paper mache sculptures, which he donated to AFFA in 2022, is pictured here. We can't wait to share his art with the Austin community—after all, we are the music capital!

We're also on the lookout for more places to show off some folk art from our permanent collection, so stay tuned for updates!

Mark your calendars for our Holiday Party on Sunday, December 8 at Casa Chapala — we hope to see all of you there! Plus, the popular silent auction will be back.

And just a quick reminder: let's make our voices heard this November—VOTE!

Amalia Rodriguez-Mendoza



A message from the AFFA Secretary, Audrey Selden.

Let the Treasure Hunts Begin: Donate Folk Art Auction Items!

As the holiday season approaches, the Austin Friends of Folk Art (AFFA) is excited to announce our highly anticipated holiday auction on December 8th. Mark your calendars and join us in celebrating folk art from around the world!

Our supporters have been on a treasure hunt for unique items to donate, blending their love for art and culture. After an adventurous trip to Iceland—complete with nighttime whale watching, geyser marvels, and baking bread with geothermal energy—I returned with some incredible finds. Among them are a lava rock bracelet and a handcrafted fish leather clutch, each telling a story of Iceland's rich natural heritage. I'm thrilled to share that these items will be featured in our auction! Additionally, a generous supporter, Shelley Jaffe, donated a vibrant vintage Guatemalan huipil.

The excitement surrounding the auction is building as our members dig through their collections to find pieces that reflect the creativity and craftsmanship of folk artists worldwide. This year's auction will showcase a diverse array of beautiful items that embody cultural richness.

We welcome donations of all kinds! If you have donations, please send us an email (info@austinfriendsoffolkart.org) listing your items. We will work with you to get the items to the December 8 auction. Your contributions will play a crucial role in supporting AFFA's mission to promote and preserve folk art, ensuring that these vibrant traditions continue to thrive.

Let's unite to make this auction a success, celebrating our shared passion for folk art while raising funds for AFFA. Stay tuned for more updates as we approach the big day, and thank you for your continued support!

Audrey Selden



An article from Carol Hayman, AFFA member.

Matchstick Grand Piano Jewelry Box Family Treasures

This is a lovely example of prison art, or tramp art, of a toy sized jewelry box in the shape of a grand piano, made out of burnt wooden matchsticks and scraps of wood. Nowadays, it is hard to find enough burnt matches to collect for craft projects, but back in the mid-20th century, when everybody smoked, there were plenty around to make things.

Arranging the burnt ends was crucial to the design of the object. There are

quite a few matchstick projects on the internet, but they all seem to be made from unburnt matches, which, while colorful, seems like a fire hazard! This jewelry box belonged to Bessie Elizabeth Brandon, my husband Robert White's grandmother. It was a gift from her second husband, Willard.



Carol Hayman

Until Next Month

Until next month, enjoy your life, your family, and your friends. It's good to count your blessings and give thanks.

Gloria Mata Pennington, Editor

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