



## What's Up? March 2026!

### March 2026 Edition

Greetings Friends, I saw my first bluebonnet, so I guess spring is truly on its way. I can hardly wait to go on my annual hunt to find the best bluebonnet patches around here. In addition to spring, we also had the opportunity to celebrate International Women's Day, which was March 8th. I think we ought to come up with some special way to celebrate together. Any ideas? We also have St. Patrick's Day on March 17th, which has turned that celebration into a whole Irish American Heritage Month celebration!



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### Message from the President

#### Celebrating Women's History Month: Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future

Women's History Month is observed every March, and it is a time to acknowledge and recognize the contributions women have made in history, culture, science, and leadership. In 1987, Congress officially designated the month of March as Women's History Month, which also aligns with International Women's Day (March 8). That day was first observed in 1911 as a global celebration of the achievements of women and as a call for gender equality.

**Josefina Aguilar**

We celebrate the incredible work of Josefina Aguilar and send our deepest condolences to her family and everyone who knows and appreciates her folk art.

Josefina Aguilar captured the spirit and traditions of the daily life of her community. She helped preserve the Oaxacan traditions through clay figurines and shared them with a wide audience around the world. AFFA is planning an exhibition of her work from our permanent collection. More details to follow.



Josefina Aguilar "la Boda"

### **AFFA Featured in "Somos Uno" Exhibition at the Ballard Museum**

We were honored to participate in the Somos Uno exhibition at the Ballard Museum and Institute of Puppetry at the University of Connecticut. The exhibit opened in November 2025 and concluded on March 8th. AFFA was proud to have twelve Mexican masks and puppets from our permanent collection in this exhibit. We extend our heartfelt thanks to curator Sol Ramirez for the invitation and for including our folk art in this amazing exhibition. It was an honor for us to share our Mexican folk art with the audiences of the Ballard Museum.





## Why Joining AFFA Matters



Membership in AFFA is more than simply adding your name to a list. It's an opportunity to become part of a network of passionate individuals who care about creating a connection and spreading the word about folk art.

We need your fresh ideas and energy to help us grow and shape the direction and future of the organization.

Now is a perfect time to join. Become a member of AFFA today by clicking on [join!](#)

## The Move: Thank You to Our Incredible Volunteers

# gracias

A huge thank you to the amazing volunteers who helped make our recent move to the new storage unit a success! We got it done! What could have been a long and challenging process turned into a smooth and productive day thanks to the time, energy, and teamwork of our dedicated members. Special thanks go to Meta for securing the space; Rosa and Audrey for working behind the scenes and executing the plan; Audrey for reviewing the contract documents; Carol for photographing before and after photos; and Laurie, Soll, Paul, Hagan, and Bob for volunteering their time and brawn! Your hard work did not go unnoticed, and we are incredibly grateful for your support. We couldn't have done it without you.

## Thank You

On a personal note I would like to thank AFFA Board member Charles Peveto for inviting me to join him at the Eberly luncheon which gave me the opportunity to visit with many folks and talk about Austin Friends of Folk Art. Enjoyed visiting with Holly Hawk with Art Beat at KUT where we discussed the topic of Museum deserts; and meeting the Consul of Ireland, Robert Hull, among many other guests.

Till next month,

Siempre,

AmaliaRodriguez-Mendoza  
Austin Friends of Folk Art Board President

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**The Miniature Worlds of Horacio Gavito: Rescuing the Heart of Mexico**

**by: Paul Munguia**

Last year, while wandering through the little shops at the market in San Antonio, a particular artwork caught my wife's eye. Among the many folk art pieces, one particular style stood out: the intricately detailed dioramas of artisan Horacio Gavito.

Dioramas are three-dimensional, often miniature, scale models that create immersive, realistic, or artistic representations of scenes; more than that, though, Mr. Gavito uses this medium to capture the heart of Mexican daily life. The piece that first captured my wife's attention was a miniature panadería (bakery). The level of detail is impressive—from the dusting of flour on the tiny wooden counters, to the golden crusts of the miniature pan dulce.

Driven by the uniqueness of the work, I reached out to Mr. Gavito at his home in Mexico City to commission a special gift (a cantina scene). Through our conversations, I learned that his art is deeply rooted in a rich family lineage of Mexican tradition. Here is part of that conversation:



*My name is Horacio Gavito, Artisan*

*My parents and grandparents are originally from Oaxaca, Michoacán and the state of Mexico and taught me their customs and traditions from their places of origin. My grandparents had an old stripe store in the town of Tizapán. My mother is a Mexican food cook.*

*Beginning my career at just 12 years old, I had the unique opportunity to work under Wendell Riggs, a distinguished expert in Mexican popular art and the founder of Bazaar Sábado, Mexico's inaugural artisan market.*

*There, I learned to know and love the art of Mexico from almost the entire country. With these diverse experiences and teachings, traveling, and meeting artisans, I*

formed my own style of art. My hope is to rescue the customs and traditions of Ancient Mexico, depicted in modern miniatures.

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## More about Josefina Aguilar

When I was notified about the death of Josefina Aguilar, my mind quickly returned to the day I visited her and her family in Ocotlán de Morelos, Oaxaca. Her family shared a small studio workspace and display area. When I walked in that day, the first person I saw was her son, Demetrio. He had a surprised look on his face and said, "Señora, Austin!"

He remembered the trip he made to Austin and that I had taken him to lunch to buy Austin t-shirts. He also recalled that when it was announced his mother was losing her eyesight and needed medical attention, I had sent some support. Josefina was seated in a corner working with clay. Demetrio took me over to her and said, "Mamá, la Señora de Texas, de Austin." She reached out her hand and said, "Gracias."



Virgen by Demetrio Garcia Aguilar



Demetrio Garcia Aguilar and Gloria Mata Pennington



Work Space and Studio



Josefina Aguilar

It touched me that perhaps she remembered. We talked for a little while, and then Demetrio showed me the many pieces of art on display and for sale. After I made my purchases, we hugged, and Demetrio's last words were that he hoped to visit Austin again. Sadly, it hasn't happened.

I am proud to own many treasures made by Josefina, her son Demetrio, and even some of her grandchildren. I was fortunate to meet her and her family and to bring home much of the fantastic art they created. Josefina Aguilar, la Gran Maestra—QEPD.

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## Until Next Month

Enjoy the better weather and our landscape that, like magic, turns into a canvas of beautiful bluebonnets, other wildflowers, and the vast number of majestic old trees in our city.

Gloria Mata Pennington

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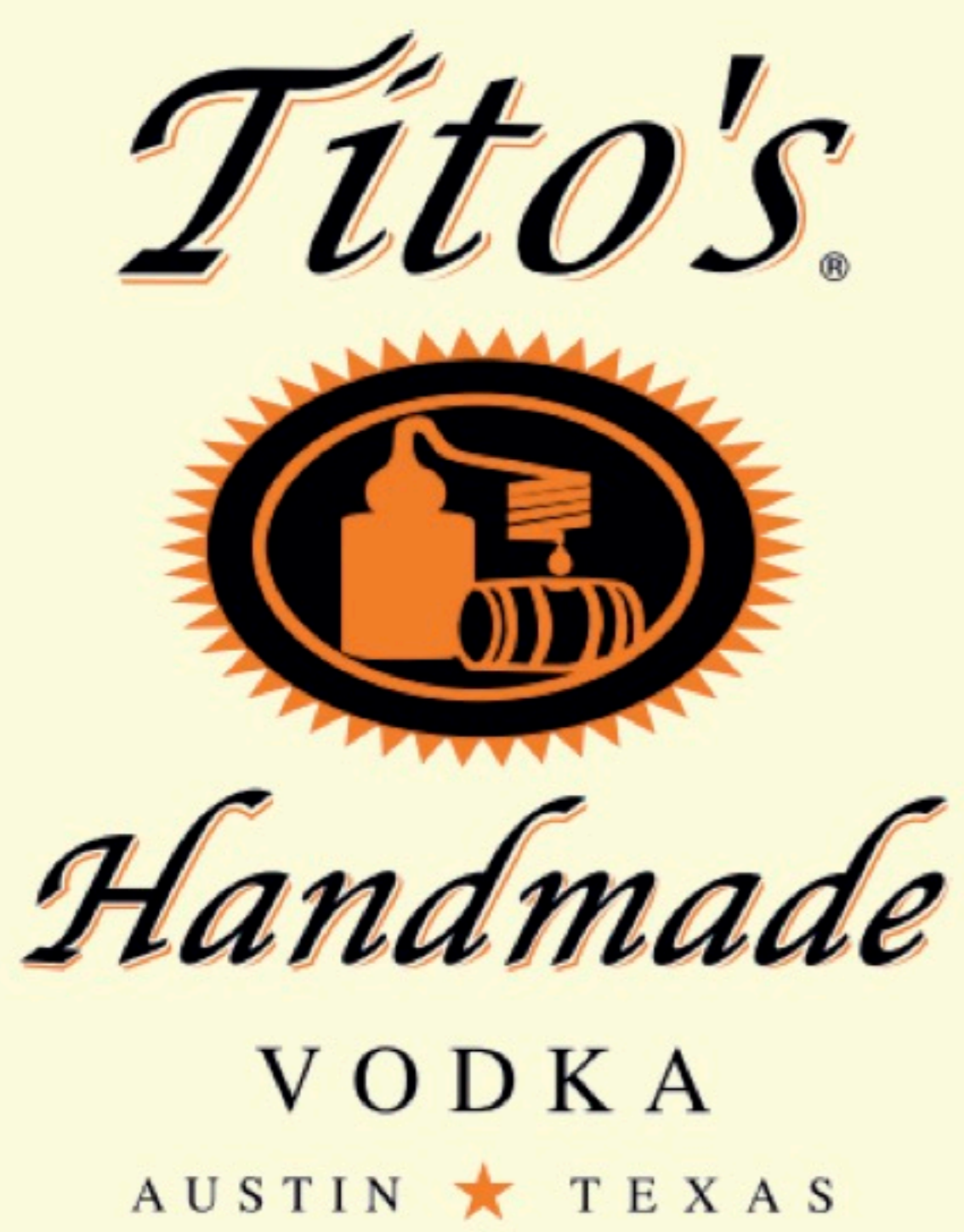
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