



A Bible, Hundreds of Baskets, and a Baby

BY CYNTHIA BAUGHMAN

The New Mexico History Museum and the Palace of the Governors have a relationship with books and book-making that reaches back at least to the Mexican era of Santa Fe. The Fray Angélico Chávez Library is the institutional successor of New Mexico's oldest library, that dates to 1851 and the custodian of graphics, manuscripts, maps, and documents reaching back centuries. The Press of the Palace of the Governors inherits a tradition of printing that dates perhaps to as early as the 1840s, when newspapers were likely printed at the Palace. Exhibits at the Press include a Ramage Press, an example of the type of press first brought along the Santa Fe Trail to New Mexico in 1834.

Given this long involvement with the history of books and of printing, the astonishingly beautiful pages of *The Saint John's Bible* find in the History Museum an appropriate stop on their travels from a scriptorium in Wales to their ultimate home in Minnesota. Les Daly takes us inside the scriptorium and the studios of the phenomenally dedicated scribes and illuminators of *The Saint John's Bible*, whose pages are surrounded, in the History Museum, by a photographic record of faith in New Mexico in the *Contemplative Landscape* exhibition.

Tom Leech, director of the Press of the Palace of the Governors and a frequent contributor to *El Palacio*, can be thanked both for his role in bringing the divinity of *The Saint John's Bible* to Santa Fe and also for bringing to this issue of *El Palacio* a piece of ridiculousness: One of the more recent additions to the Press's catalogue of hand-set, hand-bound books is the pamphlet *Why New Mexico is the Match of Texas*, which we reprint as our first-person "Perspective" piece in this issue. (We believe that neither Texans nor New Mexicans are harmed.)

A wide range of artists is on display in this issue. Robin Farwell Gavin examines the early painters and carvers who created New Mexico's oldest altar pieces, and Valerie K. Verzuh surveys the anonymous and the known creators of a stunning collection of baskets in a major exhibition at the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture. Merry Scully presents three photographers with distinctive perceptions of the southern New Mexico landscape. Laura Addison takes us into the studio of James Drake and lets us watch and listen as he creates a new work for the Museum of Art exhibition *James Drake: Salon of a Thousand Souls*. Kate Nelson discerns three arcs in the life of third-generation painter Margarete Bagshaw, whose gorgeous painting, *El Cante Amor*, is our cover art.

Margarete Bagshaw opened the photo albums of her illustrious family as we sought images for this piece. We loved the candid family snapshots of Margarete with her mother, painter Helen Hardin, and her grandmother, painter Pablita Velarde. We were also taken with a posed studio image (on page 51) of Velarde in the prime of life with her bonny little granddaughter Margarete in a cradleboard on her back. This photograph, Margarete explained to us, was created for a postcard—"I used to have a thousand of them!" Margarete Chase, of Enchanted Mesa Trading Post in Albuquerque, hired photographer Jerry Rose to take this picture of Santa Claran Velarde bearing her Santa Claran granddaughter in an Apache cradleboard. Rose, Chase, and Velarde are long gone, and Bagshaw was too young to remember the moment, but for all the commercialization and staged myth-making of the image, the command of Velarde is evident, and we think we can detect a nascent visionary power in the eyes of infant artist-to-be Bagshaw. ■

EL PALACIO IS PRODUCED IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO FOUNDATION

EL PALACIO, ESTABLISHED IN 1913, IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS BY THE CENTER FOR MUSEUM RESOURCES, 725 CAMINO LEJO, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87505 ■ MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO BOARD OF REGENTS: JO BOUNDS; THELMA DOMENICI; KAREN DURKOVICH; GEORGE GOLDSTEIN; CHARLOTTE GREY JACKSON; KENT F JACOBS, MD; BEV TAYLOR; J. PAUL TAYLOR ■ REPRODUCTION OF ANY PORTION OF THE CONTENTS HEREIN PROHIBITED WITHOUT PERMISSION ■ WE ASSUME NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNSOLICITED MATERIALS
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