

NATIVE

AMERICAN ART

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1. Vault 1 at the Indian Arts Research Center.



SANTA FE *Secret*

SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH gives Native American Art magazine exclusive access inside its breathtaking campus and vaults filled with Native art.

By **JOHN O'HERN** Photography by **DANIEL NADELBACH**



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Amelia Elizabeth White (1878-1972) and Martha Root White (1881-1937) were two of the three daughters of Horace White (1834-1916), a wealthy New York publisher and former editor-in-chief of the *Chicago Tribune*. He had accompanied Abraham Lincoln as a reporter on Lincoln's 1858 senatorial campaign against Stephen Douglas.

The White sisters served as Army nursing assistants during World War I. On a trip West in 1923, they bought a parcel of land in Santa Fe and proceeded to build a home and to raise Irish wolfhounds. William Penhallow Henderson (1877-1943) designed their home, modeling it after the mission church at the Pueblo of Laguna. The sisters called it *El Deliro* ("The Madness") after a bar that served as a landmark whenever they got lost walking

2. The administration building of the School for Advanced Research. Built in 1923 and modeled after the mission church at Laguna Pueblo, it was the home of Martha Root White and Amelia Elizabeth White.
3. The Dobkin Board Room at the School for Advanced Research, formerly the living room of the White sisters' home. The paintings are *Untitled* and, from left to right, are by Awa Tsireh (Alfonso Roybal) (San Ildefonso Pueblo), 1933, oil on canvas, Cat. no. SAR.1978-1-216; Oqwa Pi (Abel Sanchez) (San Ildefonso Pueblo), 1933, oil on canvas, Cat. no. SAR.1978-1-214; and Awa Tsireh (Alfonso Roybal) (San Ildefonso Pueblo), 1933, oil on canvas, Cat. no. SAR.1978-1-215.
4. Shelves holding Zuni pottery. The majority of these pieces date from circa 1890 to the late 1920s.



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ZUNI



Witajcie w galerii
Pomysł i wystrój







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back to their hotel on a visit to Spain. They built an above ground pool, a billiard house, guesthouses and a state of the art kennel. El Delirio became the site for lavish costume parties and was visited by stars of the country's artistic world.

None other than printmaker and painter Gustave Baumann (1881-1971) drew a map of the estate in 1927 indicating all the buildings as well as the sites of three prairie dog villages.

Elizabeth and Martha became real estate developers, and Elizabeth served on Santa Fe's first planning commission. Their love of Pueblo life and the Native arts of the Southwest led to their opening the first gallery of Native American art in New York City. Elizabeth assembled a collection to be shown at an exposition in Seville, Spain, in 1929. In their book *El Delirio: The Santa Fe World of Elizabeth White*, Gregor Stark and E. Catherine Rayne recount an anecdote about the exposition:

"At such exhibits, it was the custom of the Spanish king and queen to select an object apiece for themselves. 'They chose two of my best pieces,' Elizabeth later told Catherine. 'He took a beautiful

5. *A Dance with Grace*, by Estella Loretto (Jemez Pueblo), 2002, bronze, Cat. no. SAR.2002-8-1. Loretto was the 2002 Rollin and Mary Ella King Native American Artist Fellow.
6. The president's office at SAR, formerly the White sisters' dining room featuring an altar screen rescued from an earthquake-damaged church in Guatemala and repainted by Gustave Baumann.

Plains Indian war bonnet, and she took a large squash blossom necklace.' Elizabeth asked for a photograph of the king, Alfonso XIII, wearing the war bonnet, but her request was never fulfilled."

Martha died in 1937 and Elizabeth lived on at El Delirio until her death at 94 in 1972 when she bequeathed the estate and other property to what was then the School of American Research.

The School of American Research had begun in 1907 as the School of American Archaeology, set up by the Archaeological Institute of America as a center for the study of the archaeology and ethnology of the American Southwest. Edgar Lee Hewett (1865-1946) was appointed its first director and changed its name in 1912.

The government of New Mexico Territory gave the new institution the Palace of the Governors on the Santa Fe Plaza as its home. In 1909 it established the Museum of New Mexico to be housed along with the school. Hewett was named head of both institutions.

Over the years, the school's programs developed and broadened. In 2007, its name was changed again to the School for Advanced Research (SAR). Its mission



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states: “SAR supports innovative research and public education through seminars, lectures and residential fellowships focused on the comparative, historically informed study of human societies; promotes Indigenous creativity through artist residencies; and stewards one of the world’s finest research collections of Southwest Native American art.”

In 1922, a group of Santa Fe anthropologists, writers and art patrons had set up the Pueblo Pottery Fund. Their purpose was “to preserve and revive the arts and crafts of the Pueblo people by collecting outstanding examples and making them available for study and inspiration.” The group was incorporated as the Indian Arts Fund (IAF) in 1925 and, eventually, amassed a collection of traditional Southwest Indian arts. The group disbanded in 1972 and deeded its 4,280 pieces to SAR. The school had recently moved to the estate on Garcia Street bequeathed to it by Elizabeth White, who had been one of the founding members of the IAF. Today, the collection consists of nearly 12,000 pieces of the 450-year period from Spanish contact to the present as well as pre-contact pieces dating back to 600 A.D. The collection is housed in a building on the estate that was dedicated in 1978. It is now the Indian

Arts Research Center (IARC).

Brian D. Vallo, a member of the Pueblo of Acoma, was appointed director of IARC in 2015. He is a former Lt. Governor, Director of Historic Preservation, and Founding Director of the Haak’u Museum at Acoma.

“My first experience with this collection was when



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7. Ashiwi Polychrome water jar, maker unknown, ca. 1720, clay, paints, Cat. no. IAF.1.
8. Sandals of the Basketmaker period from the Grand Canyon area, makers unknown, 1500 BCE – CE 750, yucca, Cat. nos. SAR.1980-2A and SAR.1980-2B.
9. Drawer with silver concha belts, makers unknown, early 1900s, silver and leather.
10. Pueblo drums. Blue and yellow drum at center; Cochiti Pueblo, maker unknown, ca. 1930, wood, rawhide, paints, Cat. no. SAR.1978-4-50.

I came with my grandmother and her sister and a few other potters from Acoma who were invited to come see the collection. I was overwhelmed,” he recalls. “I wondered, ‘How can all these materials be here in one place?’ The women were picking up the pots and looking at them, handling them the way they were accustomed to. Lucy Lewis was here and Marie Z. Chino. My grandmother encouraged my interest in art but I was discouraged from making pottery because it was a female art. I always helped in gathering the clay and processing the clay. When I was a sophomore in high school, though, I made a dough bowl. My grandmother brought it to market and it sold!”

IARC’s literature states that its goal is “to bridge the divide between creativity and scholarship by supporting initiatives in Native American studies, art history and creative expression that illuminate the intersections of social sciences, humanities and the arts. This is accomplished by providing fellowship opportunities for artists to engage in uninterrupted creativity; fostering dialogue among artists, researchers, scholars and community members through seminars and symposia; nurturing future



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art and museum professionals through experiential training; and promoting study of the IARC collection of Native American arts.”

Vallo explains that IARC hosts researchers from all over the world. “It could be someone interested in the Santa Fe Indian School and Dorothy Dunn’s Studio School; something associated with how contemporary tribal communities maintain traditional arts within their community or are working toward revitalizing them; or Native American artists using the collection as a means of informing themselves of the history of a particular art form.

“Sometimes the research goes far beyond the object,” he continues. “UNM architecture students engage with the collection to study form. Others studied Acoma storage jars to learn about space allocation within homes, water storage and where they were located within the house block. And others look into the materials, the source of the clay, the paint source and the gathering of the wood to fire the pottery.”

There is also an ongoing collaboration with indigenous communities. In collection reviews with tribal experts, “we are revisiting our existing documentation associated with the objects or the archival documentation that came with the objects,” Vallo explains. The experts inform us whether or not the record we have is correct—is the material relevant,



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11. Acoma Pueblo woman's cape, maker unknown, 1850-1860, wool, dyes, Cat. no. IAF.T44.

12. The jewelry vault is rarely seen and full of works from the first half of the 20th century.

does it support the object, should it be made accessible to researchers, or does it have cultural significance and cannot be shared.”

A number of “pseudo-ceremonial pots” in the collection were identified during the Zuni collection review by tribal experts. “The pots were sold to collectors as pieces used in ceremonies,” Vallo said. “However, the makers made them for sale. We are reclassifying some material because we have found that information in the scholarly material is erroneous.”

The study collection of objects at IARC is complemented by the 9,000-volume collection of



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books in the Catherine McElvain Library as well as an archival collection of papers relating to early-20th-century New Mexico.

Dotted around the property are studio residences for the three annual recipients of Native Artist Fellowships, post-graduate interns and for the various resident scholars and seminar attendees.

One resident scholar, from the 1988-89 season, has returned to become president of SAR. Dr. Michael Brown came to SAR in 2014 from Williams College, where he was Lambert Professor of Anthropology and Latin American Studies. His areas of research have included magic and ritual, indigenous intellectual property rights, the New Age movement, and the native peoples of Amazonia.

Brown's office had been the White sisters' dining room. The prominent feature of the room is an altar screen rescued from an earthquake-damaged church in Guatemala. Apparently, the White sisters thought

13. Vault 2 at the Indian Arts Research Center. The bowls on the table are (l. to r.) Zuni Pueblo stew bowl, maker unknown, 1880-1900, clay, paints, Cat. no. IAF.1361; and Zuni Pueblo stew bowl, maker unknown, before 1924, clay, paints, Cat. no. IAF.249.

that its crucifixion scenes would be too much for their dinner guests and asked Gustave Baumann to paint over them with images of angels playing lutes. Although we admire Baumann's work and look humorously at the motivation in this case, it's ironic that an ancient artifact of another culture that has been whimsically altered is housed at an institution dedicated to conserving objects and assuring the accuracy of their interpretation.

In an article, "The Possibilities and Perils of Heritage Management" in the book *Cultural Heritage Ethics: Between Theory and Practice*, Brown wrote, "For cultural heritage to survive, it must be cultured by its proper stewards."

From the preservation of objects to the nurturing of creative thought, SAR is an exemplar of proper stewardship.

Daniel Usner Jr., Holland N. McTyeire Professor of History at Vanderbilt University, recalls, "My seven weeks as a summer fellow at SAR proved to be one of the most fruitful experiences in my 30-year career." «