

## A New Way To See Santa Fe: 12th Site Santa Fe International

The 12th SITE SANTA FE International runs through January 12, 2026 at more than a dozen prominent and little-explored locations across Santa Fe, NM.

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SITE SANTA FE.  
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With nearly 300 galleries, [a dozen world class museums](#), and artwork on display and for sale in every nook and cranny across town, Santa Fe can make

for an overwhelming destination for art lovers. How to see everything? Impossible, of course. A new project, however, offers something of a visitor's guide.

The 12th SITE SANTA FE International opened June 27<sup>th</sup> and runs until January 12, 2026. Hosted at more than a dozen prominent and little-explored locations, the exhibition introduces guests to [The City Different](#) by way of global and local contemporary art along with historic work from prominent [New Mexico artists](#). Along the way, visitors will be introduced to the city and state, and their histories, through a cast of characters living and dead, real and imagined, via more than 70 artists.

Titled "[Once Within a Time,](#)" this edition of the International is grounded in the lives and stories of over 20 "figures of interest" with strong ties to New Mexico and the region. Not Georgia O'Keeffe. Exhibition curator Cecilia Alemani went deeper than that.

Best known for her work curating art along New York's beloved High Line and the 2022 Venice Biennale, Alemani's research into the Land of Enchantment led her to Doña Tules, a notorious 19<sup>th</sup> century saloon owner known as the "Queen of Sin;" Chester Nez, the last surviving member of the so-called "Original 29" Navajo Code Talkers; acclaimed writers Willa Cather and Vladimir Nabokov; Lilli Hornig, a chemist and scientist who contributed to the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos, NM; the fictional healer Ultima, conceived of by the writer Rudolfo Anaya; and La Malinche, an enslaved Nahua woman and translator for the Spanish Conquistador Hernán Cortés. For starters.

Eschewing an overarching theme, Alemani has chosen to tell a multitude of individual stories using more than 300 artworks spanning mediums from etchings, drawings, photography, painting, film, sculpture, and installation.

Many are spectacularly strange. Makers come from as far away as Taiwan, India, and Bosnia; others call Santa Fe home.

The 12th International takes its title, “Once Within a Time,” from the most recent film by Godfrey Reggio, the legendary Santa Fe-based experimental filmmaker who is also a participating artist in the exhibition. Reggio’s *Once Within a Time* (2022), on view at SITE SANTA FE, intertwines fairytale atmospheres with apocalyptic landscapes, blending the fantastical and the mundane.

Alemaní was a fan growing up in Italy. Evidence of Santa Fe’s influence on the international art world, and the international art world’s interest in Santa Fe.

## Museum Hill

The Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian was the first institution in Santa Fe to collect contemporary Native American art. That’s its contribution to the International.

Raven Halfmoon’s (b. 1991, Caddo) monumental ceramic female figures installed outside greet visitors to the Museum. One, *Soku & Nash (Caddo – Sun & Moon)* (2022), faces Sun and Moon Mountain. Museum Hill offers some of the best views in Santa Fe.

Inside, paintings from Emmi Whitehorse (b. 1957, Navajo), a video from 2022 MacArthur Foundation “Genius Grant” recipient [Sky Hopinka](#) (b. 1984; Ho-Chunk/ Luiseño), delicate needlework textiles by Cristina Flores Pescorán (b. 1986, Lima, Peru) resembling her organs, and a room-filling Nora Naranjo Morse (b. 1953, Kha’P’o Owenge (Santa Clara Pueblo)) fabric sculpture composed of discarded items sourced in the Jornada del Muerto (Dead Man’s

Journey) region of Southern New Mexico are in service to John Chee Arviso (1910–2005, Navajo), the Wheelwright’s “person of interest.”

The cattle rancher worked as Museum founder Mary Cabot Wheelwright’s local Diné bizáád-to-English translator beginning in the late 1940s. He’d eventually drive her across the Southwest on multiple expeditions, photographs of which are displayed in a family album in the gallery.

Before leaving, make sure to peep the world’s finest collection of Southwestern jewelry and [Naranjo Morse’s daughter Eliza’s](#) mural leading downstairs to the Case Trading Post. The retail shop recreates an old Southwest Native American trading post and sells authentic vintage and contemporary Native American art by masters and emerging artists, including pottery, jewelry, textiles, baskets, fetishes, and paintings.

At the [Museum of International Folk Art](#), visitors who can pull themselves away from the gonzo installation of more than 100,000 folk art pieces installed in the Girard Wing will be astonished by the cave-like environment Zhang Xu Zhan (b. 1988, Xinzhuang, Taiwan) has created in a lower-level gallery. Enclosed in a “paper skin” of local newspapers, Zhang Xu’s spectacular stop motion video and the astoundingly intricate character figures used in the film defy belief.

The New Mexico Military Museum has free admission and Karla Knight’s (b. 1958, New York) pictograph, glyph, extraterrestrial communication-inspired paintings as a highlight. Check out the schedule of indie, art house, foreign films, and documentary screenings along with live performances at [the Center for Contemporary Art](#) next door.