

October 14-16, 2011

PRESS RELEASE

TUCSON *meet*
YOURSELF
a folklife festival

DOWNTOWN

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More than 100 Folk Artists from Arizona/Sonora Ethnic Communities Participating in 2011 TMY Folklife Festival

Tucson, AZ - While the downturn in the economy and larger trends of globalization have made it hard for many traditional industries and artists to thrive, the desire to share cultural identity through handmade objects, made through techniques learned by oral tradition and emulation, and rooted in distinct cultural regions, ethnicities, and occupations endures among Arizonan and Sonoran artists preparing to participate in the 2011 edition of the Tucson Meet Yourself Folklife Festival (October 14-16, 2011 in downtown Tucson).

Expected to be the largest number of folk artists participating in the Festival's 38-year history, this TMY event will feature over 100 artisans and tradition bearers from Tucson's diverse communities --- traditional artists who come from at least 65 different ethnicities and countries, but who are now all Tucsonans.

The Festival's main Folk Arts area, located as it is customary in the Pima County Courthouse Courtyard area, will feature a breathtaking array of colorful art traditions through demonstrations, interactions with the master craftspeople and children's activities. Another large folk arts area in the Tucson Convention Center Plaza will feature the arts of O'odhman and Yaqui artists --the two largest indigenous groups in Pima County. Art objects to be demonstrated at this year's TMY Festival include *papel picado* and reverse glass painting from Mexico, water marbling and ceramics from Turkey, calligraphy from China and Japan, rawhide ropes from Southern Arizona's ranches, hats from the African-American tradition, weaving from Laos, and tailors from Ghana. The items reveal craftsmanship as well as the ways the objects function in everyday life.

"The medium that the folk artist chooses to work in," said Dr. Maribel Alvarez, UA Professor of Folklore and Chair of the Board of TMY, "may be fiber or ink or paper or maybe other elements not so clearly steeped in tradition, like plastic beads for example, but in all cases the work's expressive beauty and functionality mixes with a cultural message."

New to the 2011 Festival will be the TMY Store, where Festival goers may purchase affordable as well as one-of-a-kind weavings, pottery, paintings, baskets and other treasures handmade by the tradition-bearers. The interweaving of indigenous craft traditions with the various artistic interpretations each artist brings to his or her work makes the Folk Arts demonstration areas of the Festival a crowd-favorite in terms of artistic creativity from around the world. Support for Folk Arts at TMY provided by Tucson Pima Arts Council and Arizona Commission on the Arts.