



Artists Illuminate Acequias During PASEO 2019 in Taos

The Paseo Project has invited six artists to present participatory art about water for September outdoor art event

TAOS N.M. July 24, 2019 –The Paseo Project recently posted a call to artists to bring visibility to Northern New Mexico’s water culture and issues. This open call brought in dozens of proposals for installations that creatively expand public knowledge and appreciation of the acequia networks in downtown Taos. For PASEO 2019, six artists have been selected to share their water-centric work during PASEO 2019 on September 13 and 14.

In the PASEO 2019 festival, Paseo Project is entering the second phase of “Acequia Aqui,” a project leveraging art to illuminate the historic downtown acequia network. Local acequia and cultural leaders see tremendous opportunity in utilizing art strategies to advance sustainable, integrated, and inclusive management of the community’s water resources. As creative thinkers and doers, artists can be powerful partners to water leaders seeking to reimagine traditional approaches to water planning and management—and connect with communities in new ways. In 2018 The Paseo Project published “*Acequia Aqui, The history and preservation of the Acequia Madre del Rio Pueblo.*” The twelve-page booklet celebrates the traditional acequia systems found within the Historic District of Taos, visually illustrating the historic infrastructure. With a series of maps, infographics, writings and interviews, including an essay by Sylvia Rodriguez, the information gleaned from Acequia Aqui provides strategies and visions for transforming the acequia network with permanent artistic and informational installations and infrastructural enhancements. Find maps, essays, and phase one materials of Acequia Aqui at www.paseoproject.org/acequia-aqui.

Meet the selected artists for phase two of Acequia Aqui, and their water-themed artworks coming to PASEO 2019:

Acequia Madre

Rica Maestas, Albuquerque NM

In collaboration with Tessa Cordova and Las Pistoleras Instituto Cultural de Arte

Acequia Madre is a series of surreal sunset and evening tours of the Taos acequia system led by the most infamous acequia mother of all, La Llorona. In these performative tours, we will not only learn about the historical and cross-cultural importance of acequias in Taos (and around the world) but also befriend the multifaceted, ghostly mother New Mexicans learned to fear as children. Though her tale varies by culture, region, and teller, La Llorona has many lessons to teach us, not only about her own story but about our precious desert waterways and the people that use them. Like acequias themselves, she is a complex and dangerous giver of life in desert communities around the world.

About the artist: Rica Maestas is a burqueña artist, author, educator, and social practitioner working in Albuquerque. An avid polymath, Rica derives her inspiration from the surreal aesthetics of the desert and Southwestern folklore, as well as topics in linguistics, critical theory, history, and film. www.ricamaestas.com

The Knot, the Loom, and the Relationship

xiili sarkela, Olivia Romo and Suldano Abdiruhman, Taos and Ramah NM

The Knot, the Loom, and the Relationship works in partnership with local artisans and weavers to create a series of woven blue wool handkerchiefs and small colcha tapestries that will serve as tokens of relationship to the water and to the story-keepers.

About the artists: This is a collective of artists and organizers born and/or raised in New Mexico. Olivia Romo was born in 1993 on the Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant, homeland of the Red Willow People, and now lives in the Pueblo of Pojoaque. xiili sarkela-bassett was born in 1994 in Red Willow People homelands, now lives in unceded Lenape territories. Suldano Abdiruhman was born in 1996 in Rama and now lives in unceded Lenape territories.

www.westernfolklife.org/benediccion-del-agua

Telepoem Booth® Acequia del Madre

Elizabeth Hellstern, Owen William Fritts, Cerrillos, NM

In collaboration with Ariana Kramer and SOMOS

The *Telepoem Booth®* is an interactive vintage telephone booth from which users can dial a Telepoem number on the rotary phone and listen to the voices of the poets reading their work. The *Telepoem Booth® Acequia del Madre* will feature poems collected from local poets revolving around acequia culture.

About the artist: Elizabeth Hellstern is a writer and an artist, working to make word as interactive as possible. Her artwork includes national placements of the public art installation the *Telepoem Booth®*, where members of the public can dial-a-poem on a phone in a vintage phone booth. www.telepoembooth.com

Spinning with Water Wisdom

Juanita J. Lavadie, Olivia Romo, David García, Judy Torres, Taos & Española

Acequias were the life force of the existence of Spanish-speaking settlements of early 1500-1600 CE. The irrigation water was shared within villages through a democratic process of voice, work and water share. Crops could be grown, families could be fed and wisdom of survival skills were passed on through generations of dichos, songs, and story talk. Spinning stories within the intimate circle of listeners, cuentistas/story tellers created images in the imagination, union in song and consejos/advice in the telling. Using handmade tools, spinners would quietly spin, listening. Letting nothing go to waste, recycled cloth was spun into yards and yards of ropes and cords that were most often plaited or woven into mats and coverings, the result of group cooperation and effort. Starting from preparing recycled cloth, participants will spin cloth into rope and weave it into a circular mat while listening to the spoken and sung words of traditional value.

www.taosacequias.org

About the artists: Juanita J. Lavadie is a retired public school teacher of bilingual and art education. She has numerous textiles in permanent collections of various museums. She is also an active acequiera and had worked collaboratively with acequia water rights and the Taos Valley Acequia Association. Olivia Romo has been active with state-wide acequias through the New Mexico Acequia Association. She is also an active poet presenting at national Cowboy Poetry conferences and has published her work. David García is a UNM PhD Music Scholar and luthier. He is known for his participation in community events, gracing such gatherings with his melodic voice in song, sharing his compositions that celebrate Northern New Mexico traditions.

Irrigation

Ayrton Chapman, Los Lunas NM

The artist explains, "Irrigation is a film documenting the first time we irrigated our land. When we moved to our new home, we were excited to utilize the acequia system for small scale farming. We have been able to refine our garden and have been actively producing produce. I have felt a strong urge to farm for some time now and have been experimenting with ways of bringing food/food production into my work."

About the artist: Ayrton was born in East Texas. She studied photography at UNT in Denton where she branched off from photography to other media. She moved to Albuquerque for her masters in Experimental Art and Technology. [youtube.com/storytimewithgrumblesandfriends](https://www.youtube.com/storytimewithgrumblesandfriends)

Implied Line, El Linaje Implícito

Ruben Olguin, Roswell NM

Implied Line, El Linaje Implícito, is a video installation along the old ditch (acequia) which used to run through the plaza area of Taos village. The roads and encroachment of city life re-routed the irrigation ditches, causing conflicts among farmers, land owners, villagers, and the Taos Pueblo. This video installation works to reveal those hidden lines, and show the balance of natural and human influences upon the region.

About the artist: Olguin is a New Mexico-based artist working in ceramics, adobe, sound, video, and electronic media. His work draws from his mixed Indigenous American and Spanish (mestizo) heritage. He incorporates traditional hand processes with earth materials and modern elements. Website: rubenolguinarts.net

About PASEO festival

Since 2014, this annual art festival has engaged the Taos community and visitors in the art making process during its two-night outdoor event. Now in its sixth year, the PASEO has become the most anticipated art event of the year, bringing out thousands of locals and visitors alike to fill the streets. Taos is a [centuries old art colony](#) and home to [Taos Pueblo](#), UNESCO-protected and the oldest continually inhabited community in North America.

The 2019 PASEO will include 26 art installations in addition to the six acequia-centered artworks. The festival is a project of Paseo Project LLC, a 501c3 nonprofit and is made possible by the JF Maddox Foundation, Peter and Madeleine Martin Foundation for the Creative Arts, LOR Foundation, the Town of Taos, Taos County Lodgers Tax, New Mexico Arts, a Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Nina's Fund, Arroyo Seco Live, Taos Community Foundation, and many additional generous donors.

In a Nutshell

The PASEO 2019: September 13-14, sunset to 11:00pm

www.paseoproject.org