

Chamisa: A Journal of Literary, Performance, and Visual Arts of the Greater Southwest

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Front Matter

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Mission Statement

Published annually by the University of New Mexico (UNM), *Chamisa: A Journal of Literary, Performance, and Visual Arts of the Greater Southwest* is an online, peer-reviewed, open access journal that showcases cultural production in the U.S. Southwest. The journal foregrounds multidisciplinary creative works by, both, recognized and lesser-known artists and writers with connections to historical and contemporary communities in this region of the country. The journal's main objective is to enrich our understanding of the value of the arts in the region by featuring the diverse views and experiences that shape the full range of creativity across Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California.

Chamisa highlights creative community partnerships to promote a greater awareness of the cultural and intellectual richness that characterizes life in the Southwestern states. The arts of the Southwest region are abundant, diverse, and often blur the boundaries between categories normally accepted as corresponding to the structural hierarchies of the art world. As these forms change, they enrich and redefine the cultural landscape. The journal seeks to capture the dynamic ways that the creative arts in this region have developed and continue to advance over time, in relation to historically diverse communities.

Chamisa: A Journal of Literary, Performance, and Visual Arts of the Greater Southwest is sponsored by the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute (SHRI) at the University of New Mexico. Established in 1980, SHRI promotes inter-disciplinary research related to Latinx/Hispanic populations of New Mexico, the Southwest, and the United States, and publishes a series of working papers and monographs, while also supporting and promoting public lectures and research seminars on Latinx issues. SHRI offers an intellectual home to its UNM faculty associates and currently has over 60 affiliated faculty members from the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Education, Architecture and Planning, Medicine/Health Sciences, Fine Arts, Law, and the Anderson School of Management. The Southwest Hispanic Research Institute is a member of the Inter-University Program for Latinx Research, a national consortium of Latino studies programs throughout the country, and is supported by the UNM Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development. The Institute also acknowledges support from, both, public and private entities and foundations.

Inaugural Issue Theme:
Identity, Cultural Practices, and Art in New Mexico

When speaking of New Mexico, identity, cultural practices, and art vary from one region to another and from one community to the next. Co-existing in this mountainous desert landscape are diverse cultural discourses of place and a multiplicity of lived realities. If there are certain shared features across New Mexican communities, what are those commonalities? Alternately, what are the differences in how people conceptualize being from New Mexico? A central question when considering identity is how that identity is expressed. Tradition, local cultural production, and the arts are what normally shape local awareness, memory, and experience. For the inaugural issue of *Chamisa: A Journal of Literary, Performance, and Visual Arts of the Greater Southwest*, we present short stories, poetry, scholarly articles, editorials, photography, painting, and mixed media artworks that address these questions from a wide range of perspectives and in a wide range of voices that represent the complex and multifaceted character of New Mexico.

Foreword

The idea for this journal originated with Dr. Leila Flores-Dueñas, Associate Professor of Education at the University of New Mexico, who noted that many of her colleagues and students possessed hidden artistic talents yet rarely counted those skills and production as creative or scholarly works of importance in their academic life. With the goal of providing a space where artists, writers, scholars, and community members could showcase their ideas, originality, and artistry, she proposed a professional journal that featured and nurtured artistic community partnerships and greater awareness of the cultural and intellectual richness that characterizes life in the state of New Mexico. In fall 2014, Leila approached Dr. Ray Hernández-Durán, then, Associate Professor of Art History in the Department of Art, to inquire about his possible interest in collaborating on a new journal focused on New Mexican arts. From 2015 through 2018, Leila and Ray met to discuss the title, content, and format of the proposed journal but the project was delayed, given the demands of other projects, administrative obligations, and a lack of internal funding from the university. Things changed, when, in 2019, Dr. Irene Vásquez was brought on board.

Irene, as Chair of the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies (CCS) and Director of the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute (SHRI), a cross-campus Latina/o-centered research institute, was able to formalize the journal's status by bringing it under the aegis of SHRI, as one of the institute's publications. During meetings for faculty involved in the "Culturally Mapping New Mexico" National Endowment for the Humanities Digital Project, Ray highlighted the importance of the arts as subject matter for the grant project. These conversations converged with Leila and Ray's proposal for a journal through the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute. The long-term plan is to design a humanities digital platform that draws on the journal submissions and other forms of textual production to highlight diverse literary narrative landscapes. Affiliated with a university unit and with access to funding, under the direction of Leila, Ray, and Irene, the journal planning took on a more structured form and approach.

The concept of the periodical, as a primarily digital publication with a small print run, including its mission, content, and editorial board all took form from spring 2019 through spring 2020. During that period, the final title—*Chamisa: A Journal of Literary, Performance, and Visual Arts of the Greater Southwest*—was proposed and approved, and the UNM Digital Repository became involved as the primary housing unit for the publication. It was also during this phase of development that the decision to expand the journal's focus from New Mexico to the larger Southwest was made, which would mean including a wider variety of subjects, submissions, and perspectives, given the distinct and varied histories and cultures found throughout the region. The rationale for expanding the periodical's purview was tied to ensuring the periodical's range, relevance, public interest, and longevity. A central objective of this journal, informed, in part, by a decolonial investment in dissolving barriers and breaking down hierarchies, has been to recognize, include, and place different voices in conversation with one another, whether individual or communal, academic or popular, rural or urban, student or established scholar, institutionally affiliated or independent.

As the journal planning proceeded, the editors decided that each issue would be assigned a theme, as a way to focus submissions around specific topics pertaining to the Southwest. Given the status of the journal as a SHRI publication coming out of the University of New Mexico, and reflecting the original idea for the publication, Leila, Ray, and Irene, as Chief Co-Editors, decided to devote the inaugural issue to an exploration of identity, culture, and art in New Mexico. In spring 2020, a flyer with a call for submissions was widely circulated via various professional and social networks inviting potential contributors to submit by the deadline, which was initially set in April 2020. However, with the profound disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the deadline was extended to September 2020; thus, the bulk of the work on the current issue took place from September 2020 through March 2021.

The inaugural issue of *Chamisa* that you are now reading is the result of a monumental cooperative effort. Beginning with Leila, Ray, and Irene; followed by the editorial board, Dr. Patricia Perea, Levi Romero, Dr. Patricia Rosas-Lopátegui, and Mónica Sánchez; SHRI Unit Administrator, Jacqueline Alderete; graduate students, Melisa García and Moisés Santos (editorial assistance), Alexandro Jesús Jara (copyediting), and Luis Sánchez Tapia (digital design); and finally, and most importantly, the contributors who submitted work, the journal would not have been possible without local interest, community support, and collaboration across units at the university. The editors would also like to extend a special thanks to the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies for supporting the launch of the first issue.

The *Chamisa* editorial board is preparing to publish a new call for submissions for the second issue of the journal. With adequate support and sufficient interest, we hope to cultivate an audience and produce more issues that gather creative works capturing the deep histories, cultural complexities, and expressive beauty of the Southwest in all of its facets. Our aim is to provide a forum for individuals of all backgrounds and relationships to the Southwest to share work, experiences, and ideas. We hope that the vision and effort that gave form to this publication come through and resonate with people everywhere.

Dedication

We wish to dedicate the inaugural issue of *Chamisa: A Journal of Literary, Performance, and Visual Arts of the Greater Southwest* to the memory of Noel Márquez (1953–2020), son of New Mexico, Chicano activist, environmentalist, and prolific artist, who boldly and beautifully evoked in his work community struggles, popular aspirations, and local creativity throughout his life.



Gerard Escamilla, “Noel Márquez Painting a Mural at the Carlsbad Museum and Arts Center,” 2012

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