

story by **TANIA CASSELLE**
photos by **LENNY FOSTER**

The Taos Hum

A monthly column, where writer Tania Casselle introduces us to the people who make Taos hum. This month we're celebrating two of the (very many) creative women at Taos Pueblo.



Jacqueline Gala

Although the customers who buy silversmith Jacqueline Gala's jewelry wouldn't know it (or perhaps they sense it), she gives a little blessing to each piece of her work before sending it out into the world from Taos Pueblo.

Gala's designs are thoroughly modern, while still drawing on her Taos Pueblo and Hopi heritage. She's received recognition at national shows, including the prominent Heard Museum Guild Indian Fair & Market, in Phoenix, but she's still modest when she spots someone wearing her jewelry. "I get real shy, but my boyfriend gets up and says, 'My girlfriend designed that,'" she explains. "It breaks the ice."

Gala sometimes hangs out with artist friends at the Gorge Bar and Grill or the Taos Inn, but she and her partner, David, mostly enjoy heading into the mountains. They'll go camping or, if they don't feel like eating at home, "We just pick up our food and drive back in the mountains."

She recalls recently spending an evening simply sitting and chatting on the adobe wall beneath the George Chacón mural on Kit Carson—right opposite the Copper Moon Gallery, which sells her work. "It was a beautiful evening, and just sitting in that little spot we couldn't believe how many people saw us, waved to us, and said hi. I've had people from New York come into my little shop [at the Pueblo] and say they can't believe how friendly people are."

Gala works in the morning or late at night (when "nobody bothers you") and appreciates that her craft allows her to enjoy a lot of spare time. "I can sit outside my home and look up toward the mountain and say thank you."

Find Jacqueline Gala's work in Taos at the Taos Pueblo, Copper Moon Gallery, El Monte Sagrado and the Taos Visitor Center, and in Santa Fe at the New Mexico Museum of History. <http://jacquelinegala.com>

Jeralyn Lujan-Lucero

Taos Pueblo artist Jeralyn Lujan-Lucero is always exploring new territory in her art. Some of her paintings are embellished with real turquoise and stones, and she's a noted sculptor of beautiful human figurines in micaceous clay, in addition to using micaceous clay more traditionally in pottery.

Today she's keen to tell me about her latest project. "I've created a totally new form of jewelry," she says and then mischievously keeps me guessing. "It's not bracelets, it's not earrings, it's not bolos, it's not pins ... It's real sterling silver—and-turquoise fingernails!" How do they stay on? "That's the secret." It's secret enough that she's patenting it.

Lujan-Lucero was born in Los Angeles and lived in California until she was 15 years old. "We moved back to Taos Pueblo," she explains, "because we're all full-blood, and this was always home." She's very involved with the Red Willow Farmers' Market and the Taos Birthing Center (TBC). "I'm on the board of the TBC, because my own mother was a birthing nurse and OB. It's who she was, and I want to be part of that. This is my way of contributing and helping the community."

Her art also reflects the feminine. "I'm a corn dancer," she says. "I participate in all our Indian ways of life here, but I also go to church on Sunday and receive sacrament and teach catechism. A lot of my art is the mother and child, nativities, Mother Earth, corn dancers ... I think I do more of the feminine energy of a village."

Lujan-Lucero has three children herself. "Our kids are raised traditionally, and my husband has cows and horses and grows his own alfalfa, so we have a full life." The family enjoys eating out at Sushi a la Hattori and Guadalajara Grill. "We have so many feast days here at the pueblo. It's great living in Taos because of the seasonal activities that come around year after year."

See Jeralyn Lujan-Lucero's art at her Sagebrush Deer Studio/Gallery at Taos Pueblo.