

Making His Mark

Mateo Romero

In a significant step in his blossoming career, painter **Mateo Romero** (Cochiti Pueblo) was selected as the poster artist for the August 2008 Santa Fe Indian Market. His image will also grace T-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs and other memorabilia for the 86th annual event, hosted by the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts.

In a ceremony unveiling the poster art in late February in Santa Fe, **Bruce Bernstein**, SWAIA's executive director, noted, "We want to continue to evolve Indian Market and take it into new directions. Our forward-thinking poster artist this year perfectly reflects this in his bold and muscular style that mixes elements of traditional culture with progressive techniques." Romero stated he was "tremendously honored" by the selection. "The lineage of Pueblo artists in this region is amazing, and I feel I am standing on their shoulders," he said.

The selected work, "Deer Dancer," comes from a series of mixed-media compositions Romero has been exploring for a few years.

The works begin with a black-and-white photo transfer, which is then painted over with acrylics and finished with a thinned tar glaze. "The paintings are many things," he noted, "historic records, portraiture, narrative, abstract, contemporary and classical." The original work (which features two dancers side by side) will be auctioned off at the SWAIA Gala Dinner on August 23 in Santa Fe.

A large selection of Romero's paintings will also be available for viewing and purchase long before Indian Market, in a special two-man exhibition May 2–23 at **Blue Rain Gallery** in Santa Fe (opening with an artists' reception on May 2 at 5 p.m.). The show will feature his newest works in oils, tackling social and political issues. "It turns back to reinvestigate some of my earlier themes, narratives and methods," he explains.

Showing with him will be **Hyrum Joe** (Navajo), whose recent works in oils, charcoal and watercolor depict Native life from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s.



Chocolate Dreams

Lickity Split Chocolate Studio, a thriving gourmet chocolate retailer currently owned by 18 Diné, Ute and Anglo youths between the ages of 8 and 15, was born when some of them approached AmeriCorps volunteer **Elaine Borgen** in 2004 for movie money. Borgen, a former executive, suggested they figure out how to earn it.

The group first sold homemade candy door-to-door, and then—with some **Ute Mountain Ute** tribal funding—bought supplies and machines to make tempered molded chocolates and scale up the business. Since then, all their efforts have been bootstrap. Borgen says no loans or government funds have been sought or granted, providing an entrepreneurial model for Native youth.

In November 2007, Lickity Split opened a storefront in Blanding, Utah and now also operates a bakery. Both businesses are doing well, despite their remote location in the state's poor-

est county. The business purchased property for a new bicycle-repair shop in February, and two new designs for their sugar-free candy recently have been introduced. Adults perform some jobs while the youth are in school, but the children run the entire business, from marketing to accounting.

"They're like a beacon. Whenever somebody says 'Lickity Split,' I get a warm feeling," says Donna Singer, CEO of the Navajo Health Service in Blanding. "It's nice to have a specialty shop here, but the more important part is to see how much our young people can do with a little support."

In 2007, Lickity Split was honored at Utah's Rural Economic Development Summit, and took the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development's 2007 American Indian Youth Entrepreneurs of the Year Award.

The business' signature design is a lollipop patterned like a Navajo wedding basket. Truffles, wedding

hearts, chocolate pretzels and toffee bars are available. White chocolates with symbols of the four sacred mountains, lollipops designed with a spirit bear, and dark chocolates bearing the symbol of the Navajo Ya'e people (winter only) are accompanied by their traditional stories.

Details: lickitysplitchocolate.com or 435/678-2626.

—Pam Hughes

Jordan Dayish, vice-president; **Andrew Dayish**, CEO; **Shelby Marks**, art director; **Tya Manygoats**, production manager; **Creedence Sampson**, president; **Nicole Keith**, administrative assistant.



COURTESY ELAINE BORGEN