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THE ARTISTS OF ARRAZOLA



Nestled in the foothills, on a high plateau overlooking the Oaxacan Valley, lies the peaceful village of Arrazola. From this village, the ancient pyramids of Monte Alban can be seen. In this tranquil town of approximately 250 people, a relatively new and now-famous style of art has developed. The artists of Arrazola carve animal figures out of wood and paint these figures in a multitude of bright colors.

Manuel Jimenez, a lifetime resident of Arrazola, created this unusual style of art approximately 35 years ago. For many years, Jimenez was the only artist who made these figures, and his work became famous throughout Mexico, and indeed the world. Today, there are perhaps 15 artists in Arrazola, all of whom make these distinctive figures.

Three young and talented artists: Arsenio Morales and Andres and Miguel Ramirez, who work together at Alvaro Obregon # 14, in Arrazola, explain that the wood used for carving the figures comes from the Copal tree. Copal wood is soft and pliable when it is green, and easy for the artists to manipulate. The Copal tree grows in the mountains, 10 kilometers from the village. The artists walk into the mountains, to collect the wood and carry it back to the village. The trips take at least a full day, and are very tiring. The artists walk because there are no roads leading into the mountains. The trips must be made frequently because the wood can only be carved when it is green.

ETHNIC GROUPS. PART ONE: THE ZAPOTEC

Indigenous ethnic groups are an important part of the heritage of Mexico. In Oaxaca, many people still share the traditions, customs, and languages of their indigenous ancestors. This diversity enriches the lives of all those who have the opportunity to experience Oaxaca.

There are 56 indigenous ethnic groups within Mexico. The state of Oaxaca contains far more than her share of this cultural diversity, with 16 of these groups in residence. Each of these groups has evolved over the years unique traditions of architecture, crafts, folklore, and political and social systems. In Oaxaca, the diversity of the indigenous people has played an essential role in the development and the advancement of the state.

Before the arrival of the Spaniards, in what is now the state of Oaxaca, the Zapotec culture had evolved into one of the dominant cultures of Mesoamerica. The Zapotec people are not a homogenous group. They are distributed throughout the Valley of Oaxaca in what are now 67 counties within the districts of Etlá, Ejutla, Zaachila, Zimatlan, Ilacoilula and Ocotlan.

Traditionally, the Zapotec women wear "enredo," long, brilliantly-colored skirts, which are wrapped around the waist, and hand-embroidered blouses of many designs and colors. The men wear simple white cotton shirts and pants. When the weather is cold, they supplement their clothing with woolen hoods, called "borongos".

Agriculture remains the basis of the economy, but the production of textiles, ceramics, and other crafts are an important part of both cultural and economic life.

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CONSULATES IN OAXACA

The main consulate office in Oaxaca is the Office of the Oaxaca Consular Corps, located on the second floor of Hidalgo 817, Suite 5, one block from the Zocalo. The hours are 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Mon. through Fri., and the phone number is 6-56-00. You will often find Wolfgang Wilczek Westphal in the office; he is the German Consul and President of the Oaxaca Consular Corps. He is fluent in several languages and may be able to help you.

Some other members of the Consular Corps in Oaxaca include representatives for:

The United States, Roberta French, Consular Agent,
Ph. 6-06-54, 6-42-39.

Canada and Great Britain, Valerie Somers, Representative,
Ph. 6-56-00

Spain, Manuel Alonzo Serrano, Consul,
Ph. 5-00-31, 5-35-25

France, Manuel Gonzales Valle,
Consul, Ph. 6-35-22, 6-35-20

Italy, Alfredo Greganti Felici,
Consul and Vice President of the Oaxaca
Consular Corps Ph. 6-50-58, 5-31-15,
5-46-55

OAXACA'S BILINGUAL LENDING LIBRARY

The Oaxaca lending library (Biblioteca Circulante de Oaxaca, S.A.) is the only bilingual circulating library in Oaxaca. It maintains a collection of almost 20,000 books and 50 periodicals, the majority of them in English. The non-profit library allows members to borrow materials, and non-members to read materials on the premises.

The library volunteers will hold the Annual Book Sale on Saturday, February 18th, from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Alameda Park (in front of the Cathedral). All proceeds from this sale will go towards the purchase of Spanish books. The library is open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 4-7 p.m. Monday through Friday. (Macedonio Alcala between M. Bravo and Murguía).



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Ph. 6-66-46

GASTROENTEROLOGIST

Dr. Javier C. Gonzales V.
(24 hour phone & house calls)
Phone: 6-50-67 / 6-25-46

ALLERGIST

Dr. Rodolfo Garcia Caballero
Morelos 905 - Clinica Sandra
Phone: 6-05-18 / 6-27-52

CARDIOLOGIST

Dr. Ramon Mondragon
5 de Mayo 217F
Phone: 6-40-58 / 5-72-59

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Red Cross	6-20-56
Police	6-27-26
Locatel	6-22-22
(missing persons, cars, etc.)	
Visitors' Aid	6-38-10
(complaints, help, theft)	
Traffic Police	6-27-44
24 hour Pharmacy	6-40-41
(Farmacia Soriano del Sur, Colon 101 at Bustamante)	

HOSPITALS:

CLINICA MONSERRAT
Emiliano Zapata 315
Phone: 5-31-16

SANATORIO DEL CARMEN
DOCTORES TENORIO
Abasolo 215
Phone: 6-26-12 / 6-00-27

DENTISTS:

Dr. Virgilio Rodriguez Cortez
Alcala 102-15
Phone: 6-93-65

Dr. Concepcion Velasquez R.
M. Bravo 108-4
Phone: 6-20-37

ARRAZOLA

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The artists carve figures of many kinds of animals. They make, birds, snakes, lions, jaguars, iguanas, pigs, dogs, horses, goats, rabbits and many fantastic imagined creatures as well.

It can take anywhere from a few hours to a few weeks to complete a piece, depending on the complexity of the design and painting. The finest pieces are highly original and imaginative. Pieces range from a few thousand pesos for a small piece to several thousand pesos for large, complex and original works.

Arrazola buses and colectivo taxis go directly to and from the south side of the Mercado de Abastos, Monday through Saturday. 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

NO NEED SAY 'NO SE' LEARN SPANISH TODAY

To get maximum enjoyment out of your stay in Mexico, you should learn Spanish. Forget any bad memories of high school language classes. It is easier and much more fun to learn a language in an environment where you have countless opportunities to practice it everyday, and where your efforts will be instantly rewarded.

Yolanda Garcia G., Director and Founder of the Institute, lived in the U.S. and has been on the faculty of Languages at the Benito Juarez University in Oaxaca for many years. Under her able direction, the Institute has expanded and includes the publication of the Oaxaca Times, to assist Oaxaca's visitors.

Also, the Institute will offer special Spanish classes during the summer for children.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH OAXACA

THE OAXACA TIMES offers you the opportunity to keep in touch with the activities in Oaxaca with a subscription. One year (twelve issues) sent to the U.S. or Canada by surface mail costs \$12 U.S. annually (\$18 by air mail). Arrange for subscription in person or by mail in our office at the Instituto de Comunicacion y Cultura, 311 Guerrero, Oaxaca., Oax. c.p. 68000.

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