

10-1-2012

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Recommended Citation

Lewthwaite, Stephanie. "Mediating Art Worlds: The Photography of John S. Candelario." *New Mexico Historical Review* 87, 1 (2012). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol87/iss1/3>

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Mediating Art Worlds

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF JOHN S. CANDELARIO

Stephanie Lewthwaite

During the early twentieth century, Anglo American artists, writers, and patrons “discovered” New Mexico’s Native American and Hispano cultures and embraced them as antidotes to the ills of modernity and the Machine Age. The emergence of New Mexico as a tourist destination and an alternative cultural frontier spawned a series of movements that positioned Hispanos outside modernity. During the 1920s through the New Deal, modernist primitivism and the preservation and revival of ethnic arts and crafts placed Hispano aesthetic production within the realm of “tradition.” The elevation of Spanish colonial-style art exacerbated this trend by viewing Hispano artistic expression as a product of geographic and cultural isolation. Hispanos were labeled craftspeople or folk, primitive or outsider artists, and when they did engage Western media or modernist techniques, critics often considered their work derivative.¹ Artists like Marsden Hartley and Georgia O’Keeffe integrated Hispano motifs into their modernist aesthetic, but the owners and creators of these motifs were rarely viewed as innovative cultural agents.

Stephanie Lewthwaite is a lecturer in American History in the Department of American and Canadian Studies at the University of Nottingham, UK. She is the author of *Race, Place and Reform in Mexican Los Angeles: A Transnational Perspective, 1890–1940* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009) and is currently working on a project exploring Hispano art and modernism in New Mexico, from 1930 to 1950. Lewthwaite wishes to thank the Clements Center for Southwest Studies at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, for funding a one-semester fellowship which facilitated the research and writing of this article. A special thanks to everyone at the Center, both staff and fellows, for invaluable feedback and advice.

The history of modernism in New Mexico, undoubtedly an intercultural affair, involved not simply the meeting of different groups; it also entailed complex cultural and artistic exchanges and agency on the part of subordinate groups. As Anglo American modernists found inspiration in the arts of New Mexico's ethnic communities, Hispanos became cultural brokers and agents of aesthetic experimentation in their own right. Hispano art constituted an innovative response to new aesthetic forms, markets, and intercultural relations that accompanied patronage, preservation, and modernism. Modernism and primitivism, both discourses that utilized the cultural "other" for Anglo needs, facilitated a series of intercultural encounters. For Hispanos who participated in cultural production, these encounters provided unexpected opportunities for ethnic agency. In her work on Native American artists, art historian Elizabeth Hutchinson notes that modernism became an aid for "marginalized groups" by allowing them "to use culture to define their place in society."² As Hispano artists engaged mainstream modernist culture, they became intermediaries between different worlds. By experimenting with different aesthetic paradigms, Hispanos articulated their varied relationships to mainstream society and modernity. They also redefined the boundaries of cultural representation, which began to crystallize after the 1880s, when, with the advent of railroad travel to the Southwest, Anglo artists, patrons, and tourists encroached on the land and its people with greater intensity.

One of these cultural brokers was Santa Fe-born John S. Candelario. During the late 1930s and the 1940s, Candelario experimented with black and white art photography, a medium not normally associated with the Hispano-arts revival. Candelario, much like his elite Hispana counterparts Adelina 'Nina' Otero-Warren and Cleofas Jaramillo, who deployed the myth of a Spanish colonial heritage to reclaim some form of ownership over local culture, Candelario used the visual arts of modernism to similar effect.³ Like Otero-Warren and Jaramillo, who wrote *Old Spain in Our Southwest* (1936) and *Shadows of the Past* (1941) respectively, Candelario appeared to replicate the dominant ways of seeing New Mexico cultivated by non-natives. He used straight photography to forge a "transcendent" regional modernism from the landscape and its people.⁴ On closer inspection, however, Candelario's photography offered multiple ways of seeing New Mexico that stemmed from his ability to move between cultures. His photography became a mode of cultural ownership and preservation in a rapidly changing world in which his own subjectivity was less than stable.

Candelario as Cultural Broker

Candelario's ancestry and upbringing were shaped by a series of intercultural encounters. Candelario was born of mixed Hispano and Anglo parentage in

1916. When John's Anglo father, Arthur Weeks, divorced his Hispana mother, Alice Candelario, she left New Mexico for St. Louis, Missouri. According to historian Van Deren Coke, John's grandfather Jesús Sito Candelario broke up his own daughter's marriage because of his dislike for Anglos, and in search of an heir, he adopted her son. John grew up in an elite Hispano society and mainly spoke Spanish in the home.⁵ Jesús Sito grew up in Albuquerque's Old Town with his half-brother Mariano, whose mother was Native American. The prosperous Candelarios intermarried with a wealthy land-owning family of German ancestry. Jesús Sito's wife, Estefanita, belonged to the Laumbach family, which owned a ranch in Buena Vista near Las Vegas, New Mexico. After the Candelarios moved to Santa Fe, Jesús Sito turned to the local Presbyterian church and changed the family name from Candelaria to Candelario. The family established a general store and meat market in Santa Fe, and Jesús Sito became a pawnbroker. In 1901 he partnered with curio trader Jake Gold. Two years later, Jesús Sito took over the business, renaming it the Original Old Curio Store, one of Santa Fe's famous shops, situated on San Francisco Street.⁶

The curio store, also known as the Indian Trading Post, had established mercantile links with Pueblo, Navajo, and Apache communities, as well as with Hispano weavers. Because of his grandfather's trading networks, John gained access to local Native American communities from an early age. Jesús Sito prepared John to inherit the business by taking him to local Indian pueblos where he could learn about Native American culture and language. According to John's son Chris Candelario, his father spent summers with Jesús Sito's acquaintances at nearby pueblos. John met Pueblo governors, learned the Tiwa language, and forged a strong connection with Taos Pueblo.⁷

Initially, John showed little interest in the curio trade, which had earned the reputation as a "spurious" industry. The curio trade, although disliked by some anthropologists, was patronized by celebrities, presidents, and tourists as a flourishing business in Santa Fe, a town heavily marketed to tourists. The industry expanded alongside tourism and railroads, and by branching out into mail-order distribution, the curio trade had a profound effect on "middle class collecting."⁸ The store sold many Native American and Spanish colonial artifacts, such as *santos* (artistic representations of Catholic saints); black and red Domingo, Tesuque, and Hopi pottery; Navajo blankets; Apache and Jemez baskets; rain gods; and kachina dolls, from which Anglos drew inspiration for their modernist iconography.⁹

In the early twentieth century, Jesús Sito was embedded in a trading network that supplied goods for the Fred Harvey Indian Department. He also provided the photographer Edward S. Curtis with "prop" blankets. Jesús Sito

indulged in his own Curtis-style imagery shooting portraits of Taos Pueblo residents such as Juan de Dios Reyna as part of his postcard advertising strategy.¹⁰ He built particularly strong connections with Chimayó weavers and Tesuque Pueblo, where he acquired rain gods that sold “one hundred to the barrel” wholesale for \$6.50 in 1905. Using reservation traders and other curio dealers to secure his goods, Jesús Sito forged links with local families who came directly to San Francisco Street to sell their wares in exchange for supplies. Like the Fred Harvey Indian Department, he employed local artisans to produce goods on site as part of the tourist spectacle.¹¹

Santa Fe had established its reputation not only as an important Anglo art colony and tourist destination but also as the center for the preservation of Hispano arts and culture. The city was rebuilt in a uniform architectural style based on a fusion of Indian Pueblo and Spanish Colonial architectural forms which elevated the adobe-style construction in particular. The collaboration between the Santa Fe Railway and the Museum of New Mexico, directed by Edgar Lee Hewett, transformed the city’s architectural profile into a “Santa Fe style.” This economic and cultural partnership created new markets which generated new sources of income and opportunities for ethnic agency.¹²

Jesús Sito’s business epitomized the increasingly powerful and lucrative connections between local cultural expression, tourism, and commerce. Tellingly, one of his self-produced postcard advertisements from 1908 captured the Old Curio Store from above as La Conquistadora procession took place on San Francisco Street below (ill. 1). With his promotional pieces, Jesús Sito perhaps anticipated both the commercialization of the Santa Fe Fiesta by the Museum of New Mexico and Hewett, and the debate over cultural ownership that emerged among some Hispanos in response to the Anglo appropriation of local culture.¹³ During the 1920s and 1930s, Hispanic elites collaborated with Anglo patrons from the Santa Fe Fiesta committee and the Spanish Colonial Arts Society. Otero-Warren and Jaramillo, however, engaged in independent literary efforts and participated in preservationist endeavors, such as La Sociedad Folklórica Foundation (1935), challenging the authority of non-natives who sought to dictate the terms and value of their culture.¹⁴

John took over the curio business during this cultural and economic transition. After attending college and studying physics and chemistry in Pasadena, California, he returned to New Mexico following the death of his grandfather and on inheriting his grandfather’s assets in 1938. Although interested in science, technology, and, soon by extension, photography, Candelario also fully participated in the world of the art commodity through the curio trade. Jesús Sito, a self-professed “showman,” had allegedly declared, “The tourists want to hear tales, and I am here to administer the same.”¹⁵ When John



ILL. 1. LA CONQUISTADORA PROCESSION, SAN FRANCISCO STREET, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

(*Photograph by Jesús Sito Candelario, 1908, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 177238*)

became proprietor of the curio store, he took over a shop renowned as “one of the most fascinating informal museums in the U[nited] S[tates]” housing “the rarest of primitive paintings, great church bells [and] gold and silver.”¹⁶ Meshing commerce and tourism with ethnography and archaeology, the curio trade enabled Candelario to see the commercial value of art and the connection of cultural property to the outside world.

By participating in these networks, Candelario exploited the economic and cultural encounters that reshaped Hispano and Native American communities in the early to mid-twentieth century. Because the curio trade relied on accessing local communities and identifying profitable goods, Candelario was in many ways a cultural broker.¹⁷ Positioned at the intersection of several different cultural, social, and economic worlds, Candelario was a go-between, a trader, and an informant who crossed boundaries between Anglo, Hispano, and Native American communities. Similar to that of Hispana intermediary Otero-Warren, Candelario’s cultural brokerage evolved from his family background and everyday working life.¹⁸ This position linked him simultaneously to mainstream U.S. culture, cultural-property debates, and a rapidly changing New Mexican society. Candelario’s intermediary status facilitated his entry into Anglo-modernist artists’ circles, where his role as a cultural broker became readily apparent. While Candelario viewed art and culture

as “portable” goods through his association with the curio trade, he did the same with his camera: Candelario transferred his considerable skills from a trade involving “opportunists and entrepreneurs” to art and photography, a realm where ambition and salesmanship were rewarded no less.¹⁹

Candelario and Modernist Photography

As a photographer, Candelario, perhaps influenced by his grandmother’s watercolor paintings and his grandfather’s own foray into photography, was largely self-taught. Using a camera pawned in the curio store, Candelario began taking pictures in the late 1930s.²⁰ Yet Candelario also learned from non-native photographers such as Yale- and Oxford-educated Henry Clark, whom Candelario met during summer photography classes in Albuquerque. Having traveled to Europe, Clark gave Candelario an entrée into the “international art world” and stimulated his desire to perfect his photographic technique.²¹ With his scientific background, Candelario honed his printing quality and refined his aesthetic sensibility. According to Coke, Candelario used a 3¼ x 4½-inch press camera or an 8 x 10-inch view camera. These cameras were known as large format cameras and they allowed the photographer to produce high resolution images. He used a filter to “darken” the sky and illuminated surrounding objects and buildings in his images.²² Although Candelario experimented with silver, bromoil, color, carbon, gum, and fresson printing throughout his career, his refinement of the platinum-printing process shaped his reputation as a photographer. As Candelario noted in 1944, the platinum process, in comparison to silver printing, resulted in “a very long scale of gradations.” Candelario’s encounters with Edward Weston and Laura Gilpin, both brilliant modernist photographers, inspired him to “perfect” the use of “cool black, rather than soft brown,” tones and to develop his own unique “secret formula” for the process.²³

In 1938 and 1939, Candelario accompanied Weston on photographic expeditions across New Mexico. Photographer and curator Steve Yates suggests that “John opened the doors to subjects, particularly architectural subjects by Edward Weston, that probably wouldn’t have been available to Weston had he not been with John.” In exchange Candelario embraced Weston’s formalist aesthetic: meticulous spatial composition, tonal variation, and sharply executed forms, combined with a mastery of light and the printing process. Candelario later acknowledged, “Through Edward, I came to appreciate the value of pure B&W photo work.”²⁴

In an effort to perfect his photographic technique, Candelario corresponded with Weston through the early 1940s. In 1942 Weston advised

Candelario: “Your photographs show tremendous advance over those I first saw a couple of years ago [but] you are gaining contrast at the expense of brilliance, that in your desire for a dramatic punch by over-correcting skies you are losing the *luminosity* which even the deepest blue sky has. Try a very light filter, or no filter, and compare results.” Weston critiqued several of Candelario’s most striking images—the pile of penitente crosses and his portraits of Hispanas set against dramatic skies. Weston continued, “I like the pile of crosses. The texture of the stump is beautifully rendered but the sky is so black that it overpowers the delicacy of values. I feel the same about black hair around the face—too much uninteresting gloom. And this from one who believes in, uses, black to the limit. But it must be used judiciously [as] part of the design.” Weston, however, praised Candelario’s “Church, Llano Quemado” (ill. 2), an image Candelario included in his *New Mexico Portfolio*, a series of twenty 8 x 10-inch prints begun in 1941 and bound in a cowhide book. Weston observed: “It has a luminous sky and fine feeling of sun on church, and the darks are well disposed of to enhance the dazzling highlights.” Throughout 1943, Candelario continued sending Weston new work. Although Weston hoped the two men might be “reunited” to work together, he urged Candelario to follow his own artistic direction rather than studying photography with others.²⁵



ILL. 2. CHURCH, LLANO QUEMADO, NEW MEXICO

(Photograph by John S. Candelario, 1938–39, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 166624)

In many respects, Candelario took a quintessentially modernist approach to photography based on formalist aesthetics. In true Westonian spirit, Candelario claimed that he had “become more aware of the behavior of light up to the moment of truth” and that “the technical freedom to concentrate upon [his] subject” was “of the utmost importance.” He added, “The least one is conscious at the time of shooting about the equipment and technical details[,] the more one can concentrate on the subject, composition, and esthetics.” Declaring himself a perfectionist, Candelario believed in “doing things right or not at all. Especially when one does not turn out volumes of work.” In Candelario’s mind, the process of photographing a Native American girl wearing a beaded buckskin jacket was a “terrific test for resolution and sharpness;” technique with the camera, he reiterated, was just as important as familiarity with subject matter.²⁶ Indeed, Candelario’s perfection of the platinum-printing process won him critical recognition and, in 1946, a fellowship with the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain.

Candelario’s platinum prints suggest that he worked primarily within the formal traditions of his time and that he belonged to a regional modernism seeking to encapsulate and preserve “a sense of place.” Like other regional modernists, Candelario evoked the plurality of the Southwest by embedding symbols of its religious, cultural, social, and architectural systems into his modernist aesthetic. Experimentation with space, composition, varied tones, and geometric forms allowed Candelario to blend crosses, churches, skies, adobe architecture, and subjects into a rich visual experience—a fusion that expressed the modernist’s desire for transcendence and belief in the organic nature of life.²⁷

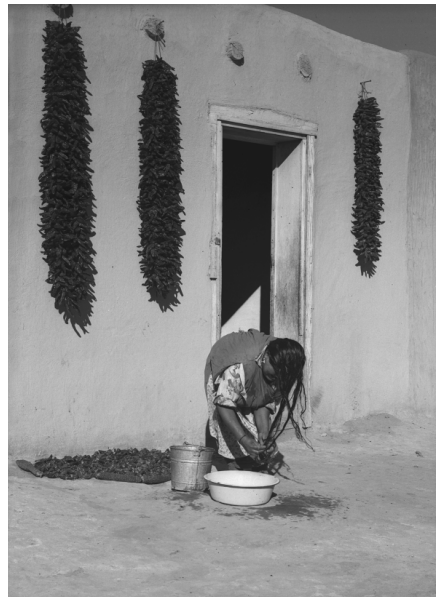
Candelario mastered and replicated the formalist signature style of early modernist photographers. Their visual style was characterized by the interrelationship between photography and modernist painting, and was influenced by cubism, abstraction, and surrealism. Candelario harnessed local cultural forms and natural landscapes as aesthetic components to his overall design in much the same way that O’Keeffe and John Marin did in their paintings. Like Ansel Adams, O’Keeffe, and Weston, Candelario juxtaposed different shapes and textures, natural formations, and man-made objects to enhance precision and heighten reality.²⁸ In his image of “Pueblo Bonito, Chaco Canyon” (ill. 3), Candelario experimented with spatial composition and tonal range, superimposing shadows across tangible forms to create striking geometric patterns and flattening space by overlapping stone doorways, windows, and columns. When he depicted ethnographic subjects, he rendered them not as subjects in their own right but as another harmonious element in the overall composition. In “Pueblo Woman Washing Hair” (ill. 4), the subject’s individuality



ILL. 3. PUEBLO BONITO,
CHACO CANYON
(*Photograph by John S. Candelario, late 1930s, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 179498*)

and day-to-day activity are obscured by her dark flowing hair, which serves spatially and tonally to mimic the strands of chiles hanging on the wall. Similarly, in “Kiva, San Ildefonso Pueblo” (ill. 5), the man emerging from the kiva becomes one of several abstract design elements rather than a participant in a religious ceremony. His form mirrors the figures peering over the parapet and the vigas protruding from the adobe wall, whose shadows fall in a way to suggest repetition of form vertically and horizontally.

Like Gustave Baumann, Raymond Jonson, Paul Strand, Marin, Adams, O’Keeffe, and Lauren Gilpin before him, Candelario documented the much-reproduced Ranchos de Taos Church in a single flattened abstract form. The church became an iconographic image for many artists and critics because it symbolized New Mexico’s tri-cultural landscape.²⁹ Likewise, Candelario replicated O’Keeffe’s tendency to use one expressive symbol, often a cross, as a metaphor for the land and its people. For example “Chapel, San Pedro, New Mexico” (ill. 6), an image of a morada, or chapter house, for La



ILL. 4. PUEBLO WOMAN WASHING HAIR
(*Photograph by John S. Candelario, early 1940s, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 180258*)



ILL. 5. KIVA, SAN ILDEFONSO PUEBLO
*(Photograph by John S. Candelario, early 1940s, courtesy Palace of the
Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 180396)*



ILL. 6. CHAPEL, SAN PEDRO, NEW MEXICO
*(Photograph by John S. Candelario, late 1930s, courtesy Palace of the
Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 165858)*

Hermandad de Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno, is at once both a dramatic portrait of the landscape and a still-life composition.³⁰ In this composition, natural and man-made objects mimic one another in tonal and spatial terms, creating the illusion of connection and repetition. Candelario transposes the morada's cross onto the penitente cross, and the whiteness of the chapel onto the white rocks in the foreground, illuminating all against an intense sky. As the stones allude to the chapel, the vegetation mimics the rhythm of the wooden cross, blurring the demarcation between human artifact and nature and obscuring the cultural significance of the morada and *descanso* (the wooden cross that serves as a marker or memorial for the deceased). By flattening perspective, Candelario blends the varying contours of the land into one seamless canvas, upon which he places symbols in an organic unity. Ever since the Anglo fascination with the processions of La Hermandad, more commonly known as the Penitente Brotherhood after the publication of Charles Lummis' photographs from the 1880s, the cross has symbolized the Hispano relationship to what poet and author Alice Corbin Henderson called "this landscape of strange, austere beauty." This landscape, and in particular this image, also caught the attention of O'Keeffe.³¹

Candelario, O'Keeffe, and Chabot

Candelario's relationship with O'Keeffe, begun in 1942, illuminates his position in relation to mainstream modernist culture. During the early 1940s, Candelario gained access to O'Keeffe's circle of modernist friends, writers, artists, patrons, and significantly, her husband, Alfred Stieglitz, who helped Candelario exhibit his work at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York in 1944. Candelario became acquainted with Gilpin, Adams, Rebecca Salisbury James (Paul Strand's wife), Peter Hurd, Andrew Dasburg, Cady Wells, Victor Higgins, and Oscar Berninghaus, most of whom he photographed after Mabel Dodge Luhan commissioned Candelario and Gilpin to take photographs for her book, *Taos and Its Artists* (1947).³² Candelario's most revealing relationship was his friendship with O'Keeffe, whom he met while photographing Ghost Ranch for a sales brochure commissioned by the American Publishing Company. When O'Keeffe learned that Candelario owned the Original Old Curio Store, she invited him into her home, and he quickly impressed on her his love for photography.

Candelario served as a cultural broker for O'Keeffe and her friend Maria Chabot, a writer, painter, and art patron whom Candelario had encountered earlier in Santa Fe, most likely through their mutual connections to the Native American art market. Chabot photographed Spanish colonial arts for Brice

Sewell, the head of the Taos County vocational school. Through her association with the Federal Works Progress Administration and Native American arts advocate Mary Cabot Wheelwright, Chabot's interests in ethnology and archaeology spanned cultures from Mexico to the U.S. Southwest. During the 1930s, Chabot worked for the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs and for the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. In 1936 she opened weekly "Indian markets" on the Santa Fe Plaza. Just as Candelario sponsored Native American craftsmen in his store, Chabot successfully brought Navajo jewelers to Santa Fe's summer markets, often in competition with Candelario and other traders in the vicinity. Through the curio store, Candelario facilitated O'Keeffe's representation of local artifacts on canvas, and he used O'Keeffe as an intermediary for selling goods from the store. He gifted O'Keeffe numerous items, lending her a precious rug on one occasion and a human skull, which O'Keeffe painted from the front and the rear in *It Was a Man and a Pot* (1942) and *Head with Broken Pot* (1943).³³

Candelario became a Spanish translator for O'Keeffe and a mine of information about local culture. O'Keeffe often invited Candelario to local events in Abiquiú, knowing that she and Chabot were usually "the only Anglos" present. On one occasion, Candelario drove O'Keeffe to Española and then taught her La Varsoviana, a dance that she had witnessed there.³⁴ In return O'Keeffe became a source of advice and encouragement for Candelario and facilitated his entrée into the New York art scene via Stieglitz, and Nancy and Beaumont Newhall, MoMA's curators of photography. Candelario sent O'Keeffe photographs that he had been refining since the late 1930s, and she forwarded them to Stieglitz. According to O'Keeffe, Stieglitz was impressed with Candelario's images, claiming that they evoked an "honesty and a feeling all their own," but Candelario had to increase his productivity, he advised, if he were to secure a one-man show in New York. O'Keeffe steered Candelario away from exhibiting in a MoMA show about New Mexico's Penitentes in 1944, urging him to hold out for the one-man show. Despite O'Keeffe's advice, Candelario visited O'Keeffe and the Newhalls in New York at the end of 1943 and eventually secured an exhibition of seventeen prints, many from his *New Mexico Portfolio*, in MoMA's show *New Workers 1*, alongside Lisette Model, Morris Engel, Adrian Siegel, Walter Rosenblum, and Dorothy Norman in 1944.³⁵

Correspondence between Chabot and O'Keeffe suggests that Candelario demonstrated much affection and admiration for O'Keeffe. During 1944 Candelario fetched O'Keeffe on her return journeys from New York to New Mexico, driving her from the train station at Lamy to Santa Fe. He also took time to capture O'Keeffe and Chabot on camera, sometimes in modernist



ILL. 7. GEORGIA O'KEEFFE RECLINING ON BENCH, GHOST RANCH, NEW MEXICO

(Photograph by John S. Candelario, 1942, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 165666)

style but more often in a way that expressed his intimacy with the two women. For example he pictured them camping at night before a fire in a manner that showed Chabot and O'Keeffe akin to those leisured Anglo women tourists who had the time to take in and appropriate the local landscape and its people (ill. 7). Many of Candelario's shots positioned O'Keeffe as the pivotal figure in the company, suggesting that he aestheticized her in much the same way that Stieglitz did in his own O'Keeffe portraits. Other images provide a rare insight into a much less austere or iconographic O'Keeffe, partially smiling with hair loose around her shoulders and looking directly at the camera. Candelario acknowledged his privilege to know O'Keeffe and later said, "I was one of the fortunate few to be in her limited inner circle of close friends, for Georgia did not make friends easily[.] She was a very private person."³⁶

Candelario's relationship with O'Keeffe and Chabot, however, was imbued with a paternalistic ethos that often characterized relations between Anglo patrons and Hispano artists. While Candelario greatly admired O'Keeffe, both she and Chabot called him Johnny or "Johnito." In 1943, O'Keeffe admonished Candelario: "The very quality that can make you good with your work can also make you very lazy." At the same time O'Keeffe advised Candelario not to exhibit at MoMA and to hold out for a one-man show, she and Chabot questioned Candelario's application to photography and his

capacity to negotiate the New York metropolitan art world. In 1944, Chabot wrote Candelario: "I always thought your photography was swell, my lad. But I've always thought you had personally — internally — a long way to go."³⁷ While visiting New York in 1943, Candelario liaised with the Newhalls about the possibility of exhibiting at MoMA. He told O'Keeffe "on the phone that he was scared of the city." O'Keeffe informed Chabot that "Johnny seemed only to want to go home" and that "his nerves seem[ed] to be in shreds." When Candelario fell ill after his return to Santa Fe, Chabot visited him in the hospital. She wrote O'Keeffe: "New York did something terrible to him. He shouldn't have gone. He can't take it. I'm quite disgusted with him. Today he was to go home. They find nothing wrong with him."³⁸

Shortly after Candelario's hospitalization, his business affairs deteriorated. In 1945, according to Chabot, Candelario's shop was in trouble after his "crooked lawyer died suddenly" and left him "utterly helpless" and the store "half-collapsed." Initially, Chabot offered to help Candelario by spraying the store's blankets against the moths. However, she quickly retracted her offer, suggesting that O'Keeffe purchase the store's blankets "regardless of the price." O'Keeffe later complained that she considered Candelario's black and white Hopi blankets "rather high" in cost.³⁹

O'Keeffe's and Chabot's consumption or appropriation of goods from Candelario's store reflected wider issues of cultural ownership, property, and power in New Mexico. Historian Flannery Burke notes that O'Keeffe was keen to claim New Mexico for herself among the many artists and writers who worked there.⁴⁰ Chabot's dealings in the Indian art market suggested a similar ambition. Perhaps the women's personal and commercial transactions with Candelario reflected that same attitude. Like other members of the Hispanic elite, Candelario understood that O'Keeffe held the power in the artist-patron relationship at a time when his own status and economic fortunes were waning. Jonathan Batkin, director of the Wheelwright Museum of Indian Art in Santa Fe, observes that by 1915 the commercial model used by Candelario's store and other traders was in danger of becoming outmoded. As tourists began arriving more by car than by train, the Plaza, rather than San Francisco Street, became the commercial focal point of Santa Fe. Although the number of curio shops increased from four in 1920 to sixteen just a decade later as tourism expanded, it is difficult to know what adaptations Candelario, lacking his grandfather's passion for the business, made after inheriting the store in 1938. In 1926 the ratio of Hispano to Anglo businesses in Santa Fe, 72 to 220, declined rapidly to 79 to 430 in 1931.⁴¹

The decline of Hispano financial power went hand in hand with Hispanos' declining control over the means of cultural representation in the Southwest.

Contemporary Hispano photographer Miguel Gandert claims that “in the photographic history of New Mexico, the traditional history of the state has been portrayed by white males [and females], and the interpretation and dissemination of images have been controlled by the same.” Candelario’s position replicated that of many individuals among the Hispano elite who witnessed Anglos tapping New Mexico as a source for their own indigenous modernism. Historian John Nieto-Phillips states that while Anglos collaborated with Hispanos in forging their own brand of Hispanophilia (and Indianism, as in Candelario’s case), they reacted strongly against Hispanos who declared independence from Anglo cultural tastemakers and tried to exercise autonomous power over their cultural resources and heritage.⁴² In 1939, folklorist Arthur L. Campa likened Anglo patronage to a “dictatorship” whose form of “materialized knowledge” made “true [New Mexican] artists merely errand boys.” However, Candelario’s intermediary status, class privilege, and encounter with mainstream modernism generated opportunities to control his own heritage and the means of cultural representation.⁴³

Creating an Alternative Aesthetic

In this context, Candelario’s work deviated from the mainstream modernist aesthetic. Art critic Lucy R. Lippard argues that non-European American artists who engage modernist idioms and techniques are often viewed as simply mimicking the mainstream. It is tempting to view Candelario as someone who was a mainstream modernist interested only in formalism and technique, as Barbara Hagood suggests. Coke claims that although Hispano life remained a striking and persistent theme in Candelario’s oeuvre, the photographer was not interested in using photography as a means of exploring his ethnic and cultural identity. Undoubtedly, Candelario avoided “labels.” Steve Yates, curator for the Museum New Mexico, explains that Candelario hoped his reputation would derive from being “a *good* photographer” rather than “a Hispanic photographer.”⁴⁴ However, viewing Candelario primarily in relation to mainstream influences obscures his transcultural position between Hispano, Anglo, and Native American worlds, and between fine art, commercial, and ethnographic photography.

The experience of cultural contact and brokerage meant that Candelario operated not only in one artistic community or cultural zone. Instead, he moved *through* several different worlds as an insider/outsider figure, combining elements of each in a way that facilitated his own cultural adaptation at a time of change. In this way, Candelario embodied the process of transculturation—the meeting and commingling of cultures that defined the encounter between

Anglo, Hispano, and Native American worlds. Candelario's photography reflected this process. As a transcultural figure, Candelario did not simply replicate the idioms of mainstream modernism. Rather, his movement across cultures generated new patterns of agency and artistic growth. This transcultural agency framed Candelario's photographic work with an aesthetic difference that helps historians understand the cultural conflicts and artistic transformations of the period.⁴⁵

Candelario's aesthetic differed from mainstream modernism on several levels. Candelario amassed a diverse body of work and produced images for different audiences and purposes. Historian Rina Swentzell points out that "commercialization" was the dominant trend in art during early twentieth-century New Mexico. Just as Gilpin sold photography through the Fred Harvey Company and other commercial outlets, Candelario produced for both artistic and commercial reasons, duplicating several of his images on the front covers of *New Mexico Magazine* in the 1940s. Candelario also freelanced for *Life*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *Look*. Inspired by the documentary style of New Deal photojournalists, Candelario captured Madrid miners on strike in 1939 for *Look* magazine. Candelario also photographed for the *Albuquerque Tribune*, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, *Santa Fe New Mexico Examiner*, and *Gallup (N.Mex.) Independent*. For example, while working for *Gallup Independent*, Candelario recorded Navajo women's participation in tribal fairs for the first time. Between 1941 and 1949, he photographed the Gallup Ceremonial, an inter-tribal gathering to celebrate indigenous cultures across the Southwest.⁴⁶

Candelario's aesthetic involved multiple ways of seeing New Mexico that reflected his transcultural agency and his own and his subjects' varied relationships to modernity. A key difference between the works of Candelario and those of his modernist peers is the centrality of human activity in many of his images. Candelario's close-ups of Hispanos in everyday work situations, families gathering fuel and water or replastering Ranchos de Taos Church, and Native Americans working in local trading posts, buying war bonds, or traveling to the Gallup Ceremonial, suggest that he departed from Weston and Adams, who were interested less in documenting the human presence than in capturing the intricacies of form and the sweeping panorama of uninhabited landscapes. Diverging even further, Candelario did not embrace O'Keeffe and Strand's "mysticism," in which vast skies and landscapes were "emptied" of people. If Southwestern photography began in the nineteenth century with the theme of "vanishing natives," as English professor Audrey Goodman notes, then it ended with no people at all in the twentieth century when artists' reduced the region to objects, architectural structures, and

relics.⁴⁷ In this way, modernist photography situated local inhabitants outside modernity; the modernist aesthetic could neither comprehend nor articulate the complex relationships between tradition and modernity that marked the twentieth-century Southwest.

Conversely, Candelario's *New Mexico Portfolio* underscores the deep relationship between people and environment, particularly in the Hispanic and Native Southwest. "I dedicate this book to photography, which has contributed to my life a greater understanding of man and nature," he declares on the opening page. Here, Candelario echoes the formula underpinning Gilpin's *The Pueblos: A Camera Chronicle* (1941), which connects the natural landscape to human activity. Certainly, Candelario's images of Native women, Pueblo Corn Dances, and Chaco Canyon from the mid-1940s display a marked resemblance to those of Gilpin, with whom he worked during this period.⁴⁸ Similarly, Candelario's depiction of land and labor reflect John Collier's documentary-style images of Hispanic New Mexico.

The everyday working-class culture of rural Hispanos dominates Candelario's oeuvre. Although his elite ancestry tied him to landed wealth, commerce, and local politics (Jesús Sito served on the Santa Fe City Council from 1899 to 1900), his photography expresses an affinity with working-class Hispano culture. The family's curio business undoubtedly linked Candelario, and his grandfather before him, to the rural weaving communities of Las Trampas, Truchas, Chimayó, and Córdova. The store dealt directly in woven products, and Hispano weavers acted as "middlemen-entrepreneurs" for the curio business. According to Candelario, his grandfather claimed Hispano weavers as "his people."⁴⁹ Historian Pablo Mitchell argues that most children of mixed Hispano and Anglo parentage claimed their Hispanic and cultural identity. The younger Candelario might also have identified with his Hispano roots.⁵⁰

Candelario's access to rural Hispano communities through the store's trading networks with local weavers shaped his documentation of working-class Hispano life. In a series of images from Truchas, wooden-slatted houses and crosses dot the barren landscape, which although seemingly uninhabited, suggest the presence of a hard-working community living off the land. Church interiors and *bultos*—wood sculptures of bleeding Christs shrouded in gauzy muslin-like cloth—dominate Candelario's images of Las Trampas. Taken during the late 1930s, these images were perhaps inspired in part by the Anglo fascination with Spanish-colonial art and santos and by Adams's own foray into Hispanic Catholic imagery.

On some levels, Candelario exploited familiar tropes developed by Anglo painters and photographers since the early 1900s to depict the region and its

people. In the Anglo imagination, Hispanos were enveloped in a pastoral, mystical, or nostalgic setting as workers, shepherders, farmers, santeros, Penitentes, and devout Catholics. They were stoic in their poverty and faith.⁵¹ In his work, Candelario alludes to Hispanos as a people tied to land, labor, and the church. For example, in “Hispanic Woman at Descanso, New Mexico” (ill. 8), Candelario’s elderly figure, clad in a black shawl, bears a striking resemblance to the huddled and contemplative woman in Kenneth Adams’s painting *Evening* (1940).⁵² Similarly, Candelario’s “Sadie” series (ill. 9 and ill. 10) depicts a woman kneeling beside a wooden cross and peering out from beneath her shawl. Sadie exists only in relation to the cross, as shown by the accompanying shot, in which Candelario reverses the image, merging both figure and cross into shadowy mystical forms cast across the landscape, in much the same way that O’Keeffe uses crosses to evoke an entire way of life or what she called “a good picture of this world here.”⁵³



ABOVE: ILL. 8. HISPANIC WOMAN AT
DESCANSO, NEW MEXICO
(*Photograph by John S. Candelario,*
1945, courtesy Palace of the Governors
Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no.
165857)

LEFT: ILL. 9. SADIE, NEW MEXICO
(*Photograph by John S. Candelario,*
1947, courtesy Palace of the Governors
Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no.
179471)

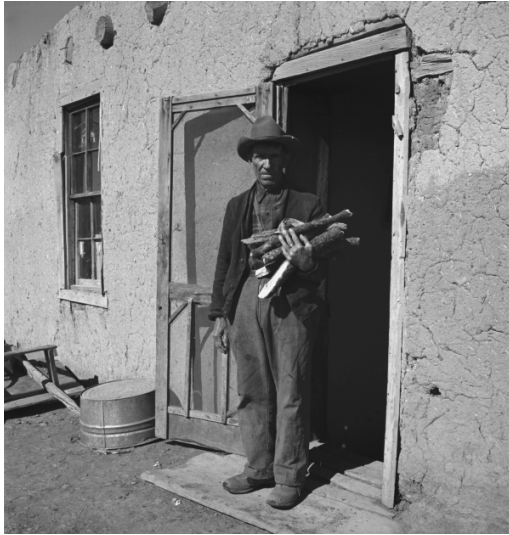
ILL. 10. SADIE, NEW MEXICO
 (Photograph by John S.
 Candelario, 1947, courtesy Palace
 of the Governors Photo Archives
 [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 179476)



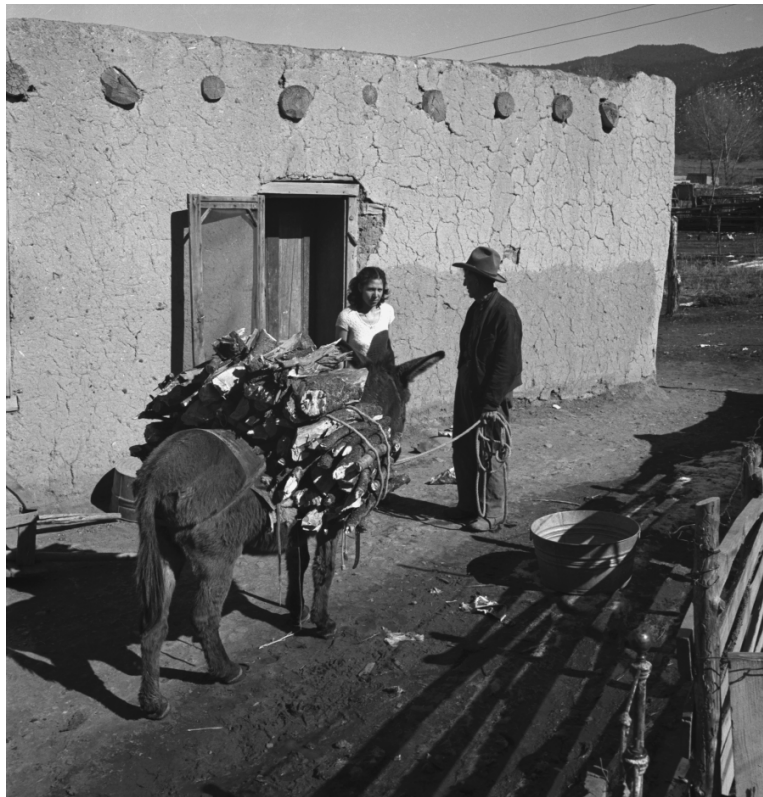
On another level, Candelario's everyday vernacular scenes demonstrate an ease with rural Hispano life that differs from the rather stylized modernist and sentimental iconography of Anglo artists. In "Replastering Church, Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico" (ill. 11), for example, the figures are minimized in relation to their activity and environment. At the same time, the children and women at play and in conversation generate an animated scene in which Hispanos are not simply reduced to "types" or symbols. In Candelario's image of the "Hispanic Wood Vendor, New Mexico" (ill. 12), the elderly man stands self-consciously before the camera. However, the remaining photographs in the series (ill. 13) paint an intimate portrayal of rural life in which the vendor is not an isolated sombre figure, as in many paintings such as those by Ernest Blumenschein and Victor Higgins, from the period.⁵⁴ In Candelario's images, the vendor becomes an integral part of a dynamic, self-sustaining rural community.



ILL. 11. REPLASTERING
 CHURCH, RANCHOS DE
 TAOS, NEW MEXICO
 (Photograph by John S.
 Candelario, 1945, courtesy
 Palace of the Governors
 Photo Archives [NMHM/
 DCA], neg. no. 179876)



ILL. 12. HISPANIC WOOD
VENDOR, NEW MEXICO
(*Photograph by John S.
Candelario, 1945, courtesy
Palace of the Governors Photo
Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg.
no. 165847*)



ILL. 13. HISPANIC WOOD VENDOR, NEW MEXICO
(*Photograph by John S. Candelario, 1945, courtesy Palace of the
Governors Photo Archives[NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 165840*)

In his photography, Candelario engaged vernacular landscapes and daily life in a way that moved his images beyond the modernist's vision of the Southwest as a land of "emptiness" or "aesthetic purity." For example in two seemingly divergent shots, "Store Front, New Mexico" and "Jicarilla Apache, 'na ih es' or Sunrise Ceremony" (ill. 14 and ill. 15), Candelario creates "an inhabited locality" that deviates both from the modernist's drive for precision and the symbolic, and from the romantic and sensationalist imagery that dominated tourist-inspired representations of the ethnic Southwest. Portraiture often involves an unequal encounter between photographer and subject, but Gandert argues that portraiture also grants the subject a degree of agency in shaping his or her own representation. By working with a wide-angle lens and positioning the onlooker's perspective from below, Candelario generates opportunities for the subject's agency and the affirmation of a vernacular rather than outsider perspective. In "Store Front, New Mexico," the woman's pose at the store's doorway gestures control over her domain, and in the second image, two female elders return the photographer's gaze while asserting the strength of intergenerational bonds. Candelario's photography



ABOVE: ILL. 14. STORE FRONT, NEW MEXICO
(*Photograph by John S. Candelario, mid-1940s, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 179915*)



LEFT: ILL. 15. JICARILLA APACHE, "NA IH ES" OR SUNRISE CEREMONY
(*Photograph by John S. Candelario, mid-1940s, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 180454*)

displays what Goodman refers to as a sense of “local and rooted familiarity,” a connection that was denied non-native photographers who moved from place to place.⁵⁵ In 1943 photographer Eliot Porter acknowledged that Candelario retained a “subtle sensitivity” for the land and its people. Porter declared, “Looking through your pictures made me very homesick for New Mexico. They contain an impelling beauty which brought back to me in a way few photographers have done the wonder and enchantment of your country.” Indeed, in his article “Our Southwestern People,” Candelario confirmed this distinction, “Being a native of New Mexico, I felt my approach in presenting my people and country would be different.”⁵⁶

By engaging the vernacular and asserting his insider/outsider status, Candelario evolved an alternative “place ethic,” which, as Lippard suggests, involves not simply familiarity with the region but a type of deference to the people and the landscape that eluded non-natives, whether they be commercial artists intent on replicating the “tourist gaze” or modernists in search of the organic and the symbolic.⁵⁷ As a result, Candelario’s position enabled him to capture a range of experiences. His aesthetic displayed an intimacy that is rarely found in the cool detached gaze of modernist photography, and that warmth becomes particularly evident in his photographs of Native American communities.

From the 1880s onward, the work of men such as Edward Curtis, Adam Clark Vroman, Ben Wittick, James George Wharton, and Charles Fletcher Lummis shaped the evolution of commercial and ethnographic photography. As tourists arrived in greater numbers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, Native Americans curtailed the photographer’s access to their ceremonies. By the time modernist photographers arrived in New Mexico, Native American subjects were being harnessed as one more element in the artist’s overall composition, although not always from artistic choice. As Yates notes regarding Paul Strand’s Taos Pueblo platinum prints, the “transient” photographer lacked access to local communities in the same way as Candelario. Strand wished to pursue the Native American subject but was only able to capture residents from the rear. Strand’s “Apache Fiesta” (1930), a collage of huddled, clothed bodies photographed from behind, signals the absence of a social contract between photographer and subject and demonstrates the ways in which Native resistance shaped his aesthetic. Similarly, in Ansel Adams’s Taos Pueblo prints, olla-carrying women obscured by shawls and shadows blend into the surrounding adobe architecture as additional geometric forms.⁵⁸

Although many of Candelario’s images, such as “Pueblo Woman Washing Hair” (ill. 4), duplicate this aesthetic, Candelario elsewhere asserts

ILL. 16. MISSION CHURCH GATE, SAN FELIPE PUEBLO, NEW MEXICO
 (Photograph by John S. Candelario, mid-1940s, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 165866)



his privilege as an insider/outsider granting the viewer special access to his subjects. As mainstays of the modernist's repertoire, doorways and entrances assume special significance in Candelario's oeuvre. In 1944 his image of a barred gate before San Felipe Pueblo Church (ill. 16) with "NO PICTURES TAKEN" written atop, appeared on the cover of the *New*

Mexican Magazine. The governor and council of San Felipe granted Candelario special permission to take one of the "few authorized" photographs. In 1943 Santo Domingo Pueblo likewise extended Candelario the first-ever photographic permit, commissioning him to document the life of a pueblo known since the nineteenth century for barring tourists and anthropologists, and for ejecting journalist Lummis, who had tried to capture the Corn Dance on camera in 1891.⁵⁹

Candelario produced a series of striking photographs for *Life* magazine. Included in the article is an intriguing interior shot of a Santo Domingo Pueblo household with a woman who, like Strand's subjects, turns away from the camera but whose face is captured in the mirror (ill. 17). By playing with framing techniques and the notion of insider/outsider, Candelario treads the line between casting the woman as an art object and as a subject with a personal history. In part she becomes one of a series of framed images that surround her on the wall, the dressing table, and the mirror. Coke explains that Candelario's use of lighting intensifies the "clarity" of the objects set against the whiteness of adobe walls. By flattening the perspective, Candelario aligns the objects neatly, as if they were exhibited in a museum-like display. However, the photographer grants the subject individuality by placing her center stage and partly contextualizes her life through the items framing her personal space: bultos, commercial images of Jesus, Pueblo rugs, moccasins, and tools. These items invoke the lived, multicultural history of New Mexico rather than a modernist narrative of purity and authenticity.⁶⁰



ILL. 17. SANTIAGO MOQUINO BEDROOM, SANTO DOMINGO PUEBLO
 (Photograph by John S. Candelario, 1941 [printed 1993], gelatin silver print,
 7 x 9 3/8 in. [17.8 x 23.8 cm], Collection of the New Mexico Museum of Art.
 Museum purchase, 1993 [1993. 21.8].

Despite this indirect and covert mode of observation, the mirror works in several ways. More than simply an aesthetic device or an indicator of compositional skill, the mirror becomes a marker of both the woman's and the photographer's subjectivity. Candelario employed the mirror device on several occasions to engage his subject, in one instance capturing a Native American man painting his face before a ceremony. But most significantly, Candelario's use of the mirror suggests his privileged insider/outsider status, his ability to enter once-forbidden private and personal spaces and to generate familiarity with histories and narratives that were not his own.⁶¹ Although the mirror underscored the partial nature of the contract between subject and photographer, Candelario's proximity to his subjects enabled him to depict not simply the sensationalism attached to Pueblo ritual and ceremony generally captured by other photographers, but also the spectacle of the familiar and the everyday in his subjects' lives.

Indeed, Candelario's art implied his attachment to Native American culture, a relationship forged since childhood, and through his ambiguous position as trader-cum-preservationist. Candelario's son recalled, "My father took me to just about every pueblo and Native American reservation in New

Mexico and Arizona. He not only knew the governors on a first-name basis but many of the residents as well. We used to spend nights in Taos Pueblo with the Marcuses, whom my father said we are distantly related to.” John Candelario “felt that he was part of their culture.” In 1943 he remarked, “Only the Indians belong to this country. The photographer can catch their expressions, but the artist with the camera can disclose their character.”⁶²

Candelario articulated his privileged insider/outsider status in the region and, in turn, affirmed his cultural authority to document the land through the camera. He differentiated his aesthetic from that of Anglo modernists through alternative subject matter, unique aesthetic devices, and rather extensive documentation of the diverse Native American communities with which he worked and traded. Candelario’s implied affinity with Native Americans differed from the declarations of other elite Hispanos, who preferred to claim purity of Spanish blood and assert a sharp boundary between Pueblo and Hispano worlds. This alliance nevertheless helped establish Candelario’s authority to reveal and document the land, people, and culture of the Southwest. For too long the photographic representation of Native communities in the Southwest had “belonged” to Anglos such as Curtis, Collier, and Gilpin. By documenting those believed to have the strongest “claims” to the land—Native Americans—and assuming some distant connection with them, Candelario strengthened his own claims to a place that had been appropriated by outsiders. Moreover, by acknowledging the dominant visual economy in New Mexico, which prioritized the representation of Native Americans over the portrayal of Hispanos, Candelario simultaneously connected himself to the Anglo community. Candelario’s grandfather deployed a similar strategy to advertise his business on the store’s postcards. In 1910 Jesús Sito posed for the camera while seated in a chair and held a pair of Indian moccasins to signal his “authority on Indian arts”; in another he surrounded himself with members of the Taos Pueblo Indian Council.⁶³

Although Candelario asserted his cultural authority to document the land, he betrayed, with his images, the imprint of earlier ethnographic modes and the contradictions of his class privilege and transcultural status. Candelario’s role in the curio trade meant that he collaborated with Native artisans at the same time that he participated in the commodification of local culture and ethnicity. Curio traders and Native artisans were “uneasy allies” in a business that regularly brought them into conflict with one another (Jesús Sito earned the epithet “broken tooth” from Tesuque Pueblo residents for fixing low prices). Likewise, Candelario’s work reflects a similar power imbalance and the role that photography played in constructing the “other.” In Candelario’s collection of negatives, the images reveal both an intimacy with the subjects

and a less than reciprocal relationship involved in documenting Native American life. One negative shows Candelario taking a close-up of a Native American man in headdress, which required the camera to almost touch the subject's face; and in "Jicarilla Apache, 'na ih es' or Sunrise Ceremony" (ill. 15), the expressions of the two elder women staring back at the camera register the cost of appropriation to them.

Candelario's intimacy with Native American subjects certainly bordered on intrusion. If portraiture delivered agency to Candelario's subjects, their returning gaze exposed Candelario's ambiguous status as a consumer-producer in an industry of images. Just as tourism embedded the curio trade in the wider "discovery" of New Mexico's Native American communities, Candelario's decision to capture Native American communities on camera became a logical extension of his inheritance and an enterprise integral to his livelihood.⁶⁴

Candelario's aesthetic emerged at a time of profound change and widespread displacement. These images still evoke nostalgia for a "vanishing" New Mexico and indicate Candelario's ambivalent, somewhat charged relationships to modernity as a native New Mexican, a member of a declining Hispano elite, and a curio trader implicated in the very processes responsible for rapidly changing the communities he captured on camera. In the curio trade, Jesús Sito operated on the principle that the notion of the "vanishing Indian" attached value, wonderment, and credibility to the store's goods. Even if Candelario, like his grandfather, did not exploit "the vanishing-race theme" to the extent that he dismissed evidence of cultural adaptation, the same principle animated his photography. Candelario once said, "My files are valuable because so much of the old ways are fading. I feel it is important to preserve this culture and heritage."⁶⁵

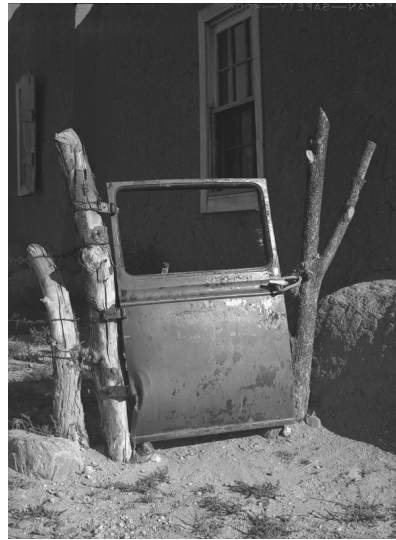
If photography constituted a mode of preservation and nostalgia, Candelario did not necessarily resolve the contradictions that shaped his world, not least because adaptation accompanied survival. The very act of photography made Candelario complicit in the process of changing culture. In their work, Otero-Warren and Jaramillo describe the confusion and discord that accompanied a society in transition. Likewise, Candelario incorporates a mix of nostalgia and modernity in his photographs. For all these individuals, erasing the line between past and present became their struggle. For example Candelario's photographic series of a wood vendor and his burro replicates a "popular" antimodern literary motif of the 1920s and 1930s.⁶⁶ His photograph of "Church, Llano Quemado, New Mexico" (ill. 2) depicts a pastoral scene, in which rural life has yet to become mechanized. Yet this image stands awkwardly in relation to the woman outside the local storefront and the

young Hispano boy engrossed in reading a military warplanes magazine emblazoned with “And still they come!” (ill. 14 and ill. 18). Both photographs signify a world dominated by the emblems of consumerism and Americanization. The latter signals the coming of war and the atomic age, which would forever alter New Mexico’s pastoral landscape and economy. Similarly, Candelario’s photo of a Navajo woman and child roasting corn on the roadside as a line of automobiles loom into view disrupts the purity-authenticity narrative with the intrusions of tourism.⁶⁷ The purity-authenticity narrative supported the romanticized image of New Mexico by suggesting that Native cultures remained untouched by time and modernity.

These juxtapositions recur in the absence of human activity. In scenes where Candelario builds a “lived in” landscape modernist forms become cultural systems in transition.⁶⁸ Many modernists, including Weston, depicted the romanticized and much tourist-trodden village of Chimayó by capturing the entrance to the famous church. Like Ranchos de Taos Church, Chimayó became one of the most-reproduced subjects in modernists’ regional portfolios, achieving an iconic status in the photographic field. Although Candelario photographed the church in true Westonian style, he offered an alternative entrance into this sacred site. In “Car Door Gate, Chimayó” (ill. 19) Candelario experiments with “fetishized emblems of tradition” and natural ruins—adobe architecture and dead tree stumps. By incorporating these emblems into a series of “disruptions, juxtapositions, and combinations”—an incongruous mix of the car



ILL. 18. UNIDENTIFIED CHILD, NEW MEXICO
(*Photograph by John S. Candelario, 1940s, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 179278*)



ILL. 19. CAR DOOR GATE, CHÍMAYO
(*Photograph by John S. Candelario, 1940, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 177238*)

door strapped to two tree posts against an enduring adobe wall—Candelario documents an alternative hybrid modernity that subtly critiques and jests at the intrusions of outsiders who envisioned New Mexico as an antidote to the machine age.⁶⁹

Lippard suggests that photographs reflect people's fraught relationship to time and space while they also serve to palliate such conflicts. If the force of Anglo cultural representation, as English professor Genaro Padilla argues, prevented Hispanos from grappling with their position in an increasingly Anglo-dominated New Mexico, then Candelario's photography contested this process. Through photography Candelario "mark[ed] his own presence" as the world changed around him, and his images provided a means of declaring power over the dominant visual economy in which both Hispanos and Native Americans were imagined by non-natives. Writing to Candelario in 1941, photographer and friend Nicholas Haz underscored the power of cultural production in this respect: "Now that you will begin to exhibit[,] Santa Fe can be expected to get on the photographic map. Perhaps soon your city's name will be found in connection with your name."⁷⁰

Candelario's work parallels the preservationist and literary endeavors of elite Hispanos Otero-Warren and Jaramillo, whose writings expressed forms of "oppositional nostalgia" in reaction to a changing world. Like Jaramillo and Otero-Warren, Candelario mediated between Hispano culture and Anglo modernity, and while the tenor of his work differed, they all exhibited a form of "ethnographic responsibility" and an eagerness to transmit their own histories. In Jaramillo's case, as her own status diminished, concern over Anglos appropriating and distorting her cultural heritage compelled her to write. Perhaps this reality, combined with knowledge gained from the curio trade regarding the marketability of local culture, stimulated Candelario to capture his homeland on camera. As Nieto-Phillips writes, elite Hispanos of this period "became authors of their own heritage." Hispanos contested the right of Anglos to lay claim to Hispano history and culture by producing their own counter-images and counter-narratives.⁷¹ Thus, Candelario's *New Mexico Portfolio* stands as a visual counterpart to the literary nostalgia of Jaramillo and Otero-Warren.

If the culture of collecting that surrounded the curio trade shaped Candelario's preservationist and ethnographic impulse, black and white photography extended it. Candelario's evolution as preservationist and ethnographer influenced later efforts to document Hispano and Native American culture on film and audio. After the 1950s, Candelario moved into color photography, film production, and screen writing, earning his reputation by documenting Hispano and Native American music and art.

When he died in 1993, Candelario had produced 58 motion pictures for three separate film and recording companies, and 188 audio recordings of music and oral testimony. In addition to interviewing Tony Lujan, Mabel Dodge Luhan's husband, and Frieda Lawrence, D. H. Lawrence's wife, Candelario recorded Apache mountain spirit dances, and Taos Pueblo, Navajo, and Hopi songs, all documented by ethnomusicologist Laura Boulton in the interwar period between World War I and World War II.⁷² Candelario used portions of this material on the soundtrack for his award-winning Golden Reel motion picture, *Indian Artists of the Southwest*. Filmed across the Southwest from Gallup, New Mexico, to Canyon de Chelly, Arizona, and focused primarily on the work of Cochiti Pueblo artist Joe Herrera, the film follows the trajectory of Indian art up to the contemporary period. The motion picture accompanied the exhibition *Background of Indian Art*, mounted at the Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, in late 1955. Candelario's subsequent film work on Native American and regional New Mexican culture also won him a Peabody and an Emmy.⁷³

In all his work, Candelario explored the encounter between tradition and modernity in order to reclaim culture while acknowledging the impact of change on local communities. In one of his screen plays from 1951, he illuminated the ways in which post-World War II New Mexico became connected to a wider world. When a young Hispano man leaves for Europe on military service, his grandfather, a gardener in a scientist's home in Los Alamos, cans local chiles with the aid of his employer so that he can send them overseas to his grandson in Germany. Like his grandfather, Candelario as an artist, photographer, filmmaker, and trader understood that local culture was portable and that modernity could be employed to sustain tradition across generations.⁷⁴

Conclusion

In New Mexico, modernism and primitivism generated a series of intercultural encounters that allowed individuals like Candelario to become intermediaries between different communities. As a transcultural outsider/insider figure, Candelario productively engaged Anglo patrons, mainstream modernism, and traditional Hispano and Native American cultures. These networks facilitated his aesthetic experimentation with modernism as well as fuelling a desire to reclaim ownership of New Mexican life at a time when Anglo modernists were appropriating and changing it. In his photographic study of Indo-Hispano rituals, Gandert declares, "This is my reaffirmation. I am of this place." Likewise, Candelario repositioned himself at the center of New Mexican culture through his photography.⁷⁵

Candelario must be situated within a lineage of Hispano cultural producers who resisted Anglo appropriation by redeploying the dominant frameworks of modernism and primitivism to assert control over the representation and commodification of local culture. Candelario's contemporary Jaramillo once declared, "These smart Americans made money with their writing, and we who know the correct way sit back and listen." However, she went on to say of Candelario's hometown of Santa Fe, "Writing and art are contagious in this old town. We have caught the fever from our famous '*cinco pintores*' and author Mary Austin, and some of us have the courage to try. It is only by trying that we learn what we can do."⁷⁶

Candelario also caught the fever. While his photography often betrays the power and limits of representation and the tensions accompanying his ethnic and class position in relation to his subjects, Candelario's images remain a testimony to the intercultural world of modernism in New Mexico and the creative agency of Hispanos working in it. Candelario's juxtaposition of modernist forms, nostalgia, and cultural intimacy with different groups suggests that a series of "entangled modernities" shaped New Mexico during this period.⁷⁷ Like his grandfather before him, Candelario adapted to the new markets that enmeshed art with tourism in innovative ways. By intervening in the dominant visual economy of New Mexico and asserting his transcultural agency, Candelario forged his own commercial and artistic identity using photography to make his mark in a modern world.

Notes

1. See Tey Marianna Nunn, *Sin Nombre: Hispana and Hispano Artists of the New Deal Era* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 34.
2. Elizabeth Hutchinson, *Indian Craze: Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890–1915* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2009), 5.
3. For example, see Genaro Padilla, "Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Cultural Autobiography as Resistance in Cleofas Jaramillo's Romance of a Little Village Girl," in *My History, Not Yours: The Formation of Mexican American Autobiography* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 196–228; and John Nieto-Phillips, *The Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico, 1880s–1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 171–205.
4. Wanda Corn, *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915–1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); and Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).
5. Van Deren Coke, *Three Generations of Hispanic Photographers Working in New Mexico: John Candelario, Cavalliere Ketchum, Miguel Gandert, May 28 to July 24, 1993* (Taos, N.Mex.: Harwood Foundation Museum of the University of New Mexico, 1993), 3.

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