



Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation

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To Bring Alive the History of Santa Barbara for Present and Future Generations

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ADDITIONAL PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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“Struck by Lightning: Saints and *Santeros* in Art of the Southwest”

*Award-Winning Santero Charles M. Carrillo, Ph.D. to Speak and Exhibit Work
in Santa Barbara*



(Santa Barbara, CA) – The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP) welcomes **acclaimed New Mexican *santero*** (carver and painter of sacred figures) **Charles M. Carrillo** for a special presentation at **El Presidio de Santa Barbara on Friday, May 30, 2008**. For more than twenty years Carrillo has blended craft, conservation, and innovation in his career as a *santero* and is recognized today as **the primary authority on the subject as well as the most accomplished artist practicing in this regional art tradition**. Carrillo’s presentation will focus on the traditional techniques of *santeros*—past and present—and the stories behind many of the saints depicted in his own work.

A trained archaeologist, Carrillo was drawn to *santos*

during his archaeological studies in the late 1970s. He has done extensive research into the saints depicted in this specialized art form as well as the New Mexican *santeros* who have preceded him. For Carrillo the art is not about the talent of the person making it, but about the artist's feeling for what they are trying to impart with their work. In an interview with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), he explained, **"Some of the *santeros* in the past weren't great artists. The artwork is sometimes very crude. This is not just about art; it's about a people's philosophy. It's about a people's way of life, a people's outlook on life."**

Carrillo prides himself on the use of traditional elements in his work including natural pigmentation rather than commercial paints, homemade varnishes from tree sap and beeswax, cottonwood root for carving, and natural production methods of hand daubing the wood on his acclaimed *retablos* (depictions on flat wood) and *bultos* (sculptures). His work is in the permanent collections of numerous museums, including the **Smithsonian Museum of American History in Washington, DC, the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, and the Denver Museum of Art. His honors include the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Spanish Market and the Museum of International Folk Arts Hispanic Heritage Award and a 2006 NEA National Heritage Fellowship.**

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CALENDAR LISTING

"Struck by Lightning: Saints and *Santeros* in Art of the Southwest"

A special presentation by Charles M. Carrillo, Ph.D.

DATE & TIME

Friday, May 30, 2008

Art viewing at 7:30 PM

Lecture at 8:00 PM

WHERE

Chapel at El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park

123 East Canon Perdido Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

ADMISSION

SBTHP members: FREE

Non-SBTHP members: \$10

Refreshments Served

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit www.sbthp.org or call (805) 965-0093

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Charles Carrillo is a pre-eminent *santero*, a carver and painter of images of saints. Experience the spirit, history and innovation of this regional tradition.

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ABOUT the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation – Founded in 1963 by Dr. Pearl Chase and other concerned community leaders, the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization working to preserve, restore, reconstruct and interpret historic sites within Santa Barbara County. The Trust is the primary force behind the reconstruction and preservation of El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park and the restoration of Casa de la Guerra in downtown Santa Barbara. The Trust is also preserving and restoring the Santa Inés Mission Mills—the site of a future California State Park and recently purchased the building that housed Jimmy’s Oriental Gardens, providing an opportunity to interpret the history of Santa Barbara’s Asian community in the Presidio neighborhood. **The Trust is currently reconstructing the Northwest Corner of El Presidio de Santa Barbara, the eighteenth-century Spanish colonial fort that is Santa Barbara’s birthplace.** Using over 50,000 adobe bricks made on site, these additions will eventually house the new Presidio visitors’ center, and with the help of the new Santa Barbara Presidio Research Center, serve to interpret the city’s Hispanic heritage, and the larger multi-cultural heritage of the surrounding Presidio neighborhood from the eighteenth century to the present. **For more information visit www.sbthp.org**

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