

Through My Eyes! Santa Fe

Jerry Grasso

Welcome to Through My Eyes! coverage of some amazing locations my wife Jayne and I have visited around the world. Some are iconic while the majority of the images presented here require a more intimate exploration of the location. This particular ebook is devoted to the [Santa Fe](#) geographic region in New Mexico. My goal is not to present a definitive study of this area, but rather to provide hopefully a limited, tantalizing glimpse of only a small, subset of locations to peak your interest! You will find that these images are not just your typical iconic scenes, but also contain some rather different ones as well.

Santa Fe sits 7,200 feet up in the southernmost end of the [Rocky Mountains](#)—the oldest and highest capital city in the U.S. The city is tucked into a valley of the Rio Grande. The [Santa Fe area](#) has quite a variety of amazing landscapes, cultural and religious sites, as well as unique shops. The images within this ebook were taken during previous visits in 2007, 2012, 2015, and 2022.

I chose many of these pictures as abstract, intimate versions of elements within some local scene. My attempt here is not to portray a travelogue. Rather, these are quiet images that you may not have noticed as you hike, walk, or travel throughout this scenic getaway.

Explore the many informational hyperlinks included!

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Enjoy life!





The [Valles Caldera National Preserve](#) is located in the Jemez Mountains of north-central New Mexico. This 88,900-acre park encompasses almost all of the volcanic caldera created by a spectacular volcanic eruption.



The [Ghost Ranch](#) is a 21,000-acre retreat and education center located close to the village of Abiquiú in Rio Arriba County in north central New Mexico. It was the home and studio of [Georgia O'Keeffe](#), as well as the subject of many of her paintings.











Made famous by local artist Georgia O'Keeffe, these landscapes are in a valley of the Rio Chama hills near the village of Abiquiu, when she made a series of paintings about the places she called "The White Place", or in Spanish ["Plaza Blanca"](#).







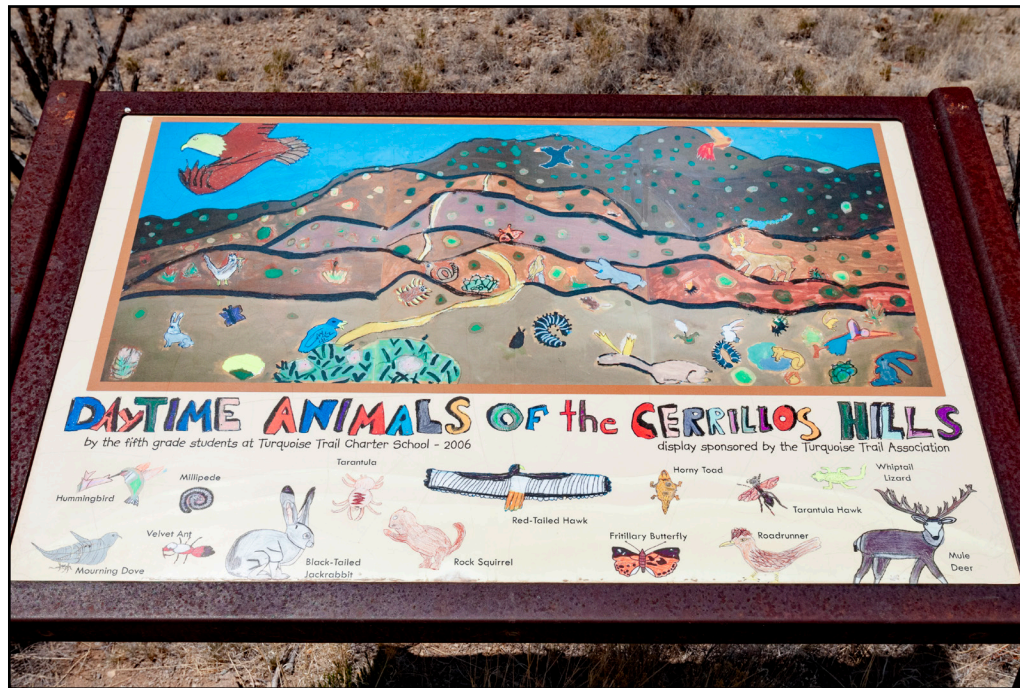
The [Bandelier National Monument](#), located near Los Alamos, is a 33,677-acre site that preserves the homes and territory of the [Ancestral Puebloans](#), who occupied this area from the [12th to the 16th centuries](#).







A view of the [Rio Grande](#).







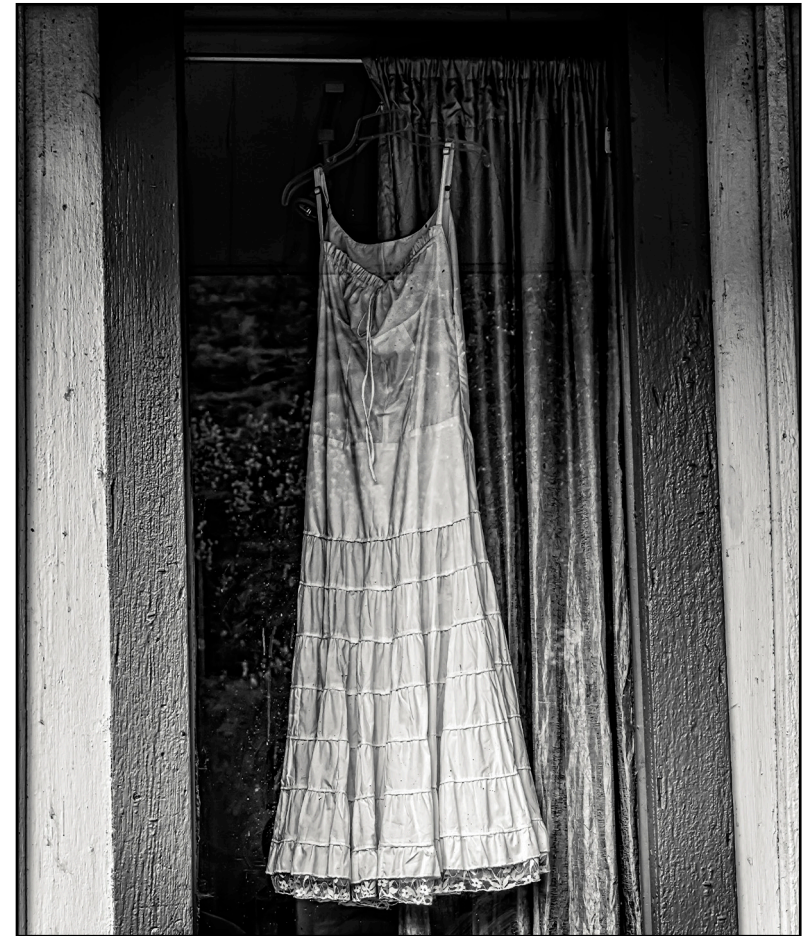


The Santa Rosa de Lima was an early 18th-century [Spanish settlement](#) in the Rio Chama valley, near the present-day town of Abiquiu.



This is an artsy town called [Madrid](#) . The locals there pronounce this name with the accent on the first syllable. These are from [Gypsy Plaza](#).





I consider [Madrid](#) to be a photographer's paradise due to its abundance of memorabilia. I could easily spend a week here photographing the many opportunities to capture interesting abstracts that emphasize line, shape, texture, and form.











Anyone who saw the movie, [“Wild Hogs”](#), with John Travolta, saw this town.

One of the highlighted sets there is a diner called Maggie's.





There are many interesting shops at this location on what is called locally as the [Turquoise Trail](#). The town is also very scenic.

















Another location we frequently visited was the [sacred pueblo at Taos](#). This [World Heritage designated site](#) is the present day example of the on-going culture of the [Pueblo Indians](#). It is considered to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited communities in the United States. As such, it is very generous of these people to allow visitors to wander through their community and share living examples of their culture. As visitors, we are able to catch a glimpse of the architecture and traditions of a people who date back as far as the late 13th century.





Another famous feature of the pueblo is the mission of [San Geronimo de Taos](#). It was built around 1620 by the Spanish and rebuilt several times later in Taos history.





On the north side of the pueblo stands the [largest multi-floored adobe Pueblo structure in existence today](#) and is backdropped by [Taos Mountain](#) of the [Sangre de Cristo](#) range.







One of the most famous residents of the pueblo, 100 year old [Tony Reyna](#), was recently honored on Veteran's Day for his role in the World War II Bataan death march.







At 650 feet above the river, The [Rio Grande Gorge Bridge](#) is the second highest bridge on the U.S. Highway System and the fifth highest bridge in the United States. During construction of the bridge in the 1960s, funding did not exist to continue the road on the other side, leading to its nickname, the “Bridge to Nowhere.”





In April, 2022, the mountains outside of Taos were [on fire](#). This wildfire burned for 40 days and became the [largest](#) in the Southwestern state's recorded history as it forced the evacuation of a small ski resort and villages in drought-hit mountains east of Santa Fe.





We stopped at the [Gas Pump Museum in Embudo](#). This nostalgic location was created by owner [Johnny Meier](#) 25 years ago. As a retired scientist from the [Los Alamos National Laboratory](#) where he worked on laser technology, Johnny's passion for vintage gas pumps, cars, and other memorabilia can be found scattered around the grounds of his museum. This is a photographer's paradise also because of the many abstract line, shape, and forms.

The pumps...





Here's a picture I took of Johnny during my visit in 2012. If you plan to visit, he asks that you make a donation to animal rescue.







This location is in [Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument](#). The name “Kasha-Katuwe” literally means “white cliffs” in the language of the [Cochiti Pueblo](#). These tent-shaped cones represent the effects of wind and water erosion. The park stands between 5700 and 6400 feet above sea level.

The hike starts off taking you through a beautiful slot canyons.













If you are there at the time when the sun can be photographed partially blocked at the top of a [hoodoo](#) or one of the slots, set your aperture to f22 and you might be able to capture the sun as a star burst.

















In May, 2012, I took these photos of the [Ring Of Fire annular eclipse](#) from the top of [St. John's College](#) in Santa Fe.



At the close of the Civil War, the Federal Government established a small cemetery, the [Santa Fe National Cemetery](#) to hold the remains of Union troops who died in the battles over Santa Fe. During the Civil War, the Confederacy made unsuccessful attempts to control what was then the territory of New Mexico.





ST. FRANCIS CATHEDRAL

Built on the site of two earlier churches, the [Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi](#) is one of the historical cathedrals that sprang up in the footsteps of European expansion into the Southwest. Constructed by French and Italian masons and completed in 1887, this cathedral also features an old adobe chapel built in 1714. Its beautiful stained-glass windows were transported to Santa Fe by ship and covered wagon.















Santa Fe has been called the Dancing Ground of the Sun by early Native American inhabitants and nicknamed The City Different by town fathers at the turn of the 20th century.

The [Santa Fe Plaza](#) is a National Historic Landmark in the downtown area.

The plaza dancer here tells a story through his hand movements, footwork, and facial expressions. The stories are often about the land or the people in his tribe and become a means to pass down history and knowledge from one generation to the next.













The [De Vargas Street House](#), is often referred to as the Oldest House and one of the oldest buildings in United States.



[San Miguel Chapel](#), is a Spanish colonial mission church in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Originally built around 1610, it is often referred to as the oldest church in the United States (excluding Puerto Rico). The church was rebuilt twice, once in the mid to late 17th century, and again in 1710 following the Pueblo Revolt.





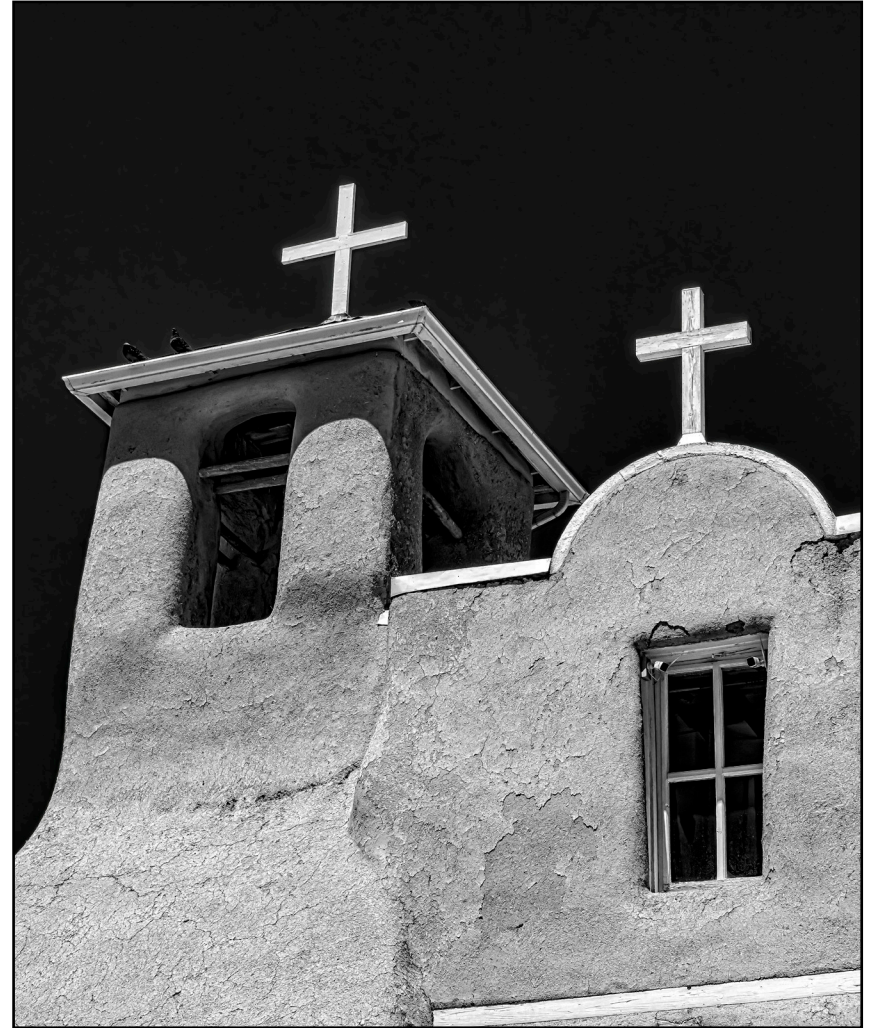
The Spiral Staircase at the [Loretto Chapel](#) is truly an amazing stair. It winds approximately 760 degrees total, more than two full turns, and is made of Spruce. It ascends a total of 22 ft. from floor to floors.

An unknown carpenter came along and built the spiral stairway without the use of hammer or nails. He left before he could be paid and no one is quite sure who he was or how he completed the masterpiece. Engineers still marvel at this carpenter's accomplishment.

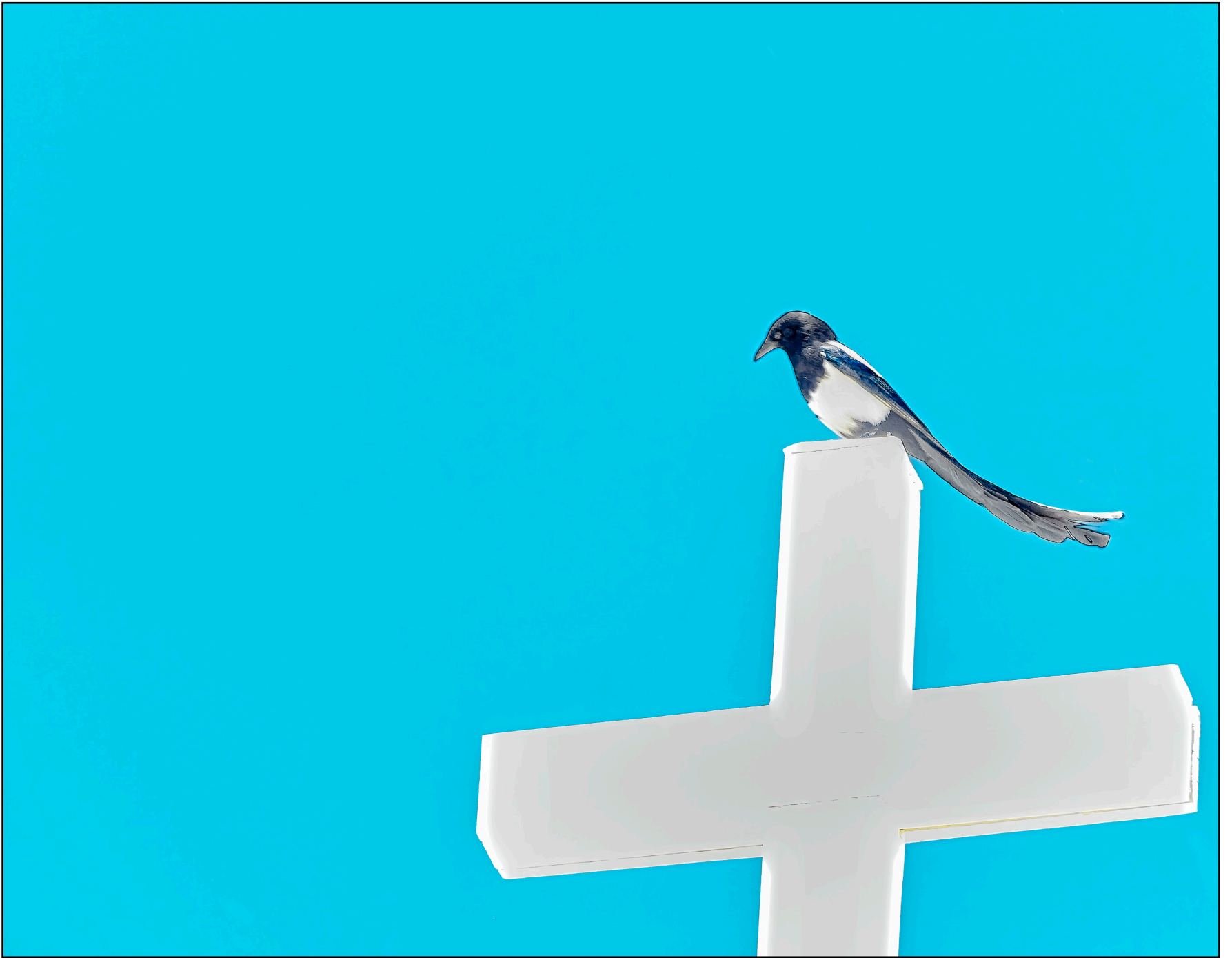


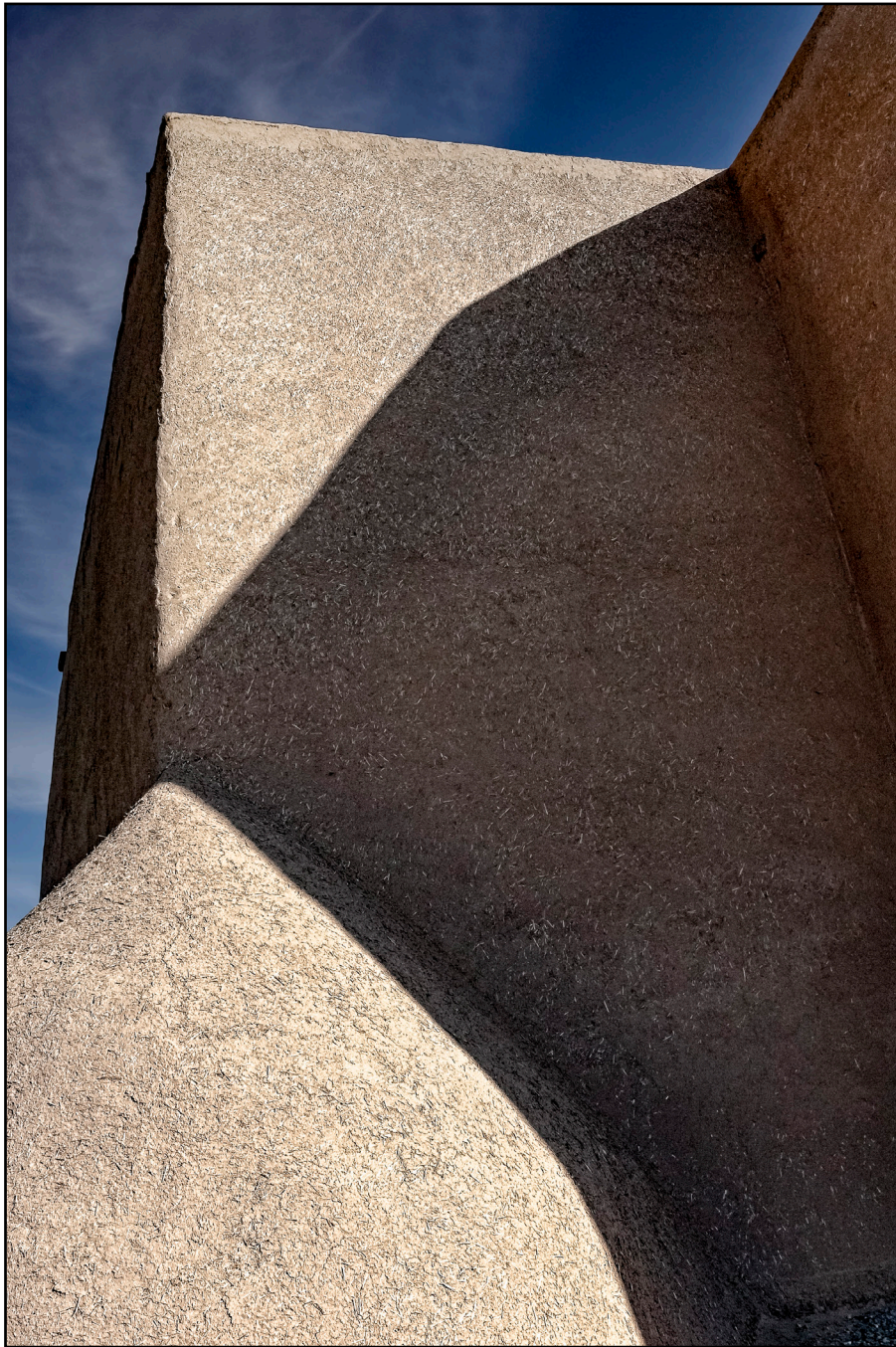






The [San Francisco de Asís Mission Church](#) is a historic and architecturally significant building on the main plaza of Ranchos de Taos.













My Artistic Mission

Child-like wonder and inquisitiveness are qualities frequently put aside once we become adults. We tend to slowly become sterilized by our right-or-wrong kind of world which too often has too little time to explore the what-if's and the what-could-be's. I believe we all need to re-connect with these qualities to re-enrich our lives. A first glance at a photograph of an onion often reveals the fact that, indeed, it is an onion. But what also lies beneath its surface? We won't know until we peel back its layers.

Animation innovator, Walt Disney, recognized this and tried to bring back the power and importance of imagination. Inspired by his spirit, my mission therefore is to encourage the use of viewer imagination. My work attempts to explore and suggest what often lies hidden within the personalities and mysteries present in the world that was, and the world that is around us.

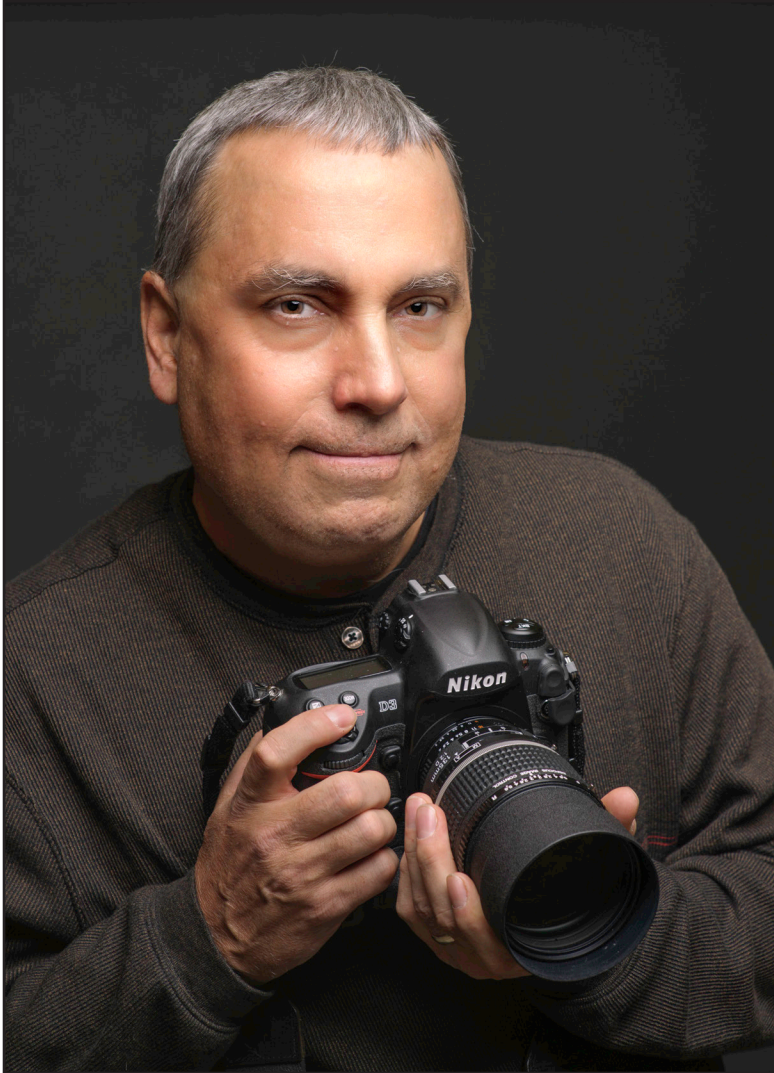
For me, my photography often is not so much about the decisive moment. Rather, it is about creating an awareness of place and a sense of history, with an aura of mystery. It is the starting point for my artistic journey, not the destination. I try to use what I produce as personal metaphors for my reactions to what I saw and felt.

My favorite motivational quote is that "Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone." My works attempt to reflect this as I probe the emotional, mind's eye after-image that was captured by both the eye and the heart, and which often defies logical explanation by the mind.

My goal is that my projects will serve as a springboard into inventiveness and exploration with the hopes of awakening my viewer's inner child. I try hard to show the connections and implications of things that others may not readily see. My hope is that my work may also help viewers discover the beginnings of their attempt to understand and perhaps even learn to tolerate and sympathize with the human condition and the world in which we live. I will try to do whatever I can to make viewers linger longer in front of my works so as to ignite their imaginative response through discovery and inquisitiveness.

Any image found within this book or on my website is available as a print purchase. Just email me at jerrygrasso96@yahoo.com, or visit my website at jerrygrasso.com.

Enjoy life!



JERRY GRASSO has been an award-winning, international fine art photographer and visual artist since 2002. He has mentored locally with photographer, [Mallorie Ostrowitz](#), and then with internationally-renowned visual artist, [John Paul Caponigro](#). Photography is only the starting point for many of his projects. His favorite motivational quote is that “Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone.”

In addition to his travel photography, Jerry specializes in the intimately abstracted architectural photography, the photo essay, and the photo composite series.

Jerry’s mission is to awaken his viewer’s inquisitive inner child by creating an awareness of place and a sense of history, with an aura of mystery.



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