

# Editor's Letter

*"Live in fragments no longer. Only connect . . ."*

—E.M. Forster, *Howards End*

It is my understanding that there is no word for art in most indigenous cultures. John Reyna, a Native American from Taos Pueblo, stressed this fact about Pueblo languages in his introduction to *SchoolArts'* Folk Art Traditions and Beyond seminar in Santa Fe this summer.

John explained that Western notions of art and religion find no separation in Pueblo culture, as all aspects of life are significantly interconnected. We found a multitude of such interconnections while meeting 123 artists from forty-six countries at the sixth annual Santa Fe International Folk Art Market, the largest international folk art market in the country.

For us, just twenty-four of the 23,000 in attendance, it was a joy to meet and interact with so many different artists whose work expressed every aspect of their lives through an unbelievable number of media. Yet for the artists, the market is even more life changing in multiple ways.

First, the artists take home ninety-three percent of their sales, an average of \$16,000 per booth. Since ninety-seven percent of the folk artists come from developing countries where the per capita income is less than \$750 per year, these earnings change the lives of the artists, their families, their communities, and 16,000 cooperative members back at home.

The market also offers the artists workshops on pricing, customer service, creative labeling, booth display and design, international sales opportunities, web marketing, technology resources, and artist cooperatives. The artists are welcomed as honored guests, provided translators as needed, and introduced to New Mexican culture through field trips and hands-on artist workshops.

On a smaller scale, my greatest pleasure is that I know our participants will take their experiences in New Mexico and at the market back to enrich their own students, fellow teachers, and communities, making interconnections in which art is always at the center.

**Note:** Look for information about *SchoolArts'* New Mexico 2010 summer seminars in the January issue.

*Nancy Walkup*



*Top: Nancy and Sue Rundstrum, program coordinator for Ghost Ranch in Santa Fe, an adult conference center, at the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market. Middle: Ndebele artist Mama Esther Mahlangu from Kwmhlanga, Mpumalanga, South Africa, trying Native American beading. Bottom: Manjula Devi Maithil Bahun from Nepal incorporating her traditional style of painting with New Mexican retablo techniques.*