

CLEMENTS CENTER FOR
SOUTHWEST STUDIES
SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

You are invited to the **Brown Bag Lecture Series**

Wednesday, April 11, 2012 from 12 noon to 1 p.m.

Texana Room, DeGolyer Library
6404 Hyer (formerly Hilltop) Lane & McFarlin Blvd.

Awa Tsireh's Paintings and the Art of Subtle Resistance

Sascha Scott

Clements Center Fellow for the Study of Southwestern America, 2011-2012



Focusing on paintings by San Ildefonso Pueblo artist **Awa Tsireh** (Alfonso Roybal), Sascha Scott will explore art making and Native political activism in the 1920s, a period that witnessed an epochal shift in federal Indian policy from assimilation to preservation. Scott's research on Awa Tsireh's works is framed by two questions: First, did navigating the politics of the era change what and how Pueblo artists painted? Second, are Pueblo strategies of resistance encoded in Pueblo painting? By analyzing the visual language of Awa Tsireh's paintings, a language bounded by Pueblo epistemologies, these answers can be found in Pueblo conceptions of knowledge and attitudes about production and distribution.

It is significant that Awa Tsireh experimented vigorously with different subjects, formats, and styles at a time when Pueblo culture was under attack by the Office of Indian Affairs and Pueblo villages were under siege by tourists and anthropologists. This talk demonstrates that through various visual strategies, which were often subtle, Awa Tsireh's paintings strategically countered cultural oppression at the hands of assimilationists and thwarted exploitation of pueblo culture by anthropologists, cultural modernists and tourists. Through their art, Pueblo painters working in the 1920s celebrated their culture at a time when it was under attack, helped to develop a market that benefited themselves and sometimes their communities, and did so while protecting boundaries of Pueblo knowledge.

Sascha Scott received her PhD in art history from Rutgers University and is an assistant professor of American art at Syracuse University. She is spending the spring semester at the Clements Center completing her manuscript, "Painting the Pueblo: Art and the Politics of Preservation, 1915-1930" (under contract with the University of Oklahoma Press) for publication.

Image: Awa Tsireh (Alfonso Roybal), Koshare and Rainbow, c. 1925-1930. Indian Arts Research Center, SAR, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

For more information or if you need special accommodations, please contact swcenter@smu.edu or 214-768-3684.



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