



James Rutherford - American, b. 1960
curator • gallerist • educator • arts advocate

My own career in the arts has now spanned more than thirty-seven years – but it all began with a move to Los Angeles in 1980 where my first professional forays involved working for galleries, consultants, and collectors via an art installation business I co-founded. These early experiences in the big-city art world set me on a path which led me back to Santa Fe and then New York where I pursued my dream of becoming a curator.

From 1986 to 1992, I served as Director of the Governor’s Gallery at the State Capitol in Santa Fe under three gubernatorial administrations. During this time, I assembled a statewide inventory of artists and cultural assets, and cultivated strategic relationships among artists, tribal entities, arts organizations, and the media. I curated and presented more than fifty exhibitions of New Mexico artists that reflected a statewide sensibility and an emphasis on Native artists and underserved communities. In this role, I also represented and advised the Executive branch on arts issues, and served as the Executive's liaison with the NM Tourism Department and other state agencies.

As Director, I coordinated along with the NM Arts Commission the annual Governor’s Awards for Excellence & Achievement in the Arts and curated concurrent exhibitions. I co-curated major exhibitions of southwestern realism at the NM Museum of Art (which subsequently travelled to the Taiwan National Museum in Taichung – and was attended by a delegation I led with Governor & Mrs. King), a major survey of Hispanic arts and crafts at the NM State Fair Fine Arts Gallery, and curated travelling exhibitions presented at Stables Art Center (Taos), Branigan Cultural Center (Las Cruces), KIMO Theatre (Albuq.), Clovis Community College (Clovis), and San Juan College (Farmington), among others. Additional accomplishments during my tenure at the Governor’s Gallery were the establishment of *Month-of-Sculpture* and *Mile-of-Sculpture* projects, creation of a sculpture program on the Capitol grounds, and the instrumental role I played in the establishment of the Capitol Art Foundation and collection.

I had the opportunity to explore and enhance my curatorial skills and form new relationships in the art world as co-owner of Copeland / Rutherford Fine Arts on Canyon Road from 1992 to 1996. I leveraged the freedom I found in the private sector to pursue my artistic vision, and in a short period of time the gallery became known for its ambitious schedule of outré exhibitions and programming. Offerings included solo and group exhibitions featuring a diverse assortment of artists and media, as well as collaborative events ranging from poetry bouts to film screenings, symposia, and charitable events for non-profit organizations. The experience gave me a front-line appreciation for the opportunities, needs, and challenges of a for-profit, arts-related business.

After relocating to Nashville in 1998 I was hired as the Assistant Director of Special Projects at the Tennessee State Museum (TSM). In this position, I was primarily responsible for organizing outreach exhibitions and working with the Museum's Foundation to achieve development goals. In 2000, I served as the art coordinator for a travelling exhibition of the graphic work of Red Grooms and was part of the pre-planning for a major solo show of the work of Herb Alpert at TSM. I was involved in successful fundraising initiatives such as the annual *Tennessee Waltz* at the State Capitol, and was responsible for the creation of a Collectors Club and led its fundraising tours of studios and museums in other cities.

After leaving the TSM I would be instrumental in the conception and establishment of a museum dedicated to the renowned singer/songwriter and longtime NM resident, Roger Miller, in his hometown of Erick, OK. My responsibilities in this endeavor included: acquiring and overseeing renovations of an historic building on Rt. 66; designing and installing exhibits of memorabilia and personal effects; applying for and receiving 501(c)(3) non-profit status from the IRS; designing and creating gift shop inventory; creation of website and marketing materials; and organization of annual Roger Miller Festival and benefit concerts.

My accomplishments as an independent curator have included pre-1986 exhibitions in Battery Park and SOHO in NYC, Santa Fe's Armory for the Arts, and the Telluride Film Festival, post-2000 exhibitions at the NM Museum of Art and the United Nations, Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery, and more recent shows at the Santa Fe Community College Fine Arts Gallery, and McCray Gallery at Western NM University. From 2015 to 2018, I worked at Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art and Allan Houser, Inc. in Santa Fe where I organized exhibitions with prominent artists and continued to cultivate relationships with collectors and the media. During this same period, I served as a volunteer and auctioneer with numerous non-profit organizations including the Cancer Foundation for NM, Lightning Boy Foundation, Santa Fe Girls School, Girls Inc., Cooking with Kids, Rocky Mountain Youth Corps., the International Folk Art Market, the Spanish Colonial Arts Society, and the Tourism Association of NM, among others.

From 2009 to 2012 I worked for Santa Fe web services company, studio x, inc., serving primarily as a project manager for a contract with City of Santa Fe for creation and maintenance of the Santa Fe Convention & Visitors Bureau (SFCVB) website SantaFe.org (to this day one of the most visited travel websites in the state). In this role, I collaborated with SFCVB staff and contractors to integrate marketing initiatives and statistical measurement tools into website, social media, and electronic communications. I documented regional cultural assets and attractions, and cultivated relationships and strategic partnerships with governmental and tribal entities, private businesses, trade groups, and various other constituents. I also served as spokesman in public presentations intended to foster relationships among the stakeholders of the SFCVB and facilitate their participation in web-based promotional programs. These relationships likewise informed the content I curated and produced for the website.

I fulfilled a longtime personal goal in the Fall of 2017 when I completed a BFA in Museum Studies at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe. I returned to school as an adult after a career in the art world as a curator, museum specialist, gallerist, and arts advocate spanning more than three decades. The knowledge I gathered reflect the most up-to-date best practices in the museum field – specifically with issues surrounding cultural sensitivity and collaboration with tribal and Indigenous communities. In my most recent position as Advancement Services Manager at IAIA, I was responsible for implementing IAIA Foundation Board and Board of Trustees strategic plans, maintaining donor records and budgetary reporting, creating annual and year-end appeal collateral and digital marketing, issuance of charitable donation receipts and correspondence, and serving as a team leader for the planning and presentation of an annual gala to raise funds for student scholarships.