

# debbie denison

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## about the artist

Debbie Denison is a self-taught artist who lives in Chimayó, New Mexico. Forced by disability to find an occupation she could do while sitting at home, she discovered a passion for art, which has found expression in brilliantly colored landscapes in oil as well as lively, hand-pulled linoleum block prints. Debbie also creates carved wood figures and endearing small clay sculptures. Debbie draws her inspiration from the sacred and beautiful surroundings of New Mexico.

## artist statement

Illness sidetracked the goals I had set as I attained a graduate degree in Middle Eastern Studies. I now had to find a new way of living. New Mexico welcomed me with its sacred hills and loving people.

People who see my paintings often draw parallels with European Expressionism. Like the Expressionists, I am excited by the colors and wonders of the landscape around me. My oil paintings are vivid with cadmium red and the dark purple of the distant mountains. As I breathe the crisp air of each new day, I try to dance with the paints in fluid motions. The walking rain and great expanses of sky are themes in both my oil landscapes and my linocuts.

My work is influenced by those who came before me, even when I don't consciously know it. My linocut block prints are greatly influenced by the works of Walter Anderson of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, where I was born. Anderson did large, elaborate linoleum prints. After World War II he obtained inexpensive rolls of leftover linoleum from the nearby naval ship building yard, which he used to create large, elaborate linoleum prints. His linoleum prints, often hand-colored, are like illuminated manuscripts illustrating the natural world of the islands along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. I also tip my hat to Willard Clark and Gustave Baumann, whose brilliant works far outshine my folk style, but who also provide me with energy and inspiration.

I listen to music and poetry as I work. The poetry of Rumi and the spirituality of the indigenous people spark my imagination. I drive the back roads with my eyes and my mind open. I live in Chimayó, where the sun turns the hills scarlet red and orange. As I work, there are times of creating when, as Rumi says, "everything becomes music." And my work becomes a song and a prayer of gratitude for this time and this place, my joy of living on the sacred lands of New Mexico.

