



CENTER FOR ART + ENVIRONMENT at the Nevada Museum of Art

Bill Gilbert: Mata Ortiz

Collection CAE2106

Introduction/Abstract

Artist Bill Gilbert began visiting and working with the potters of Mata Ortiz in 1991. These archive materials are a definitive record of Mata Ortiz ceramic evolution during the 1990s. Materials include photographs, slides, documents, catalog drafts, and exhibition ephemera.

Biographical Note: Bill Gilbert

New Mexico artist Bill Gilbert completed his undergraduate work in studio art at Swarthmore College and Pitzer College, where he studied with ceramists Paul Soldner and Dennis Parks. Gilbert did his graduate work with Rudi Autio and Ken Little at the University of Montana and received his MFA in 1978. Gilbert served on the faculty in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of New Mexico from 1988 until becoming professor emeritus in 2016. He directed the Ceramics program at UNM from 1988-2000. He then founded the Land Arts of the American West program in 2000 and was appointed the Lannan Chair in 2004. Gilbert subsequently co-founded the Art & Ecology emphasis in studio art at UNM in 2007. He has exhibited his place-based, mixed media, and video works in galleries and museums across the world, including at the Center for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art. He is also a curator and writer focusing on indigenous artists from U.S. pueblos, Mexico, and Ecuador. In 2009 he coauthored *Land Arts of the American West* (University of Texas Press) and in 2012 published *Arid Lands Pedagogy: Art in the American West* (Routledge).

Scope and Content

Gilbert began visiting and working with the potters of Mata Ortiz in 1991. The village was transformed by a resident, Juan Quezada, who re-discovered/created pottery-making skills from the nearby ancient Casas Grandes tradition, and then adapting it to contemporary pottery of his own design, an evolution that took years. By the end of that time, the entire village had begun to engage in making pots, which completely invigorated the economy and life of the village. Gilbert was in the vanguard of Anglo collectors, and became a champion of the work through exhibitions, books, and events. His materials are a definitive record of Mata Ortiz ceramic evolution during the 1990s and overlap with his Land Arts of the American West curriculum and other pedagogical activities, as well as with his personal artmaking practice. Materials include photographs, slides, documents, catalog drafts, and exhibition ephemera.

This archive is currently in process.