



Michelle TAPIA JEWELER



"My designs are all from my heart and my culture. My love of animals and anything of beauty influence me most." - Michelle Tapia

Michelle Tapia was born and raised in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Although she never received formal art or jewelry training, she has been creative since childhood. This natural inclination made her a quick study as she learned silver and goldsmithing, lapidary, and the art of scrimshaw from renowned Alaska Native jewelry-makers, Denise and Samuel Wallace. When the Wallace s relocated from Santa Fe to Hawaii, Michelle expanded the line she started under their tutelage.

Michelle s heritage includes her paternal great-grandfather, a full-blood Comanche from Picuris Pueblo, and her maternal great-grandfather, of Santo Domingo Pueblo. Along with her Spanish-Catholic upbringing and her Tibetan Buddhist philosophies, these multicultural influences, combined with nature and animals, inspire her. Cats, dogs, bunnies, butterflies, fairies, dragonflies, and mermaids are among the whimsical motifs she creates. Her small wearable devotional pieces are called Relicarios, and she has several pieces with the image of Buddha and brightly colored Lotus blossoms. Working from her home studio in Santa Fe, Michelle carves each of her pieces by hand from fossilized walrus tusk, some dating back 20,000 years. She fabricates all her own metalwork, setting every hand-inked design in fine metals.

Tapia has won numerous awards, including Best of Show, 6 Best of Fine Jewelry, 2 Best of Fine Crafts (3-dimensional), and Best of Collaboration Fine Art at Santa Fe s Contemporary Spanish Market. Her creations have developed a following around the world.

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