

The Folklife Festival Marketplace

Since its founding in 1967, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival has helped thousands of traditional artists and musicians from around the globe by selling their arts, crafts, and music in its Marketplace tent. The size and location of the Marketplace may change from year to year, but its mission remains the same: to honor and support the Festival's participants, many of whom lack other outlets for sharing the beautiful work they create.

In 2010, the Festival Marketplace—located adjacent to the Freer Gallery of Art—is offering for sale approximately thirty thousand objects of cultural, aesthetic, and educational significance. Moreover, many of the artists and musicians whose work is featured there will also be demonstrating and performing at the Festival. The opportunity to meet the artists and to learn more about their cultural traditions by watching them work or perform is one of the primary benefits of attending the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

For example, coming from Haiti to the Festival Marketplace are the textile artist Mireille Delismé, who sews colorful sequined flags based on voodoo traditions,

and the painter Levoy Exil, whose vibrant and colorful images capture the essence of the Saint-Soleil school of which he is a founding member. Both Delismé and Exil tragically lost most of their materials, their stock, and their studios in the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010. Dozens of other Haitian artists were similarly affected and although they will not be attending the Festival, their traditional crafts will be featured inside the Marketplace tent: vetiver grass baskets, sequined bottles, colorful bowls, decorative metalwork, papier-mâché masks, maracas, miniature houses, stone sculptures, voodoo flags, and much more. Haitian artists affected by the earthquake have handcrafted each one of these items. Purchasing their work will help support their efforts to rebuild their lives and resume their artistic creativity.

Coming to the Festival from Mexico are groups representing the Wixárika (or Huichol) people of western central Mexico who make beaded jewelry, yarn paintings, and woven bags; the Téenek people from northeastern Mexico who are renowned for their embroideries; and other communities whose traditional crafts include dolls made of





corn and delicate figures carved from ironwood. Each of these items has been carefully selected for the Marketplace to highlight the creative spirit of Mexico's distinctive regions.

Representing the Asian Pacific American program at the Festival Marketplace are items from thirty different cultural groups, including Laotian textiles, Chinese paper arts, Mongolian and Korean masks, Japanese dolls, and Thai soap carvings. Many of the artisans are recognized masters who are now training new generations to carry on these traditions.

Another highlight of this year's Marketplace is a selection of some of the best items from previous Folklife Festivals, including African wired baskets, clothing from India, and stoneware from Alabama. In its own way, each item traces the relationships the Smithsonian has built since 1967 with Folklife Festival participants from every region of the United States and more than ninety nations.

Many of the products in the Festival Marketplace are not available through regular retail outlets. Please take advantage of this once-a-year opportunity to help enrich your life and the lives of Festival artists and musicians. The Festival Marketplace is open every day of the Festival from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

(Above) The Marketplace tent is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day of the Festival.
Photo by Jane K. Fox, Smithsonian Institution

(Left) The Festival Marketplace offers thousands of items for sale. Photo by Leah Golubchick, Smithsonian Institution

(Right) The Festival Marketplace in 2006 featured hand-crafted ceramics from Turkey.
Photo by Jane K. Fox, Smithsonian Institution

