

Retablos Ayacuchanos



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CONTACT INFORMATION:

Sandy Peinado

COMPANY: Retablos Ayacuchanos

COUNTRY: Peru

EMAIL: wholesale@folkartmarket.org

PHONE: 973-650-0232

Claudio and Vicenta, husband and wife, are indigenous Quechua, from the region of Ayacucho, in the Andes Mountains of Peru and work together as Retablos Ayacuchanos. Claudio learned the art of retablo making from his father, and Vicenta from her husband. They and their four children work together to create the magnificent retablos and figurines that everyone loves.

Contemporary retablos are wooden boxes with double doors and brightly painted. They depict intricate narrative scenes of daily life, culture, and history important to the Quechua people. They were first introduced by the Spanish colonizers as portable shrines depicting religious images exclusively. Over time, the Peruvian retablos evolved, and the Jiménez Quispe family has taken this art form one step further by including not only cultural and historical themes but social and political topics as well.

The retablo box is made of carved cedar wood, treated with volcanic ash and painted with bright, beautiful flowers or birds. The figurines are made of a mixed paste that includes plaster of Paris and potato flour. Each figurine is individually hand sculpted and hand painted.