



## art for (and of) the home

**SOMETIMES CONTEXT** is everything. For these three local artists, getting to know the homes where their work will be exhibited allows them to make art specific to people as well as place. Each artist, through focused site-specific work, brings his or her own unique vision, expanding on the meaning of *make yourself at home*.

**Cathy Aten** “In our culture everyone wants to sweep the dirt outside,” says 53-year-old artist Cathy Aten. To bring awareness to this expelled substance, and thus our own foundation in the earth, she instead brings the dirt back in and uses it to create pieces that reflect a home’s inhabitants. A Michigan native who has lived here for 20 years, Aten was previously an oil painter, but after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2000, she gave up working with anything toxic. And then came an epiphany: “I thought, ‘Wow, if I love New Mexico so much why don’t I use it as my medium,’” she recalls. Since then, she’s combined this beloved, ancient material with clay, sacred objects, and ceramics—as well as what she garners mentally and energetically from time spent with clients in their homes—to craft the impressionistic and narrative work she’s dubbed “Portraits of Place.” Info: [cathyaten.com](http://cathyaten.com), also Eileen Brazier Fine Arts

**Nina Tichava** New Mexico native and Santa Fe resident Nina Tichava wants to connect her clients to what’s already in their lives. Drawing on the patterns, shapes, and colors she documents in their homes, from rows of shoes in a closet to the shape and color of a potted plant’s leaves, as well as information she gleanes from interviews, the 34-year-old artist creates oil and mixed-media paintings that bridge the gap between fine art and interior design. Through this intimate process Tichava, the daughter of a construction worker and a designer, hopes to bring a client’s awareness to “what’s been there all along,” she says. “We’ve all heard the cliché ‘a painting to match the couch,’” says Tichava. “I like to say that I’m creating paintings that *consider* the couch.” Info: [tichava-mills.com](http://tichava-mills.com), Tichava Mills Fine Art

**Matthew Chase-Daniel** When creating work for the home, 42-year-old sculptor and photographer Matthew Chase-Daniel begins by acquiring a sense of his clients and the larger environment in which they live. “Work for a gallery resonates with me and who-knows-who-else, but with work for the home—though it retains a universal quality—it’s important that it resonate with the people who live there,” he says. To create his impermanent outdoor installations, he gathers organic materials, such as vines, alfalfa, and other grasses from a house’s immediate surroundings, then weaves them together into undulating forms and mounts them as sculpture to “bring attentiveness to the sacredness of people’s natural environments.” Info: [chasedaniel.com](http://chasedaniel.com), also Victoria Price Art and Design—*Emiliano Garcia-Sarnoff* **SI**



Clockwise from top left: Cathy Aten’s ceramic *Black Forest*; Nina Tichava’s *Paper, Water Lantern*, a 24 x 72" site-specific painting for the Brebner-Chen residence; Matthew Chase-Daniel’s 23-foot-tall *Alfalfa Pole*, made of grass, steel, waxed nylon, and wood