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Journey to New Mexico – Follow Mabel’s Path to Taos

Taos, NM - October 18, 2015 There is something powerful in the light of Northern New Mexico. For generations, artists and soul searchers have been drawn to the remote mountains around Taos, to discover and create art. Interest in escaping turbulent society and a desire to build a retreat in which artists could create, is what brought Mabel Dodge Luhan to Taos, New Mexico in 1917. After settling in Taos, Mabel began attracting artists and philosophers to her New Mexican home. But, it was the magical light and the unique culture that kept them here and claimed the creative souls of artists like Georgia O’Keeffe and Ansel Adams, and the imaginations of the likes of D.H. Lawrence, Frank Waters, and Willa Cather. The Harwood Museum of Art’s exhibition, *Mabel Dodge Luhan & Company: American Moderns and the West*, opening in May of 2016, explores the life of Mabel Dodge Luhan and her journey to Taos through the art of the people she attracted to this remote area.

Whether visitors to Taos are drawn by art, culture, or the outdoors, they find, once they arrive, that these things are inseparable. Mabel Dodge Luhan had long been fascinated by Native American culture, largely as interpreted by non-native artists, but when she came to New Mexico at the encouragement of her third husband, Maurice Sterne, she found that the spiritual atmosphere, the mix of Hispanic, Native American and Anglo culture, and the overwhelming beauty of the setting, set it apart from any other place where modern avant-garde congregated.

In Taos, Mabel built her home on the border of Taos Pueblo Lands, with the encouragement and assistance of Tony Lujan, who would eventually become her fourth husband. The complex, called Los Gallos, was a place where the artists Mabel summoned came not just to work on projects already in progress, but to create original art.

Mabel Dodge Luhan & Company: American Moderns and The West's exhibition co-curator Lois Rudnick said, "Northern New Mexico was the place, Mabel and others argued, that would allow Anglo artists, writers, and reformers to reunite body and mind, and spirit and matter." This proved to be true, and what they produced in that time and place was different than anything seen previously in the modernist movement. "It literally shaped the American modern arts movement as we know it today," she added.

To this day, visitors to Taos are captivated by the light and rarefied atmosphere. Artists still migrate to the Taos mountains in an effort to capture the same spiritual essence that Mabel's companions strove to replicate. In autumn especially, as the trees turn, and the mountains glow in the crisp air, artists from around the world can be seen painting along roads, and in fields all around Taos mountain. Many follow in the footsteps of Mabel's companions and stay at the renovated Mabel Dodge Luhan House, where the creative history surrounds them. They visit Taos Pueblo, and explore the villages near Taos to experience the cultures, both Native American and Hispano, that shaped the modernist movement of the West.

Some pursue Georgia O'Keefe's path, to the solitude of Abiquiu, New Mexico, and the stunning vistas that inspired her. Others explore the newly reopened D.H. Lawrence Ranch, given to Frieda Lawrence by Mabel Dodge Luhan in exchange for the original manuscript of Lawrence's novel, *Son's and Lovers* (Simmons, Marc). Here they marvel at the quietude that allowed Lawrence to write his novel *St. Mawr*. Each of these experiences leads back to the movement begun by Mabel Dodge Luhan when she moved to Taos.

Come to Taos in the summer of 2016 and follow in the paths of Mabel and the artists she brought to Taos. During the exhibition, special lodging packages are available at Heritage Hotels & Resorts' Taos locations, including El Monte Sagrado and Palacio de Marquesa, where there is a suite dedicated to Mabel. For information on packages visit: <http://www.hhandr.com/taos-mabel-dodge-luhan-exhibition>.

The Harwood Museum of Art's exhibition, aims to immerse visitors into Mabel's life and to encourage them to explore everything about Taos that attracted Mabel and her compatriots to New Mexico. Each visitor to the exhibition will learn something of what made Mabel the magnet she was, and what it was about her, and the home she built in Taos, that sparked the birth of American Modernism in the West. Find out more about Taos and all it has to offer by visiting taos.org and learn all about Mabel Dodge Luhan and Company at mabeldodgeluhan.org.

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