ZANEBENNETT CONTEMPORARY ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Structures That Shape Us

Roberto Cardinale

25 September 2026–25 November 2026

OPENING RECEPTION

25 September 2026, 5–7 p.m.

ROBERTO CARDINALE | *San Francisco de Assis*, 2025
Painted New Mexico white pine, 19 H x 11.5 W x 15.5 D in (48.3 x 29.2 x 39.4 cm)
Drawer collage by PJ Cardinale, photo courtesy the artist

(SANTA FE, NM) Former Benedictine monk and artist Roberto Cardinale explores architecture, faith, and cultural memory in forthcoming exhibition of Spanish Southwestern architecture sculpture.

Zane Bennett Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Structures That Shape Us*, an exhibition of twelve sculptures by artist and former Benedictine monk Roberto Cardinale. Bringing together sculptures inspired by churches from the American Southwest, the East Coast, and Europe, as well as working drawings, the exhibition explores how architecture carries history, belief, and cultural memory. **The exhibition opens with a reception on September 25, from 5–7 p.m.**

Cardinale's work takes particular inspiration from the Spanish architecture of the American Southwest, where Indigenous building traditions and Spanish architectural practices embellished with Moorish influences mixed to create built environments that organized spiritual life, but also economic systems, and the cultural fabric of the region. His detailed and rigorously researched **sculptures invite viewers to consider these historically important churches not only as monuments but sites where the history that has shaped our societies continues to live, evolve, and inform future generations, addressing the beauty of the structures and the questions that the dominance of the Empire that built them raise.** Though distinctly Christian, these sculptures carry the regional influence of where they were built. The details of his sculptures, gathered from first-hand experience and research, challenge the notion of universal cultural identities and shed light on history as something imperfect, complex, and subject to random events. **At the heart of these sculptures is the human impulse to connect with something larger than oneself.**

For Cardinale, sculpture is **both artistic practice and spiritual vocation**. As an artist who once lived as a Benedictine monk, he continues the order's longstanding tradition of preserving and transmitting knowledge. His sculptures function as records of architectural history while acknowledging its complexity—including the beauty, cultural exchange, conflict, and systems of empire embedded within it. ***Structures That Shape Us* invites viewers to consider how the buildings we inherit shape our collective understanding of who we are.**

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For press or image inquiries, please contact Spencer Linford at spencer@zanebennettgallery.com.

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About the Artist

Roberto Cardinale is a Santa Fe-based artist whose sculptural practice is rooted in a lifelong love of ecclesiastical architecture, informed by his years as a Benedictine monk and extensive travels around the world. Since 1985, he has created nearly 1,000 hand-built sculptures inspired by churches, missions, synagogues, and other buildings of faith. Working primarily in New Mexico white pine with surfaces that are then richly painted, his intimate architectural sculptures translate monumental sacred spaces into objects for contemplation. While he specializes in the churches, missions, and synagogues of New Mexico, his work encompasses buildings of faith from cultures and regions around the world.

For Cardinale, architecture is more than a physical structure; it is a repository of faith, history, cultural memory, and human experience. His Benedictine background informs his belief in preserving and transmitting knowledge, while his sculptures invite viewers to consider the enduring role of sacred spaces in shaping communities and individual lives.

Born in Pueblo, Colorado, in 1939, Cardinale earned a BA in Mathematics and Philosophy while a Benedictine monk, an MA in Art from the University of Northern Colorado, and a Doctorate in Art Education from Arizona State University. He has held faculty and leadership positions at Boston University—where he was a professor and director of The Program In Artisanry—the Ohio State University, the San Antonio Art Institute—where he was president—the University of Arizona, and the University of Northern Colorado. He currently lives in Santa Fe, NM, with his wife of over 60 years, PJ, a collage artist who collaborates with him on his church and synagogue sculptures.

Cardinale's work is held in the permanent collections of the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, Harwood Museum of Art, Amarillo Museum of Art, Benedictine University Museum of Art, and the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, as well as the collection of King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia of Spain. His work has been featured at the Sangre de Cristo Center for the Arts, Tucson Museum of Miniatures, Institute of Texan Cultures, and Taos Museum of Art at Fechin House. In 2009, he was named a Master of the Southwest by *Phoenix Home & Garden*.

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