

# Show shines light on obscure culture

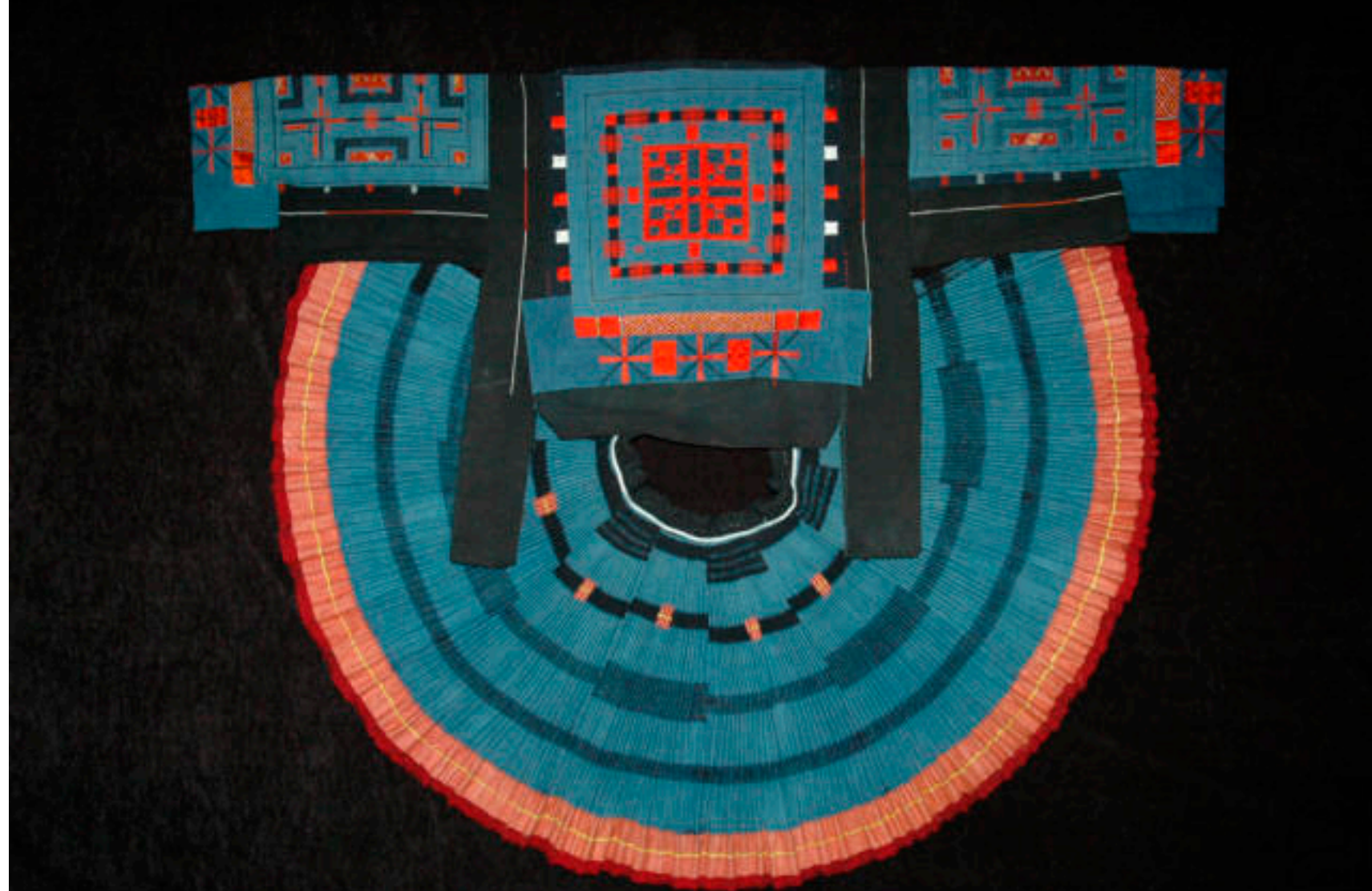
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By [Kathaleen Roberts / Journal Staff Writer](#)

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A Baiku Yao skirt and shirt from Guangxi, China, are part of the "Deeply Yao" show. (Courtesy of Chinalai Tribal Antiques)

These "Objects of Art" range from a full-sized, hand-carved Japanese airplane to priest and shaman robes from the Yao people of southern China.

Opening on Wednesday, Aug. 12, in a gala benefiting New Mexico PBS, the show is the sixth of its kind to land in Santa Fe, curator Kim Martindale said.

Organizers expect the event to lure from 3,000 to 5,000 people. More than 70 dealers from across the United States and Africa will present thousands of unique items.

"Deeply Yao," an exhibition presenting the works of the Yao people of China and northern Southeast Asia, is the largest show of ethnographic art from this hill tribe group. Also known as the Mien, Lan Tan, Mun, Pu Nun, Lu Ngien, Lak Kja, Zao and Dao, according to clan and country, the Yao are the descendants of people who lived in the mountains around China's Changjiang River Basin during the Qin and Han dynasties (221 B.C. to A.D. 220). The Yao form one of the 55 ethnic minority groups officially recognized by the Chinese government.

Their origins can be traced back 2,000 years, beginning in the Hunan Province. Both the men and women cover their heads with a black or red scarf. The women stitch their traditional suits in bright colors, often decorating their shirts with silver. Artists stitched the textiles from silk or cotton.

The exhibition highlights include 19th-century ceremonial paintings, hand-carved wooden sticks inlaid with metal, horns for summoning benevolent spirits, and hand-carved wooden blocks and stamps.

Visitors can see 18th- to early-20th-century hand-carved wooden tiger striped (or five-colored) dogs representing Pan Hu or King Pan, father of the Yao people, for sanctifying rituals, as well as 19th- to early 20th-century books and scrolls.

"Deeply Yao" is courtesy of New York's Chinalai Gallery.

"They've dedicated much of their lives to that culture," Martindale said.

"Very little has been done on (the Yao). Some of the bigger cultures took precedence, like the dragon robes of the Ming Dynasty."

But the show comprises more than antique Asian art. Viewers can see both historic and modern fine art from the Taos school, as well works by leading contemporary artists in sculpture, textiles, furniture, jewelry, books, clothing and tribal American Indian, African, Asian and folk art.

**If you go**  
**WHAT:** Objects of Art Santa Fe  
**WHEN:** 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12, opening night gala for New Mexico PBS (KNME). General hours from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13, through Saturday, Aug. 15  
**WHERE:** El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe, 555 Camino de la Familia, Santa Fe  
**HOW MUCH:** \$50 opening night gala; general show \$15-\$20. Visit [ObjectsOfArtSantaFe.com](http://ObjectsOfArtSantaFe.com). Call 505-660-4701

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