

# SANTA FEAN

MARCH 1997

VOL. 25, NO. 2 \$2.95



**PRIVATE LIVES:  
ARTISTS AT HOME**







# ESSENTIAL ANTHONY

*By Manya Winsted  
Photography by Peter Vitale*

MODEL TALL AND SLIM, WITH A SOFT HUSKY VOICE LIKE A BREEZE through high prairie grass, Carol Anthony lives, breathes, *is* art. She is possessed of that rarest gift...a child's wonder and unsuspected delight in ordinary things, everyday things. Nothing is passé. Nothing is beneath notice. And through her eyes, the world is re-discovered. Fresh.

Almost a painting itself, this "kitchen composition" includes Anthony's favorite objects—old crockery, spoons, burnished metal storage tins, a bird nest and egg nestled in a basket, and a wonderful modern-day Vermeer still life by Bob Kulicke, who was renowned as a premier framer.







A cozy corner, with a window open to the breezes, is a favorite spot for writing letters. The primitive table by Larry Swan has a hammered metal top where he used to make bread.

The old Mexican chair is from El Paso Imports, as are the yellow shutters. The turn-of-the-century painting of a Connecticut hillside (which has three bullet holes in it) was one of her father's favorites. Other oddments include an old French vase filled with fresh tulips, an ostrich egg ("my twin egg") from friend Clare Rhodes, a small painting of an egg by Anthony and a photo of her cloister garden santuario by Susan Crocker in a tin retablo.

As I follow the exuberant artist among the work tables, around the hulking presence of a hand-operated art press and past storage shelves in the cramped studios inside Hand Graphics in Santa Fe (where she works on monotypes a few days each month), even the neat rows of squat tinned paints take on unexpected glamour. "Look how beautiful they are...the forms, the smudges of color, the scratches," Anthony comments.

Fingers of paint lined along the upper edge of her plexi work surface are "such perfect, complete art it's intimidating."

At home on her five acres of piñon-studded prairie, art is not confined to the studio, either. It is everywhere. When she bakes popovers, the form so enchants her that one is always saved from the batch to reside in a special, nicho-size glass display. Rocks, eggs, apples, pears, the pure and sensual beauty of a wood bowl, a sleek, brushed aluminum canister...everything becomes an element of art, part of the larger composition of her private world. "I love old crockery, old spoons...all the implements of yesteryear," explains Anthony, "yet I also love the handsomeness of modern kitchen implements and vessels. However, the only plastic things in my house are ice cube trays and my toothbrush," she laughs.

From the verdance of Connecticut, where she had converted a former chicken coop into a pocket-size Palladian charmer, she moved finally to Santa Fe in 1991 "to discover the big sky, the fascinating people here who come from other places." Although she still loves the green intimacy of New England, "I needed to be here...I need the strength and beauty here to finish what I started in other places." To soften the severe planes of the high desert, Anthony has infused her homestead with something of a 19th Century feeling, including a New Mexico variation on English gardens.

Ancient weathered and carved doors, which Anthony has collected over a lifetime, became the central architectural elements—marking passages between rooms, becoming facades for linen cabinets, etc.—in her straw bale and adobe home. The



humble construction materials themselves became a natural medium of sculpture for the entire compound. Anthony selected the site-line of the compound for a southward view of majestic twin peaks that roughly resemble a heart, which Anthony saw as herself and her twin sister Elaine, who also was a painter. Anthony's country compound includes her primary living quarters, plus a small casita built for quiet contemplation, with its comfy porch facing onto the "cloister" garden—a "Southwestern version of an ancient monastic retreat."

At the southwest corner of the cloister garden is an odd, round turret-style building that at first I thought was just a very arty doghouse for Pocket, Lover Boy and Henry Hound. Not so. Beyond the

crawl-in carved door is actually a tiny santuario with an altar and a chair. "I just love sometimes to curl up in here (even in winter) with my dogs and sleep," says Anthony, although she had to forsake such pleasure while a family of towhees used it as a nest for their chicks. The conical roof originally was thatched, but now is a living flower garden resembling those she had admired in Europe. The cloister garden itself was planted primarily with indigenous flowers and shrubs in a palette of silver and white, grey-green and a hint of blue. Everything is planted in twos because of her twin—two aspens, two lilacs, two apple trees, two pears, two cherry trees, two Russian olives.

Adjoining the cloister garden wall are corrals and a half-barn built originally for her quarter horse Starshine, and now used by visiting horses. Behind the barn—since the casita has no indoor plumbing—Anthony created a very fancy and humorous outhouse with carved doors from the Middle East and a high-backed, elaborately carved "throne." One of a series her late twin Elaine did of toilets is framed and hanging prominently on the wall.

The building of the compound was a shared experience, as were the celebrations when each new portion was completed.

**Right:** The livingroom, warmed by a cheery fire, is filled with wonderful collectibles and art from family and friends. On the table, clay vessels by sculptress Elizabeth MacDonald from New England, which were inspired by Hiroshima. Beside them is a 19th Century cherub that was an altar piece from a church in northern Spain, as is the cherub on the mantel, which Anthony annually bedecks with dried flowers and grasses from her cloister garden (the arrow is Native American). The antique black-faced tin clock-signage over a clock repair shop—was part of her late father's collection. Paintings are by Anthony, and framed by good friends Bob Kulicke and Melinda Read.













Left: The ambience of a 19th Century farmhouse was created in the casita—a favorite sanctuary—with primitive style furnishings from El Paso Imports, an antique reproduction wood stove by Firebird, a collection of baskets, and dishes from her sister Elaine's years of living in Mexico City. On the wall above the stove is a contemporary painting by Carol's twin sister Elaine; and (top right), Carol's painting "Two Separate Solitudes: Lake Lillinonna," her version of a favorite poem by Rodin's secretary, Rainer Maria Rilke. Above: Carol at play with Lover Boy and Henry Hound in the cloister garden. Behind her is the round tower santuario with its carved, crawl-through door. The antique hay fork is European.



