

Josué Eleazar Castro Razo | Mexico
| Sculpture

A mechanical engineer brings movement to folk sculpture



The historical city of Salamanca, Mexico, is home to a fascinating blend of indigenous and colonial architecture, music, and artwork. Master artist Josué Eleazar Castro Razo hails from this area, and his meticulously crafted, handmade toys captivate the young and the young-at-heart. Razo's colorful sculptures feature bustling fiestas, dinosaurs, and even bakeries complete with apron-bedecked skeleton bakers, all of which can be put into whimsical motion which the twist of a handmade knob.

Josué applies techniques he learned as a mechanical engineer to construct the mechanisms and gears for his toys, whose spirited personalities are derived from traditional Mexican folk art like skulls, devils, mythical creatures or alebrijes, dolls, masked people, musicians, and countless more. The figures, which require precise attention to detail, also incorporate traditional Mexican colors and themes, and are formulated almost exclusively with recycled material. Razo uses cardboard, or cartonería, as well as a type of natural

paste, or engrudo, for his toys, all of which are decorated by hand with bright acrylic paint.

In the rich world of international folk art, few kinds of hand-made art offer as much pure delight as Josue's toys. "I hope in the future more people start to make mechanical toys," says Razo, who adds that he wants "to make people feel joy in every piece." In addition to offering workshops for children, Razo's rare skill has earned him an international reputation as well as dozens of prestigious recognitions, including first prize in the Mexican Folk Toy National Competition.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST