

THE CINCO GROUP

In the early 20th century, five young painters arrived in Santa Fe from various cities on the East Coast. Wishing to differentiate themselves from other artists of the early Santa Fe Art Colony, they called themselves “Los Cinco Pintores” (The Five Painters). Enamored of the region’s dramatic landscapes and diverse cultures, they painted scenes of daily life in Santa Fe and northern New Mexico—colorful landscapes, romantic portrayals of Pueblo Indians on horseback, or portraits of local residents relaxing in the historic plaza, or town square.

More than one of the Cincos, as they came to be known, tried their hand at furniture making. Though they were not as skilled as the local Hispanic craftsmen, they developed a unique, simple, rough-hewn style that blended Spanish, Mexican, and Pueblo Indian design motifs. The Cincos’ singular style is the inspiration for this group. The horizontal stretcher, featuring various interpretations of the iconic stair-step pattern, is an adaptation of a symbol used often on Pueblo Indian pottery. Depending on the direction it faces, the stair-step motif represents either the mountains or rain clouds.



MEMBERS OF “LOS CINCO PINTORES”

TOP LEFT:
WILL SHUSTER AND
WALTER MRUK, CA. 1920

TOP RIGHT:
JOSEF BAKOS

LEFT: WILLARD NASH AND
FREMONT ELLIS, CA. 1920

