

Mohawk Hudson Folklife Festival, 2022

**BY ANNE RAPPAPORT BERLINER, NYF STAFF FOLKLORIST
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEVIN HOEHN**

The 2022 Mohawk Hudson Folklife Festival was a spectacular sequel to the first festival hosted in 2021. We were thrilled that Mohawk Valley-based photographer Kevin Hoehn made the trip to Albany to photograph our event. There he found the crafts, arts, music, and dance from the communities who have made a home from New York's Montgomery to Columbia Counties.

The festival welcomed back veteran participants: Altin Stoja, an iconographer; Latifa Ali Mohammad, who creates spectacular embroidered arts; the Desi Trio, a band of Pakistani immigrants; Ismail Arbab, a rug weaver and jewelry maker—all of whom have made Albany County their home.

In addition to old favorites, new to the festival was a foodways demonstration tent that featured Karen, Congolese, and Dominican food. Pictured opposite is Albany's Santa Cabrera cooking Dominican empanadas.

Staying true to the festival's name, new artists joined us from farther afield, along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. Pamela Badila and her family are community pillars in Hudson, New York. At the festival they displayed their numerous talents, such as beadwork, painting, and storytelling. Jake Krohn, a farrier and blacksmith joined the festival from Amsterdam in the Mohawk Valley. Other new artists included Sarah Bachinger, who is the founder of *Pysanky for Peace*, and Tatiana Gjergji Benack of *Noteworthy Resources*, who lead the crowd in a participatory dance from Albania.

The festival is a microcosm of the communities and artists that New York





Folklore supports. If you were to look at the festival from a bird's eye view, you could imagine faint lines creating a spider-web of connections.

Huguette Kasongo, who fried up delicious Congolese Samosas is the wife of 2021 festival performer Patrick Kasongo of Wa Lika. Altin and Tatiana connected over their shared Albanian heritage. At the 2023 festival, another Albanian introduced to us by Tatiana will be demonstrating at our food tent. She also happens to be Altin's cousin!

In 2023, we hope that these imaginary webs continue to tangle, as we further our reach and deepen our connections with the communities along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. ▼









