

Pueblo Pottery Figurines: The Expression of Cultural Perceptions in Clay

Patricia Fogelman Lange

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Pueblo Pottery Figurines: The Expression of Cultural Perceptions in Clay Patricia Fogelman Lange What do Pueblo Indians find aesthetically pleasing in their art? This book answers that question by examining pottery figurines, which emerged late in the nineteenth century. Their sudden appearance was a break with previous genres of Pueblo creative expression and a response to Anglo-Americans transforming life around them. From their inception, pottery figurines were infused with a definite political and social message. They often tapped into the dualism inherent in the Pueblo worldview in which human figures possessed animal heads, humour was juxtaposed with seriousness, and outsider and insider were simultaneously presented. Today the popular 'storyteller' figures generate income for their creators, but Lange shows another side to the appreciation of these objects and their antecedents. As the first-ever sustained aesthetic inquiry into a Pueblo sense of beauty, this path breaking contribution offers a new view of Pueblo artistic endeavours. Lange skilfully delineates how their creativity serves religion and traditional life but also describes the dissonance between those values and the process of making objects for the commercial market. In unravelling a cultural aesthetic from a study of pottery figurines, Lange interprets how these objects arise from specific historical or cultural events. But also discussed is how figurines contain clues about Pueblo artists who straddle two distinct worlds -- the traditional and the modern.



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