

EDITED BY ELI BARTRA



# Crafting Gender



LADUKE

WOMEN AND FOLK ART IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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Women and Folk Art in Latin America and the Caribbean

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# Contents

Illustrations vii

Acknowledgments ix

ELI BARTRA

Introduction i

SALLY PRICE (*Suriname*)

Always Something New: Changing Fashions in  
a “Traditional Culture” 17

NORMA VALLE (*Puerto Rico*)

The Emergence of the *Santeras*: Renewed Strength for Traditional  
Puerto Rican Art 35

MARI LYN SALVADOR (*Panama*)

Kuna Women’s Arts: Molas, Meaning, and Markets 47

DOROTHEA SCOTT WHITTEN (*Ecuador*)

Connections: Creative Expressions of Canelos Quichua Women 73

ELI BARTRA (*Mexico*)

Engendering Clay: *Las Ceramistas* of Mata Ortiz 98

RONALD J. DUNCAN (*Colombia*)

Women’s Folk Art in La Chamba, Colombia 126

DOLORES JULIANO (*Argentina*)

The Mapuche Craftswomen 155

MARÍA J. RODRÍGUEZ-SHADOW (*Mexico*)  
Women's Prayers: The Aesthetics and Meaning of Female  
Votive Paintings in Chalma 169

BETTY LADUKE (*Mexico*)  
Earth Magic: The Legacy of Teodora Blanco 197

LOURDES REJÓN PATRÓN (*Mexico*)  
Tastes, Colors, and Techniques in Embroidered Mayan  
Female Costumes 220

Contributors 237

Index 241

## Illustrations

### Suriname: *Changing Fashions in a "Traditional Culture"*

1. A reverse appliqué textile in progress 18
2. An embroidered cape with patchwork/appliqué borders 23
3. A "bits-and-pieces" cape 25
4. A Saramaka narrow-strip cape 27
5. Skirt with yarn embroidery and crocheted edging 29
6. Calabash drinking bowls 32
7. Decorative carved calabashes 32

### Puerto Rico: *The Emergence of the Santeras*

1. *Las Tres Reinas Magas* 36
2. Raquel Pagani in her workshop 36
3. Archangel Saint Raphael 42

### Panama: *Kuna Women's Arts*

1. Kuna women in traditional dress 52
2. Young girls learn to make molas 57
3. One-color bird mola 57
4. Mola blouse 62
5. Multicolored frog-leg mola 62
6. Canoe mola 65
7. Chicha mola 65
8. Multicolored political mola 67
9. Stuffed fish 69

### Ecuador: *Creative Expressions of Canelos Quichua Women*

1. Estela Dagua and Marian Vargas apply resin to a small jar 76
2. Apacha Vargas and Estela Dagua 76
3. Clara Santi Simbaña and José Abraham Chango 81



Colombia: *Women's Folk Art in La Chamba*

1. Lidia Inés Sandoval working 141
2. Hen-shaped water container 147
3. Fish-shaped bowl and donkey figures 147

Argentina: *The Mapuche Craftswomen*

1. Mapuche woman in traditional dress 161
2. Rayén (Rosa Zurita) 161
3. Mapuche woman weaving 163
4. Mapuche rug, Chile 163
5. The circulation of crafts within the Mapuche community 164

Mexico:

*Las Ceramistas of Mata Ortiz*

1. Paz Silva de Ramírez shaping a pot 111
2. Sara Corona painting 115
3. Quality of Mata Ortiz pottery 119
4. Quality of Mexican folk art 119
5. Mata Ortiz pottery 120
6. Mata Ortiz pottery 120
7. Mata Ortiz pottery 121

*Female Votive Paintings in Chalma*

1. Ex-voto giving thanks for successful surgery 178
2. Ex-voto giving thanks for surviving domestic violence 182
3. Ex-voto giving thanks for surviving a beating 183
4. Ex-voto giving thanks for recovery from an illness 184

*The Legacy of Teodora Blanco*

1. Mermaid by Irene Blanco 205
2. Berta Blanco Núñez 209
3. Angélica Vázquez 214

*Embroidered Mayan Female Costumes*

1. Mestiza terno 223
2. Mestiza next to tortilla machine 229
3. Everyday hipil 229
4. Patterns for the edges of a hipil 230
5. Mayan woman with hipil 233

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## Introduction

Does folk art exist? Or is it an anachronism, no longer meaningful and perhaps even reactionary? It is, without a doubt, a problematic concept. Still, folk art remains a sufficiently clear referent that enables me to communicate, from the outset, what I would like to discuss. Further, a better term does not exist at the moment to define this specific group of artistically designed objects. I avoid the perhaps simpler term, *art*, in order to emphasize that I am interested in discussing creative production that differs from “great” or “high” art. Removing the modifier does not magically grant folk art higher value or improve its subaltern, marginalized status.

My insistence on the term *folk art* is part of a larger effort to vindicate a particular form of artistic expression, to identify its difference. Its social origins, means of production, distribution, and consumption, and its functions veer from what we typically imagine art to be. Folk art persists without an accurate name. Perhaps this is due to the fact that those frequently portrayed as unknown, faceless artists create it.

I do not believe that one would be better served by turning to one of the 1001 names that have been thrown about for at least the past hundred years as if they were indistinct, interchangeable synonyms of folk art: *craft*, *handicraft*, *primitive art*, *touristic art*, *fourth world art*, *curiosities*, *outsider art*, *decorative art*, *ornamental art*, *savage art*, *the art of savages*, *applied arts*, *popular arts*, *ethnic art*, *native art*, *exotic art*, *tribal art*, *traditional rural crafts*, *cottage industry production*, or *village art*. Not everyone considers these terms synonymous, but distinguishing them often creates additional problems. For example, one scholar explains that “folk art is the derivative art from a high art form in the same culture, whereas what we call primitive art is the most

highly developed art form of the cultures in question” (Blocker 1994, 30). The problem arises on considering not the art but the society that produces it as primitive; and on considering folk art as nothing more than the derivative of an allegedly superior art form.<sup>1</sup>

Women and folk art share a common fate in Latin America and the Caribbean: though ubiquitous, both are almost as invisible as they are disrespected by those who study this region. In spite of the extraordinarily abundant and multifarious forms of expression that exist, a gender-based analysis of Latin American and Caribbean folk art is a task whose foundations have yet to be established. The present anthology aims to begin performing this task.

Folk art includes the visual and plastic arts and refers to the cultural production of the world’s poorest inhabitants. The poorest among the poor are most often women, and, not surprisingly, women are the most common practitioners of this art. Folk art, in general, relies on the use of traditional techniques and simple tools, and it is always handmade. Rarely is folk art utilitarian. In that sense, it differs from handicrafts, which also comprise handmade objects but are produced to satisfy practical needs, exhibit less artistic quality, and tend to be extremely repetitive, both in terms of the products themselves and of the production process. When wrestling with the question of how to evaluate artistic quality, one cannot avoid returning to the aesthetic values of so-called Western cultures, the same cultures that invented the labels for folk art that I mentioned above.

Marion Oettinger divides folk art into three classifications: utilitarian, ceremonial, and recreational. The folk art I find most interesting has no function other than an artistic one; it is mainly “recreational.” Oettinger concludes that Mexican pottery is predominantly utilitarian: “Pottery is perhaps the most common folk expression in Mexico, whether it be strictly utilitarian, figural, or both. It comes in every shape, color, and size. . . . No matter what other use [ceramic pieces] may have, they are primarily containers” (1986, 34). A telling exception to this rule can be found in Mata Ortiz, a pottery-making community that is the focus of my article in this anthology. Mata Ortiz pottery is strictly decorative and not at all utilitarian. Reversing Oettinger’s conception of pottery’s primarily functional nature, the Mata Ortiz ceramic pieces only serve a utilitarian purpose if their artistic qualities have somehow fallen short. For example, a badly thrown pot may end up as a container for paintbrushes. Another testament to the principally ornamental nature of the Mata Ortiz pottery is that it is not designed to hold liquids. Even though ceramic pots were originally produced, ages ago, to contain any liquid or solid used in cooking, purely decorative pieces are increasingly common.

How does one begin to define folk art in Latin America and the Caribbean? Is there an authentic folk art? Which would it be? The question of authenticity is not resolved by proposals such as Oettinger's, which argues that Latin American folk art must be created *by* and *for* Latin Americans (1992, xiii, 3). It has been a commonplace to think that folk art was created by the people for the people, but a significant portion of the folk art created in Latin America is consumed outside of its community of origin and, even more often, in another country altogether. For me, *authentic* does not mean *pure*, and this concept may not prove useful to understand folk art at all. James Clifford proposes that "we need exhibitions that question the boundaries of art and of the art world, an influx of truly indigestible 'outside' artifacts [and] shows that feature the impure, 'inauthentic' productions of past and present tribal life . . . [representing] affinities of the tribal and the postmodern" (1988, 213). Although he makes an important effort to break with traditional conceptions about art, he nonetheless continues to perceive the world from a Eurocentric, although postmodern, perspective.

For too long, folk art has been considered a minor art form, inferior to "great art." The fine arts, or so the story goes, represent the pinnacle of artistic creation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Only the poor make folk art, and thus it seems less deserving of serious consideration. Folk art, a derivative and deviant expression of the common people (Weekley 1988, 10–11), has been consistently ignored by scholars of aesthetics and art history, especially when compared to the attention that the "high" art created by white men from the developed world has received. Scholars of "high" art have studied individuals and artistic movements ad nauseam; they have constructed an Art History and innumerable theories to explain it. However, no such history of folk art has been developed, nor have studies been made of the different styles, and even less attention has been paid to the aesthetic theories of this art. In the so-called Western nations, a feminist art theory is in the process of construction; we cannot say the same about the existence of a feminist theory of folk art. Gene Blocker, who uses the term *primitive art*, emphasizes the extent to which folk art has been overlooked, stating that "primitive art has not been investigated as art, at all" (1994, 2). Folk art, or "exotic art," as anthropologist Raymond Firth (1992) chooses to call it, has been studied almost exclusively by specialists on the anthropology of art or aesthetics—who number only a handful and who tend to be women. James Clifford asserts that "non-Western objects have generally been classified as either primitive art *or* ethnographic specimens" (1988, 198). I would like to know where the West begins and ends. Are Mexican ceramics from Puebla considered

“non-Western objects”? Is all folk art made in Latin America automatically non-Western?

Ruth Barnes’s impressive research stands out as a model of what we need vis-à-vis folk art. Two aspects of Barnes’s work, which focuses on Indonesian textile art, exemplify her rich perspective: she evaluates textiles as artistic creations that emerge from a specific sociocultural context, and she focuses on the women who make the textiles—identifying the connections between their lives and the entire process of their artistic production (Coote and Shelton 1992).

Studying folk art from a gendered perspective—which enables one to see the often overlooked artistic creation of women—continues to be a challenging task, especially in the Latin American context. A gendered perspective is absolutely fundamental for reasons often ignored because of their obvious importance. First, a focused study on the processes of women’s artistic creation today and in the past helps us develop our general understanding of women as a social group and can aid us in appreciating how their roles in the production of art compare and contrast to those of men. In turn, this understanding helps establish a more integral identity for women and leads to improved conditions of existence by recuperating a history often ignored and recognizing women’s roles in producing culture. Finally, a focus on gender promotes a broader understanding of the production, distribution, consumption, and iconography of folk art in general, whether it is created by women or men. Knowing if a piece was produced by a woman is just as important as recognizing that it was created by a specific cultural group, such as the Huicholes, Purépechas, Mayas, Chamulas, or a mestizo community. It is no longer acceptable to assume that folk art constitutes the artistic creation of “the people,” a general, abstract, and gender-neutral term. The articles published in this anthology, which focus on issues of gender and cultural production, aim to address the weaknesses of earlier studies of folk art in order to enrich the knowledge we have about women’s artistic production and about artistic production in general. As Evelyne Hatcher observes: “Esthetic systems are not isolated constructs. They arise from and are expressions of the way life is conceived and what enhances the quality of life. Therefore, the more one can learn of the lives of the makers and users, the more one can see in what ways the art forms are or were meaningful in their original contexts, and the deeper our esthetic perception” (1999, 205).

Our focus on women’s artistic production also works against a twofold process of marginalization: folk art clearly remains on the periphery of intellectual consideration, but women’s folk art is practically invisible. This margin-

alization demands a feminist investigation of women's folk art, a study whose methodology is grounded in a political philosophy that strives to transform the subaltern position in which so many women find themselves. Such a study foregrounds the gender of those who produce folk art and investigates particular pieces' iconography in order to delineate and interpret representations of the feminine and the masculine. The existing contributions to and foundations of a feminist perspective on Latin American social reality and folk art must be acknowledged. For example, Betty LaDuke's *Compañeras: Women, Art, and Social Change in Latin America* (1985) constitutes an important, pioneering text. While LaDuke's study indeed focuses on the artistic production of Latin American and Caribbean women, it does not distinguish between handicraft, folk art, and elite visual arts.

There is, of course, another genre altogether: the coffee-table book. In recent years, a number of impressive, full-color, and costly volumes designed as living-room furniture have emerged—luxurious celebrations of art that comes from the world's poorest regions. These books tend to feature excellent photography, but they lack serious commentary on the artists and the meaning of what they produce, a problem endemic to most books on Latin American folk art. It is not surprising that a significant number of these books are catalogs from expositions.

Not every catalog ignores the artists. For example, *Ocumicho: Arrebatado del encuentro* (1993) features women artists, giving them faces, bodies, and names. The *Ocumicho* exposition was organized as an interesting “experiment” by Mercedes Iturbe, a well-known promoter of Mexican cultural production. Iturbe visited the small town of Ocumicho, Michoacán, famous for its ceramics, and distributed reproductions of paintings to women potters. The images included the work of twentieth-century Mexican artists like José Clemente Orozco, seventeenth-century European engravings, eighteenth-century oil paintings and prints, and codices depicting the conquest of Mexico. Iturbe suggested that the potters of Ocumicho recreate these images in clay. The resulting book is elegantly made, contains superb photographs, and contributes significantly to the goal of making women artists and their work more visible.<sup>2</sup> Still, the book's text pales in comparison to the images, presenting only a superficial analysis of the creative process and the pieces portrayed.

Most scholarly work on Latin American folk art that approaches the topic from a gendered perspective has emerged from Europe and the United States. Less frequently have European and U.S. scholars considered the folk art of their own nations from that perspective. This imbalance may arise from the



fact that this Latin American art has often been considered “primitive,” “native,” or “savage,” labels which intellectuals from developed countries would scarcely use to refer to people of their own nations, excepting “Native Americans” or other nonwhite people. But their art would be considered an “outsider art” anyway. In order to study the folk art of white women from developed countries, one must broaden the category of artistic production to include tasks traditionally considered nothing more than “women’s work” or domestic labor. For example, an excellent history of embroidery in Great Britain stands out because it expands the definition of what constitutes art. A knowledge of embroidery’s history constitutes a knowledge of women’s history, the book’s author, Rozsika Parker, tells us (1996). *Women and Craft* (1987), edited by Gillian Elinor et al., proves another exemplary volume. It analyzes various forms of domestic labor, including embroidery, weaving, crocheting, knitting, and quilting. These tasks represent folk art par excellence in developed countries, and have, for the most part, remained hidden in the scholar’s closet, next to the broom and the feather duster.

When a pluriethnic country attempts to consolidate its cultural identity, aspects of each ethnic group, especially folk art if it exists, are often integrated into a purportedly unified national imaginary. After the Mexican Revolution of 1910, this phenomenon produced the glorification of folk art, promoting it as a fundamental element of the modern nation-state. Applauding the art of the people was seen as a necessary step toward unifying a radically diverse country. These efforts are represented by *Las artes populares en México*, Dr. Atl’s classic text, published immediately following the revolutionary decade in 1922, and by the work of Daniel Rubín de la Borbolla, which appeared a few decades later, in 1963.

The case of Australia offers a more recent example of how folk art is edified as a nation’s unifying force. Many institutions collaborated to establish a strong cultural identity in light of the one-hundred-year anniversary of the nation’s birth. *Everyday Art: Australian Folk Art* (1998) resulted from this search. It is a brief but very well-done text that considers, surprisingly, the gender of Australian folk artists. Another recent text that deserves mention is the volume edited by Paola Gianturco and Toby Tuttle, *In Her Hands: Craftswomen Changing the World* (2000). Gianturco and Tuttle’s well-produced book, complete with full-color illustrations, stands apart from most of the other books on folk art similar in appearance. It focuses more on the artists than the art they create. *In Her Hands* provides less of a dense, academic investigation than a broadly appealing ethnographic-aesthetic exposition. Based on a series of interviews, the volume identifies each artist’s ethnic

origin, gender, and artistic medium. Perhaps most interesting is the fact that the women in this book are photographed laughing and smiling, actively working and creating. Such portrayals stand in contrast to the typical images of people living in impoverished regions, which depict the static, artificial poses of a serious, sad, and defeated community. The photographs in Gianturco and Tuttle's book also avoid picturesque representations of their subjects, and many of the women have their backs to the camera. For the editors of *In Her Hands*, it was clear that "these invisible women with their world-altering dreams deserved the spotlight" (10).

*In Her Hands* stands as an exception that proves the rule. All too often, books on folk art provide pages and pages of analysis that do not mention artists at all. Worse are the cases where the focus on artists leaves women in the margins, with no apparent justification other than crass chauvinism, which has proven a pervasive tendency. Even Carlos Monsiváis, a Mexican intellectual renowned for his solidarity with feminist struggles, committed this error in an essay that appeared in the book, *Arte popular mexicano: Cinco siglos* (1996). Monsiváis's piece mentioned sixteen artists; only two were women. *Oficios de México* (1993), another book devoted to folk art, depicts a male artist on the cover and contains ninety photographs. Nineteen of them portray female artists. A stark example of how women artists are frequently condemned to exist without faces or names appears in Kathleen Trenchard's 1998 study of Mexican paper cutting. All the book's portraits are of men. The only hands photographed for the book belong to women.

Better studies include excellent analyses of how the socioeconomic conditions of female folk artists shape their working conditions and artistic production. Patricia Moctezuma's investigation of the glazed pottery of Patamban, in the Purépecha region of Michoacán, stands out in this regard (Mummert and Ramírez Carrillo 1998, 73–101). Still, problems persist. Moctezuma's and similar studies typically describe folk art in the same way they might describe home-baked cookies or handmade shoes:<sup>3</sup> as just another form of artisanship, ignoring its artistic value. Of course, Moctezuma's work indeed proves groundbreaking in its combined emphasis on questions of gender and working conditions. What must be done now in order to understand folk art more completely is to combine the following, essential concerns: social class, race and ethnicity, gender, and art, art thereby interpreted as a process and not a collection of lifeless objects.

I consider studies of women folk artists (whether from indigenous communities or not) emphasizing the entire creative process and analyzing iconography from a feminist perspective to offer the most outstanding scholarship

on Latin American folk art. Such studies are extremely rare.<sup>4</sup> Lois Wasser-spring, who recently published a book on six of the most famous women potters of Oaxaca, contains all the necessary elements for a potentially exceptional study. Based on interviews, *Oaxacan Ceramics: Traditional Folk Art by Oaxacan Women* (2000) outlines the entire creative process, describes the women's lives in detail, and analyzes specific works and their imagery as the products of a particular social context. It is beautifully illustrated and features color photographs by Vicki Ragan. However, it lacks scholarly rigor and a critical framework. It also presents a frankly picturesque outlook, which reinforces a romanticized, paternalistic conception of the artists, their work, Oaxacan culture, and Mexico as a whole.

In Spanish, references to artisans are generally made using the masculine form, *los artesanos*. I often ask myself whether mentioning artisans in the masculine is a way of legitimizing them. Does the use of the feminine automatically devalue what it describes? Women, for example, often speak about themselves with masculine language for fear of otherwise irrevocably devaluing their status. Linguistic bias emerges in studies of folk art such as Cecile Gouy-Gilbert's investigation of the artistic production in Ocumicho and Patamban (1987). Almost 100 percent of the artists in these communities are women, and still Gouy-Gilbert only describes *artesanos* (using the Spanish masculine plural noun ending), and when she does focus on particular people, she only provides accounts of the scarce male artists who reside in those villages. To the author's credit, her study does investigate the artists' socioeconomic conditions and describes the iconography of their work. Unfortunately, it lacks analysis from a specifically aesthetic viewpoint.

The absence of aesthetic analysis constitutes a common problem. Additional cases in point include the work of Les Field about gender relations and artisans in Nicaragua (1999) and Lynn Stephen's analysis of Oaxacan Zapotec women (1991). Field's research is extraordinary for its focus on Nicaragua, where folk art traditions are not as developed as in other countries, and for its focus on women artists. Like Field's work, Stephen's is an ethnographic study that combines interests in folk art, social class, ethnicity, gender, and feminism. Her study of Zapotec artists adopts a strongly anthropological approach, but her treatment of artistic creation portrays it fundamentally as labor. Stephen researches relations of production, division of labor, and commercialization, but any discussion of artistic value remains hidden behind her emphasis on the art's socioeconomic context.

At the other extreme we find texts, generally exposition catalogs, that provide minutely detailed aesthetic examinations of particular pieces, tech-

niques, and styles, mentioning as well the pieces' place of origin, but that neglect artists entirely (Lechuga et al. 1997; Martínez Massa 1992). If such catalogs identified the artists, they would prove useful to an analysis of creative production from a gendered perspective, thereby expanding our understanding of women's—and by extension men's—folk art. Due to the absence of names in these catalogs, folk art's process of production appears as completely abstract, neutral: "the people" weave, paint, and embroider. And any time the artists do appear, they are masculine *artesanos* (Tarazona and Tommasi de Magrelli 1987).

Semiological investigations of folk art tend to be more conscious of gender concerns. Verónica Cereceda's study of the aesthetic aspects of Aymaran textile production in Isluga, Chile (1987), focuses on female artists. Peter Gow's work (1999), which pays special attention to the Piro women of the Amazonian region in Peru, also focuses on the iconography, symbolism, and technical aspects of these artists' designs. Although both Gow and Cereceda develop a gendered perspective for framing their analyses of folk art, their research could ask more about the general social, economic, and working conditions of the artists. Of specific value would be a more thorough discussion of their art's processes of production, distribution, and consumption.

The investigations of Janet Catherine Berlo (1991) and Cathy Winkler (1993) are exemplary for their rare ability to combine several analytical approaches. They consider history, anthropology, art history, and the ethnography of art, also taking into account the artists' gender, social class, and ethnicity. Berlo's work on Latin American textiles attests to the author's remarkable knowledge of and concern for aesthetics and sociohistorical factors. Winkler's meticulous study of the artists of Olinalá is primarily anthropological, but it does not ignore entirely the question of artistic value.

When considering the overall scarcity of scholarly work on folk art that foregrounds gender, it is important to note that, in general, folklore has lent itself to feminist analysis more often than folk art has. In developed countries, folklore has received more attention than folk art, probably because it has traditionally been considered more fundamental to cultural identity. I would argue that folk art is extremely richly developed in many cultures of Asia, Africa, and Latin America but, in general, it does not enjoy such an elaborate tradition in the United States, Canada, Europe, or even Australia (in spite of the recent renaissance of aboriginal art mentioned above). Folk art exists in almost every culture of the world, but it is more developed in some places than in others.

Focusing on folklore in their own countries, feminist scholars from devel-

oped regions find folk art in the developing world. Significantly, it is much less common for Latin American and Caribbean scholars to look at the folk art of their own regions. When they do, art, as I mentioned earlier, appears as labor and not as a primarily aesthetic, creative process. For example, Loreto Rebolledo's work on pottery and textiles in Chile (n.d.) describes the commercialization of and social relations that shape artisanal industries; but she says nothing about art. In short, it is necessary to develop a structured theoretical framework for analyzing folk art from a gendered perspective, especially in Latin America, where existing contributions to such a framework remain particularly scarce.

Although developing a gendered perspective is essential, it is also necessary to examine closely the entire process of producing folk art. It is certainly true that not all artistic production clamors for a gender-based analysis. As opposed to bold displays of conceptions of the masculine and the feminine, pieces often raise such concerns in a barely audible whisper, warning scholars against jumping immediately from description and analysis to establishing broad-based theories about gender in Latin American folk art.

The need to combine different scholarly tendencies in order to understand folk art more completely is reinforced by a glance at how others have addressed this issue. For example, Marion Oettinger (1992, 2) contends that there are two clearly differentiated schools of thought: on one hand, studying folk art as art; on the other, emphasizing socioeconomic context and ignoring the question of aesthetics. Blocker argues that scholars must unite these divergent tendencies: "You can approach primitive art from an aesthetic point of view but subjectively, or you can approach primitive art from a more objective basis, but not aesthetically. What has not occurred in the case of primitive art, as has occurred with practically every other art form is an approach which is both aesthetic and objective" (1994, 2–3). I believe that the present anthology begins to achieve this goal. All of its contributors combine Oettinger's schools of thought: they analyze folk art as artistic creation emerging from a complex web of social relations that in turn help shape and are determined by relations of production, distribution, and consumption.

This collection includes ten studies of the visual folk arts in seven different Latin American and Caribbean countries. I should clarify that the anthology does not attempt to be representative of the entire region. There are four pieces about Mexico, for example, and mostly for rather arbitrary reasons. I am Mexican, and I live in Mexico. Perhaps it would have been good to cover each country. However, adhering to this criterion would make different indigenous groups invisible by privileging the nation-state form. This

concern also illustrates why it is deceptive to say that there are four essays about Mexico. Each focuses on different ethnic groups and different regions of that heterogeneous country. Of course, I must acknowledge that the anthology still exhibits serious absences, the most important of which is Brazil. I simply could not find anyone who works on Brazilian folk art and gender. Many other absences are merely due to limitations of space. In a book of this scale, it is impossible to provide exhaustive coverage of the entire region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The texts included have been chosen for their effectiveness in providing and developing interesting comparative perspectives. For example, readers can better understand the similarities and differences between the indigenous pottery-making communities of the Amazon and the mestiza potters of Mexico and Colombia (Whitten, LaDuke, Bartra, Duncan). Though the creative and technical processes of pottery making are remarkably similar in all of these groups, the function of ceramics and the meaning of its design and iconography vary widely from place to place.

Another aspect of the anthology important to mention is that five of the articles have been written by Anglos, while Latin American and Caribbean scholars wrote the other five. Thus, aside from considering how the creative process is shaped by geographical, linguistic, ethnic, social, political, and economic factors, this anthology presents another complexity by including perspectives from inside and outside of the Latin American and Caribbean region. Aside from this difference, all of the pieces included here share the trait of analyzing communities that are not the authors' own. But even this commonality manifests itself along a broad range. Sally Price's article on the Maroon women of Suriname speaks of a culture that she perhaps knows better than her own, even though she remains an outsider. The same complex relationship describes the positions of Dorothea Scott Whitten, Ronald J. Duncan, and Mari Lyn Salvador, all of whom have spent decades researching the communities they discuss here. Betty LaDuke, an artist-academic, has spent a great deal of time immersing herself in artists' communities in Latin America and Africa, and she focuses consistently and insightfully on questions of gender. To varying degrees, the articles by Dolores Juliano, María J. Rodríguez-Shadow, Norma Valle, Lourdes Rejón Patrón, and myself represent studies of communities with strong cultural connections to the scholars in question. Simply put, this collection approaches different cultural traditions from a variety of cultural perspectives, granting credence to Blocker's observation that "the study of primitive art is necessarily and unavoidably cross-cultural in nature, judging their art in our terms" (1994, 21). All of the

anthology's essays acknowledge the combination of change and continuity inherent to folk art. Though in many aspects traditional, folk art is a very dynamic form, and the collection's authors recognize its responsiveness to change.

Women create art in Latin America and the Caribbean, and, as far as anyone can tell, they always have. This anthology strives to develop a clear, systematic framework for better understanding exactly what and how women folk artists create. For too long, their artistic production has remained hidden, either confused with domestic labor or concealed behind an abstract notion of the pueblo that is almost always assumed to consist solely of men.

Half of the pieces assembled here focus on indigenous communities (Price, Whitten, Salvador, Juliano, Rejón Patrón), while the other half focuses on groups of women artists who do not identify themselves as indigenous and who do not speak indigenous languages (LaDuke, Duncan, Bartra, Valle, Rodríguez-Shadow). Women of this latter group form part of mestiza society, or at least that is how it appears.

Each essay in the anthology—with the exception of the article by Rodríguez-Shadow, whose subjects remain anonymous—focuses on women artists. Every piece also elaborates on the creative process of producing art, and on its distribution and consumption. Most important, each essay considers folk art as *art*; every contributor made a concerted effort to address this fundamental point.

This anthology is one of the first of its kind. It is our hope that many more will follow, helping to illuminate what for too long has remained as invisible as if it resided on the dark side of the moon: the creative wealth of poor women from the multiethnic and pluricultural communities of Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>5</sup>

## Notes

This introduction was translated by Ryan Long.

- 1 For an interesting discussion about primitive art, see Price (1989).
- 2 This is also true of film and video. See, for example, Julia Kellman and Phil Miller's video, *The Moon Woman's Sister* (Conejo Productions, USA, 1993), which focuses on the Mayan weavers of the Guatemalan high plains.
- 3 For a similar tendency in the scholarly work on other parts of the world, see Michel (1999).
- 4 Of particular interest are the studies published by the Centro de Estudios para

el Desarrollo de la Mujer (CEDEM) in Santiago de Chile, within the Colección Artes y Oficios. See, for example, Loreto Rebolledo, *Artesanas de Rari: Tramas en crin* (Santiago de Chile: CEDEM, 1990), number 2 in the series; Ximena Valdés, *Loceras de Pilén* (Santiago de Chile: CEDEM, 1991); and Angélica Willson, *Textilería mapuche: Arte de mujeres* (Santiago de Chile: CEDEM, 1992), number 3 in the series.

- 5 I prefer advancing the term *pluricultural* to adhering to the term *multicultural* because of the latter's associations with a dominant sexist and racist ideology that persists most strongly in the United States. See Sartori (2001) for an interesting study of pluriculturalism.

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