UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Kachina Dolls: The Art of Hopi Carvers. By Helga Teiwes.

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0136650r

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 16(3)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Hieb. Louis A.

Publication Date

1992-06-01

DOI

10.17953

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

apart from that of other minorities and will likely shape the nature of Indian-white relations in the West into the foreseeable future.

In conclusion, this book is a significant contribution to the history of the American West. It will prove of interest to historians, anthropologists, policymakers, and others with an interest in the social history of the West. An added benefit is that it is relatively inexpensive, given its thickness.

Daniel L. Boxberger
Western Washington University

Kachina Dolls: The Art of Hopi Carvers. By Helga Teiwes. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991. 160 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

Helga Teiwes's text and photography celebrate the work of twentyseven modern Hopi carvers, artists whose work reflects the most recent developments in Hopi kachina dolls. Given the popular interest in kachina dolls, it is not surprising that a second book on the subject would appear almost simultaneously: Hopi Kachina Dolls and Their Carvers by Theda Bassman and photographer Gene Balzer (West Chester, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1991). Both books document this new art form, Hopi kachina wood sculpture. Bassman interviews twenty-five artists, several in common with Teiwes. Both writers provide basic biographical information, with Bassman furnishing lengthy quotes from the carvers as they discuss their art and its place in Hopi religion. The Bassman book includes extensive color photography, including a photograph of each artist and the artist's signature or hallmark as it appears on the base of the dolls. However, it lacks any sort of historical or cultural introduction, any overall context for understanding or appreciating this art form.

Bassman's book is for the collector; Teiwes's book is as much for the artists as it is for students of Hopi art. Teiwes's volume had its origin in an Arizona State Museum project to document "the lifestyles of various southwestern Indian tribes through photography." To that end, between 1985 and 1989 she made repeated trips to the Hopi villages, where she interviewed and photographed twenty-seven "representative" carvers at work. The first product of this effort was a public exhibit at the Arizona State Museum in Tucson, which was attended by sixteen of the carvers and their families. Teiwes is foremost a photographer, and her images of the

Reviews 219

artists at work (black-and-white) and of the kachina sculptures (twenty-four color plates) are extraordinary. In addition to these rich visual images, the introductory chapters are enhanced with photographs by Forman Hanna taken in Mishongnovi village in 1922. Clearly, the visual dimension of Teiwes's effort is superior.

In addition, Teiwes's text is concise, factual, and smoothly written. A bibliography follows her essay, but references throughout are to perspectives given to Teiwes by colleagues at the Arizona State Museum rather than the sources cited. Although this is an excellent introduction to one aspect of Hopi art, there are several statements that are incorrect or subject to other interpretations.

There has been a tendency from J. Walter Fewkes, writing in the 1890s, to E. Charles Adams, writing in the 1990s, to speak of "Kachina religion" (Teiwes) or the "Kachina cult" (Adams). The katsina is an integral part of Hopi religion as well as the Hopi ritual calendar. It is misleading to imply that this is somehow a separate religion, an offshoot or intrusion. Teiwes, following Adams (*The* Origin and Development of the Pueblo Katsina Cult, University of Arizona Press, 1991), says that "no archaeological evidence of the Katsina religion" (p. 22) has been found prior to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, when masked figures appear in ceramic and rock art. Against this, it may be argued that the sipapu, which exists in archaeological sites nearly one thousand years earlier, is evidence of a lower world of spirits in Pueblo thought which may only have been given masked representation with the later development of religious expression. This, however, is a matter of differences in interpretation.

In a brief review of Hopi history, Teiwes states, "Mormon settlers began to encroach on Hopi land, often claiming those sites that had springs and washes. Because of such actions, the missionary efforts of the Mormons failed, and resentment among the Hopi grew. President Chester A. Arthur's establishment of the Hopi reservation in 1882 ended white expansion . . ." (p. 29).

Teiwes's statements reflect two common but incorrect perspectives. First, although a Mormon settlement was established at Tuba City near the Hopi summer farming village at Moencopi, I know of no Mormon homesteading near any of the major villages at any time during the nineteenth century. Second, through detailed research in the National Archives, Stephen C. McCluskey has made clear that the boundaries of the 1882 Hopi Indian Reservation were established (1) to provide the legal basis to evict Dr. Jeremiah Sullivan, who lived on the Hopi First Mesa from early

in 1881, and (2) "for [a] reservation that will include Moquis villages and agency and large enough to meet all needful purposes and no larger" ("Evangelists, Educators, Ethnographers and the Establishment of the Hopi Reservation," *Journal of Arizona History* 21 [1980]). It was unquestionably Sullivan who forced the issue, rather than Mormon pressures from the West or Navajo encroachments from the east.

With prehistory and history behind her, Teiwes moves into areas where her fieldwork and photography complement each other in providing various perspectives on Hopi kachina carving. From Emory Sekaquaptewa we learn that the Hopi recognize four forms of the tihu (doll), which correspond to four stages of postnatal development. Barton Wright provides a useful framework for understanding the development of stylistic changes in the kachina doll over the past century. From here, Teiwes describes the development of kachina sculpture in the 1980s and the new carving techniques, which include X-acto knives, woodburning, and Dremel tools, as well as new stains and paints. Through twelve black-andwhite photographs and accompanying narrative, Teiwes documents Von Monongya's creation of a Sa'lakwmana sculpture. Finally, Teiwes discusses the influence of the market on this art form and the concessions made to the market's taste. The influence of traders—including Hopi entrepreneurs—and of juried shows, as well as the creativity of individual artists, are all shown to have had a place in the recent development of kachina sculptures.

Fully one half of the book is given over to brief profiles of twenty-seven modern carvers, including such nationally known artists as Alvin James Makya and Cecil Calnimptewa. Bassman includes Calnimptewa but omits Makya. Here, as elsewhere, Teiwes provides a broader base for understanding and appreciation.

Teiwes concludes her account with a brief and insightful summary statement. She notes that kachina dolls were once made for religious purposes, but now they have a secular function. Clearly, this is the case. Of the many books written on Hopi kachinas, Edward A. Kennard's *Hopi Kachinas* (with color illustrations by Edwin Earle) is probably the most successful in conveying the religious contexts. Teiwes's fine effort provides an excellent understanding of the secular contexts of contemporary Hopi kachina wood sculpture.

Louis A. Hieb University of Arizona