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Woven from the Center: Native Basketry in the Southwest. By Diane Dittemore. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2024. 400 pages. $75.00 hardcover; $75.00 e-book.

Written by Diane Dittemore, the recently retired associate curator of ethnology at the Arizona State Museum, *Woven from the Center: Native Basketry in the Southwest* highlights objects from the Arizona State Museum's extensive collection of more than 4,000 historic and contemporary baskets. Opening its doors in 1893, the Arizona State Museum (ASM) was founded during a period of heightened interest in Indigenous material culture, which was, in part, intensified by the arts and crafts movement and its elevation of the handmade object. As Dittemore details, although such basketry collections proliferated during this period, the identities of the artists were not typically recorded. An extractive and colonial practice, the separation of material culture from source communities is a form of commodification grounded in erasure. An awareness of this unavoidable truth permeates *Woven from the Center*. Organized predominantly by tribal community, the volume commences with an introduction providing a history of the museum's ethnographic basketry collection. With a particular emphasis on affluent Anglo-American collectors, the inaugural chapter details bequests fundamental to the formation of the basketry collection, which broadly comprised the majority of the museum's earliest ethnological acquisitions.

The bulk of the volume, "Centering In: Basketry by Tribal Community," dedicates chapters to each of the tribes whose baskets form the ASM collection, including the Tohono O'odham, Akimel O'odham, Hopi, Ndée (Western Apache), Yavapai, Diné, Pai, Paiute, New Mexico Pueblo, Nde (Chiricahua Apache), Comcaac (Seri), Yoeme (Yaqui), Yoreme (Mayo), and Rarámuri (Tarahumara) communities. These chapters are primarily organized by tribal community, with the exception of the last two chapters, which are organized by geographic region. This organizational shift results in a somewhat uneven presentation, but one that aligns with the strengths of the ASM collection. While the introduction primarily features photographs of collectors, these chapters center the artists with maker photographs accompanying examples of their artistry. Throughout *Woven from the Center*, the volume includes an ample selection of richly detailed full-color photographs, conveying the remarkable variety of patterns and materials found within the basketry collection. The baskets range from those created for ceremonial and utilitarian use to those crafted specifically for the burgeoning tourist industry.

During the Great Depression, the federal government established the Indian Arts and Crafts Board in an effort to promote economic self-sufficiency for Native peoples, employing anthropologists who directly solicited on reservations. As the market expanded, such baskets became "tangible expressions of the interactions" between

tribes and the settler population (76). As Dittemore describes, wealthy collectors became increasingly concerned about the detrimental aesthetic impact resulting from commodification, as artists adapted their designs to suit Anglo-American consumer tastes. Rather than abstract or geometric patterns, the commercialization of basketry resulted in a proliferation of figurative works featuring anthropomorphic and animal designs. In 1917, ASM director Byron Cummings lamented that such basketry catered to the sensibilities of tourists who believed such designs to be quintessentially "Indian," while the artists themselves were amused by "the ignorant and depraved tastes of the would-be connoisseur" (104).

One such example was created by renowned Tohono O'odham artist Chona Ochoa, who was the subject of anthropologist Ruth M. Underhill's *Autobiography of a Papago Woman* (1936). With outlined figures darkly contrasting against the amber-toned background, the urn-shaped basket features an anthropomorphic pattern interspersed with silhouetted profiles of animals. As Dittemore details, Ochoa originally sold the basket to her Tucson employer, who first utilized the vessel to store children's toys, and later as a wastepaper basket. Commenting to Underhill regarding her living conditions during that period, Ochoa stated, "We went to Tucson and worked for the white people. In Tucson, we had a shack with mattresses in it" (88). Notably, although abhorrent working conditions and economic exploitation were common, concern for such mistreatment seemed largely absent from historical discourse that predominantly focused on the detrimental impact of commercialization on aesthetics. This aesthetic anxiety manifested in discourse surrounding both form and materiality, as Indigenous artists began to incorporate unconventional, commercially produced dyes and pigments. Affluent collectors perceived such adaptations as inauthentic debasement.

As discourse evolved, material adaptation, such as glass bead embellishments, became widely admired as aesthetic innovation. Such innovation is emphasized throughout the volume. In addition to historical baskets, the text highlights selections from contemporary weavers, such as Ruby Chimerica (Hopi) and her daughter, Annetta Koruh. Constructing woven sculptural forms, Chimerica employs negative space, thus exposing the warp while alternating the tension of the weave to create freeform and unconventional designs. Borrowing this technique, her daughter, Annetta Koruh, creates openwork butterflies whose wings seem animate with flight. Although aesthetic deviation from conventional design has been met with criticism, such adaptation embodies the resilience of Native communities who have continued to thrive despite remarkable adversity. Moreover, this embodied resilience manifests through examples such as the Tohono O'odham coiled work basket, a utilitarian form that ruptured under the weight of its burden. Bearing this wound, the basket was carefully stitched with bailing wire, altered but with renewed purpose.

The detrimental impact of the commercial market and, more broadly, settler colonialism, serves as a dominant theme throughout the volume. Furthermore, the presumed authority of the commercial market continues to complicate interpretive meaning, as settler misconceptions frequently dominate the common understanding of cultural motifs and conventions. One such example is the Navajo (Diné) "wedding basket." As Dittemore explains, contrary to this popularized misnomer, the negative

space interrupting the black-and-red banding is more accurately symbolic of ceremony, as the ritual use of the basket is not exclusive to wedding ceremonies. Proliferated through the commercial market, this misconception continues to create an impediment to the adoption of more accurate terminology.

Woven from the Center: Native Basketry in the Southwest will appeal to both researchers and collectors, as well as Indigenous communities whose cultural heritage items form the Arizona State Museum's ethnographic basketry collection. Although the title of the volume is perhaps somewhat misleading in its implied breadth and would be more suitable for an encyclopedic text rather than one focusing on a single museum, the formidable collection highlighted is comparatively expansive; thus, the analysis is more broadly applicable. Throughout the book, the presentation includes extensive analysis of established sources combined with historical and contemporary photography, artwork, ethnographic records, and historical documents. What is more important, as an art form of symbolic and ceremonial significance, basketry remains integral to the cultural revitalization efforts of numerous tribes. As *Woven from the Center: Native Basketry in the Southwest* attests, assisting Indigenous communities with such revitalization efforts is the most ethical use of museum ethnographic collections in circumstances in which retention, rather than repatriation, remains appropriate.

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