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Dialogues With Zuni Potters. By Milford Nahohai and Elisa Phelps. Zuni, NM: Zuni A:shiwi Publishing, 1995. 100 pages. \$45.00 cloth; \$19.95 paper.

Dialogues With Zuni Potters by Milford Nahohai and Elisa Phelps features the voices of Zuni artists who acquaint readers with the conceptual historic and cultural aspects associated with the pottery tradition. Too often, books on American Indian arts overanalyze form, design, and technique and neglect the artists who provide personal insights into the art and culture. These books also distance readers from the artists by not including their narratives and by focusing only on the art as if it were separate from the people and the place of origin. In *Dialogues With Zuni Potters*, the authors feature the potters and the art equally and demonstrate the multiple connections between potters, pottery, family, culture, and Zuni.

Eleven interviews with fourteen artists comprise much of the book. Eight of the interviews are with individual artists Quanita Kalestewa, Josephine Nahohai, Milford Nahohai, Eileen Yatsattie, Gabriel Paloma, Marjorie Esalio, Noreen Simplicio, and Livia Roxie Panteah. The remaining three interviews are with couples Randy Nahohai and Rowena Him, Anderson and Avelia Peynetsa, and Agnes Peynetsa and Berdel Soseeah. Milford Nahohai and Phelps conducted most of the interviews together. However, James Ostler interviewed Milford Nahohai and Milford, a practicing potter and former employee of the Pueblo of Zuni Arts and Crafts, interviewed Kalestewa and Esalio alone. A significant and distinguishing element of the book is the relationship of the interviewer, Milford, to the artists. As a Zuni potter, Milford Nahohai is familiar with the potters and Zuni culture which undoubtedly aided in the execution and content of the interviews.

Dialogues with Zuni Potters demonstrates that artists are more than producers of objects. Through the "dialogues" between the authors and potters, readers become aware of the humanity of the Zuni potters. A montage of ideas, memories, opinions, history, and humor comprises each interview allowing for a unique profile of each artist(s). Accompanying each interview are black-and-white and color photographs of the artist(s) alone and/or with family members or their ceramics, or engaged in various activities. Although the voice of each artist takes its particular course in the dialogue, the potters still answer specific questions related to technique, designs, taboos,

influences, pottery-making processes, and personal history. The background of each artist is different, and their ideas and opinions on the Zuni pottery tradition vary. Nevertheless, each potter recognizes the significance of pottery making in Zuni as it relates to the culture and to their identity. Several potters specifically emphasize the continued traditional use of pottery in the Pueblo to hold water and food, recalling how good water tastes when stored in a pot or referring to ceremonial uses of pottery in the Pueblo.

Most of the interviews are with a single artist but two interviews are with couples who collaborate on pottery (Randy Nahohai and Rowena Him also interviewed together but they were regarded as individual artists). In collaborations, each person completes certain parts of the pottery-making process that the other may not be as skilled at doing. In the partnership of Agnes Peynetsa and Berdel Soseeah, for instance, Soseeah forms the pottery and sands while Peynetsa paints and forms lid tops with figurative frogs and lizards. Peynetsa also signs the ceramics they produce together since the Peynetsa name is widely recognized. Anderson and Avelia Peynetsa also create pottery together, each performing the part of the work they do well. Anderson states, "Avelia does all of the polishing 'cause when I polish, they always come out dull" (p. 54). While these collaborations continue, these potters also create pieces independently, some with the hopes of becoming known for their individual works.

Interestingly, three of the five men represented in *Dialogues With Zuni Potters* are interviewed with their women partners. This makes sense because of their close working relationships; however, there may have been more individualized testimony based on gender if the men had been interviewed alone. In the past, most Zuni potters were female but the book attests to changing attitudes and conventions. The men comment on how they feel about being potters since historically women made pottery. Responses to these changes are usually brief, such as Anderson Peynetsa's statement: "That was then, this is now" (p. 57). Milford Nahohai also notes that at other pueblos pottery making is still considered a female art, "but it's not like that in Zuni. Males are becoming more dominant in pottery because they're the ones that are experimenting and making bigger pieces" (p. 51). Randy Nahohai is one example of this trend as illustrated by several photographs of his pots in the book.

The ages of the potters interviewed varies and a few family

generations of potters are represented in the book, particularly the Nahohai and Peynetsa families. The potters' narratives concerning the influences on their artistic development are enlightening because their comments hint at the changes that may be occurring in teaching pottery making. For instance, many of the younger artists took pottery classes that Daisy Hooee (Hopi, Tewa) or Jennie Laate (Acoma) taught at the Zuni High School, although they may have had relatives who knew how to make pottery. Both of the high school teachers were from other tribes but their students adopted and adapted the Zuni pottery tradition to develop their styles. The older potters learned from mothers and relatives. For example, Quanita Kalestewa acquired her pottery-making skills from her mother, Nellie Bica, who "is the oldest recognized potter at Zuni" (p. 13).

Generational differences are apparent in pottery styles and techniques as well. Younger potters such as Anderson Peynetsa, Randy Nahohai, Gabriel Paloma, and Noreen Simplicio are prone to experimentation which includes less adherence to strict traditional pottery practices like outdoor firing. Still, the adaptability of the Zuni pottery making is gradually being recognized as part of the cultural tradition. Every potter represented in the book has his or her distinctive style based on certain pottery forms, painting techniques, or appliqués. Anderson Peynetsa has achieved recognition for his exceptional painting style and technique; his pots are known "for [their] precise, flowing lines" (p. 53). The younger artists also look to older Zuni pottery for inspiration. For example, Eileen Yatsattie visits museums to research older Zuni pottery, stating that "There's always something different that you never see anywhere else" (p. 71). Some potters prefer to copy the original designs and forms because of their adherence to tradition while others feel free to change traditional Zuni styles to suit their individuality.

Significant changes have occurred in Zuni pottery since the 1986 publication of *Zuni Pottery* by Marian Rodee and James Ostler. The level of skill among Zuni potters has increased dramatically, as evidenced by the finely painted designs and well-formed pots and figurines illustrated in *Dialogues With Zuni Potters*. Several factors have attributed to the increased mastery of pottery making in Zuni, including developing a market for Zuni pottery; however, the most important influence has been "the increased knowledge that Zuni potters have acquired about their own potting tradition from books and museum col-

lections" (p. 7). Once Zuni potters began to have access to historic Zuni pottery in museum collections, they experienced a surge in creativity that continues today. The usefulness of historic art forms in museum collections to practicing artisans is invaluable. As an example, Josephine Nahohai was the recipient of a School of American Research (SAR) grant that allowed her and others to examine the SAR collection of Zuni pottery. After studying the collection, Josephine "didn't use the deer [in-his-house] design anymore. She saw a lot of other designs that had more meaning to her so she put those on her pots" (p. 29). In addition, potters such as Randy Nahohai and Rowena Him "draw a lot of [their] inspiration, even the real contemporary type designing, from the old pots" (p. 35).

The pottery illustrated in *Dialogues With Zuni Potters* attests to the range of the artists' creativity. As seen in the book, polychrome pottery (white slip with red and white painted designs) is no longer the only kind of pottery being produced at Zuni. The innovations since the last major study of Zuni pottery include changes in color, form, and designs. Pots often have a red, yellow, or micaceous slip background with painted white, red, black, and/or yellow designs. Patterns and designs on the pots have become more intricate as well as more varied and dynamic. Instead of painting designs, Noreen Simplicio and Livia Roxie Panteah cut out the designs on some pots. Other potters cover the surfaces of their pottery with frog images in naturalistic or abstract renditions. The application of figurative frogs, salamanders, and lizards to pottery has become more common on Zuni ceramics. These figures appear to be emerging from the walls of some pots, while other ceramics have whole frogs applied to their sides. Gabriel Paloma shapes the handles of cornmeal bowls like dragonflies and the plumed serpent. Owl figures, a favorite of Quanita Kalestewa, have not changed much from their historic counterparts but remain integral to the Zuni pottery tradition.

For those readers who are unfamiliar with Zuni pottery, *Dialogues With Zuni Potters* will provide insights into the potters' lives and their artistry. However, these same readers may find themselves confused due to an unfamiliarity with pottery processes, Zuni culture, or the history of the Zuni pottery tradition. Therefore, it may be helpful to peruse *Zuni Pottery* (1986) and/or *Gifts of Mother Earth* (1983) to provide background on Zuni culture and the pottery tradition. *Zuni Pottery* presents a thorough history of events leading up to contemporary potters

and pottery presented in *Dialogues with Zuni Potters*, while *Gifts of Mother Earth* provides a historical and cultural context for the Zuni pottery tradition. Readers searching for a more interpretive analysis of Zuni pottery making may find this book disappointing since the text largely consists of quotations from the potters with little interpretation by the authors. As previously mentioned, books are available that can supplement a reader's understanding of the Zuni pottery tradition.

Dialogues With Zuni Potters developed out of a need to document the growth and artistic skill achieved by Zuni potters since the 1980s. The book has accomplished this task along with contributing potters' viewpoints to existing books on Zuni pottery. Furthermore, as a publication by an enterprise owned and operated by American Indians (it is the third book published by Zuni A:shiwi Publishing), it is a valuable resource since it was generated from within Zuni artists' perspectives. Books like *Dialogues With Zuni Potters* that incorporate artists' voices are a needed addition to available books on the arts of American Indians.

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From the Glittering World: A Navajo Story. By Irvin Morris. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997. 272 pages. \$24.95 cloth.

There are many Native American stories, and in *From the Glittering World*, Irvin Morris has devised a way of telling them all. His effort yields a literal omnibook, comprising as it does virtually every aspect of narrative as it contributes to the forming of a writer's vision. A Tóbaahí Navajo with a master of fine arts degree from Cornell and presently teaching at the State University of New York, Buffalo, Morris draws on the theoretical expertise of experimental fiction in order to accommodate his own experience, which stretches from the most uncorrupted renditions of creation myths to his own creation as a writer. Thus, *From the Glittering World* encompasses both the individual in the cosmos and the cosmos within a single person. Indeed, Morris demonstrates the great world that his personal experience enfolds, and the result of that demonstration is an uncommonly complete form in which to write.

Morris' "Navajo story" is recounted in four parts: a creation