



Art and Faith in Mexico: The Nineteenth-Century Retablo Tradition

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Nineteenth-century Mexico was a period of unprecedented political turmoil. One result of this instability was that many religious practices moved from the church to the home, and the retablo art form--sacred paintings on tin--flourished.

With over 1,700 objects, New Mexico State University holds the largest collection of retablos of any museum in the United States. Eleven eminent Latin Americanists from the U.S. and Mexico have studied this collection and placed it in a broad cultural context. They have looked at the retablos from the standpoint of art history, history, anthropology, folk art, and religion to bring a new understanding of and appreciation for these paintings. This interdisciplinary approach brings together multiple influences in considering, for example, Baroque images as popular icons, Aztec gods and home altars, popular images in nineteenth-century Mexico, European and viceregal paintings, and bultos and santos from New Mexico. The richly varied retablo tradition continues to the present, making this volume a much-needed addition to the literature on the complex society that formed along the Camino Real between Mexico City and Santa Fe.

In addition to the essays, the book includes restoration philosophy and conservation methods, a glossary, chronology, maps, and a comprehensive section on the art and iconography of each object in the Art Gallery collection.

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