



Casas Grandes and the Ceramic Art of the Ancient Southwest (Published in Association with The Art Institute of Chicago)

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In the flourishing ancient Indian communities of the American Southwest and northwest Mexico, master potters created ceramic arts that are considered among the most accomplished in the world. The symbolic imagery and distinctive local styles of the region are unmistakable—simple volumetric shapes covered with complex, interlocking geometrical designs that are sometimes combined with bold abstract animal, human, and composite figures. Within this shared tradition are clearly identifiable local styles and symbolic vocabularies, and this lavishly illustrated book focuses on one of them: the ceramic works of the Casas Grandes-Paquimé area of northwest Mexico and adjoining parts of New Mexico and Arizona, c. A.D. 1200–1400.

For the first time on a comprehensive scale, expert art historians and an artist-teacher discuss the complex imagery of approximately ninety Casas Grandes vessels with fifty pieces representing other major styles of the Greater Southwest. Superb examples show polychromatic designs of real and mythological animals, together with abstract human figures and remarkably varied geometries, demonstrating the imaginative complexity and exceptional achievement of the Casas Grandes potters. Certain motifs reflect affinities with distant Mesoamerica, yet the authors show that these forms were absorbed into a visual vocabulary that reflected the unique artistic and cosmological outlook of Casas Grandes, within the native Southwestern cultural tradition.

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