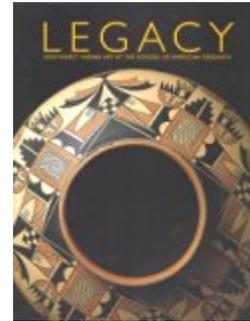


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Duane Anderson, ed. *Legacy: Southwest Indian Art at the School of American Research*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1999. xiii + 224 pp. \$100.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-933452-54-1.

Reviewed by Charles C. Kolb (National Endowment for the Humanities)
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A legacy is “a gift from an ancestor; something handed down across time and space, and through the generations. It draws its significance from how and by whom it is created and acquired, and why it was preserved and passed on. Any legacy changes over time, taking on new meanings with each new context and each succeeding generation” (p. 2). With this distinction, Anderson and his colleagues set the stage for a magnificent presentation—unparalleled images of artifacts accompanied by thoughtful, and thought-provoking, narratives.

The School of American Research (SAR) located in Santa Fe is an internationally renowned non-profit center for Native American studies, anthropology, and contemporary Native American artists, scholars, and the general public. The school is known for its resident scholar program, seminars, scholarly and popular publications, public outreach, archaeological excavations, and extraordinary collections of material culture created by prehistoric and contemporary populations of the Southwest. In 1997-1998, SAR celebrated its ninetieth anniversary and commemorated the twentieth year of the school’s Indian Arts Research Center. As a part of the celebration SAR organized an exhibition of ninety Native American artworks from their collections that was on display at the Wheelwright Museum until April 1999. These objects, drawn from the school’s collection of more than 11,000 pieces of pottery, paintings, textiles, baskets, jewelry, katsinas, leatherwork, beadwork, and other items, also represent 48 Native American tribes.

These artifacts, a feast for the eyes, commemorate the anniversary and are also highlighted in *Legacy*. The editor, Duane Anderson, an archaeologist who specializes in the American Southwest and Midwest, also serves as

SAR’s Vice President. The writer N. Scott Momaday, a member of the Kiowa tribe of Oklahoma, a former SAR resident scholar, and a current board member, wrote the forward to this compendium. SAR’s President and CEO, Douglas Schwartz, an archaeologist who specializes in the American Southwest, authored the preface.

This lavish tome contains more than 150 full-color images accompanied by corresponding scholarly essays prepared by fourteen of the foremost scholars in the field. Among these are independent researchers, curators, museum directors, art historians, and anthropologists. Their essays focus on the historical and aesthetic “legacy” embodied in the ninety artifacts, which are considered to be gifts handed down from past generations to future descendants, and on the relationships that developed among those who created these objects, collected, and studied these objects. Hence, the essays explore the unique relationships between Native American artists, patrons, benefactors, SAR staff members, scholars, and others whose efforts have enriched and enhanced the significance of the corpus.

Eight scholars authored the descriptions of the twenty-five ceramic selections—twenty-two pottery vessels and three figurines. Some of these are archaeological or ethnographic specimens, and a few are contemporary pieces. “Paintings,” by J. J. Brody, included eleven examples dating from 1880 to 1946; most are watercolors. Anderson and Marian Rodee prepared the section entitled “Textiles.” The majority of the examples are Navajo blankets or rugs (1850-1954). The “Chief White Antelope Blanket,” a Southern Cheyenne tribal icon, dates to the Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado on November 29, 1864. Anderson recounts the history of this blan-

ket and discusses the issues related to its ownership and access, all of which makes fascinating reading. "Baskets," a dozen specimens dating from 1850 to 1997 described by Susan McGreevy and Andrew Whiteford, includes, in the main, bowls and jars. One contemporary Navajo example, Mary Holiday Black's coiled tray dating to 1997 depicts the mythic story "First Man Placing the Stars." Allison Bird-Romero prepared the narratives for nine examples of silver jewelry (1875-1950). Barton Wright describes twelve "Katsinas" created from 1890 to 1980. Whiteford also contributed the eight descriptions included in "Leather and Beadwork," among them a Shoshone painted elkskin relating the Sun Dance ceremony, attributed to an artist named Katsikodi (1890).

The splendid color images in *Legacy* are the work of SAR's resident photographer, Addison Doty, whose knowledge of the art and science of photography and knowledge of the selected objects is evident. The clear prose of the authors, compelling descriptions and elucidation, and Anderson's editorial work are anthropological labors of love.

Legacy may appear to be a "coffee table" volume that is designed to be attractive and informative, catch one's eye, and engender conversation—it is that—and more. Certainly it helps to celebrate the ninetieth anniversary, showcases some of the spectacular items of material culture in the collections, and it demonstrates the legacy of SAR's founder Edgar Lee Hewitt. It also illustrates the dedication of his successors in creating an incomparable research center that specializes in the prehistory, history,

and contemporary cultures and peoples of the Southwest. This is a solid, well researched, and eloquent book with spectacular images and thoughtfully integrated sets of essays that gives the reader a glimpse of the extraordinary collections at SAR. Students of contemporary Native American art and culture, art historians, anthropologists, historians, museum curators, art collectors, and connoisseurs of American crafts will find a feast for the eyes and much to ponder and enjoy. A span of ninety years is cause for celebration, but it is also a time for reflection about the transformations that have taken place in the discipline of anthropology and its relationships with history, art history, and Native American studies. Anthropology "came of age" during the twentieth century and so has the school—they are both mirrored in *Legacy*.

In about eight years the editor and the essayists will face a significant problem—preparing a comparable work to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the School of American Research. A publication of similar excellence in the year 2007 will be difficult to achieve given the quality of the ninetieth year of "Legacy." Nonetheless, I suspect that the SAR staff will outdo themselves once again and I await this centennial.

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