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## Review of Native Americans: Five Centuries of Changing Images.

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*Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha*

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*Native Americans: Five Centuries of Changing Images.* By Patricia Trenton and Patrick T. Houlihan. New York: Henry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989. Introduction, illustrations, notes, select bibliography, index. 304 pp. \$49.50.

*Native Americans* is a lavishly illustrated, attractive "coffee table" book intended for the general reader, and such volumes are significant because they reach wide audiences who frequently learn about complex and important topics from such general works. In *Native Americans* Trenton and Houlihan essay the imagery of the Native American in European and Euro-American art. They utilize an "integrated" anthropological and art-historical critique" (p. 7), and they use the concept of "cultural areas" to organize their text.

*Native Americans* presents a summary of non-Indian artists who depicted Indian peoples throughout North America. The authors critique the success or failure of the artist in portraying their Indian subjects, and they occasionally comment on the cultural significance of certain Indian artifacts pictured by the artists.

*Native Americans* is an ambitious volume about an enormous topic; therefore, it must be read as an introduction or overview to its subject. As is the case with any overview, *Native Americans* can be faulted for being too thin in

some areas. Also not surprisingly, given the interests of Trenton and Houlihan, they seem most sure of themselves when writing about the Southwest and California.

Readers of *Great Plains Quarterly* will note erroneous or misleading comments regarding the Indians of the Great Lakes and the Great Plains. These errors must be the result of haste because in some instances I am certain that Trenton and Houlihan know better. They write that although "both Cree groups are Algonquian speakers, they use different dialects; both can be distinguished from their Ojibwa neighbors to the south who speak an Athabaskan language" (p. 69). Four pages later they correctly identify the Ojibwa as members of the Algonquian language family, but then imply that the Chippewa and Ojibwa are two distinct tribes. They identify the Lakota as a "northern" plains tribe and their more northerly neighbors the Mandan and Hidatsa as "southern" plains tribes (p. 80). Swiss artist Rudolph Kurz, who lived among the Missouri River tribes, is not mentioned in the Great Plains section, but he pops up without explanation in the chapter on the Southwest, a place where he never set foot. The American Indian Movement (AIM) did not occupy the entire Pine Ridge Reservation in 1973 (p. 270), but rather the specific site of the 1890 Wounded Knee massacre.

It is regrettable that the authors did not catch such errors because *Native Americans* will introduce general readers to this important area of American art history and ethnohistory, and many will accept such remarks at face value. Still *Native Americans*, if read carefully, is a handsome and useful volume.

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