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## Review of *Earth Songs, Moon Dreams: Paintings by American Indian Women* By Patricia Janis Broder

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*Earth Songs, Moon Dreams: Paintings by American Indian Women.* By Patricia Janis Broder. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 1999. Illustrations, notes, selected bibliography, index. xviii + 296 pp. \$60.00.

With the first book devoted exclusively to women's painting, Patricia Janis Broder addresses a deficiency in Native American art history. Women's arts—painting, or any of their myriad art forms—became an area of serious inquiry after 1960 that has yet to be sufficiently served by scholars.

Broder's introduction explains the importance of the role of women, their arts, styles, and subjects. Mentioned are individuals and "schools" that form the context and modes of contemporary women's art. The author has selected artists' paintings that she determined have "cultural, historical, and aesthetic merit." There are ninety featured artists representing fifty-seven communities. Each artist's

biography offers useful background material, including information about her images, as well as illustrations of her work. Most biographies are clearly written, although a few lack dates and current data.

Several painters from the Northern and Southern Plains are featured in this seminal work. Historic Plains women painted stylized geometric patterns on hide containers and robes. This non-figurative traditional style was dropped by Plains women early in the twentieth century. Among the artists who helped establish the new trend was Anne Little Warrior, whose dance scene is created in the Plains pictographic style. Southern Plains artist Lois Smoky, who attended art classes under Oscar Jacobson and was one of the original Kiowa artists in the 1920s, is featured as a symbol of a new era in women's painting. Sharron Ahtone Harjo paints today in a style reminiscent of the Kiowa Ledger artists.

One of the Northern Plains women included is Crow artist Connie Red Star. Her painting *Crow Parfleche* creates a sense of irony by recalling the geometric style of earlier women. Other Plains women include Roberta A. Whiteshield, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Rosebud Tahcawin De Cinq Mars, and Nadema Agard. Themes involve ceremonials, the spiritual world, and traditional and everyday life activities. Broder suggests that further scholarship is needed and that her book, which is "neither an encyclopedia nor a directory," has some limitations. For example, work by Linda Haukaas and Jean LaMarr is not included. Broder compensates by a regional approach with artists from a broad geographical range. With color plates of excellent quality illustrating a wide variety of painting, this book helps fill the void of serious studies of Native women's art history.

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