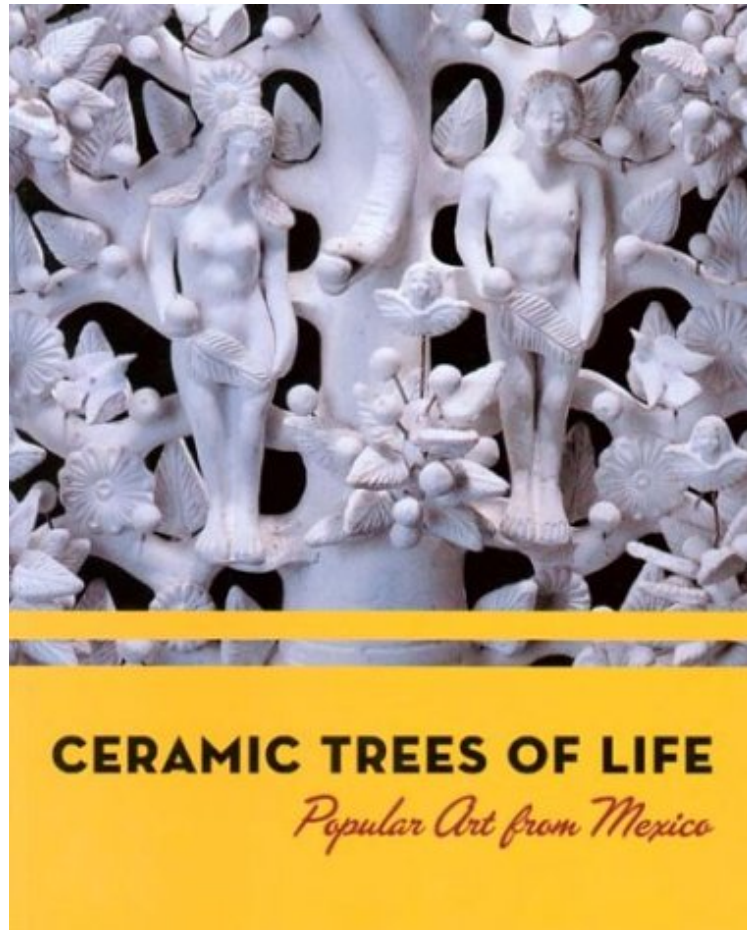


[FREE] Ceramic Trees of Life: Popular Art from Mexico

## Ceramic Trees of Life: Popular Art from Mexico

*Lenore Hoag Mulryan*

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**Lenore Hoag Mulryan : Ceramic Trees of Life: Popular Art from Mexico** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ceramic Trees of Life: Popular Art from Mexico:

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Tucked among their branches, the elaborate and colourful Mexican clay constructions known as Trees of Life may contain a range of possible scenes: pre-Hispanic cosmologies, genealogies, and rituals; biblical stories; historical vignettes; or secular events. Often fitted with candles or incense burners, they may soar to a height of twenty feet or be small enough to fit in a child's hand. Ever increasing in popularity, by the early 1970s, the remarkable and versatile

Tree of Life had become a quintessential symbol of Mexico. In "Ceramic Trees of Life", Lenore Hoag Mulryan and her co-authors explore the origins of this unique Mexican art form and examine its development and contemporary manifestations. Following Mulryan's introduction, Delia Cosentino examines pre-Hispanic tree symbolism and discusses the syncretic approach of the Spanish clergy, which actively sought to emphasize parallels between local beliefs and Catholicism. Essays consider the work of prominent potting families from the three major Tree of Life producing communities: the Flores and Castillo families of Izucar de Matamoros, Heron Martinez of Acatlan de Osorio, and the potters of Metepec, focusing on the Soteno family. Lavishly illustrated with magnificent examples of Trees of Life drawn from the Gerald Daniel Collection of Mexican Folk Art at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, as well as with many stunning field shots, this volume traces the Tree of Life from its origins to its role as a vibrant symbol of the modern nation. In so doing, it also touches upon the fate of the clay artist in present-day Mexico and the impact of commodification on the popular arts, revealing the simultaneous pull of tradition and push of modernity that have developed this popular art form in the face of the changing social, economic, and political landscape of mid- to late-twentieth-century Mexico.

From Booklist One of the most recognizable and beloved of popular Mexican art forms is the Tree of Life, elaborate ceramic constructions depicting stylized trees with diverse human and animal figures perching on their many branches. Trees of Life are "complex hybrids of indigenous and European concepts and customs" and therefore reflect a grand spectrum of cosmologies and historical vignettes. Mexican art specialist Mulryan and her art historian and anthropologist contributors offer a lively history of the Tree of Life from its roots in the reverence for trees expressed by the Maya, Aztec, and Mixtec to the grafting on of Christian beliefs. Mulryan and company also explain the techniques involved in the complex, gravity-defying construction of Trees of Life and profile a contemporary master potter, Heron Martinez Mendoza, but best of all are the gorgeously detailed photographs of Trees of Life from pre-Columbian times to the present. Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved About the Author Lenore Hoag Mulryan has actively conducted research on Mexican ceramic art for a period of nearly twenty-five years. Her two previous Fowler publications, *Mexican Figural Ceramists and Their Works* and *Nagual in the Garden: Fantastic Animals in Mexican Ceramics* are also based upon that research.