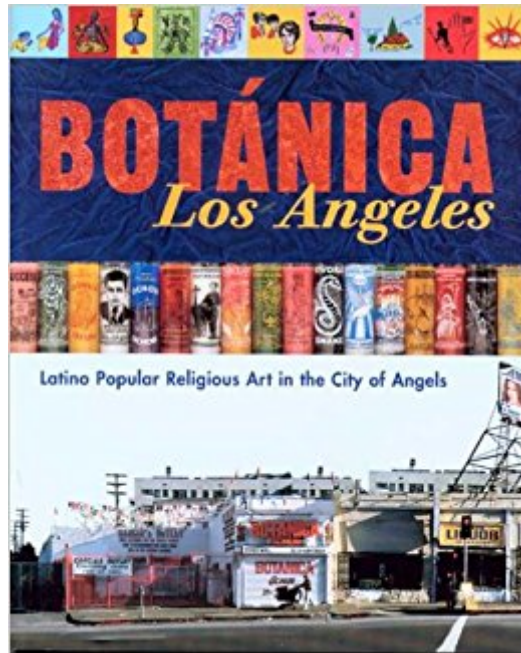


The book was found

Botanica Los Angeles: Latino Popular Religious Art In The City Of Angels



Synopsis

Material expressions of spiritual belief are integral components of the Los Angeles landscape. Cathedrals, temples, churches, and shrines dot the city, but they are not the only sites where notions of the divine, or at least the supernatural, are made visible. Reflecting the broad ethnic and cultural reconfiguration of Southern California in recent years, botanicas have emerged as one of the most frequent purveyors of sacramental items. This book explores these fascinating venues and their role in transmitting, transforming, and critiquing traditional faiths. An ever-evolving combination of spiritual center, religious supply house, and alternate healthcare facility, the botanica is generally associated with folk Catholicism and other Latin American religious traditions. Vivid photographs and essays describe these sites of spirit-infused artistry, ceremonial activity, and community building.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Patrick Arthur Polk is visiting assistant professor of world arts and cultures at UCLA. Other contributors include Donald J. Cosentino, Ysamur Flores-Pena, Miki Garcia, Claudia J. Hernandez.

I was really excited to see this book, as I am very interested in learning more about Latino and Afro Latino religions and spiritual expressions, as well as the visual representations that come along with them (altars, dress, etc). The book itself has beautiful detailed pictures taken from the Los Angeles area botanicas and homes of practitioners of Curanderismo, Espiritismo, Santeria, and Palo. The

concept of the book is documenting religious expression of Latin Americans in L.A. Unfortunately because of the very academic approach, the first two chapters (which are really the reflections of the ethnographer who visits various botanicas) are very dry and detached. They are definitely written from the perspective of "an outsider looking in" to an extreme extent. The information is presented in a way such that someone who is completely unfamiliar with Afro Latino/Latino religions and spirituality is assumed to be the reader. Despite that, most of the other chapters (written by various authors) are very warm and include interviews with practitioners, as well as personal knowledge and experiences of the authors themselves within various practices. Subjects included in the book are Puerto Rican Mesa Blanca (espiritismo), the Guatemalan saint San Simon, understanding what a botanicas are and why they exist, and a breakdown of the African origins and orishas of the Santeria and Palo traditions. This book is by no means comprehensive of Latin American spiritual traditions, however it is a good introduction to the religious expressions of the Diaspora found in "the City of Angels".

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