



## Painting the Maya Universe: Royal Ceramics of the Classic Period

By Dorie Reents-Budet

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**Painting the Maya Universe: Royal Ceramics of the Classic Period** By Dorie Reents-Budet

Lavishly illustrated with nearly 400 color images, *Painting the Maya Universe* is the most thorough study and brilliant display of Classic Maya ceramic painting yet published. Building on twenty years of research and debate, Dorie Reents-Budet and her collaborators Joseph W. Ball, Ronald L. Bishop, Virginia M. Fields, and Barbara MacLeod bring together many perspectives, including the art historical, archaeological, epigraphical, and ethnohistorical, to examine one of the world's great but overlooked painting traditions. With an emphasis on sixth- to eighth-century pottery featuring both pictorial and hieroglyphic imagery, *Painting the Maya Universe* presents an extraordinary exploration of the cultural roles and meanings of these Guatemalan, Belizean, and Mexican elite painted ceramics. Maya pottery is discussed both in aesthetic terms and for the important information it reveals about Maya society, artistry, politics, history, religion, and ritual. The range of ceramic painting styles developed during this period is also presented and defined in detail.

*Painting the Maya Universe* is the first publication to present a definitive translation of the hieroglyphic texts painted on these objects. With many glyphs deciphered here for the first time, this analysis reveals much about how these vessels were perceived and used by the Maya, their owners' names, and, in several cases, the names of the artists who created them. This information is combined with archaeological and other data, including nuclear chemical analyses, to correlate painting styles with specific Maya sites.

Published in conjunction with Duke University Museum of Art and an exhibition touring the United States, *Painting the Maya Universe* presents an astonishing visual record as well as a monumental scholarly achievement. With photographs by Justin Kerr, the foremost photographer of pre-Columbian art, it includes over 90 unique full-color rollout photographs, each showing the entire surface of an object in a single frame. The book also addresses the questions and controversy regarding the loss of information that occurs when objects are removed from their archaeological context to become part of public and private collections.

*Painting the Maya Universe* will energize discussion of Maya pottery, hieroglyphic texts, and iconography. Its photographs, a lasting resource on this great painting tradition, will stimulate and delight the eye. It is a breakthrough in

art history and Latin American scholarship that will enrich general readers and scholars alike.

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