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Art of West Texas Women: A Celebration.

By Kippra D. Hopper and Laurie J. Churchill.

Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2010. 224 pages, \$29.95.

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Gorgeously illustrated and designed, *Art of West Texas Women* celebrates the work of twenty women from Amarillo to El Paso working in a large variety of mediums. Rather than examining a particular genre of art that might be described as West Texas art, the book focuses on a sampling of artists living and working in the region. The result is an eclectic range of pieces in which the region has affected the artists, but they have not produced a body of what might be considered work with a West Texas regional flavor. Personally, I prefer the former because it allows for a greater inclusion of work and artists than the latter. I especially enjoyed Collie Ryan's vibrant and energetic hubcap mandalas and Lahib Jaddo's cross-cultural fusion of Iraqi and West Texas landscape and culture.

Hopper and Churchill arranged the book in a one-artist-per-chapter format that allows us to "see through the lens of the artists' eyes their perceptions of their work, why and how they do what they do, and how this isolated place affects their art" (xiv). The authors accomplished this by first interviewing each artist, putting similar questions to each, and then translating the interviews into essays. As a result, recurring themes emerge in each essay that allow for comparison of the artists. Additionally, this organization enables the reader or teacher to easily break the book into chapters or sections without losing context.

Each essay tends to provide a general overview of the artist's work—the kinds of pieces she frequently produces and her process—followed by detailed descriptions of particular works, accompanied by stunning color photographs. Biographical information, including education, training, and artistic influences as well as the role of West Texas is provided. Importantly, the essays illuminate the ways in which the region informs the art. As Pamela Brink notes, "nurtured by West Texas and its intrinsically rural culture, these women thrive on solitude and the perceptions they find in quiet places. Through their many and varied talents, they insist that who they are and where they live offer important understanding for the rest of the world" (xx).

While this is not a comprehensive analysis of all women artists in West Texas, the collection reveals the intricacies of the creative process and the ties between artist, landscape, and culture in West Texas. Photographer Robin Dru Germany believes that "you cannot separate the things that happen from the places where they happen. ... In a way, being in Lubbock has made me think more about what I value in nature and why. ... That ties directly into the work I'm doing now" (66). Readers and teachers interested in women's studies, art of the Southwest, and the connections between place and artistic expression will find this an interesting and insightful collection.