



Visions of a Huichol Shaman

by Peter T. Furst

DESCRIPTION:

The brilliant visionary yarn paintings of the shaman-artist Jose Benitez Sanchez emerge transformed into two-dimensional form from fleeting, sublime visionary experiences triggered by the complex chemistry of the divine peyote cactus. Benitez's visions are of the Huichol universe in Mexico's rugged Sierra Madre Occidental, as that world came into being in the First Times of creation and transformation and in the ongoing magic of a natural environment that is alive and without firm boundaries between the here and now and the ancestral past.

Modern yarn paintings—more than 30 in the University of Pennsylvania Museum's collection are illustrated here—have their roots in the sacred art of communication with numberless male and female ancestors and native deities, related in the two remarkable Huichol origin myths also presented here to shed some light on Native American culture and provide some understanding of the religious experience that informs it.

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