



Made in Mexico: Tradition, Tourism, and Political Fermant in Oaxaca

Chris Goertzen

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Made in Mexico examines the aesthetic, political, and sociopolitical aspects of tourism in southern Mexico, particularly in the state of Oaxaca. Tourists seeking "authenticity" buy crafts and festival tickets and spend even more on travel expenses. What does a craft object or a festival moment need to look like or sound like to please both tradition bearers and tourists in terms of aesthetics? Under what conditions are transactions between these parties psychologically healthy and sustainable? What political factors can interfere with the success of this negotiation, and what happens when the process breaks down? With Subcommandante Marcos and the Zapatistas still operating in neighboring Chiapas and unrest on the rise in Oaxaca itself, these are not merely theoretical problems.

Chris Goertzen analyzes the nature and meaning of a single craft object, a woven pillowcase from Chiapas, thus previewing what the book will accomplish in greater depth in Oaxaca. He introduces the book's guiding concepts, especially concerning the types of aesthetic intensification that have replaced fading cultural contexts, and the tragic partnership between ethnic distinctiveness and oppressive politics. He then brings these concepts to bear on crafts in Oaxaca and on Oaxaca's Guelagueta, the anchor for tourism in the state and a festival with an increasingly contested meaning.

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