The book insightfully illustrates how Jiménez Quispe in the United States transformed the Saint Mark boxes into three-dimensional retablos, where the agglomeration of images lends more drama to the scene. Traditional triptychs are still present, but they evolve into much more complex, multi-tiered boxes, such as the Triunfo Latino (1999), which the authors describe as a piece that "reflects Nicario's underlying optimism about the prospects for Latin American and Caribbean immigrants in the United States" (p. 120).

Lastly, one final fusion takes place between the Ayacuchan retablo and the Mexican retablo (painted votive offerings), where painting, and not just figurative sculpture, plays an important part in the work as a whole. The Wall retablo depicts the Virgin of San Juan de los Lagos in a very similar manner to Mexican retablos. Indeed, the Border Patrol triptych reproduces, in its side doors, two retablos published as part of the book Miracles on The Border: Retablos of Mexican Migrants to the United States (University of Arizona Press, 1995) by Jorge Durand and Douglas Massey.

Beautifully illustrated with Jiménez Quispe's own work, and enhanced with insightful text by Damian, LaRosa, and Stein, Immigration in the Visual Art of Nicario Jimenez Quispe should be read, admired, and imitated in terms of its rescue of and research into folk art and its evolution across the Americas.


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Over the past decade, scholars across numerous disciplines have taken great interest in the roles social media and mobile technologies have played in grassroots organizing, political uprisings, and Indigenous resistance to neocolonial projects—notably including Arab Spring, Black Lives Matter, Hong Kong pro-tests, #MeToo, Standing Rock, and Wisconsin Uprising. Although the use of various media as an important and ever-changing tool to advocate for the agency of subaltern peoples goes back centuries, the digital revolution has provided important reason to revisit the ways that media have impacted representation, identity, and agency of Indigenous and other subaltern peoples both historically and in the present.

In this co-authored monograph, Coppélie Cocq and Thomas DuBois offer a survey of activist-oriented Sámi media works dating to the late 1800s with the origins of Sámi-language newspapers and print media, including early twentieth-century Sámi writers advocating for Sámi rights (Johan Turi and Elsa Laula Renberg). On their journey to the present day, they travel through the emergent visual, verbal, and musical discourses of the Álttá Dam conflict of the late 1970s and early 1980s (Niillas Somby and Paulus Utsi), and through the rise in Sámi film and music of the late 1980s and 1990s (Nils Gaup, Paul-Anders Simma, Nils Aslak Valkeapää, Mari Boine, and Aŋŋel Nieiddat). Cocq and DuBois continue their survey into more recent decades, looking at how these earlier pathfinders have led the way for artists such as musicians Sofia Jannok, Jon Henrik Fjällgren, and Jörgen Stenberg, and filmmakers Katja Gauriloff, and Amanda Kernell. The latter chapters continue this discussion in terms of social media, detailing significant innovations of Sámi social media innovation and use by artists. These include topics such as the creation of the pre-social media social network “SameNet,” the use of hashtags to promote language revitalization, Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska’s sharing of the luohi “Gulahallat eatnamii” [“We speak earth”] in advance of the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, and online resistance to the proposed mine at Gállok.

As a survey, the work engages an impressive number of well-known Sámi artists, musicians, filmmakers, writers, photographers, and online activists (many not named in the short summary above), while situating their work within a number of critical frameworks: historically, in relation to the American Civil Rights Movement and American Indian Movement; intellectually, in relation to the decolonizing frameworks developed by Indigenous scholars.
like Linda Tuhiwai Smith; and by discipline, drawing heavily from ethnomusicology, film studies, and digital folklore studies. As a whole, the book drives toward centering Sámi activist voices in Sámi activist narratives in a struggle for Indigenous survivance, autonomy, and sovereignty that Indigenous people have endured for centuries. To reflect the interrelationships that exist between different eras of Sámi media use, Cocq and DuBois have chosen a chapter framework that uses Sámi snow terminology to reflect the changing snowscapes that might progress through winter into a spring thaw.

Of particular value in this volume is the consolidation of critical discussions of so many interconnected Sámi media works—which heretofore existed scattered across a number of Sámi and colonial Nordic languages. Bringing these works into a coherent narrative that reflects their interrelationships is of great value for English-speaking researchers of Sámi culture. Similarly, the work serves as an outstanding classroom resource. With certain chapters dedicated toward close readings of various media (most of which are accessible to international audiences), the book serves as a much-needed resource for instructors desiring to integrate Sámi arts and activism into a classroom, all while offering thoughtful interpretations of these artistic forms that are both ontologically challenging yet supremely accessible to non-Indigenous persons.

Researchers in Sámi studies will clearly see the many subtextual themes in the book that invite further exploration. These include the importance of gender in Sámi activism (today largely led by young women), the rise of movements such as Queering Sápmi or #Sápmitoo (related to #MeToo) that address lateral rather than colonial violences, and further discussion of activism as a strategic and collaborative process (and not just products) negotiated beyond the immediate sphere of the most vocal of activists. Further areas of interest include the reception of these media arts within the community and the reasons for their resonance (or inefficacy), the ways that these media products operate within the complex and negotiated spaces of the many diversities of the Sámi community (sometimes providing backlash), and the pivotal role of diasporic and trans-Indigenous identity formed and re-formed through social media spaces—particularly in partnership with Sámi Americans and Indigenous North Americans. Similarly, further work is needed to explore how the process of online “democratization” works in ways that sometimes advance Western constructs of identity, agency, and representation, thereby displacing certain elements of Sámi cultural identity. That is, in an online landscape where online personae and self-promotion tend to eclipse the important cultural values of genuineness and humility (and where social authority is generated more in wit than in wisdom), social media poses at least some potential threats to Sámi cultural values and negotiated systems of social order, which many Sámi would suggest are critical components of Sámi Indigeneity. Social media—probably all Western media—disrupt Sámi systems of authority and relationality in complex ways, whether for better or for worse.

Overall, Cocq and DuBois offer an artist-centered account of Sámi agency within Sámi media products—countering implicitly the many stereotypes of the newness of Indigenous media use and activist traditions. The work is of value for both crafting a Sámi activist counter-history that “talks back” to the empire through its own media platforms, and in its close readings of numerous multimedia art works of prominent Sámi artists. Finally, it serves as a call to action for other researchers to carry this research forward, in exploring the challenges and complexities of “activist art” in ways that further advance a decolonizing epistemological and ontological agenda.


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This notable volume, comprising five scholarly articles illuminating different aspects or genres of folk performance traditions in China, is solidly grounded on meticulous research.