



The Murals of Cacaxtla: The Power of Painting in Ancient Central Mexico (Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Series in Latin American and L)

Claudia Lozoff Brittenham

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Between AD 650 and 950, artists at the small Central Mexican city-state of Cacaxtla covered the walls of their most important sacred and public spaces with dazzling murals of gods, historical figures, and supernatural creatures. Testimonies of a richly interconnected ancient world, the Cacaxtla paintings present an unexpectedly deep knowledge of the art and religion of the Maya, Zapotec, and other distant Mesoamerican peoples. Painted during a period of war and shifting alliances after the fall of Teotihuacan, the murals' distinctive fusion of cosmopolitan styles and subjects claimed a powerful identity for the beleaguered city-state.

Presenting the first cohesive, art historical study of the entire painting corpus, *The Murals of Cacaxtla* demonstrates that these magnificent works of art constitute a sustained and local painting tradition, treasured by generations of patrons and painters. Exhaustive chapters on each of the mural programs make it possible to see how the Cacaxtla painting tradition developed over time, responding to political and artistic challenges. Lavishly illustrated, *The Murals of Cacaxtla* illuminates the agency of ancient artists and the dynamics of artistic synthesis in a Mesoamerican context, offering a valuable counterpoint to studies of colonial and modern art operating at the intersection of cultural traditions.

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