



Just Above the Water: Florida Folk Art

Kristin G. Congdon, Tina Bucuvalas

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Florida has an abundance of excellent artists whose work reflects the traditions of their many diverse communities. Yet there has been, until now, no major publication that focuses on the state's visual folk arts and folk artists.

Just Above the Water: Florida Folk Art includes an overall view of folk arts in Florida and individual profiles of over seventy artists, including Mary Proctor, Mario Sanchez, Nicholas Toth, Ruby C. Williams, and Purvis Young. The work of painters, sculptors, master saddlemakers, iconographers, and instrument makers is illustrated here in more than 200 black-and-white and color photographs.

Some consider folk art to be art created by self-taught individuals working in an idiosyncratic style, while others believe it to be the expression of traditional cultural forms. Kristin G. Congdon and Tina Bucuvalas argue that artists of both types express innovation and tradition. In many instances, a close examination of the artists and their work reveals much about Florida's cultural history. The artists clearly are not naive, simple, primitive, or quaint. Like the work they produce, they are sophisticated, expressing their creativity in relation to complex cultural backgrounds.

Kristin G. Congdon is a professor of film and philosophy at the University of Central Florida and lives in Winter Park, Florida. She is the author and editor of *Uncle Monday and Other Florida Tales* (University Press of Mississippi). Tina Bucuvalas is the state folklorist and supervisor of the Florida Folklife Program and is a coauthor of *South Florida Folklife* (University Press of Mississippi). She lives in Tallahassee, Florida.

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