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## Moche Finesline Painting: Its Evolution and Its Artists

*Christopher B. Donnan*

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**Christopher B. Donnan : Moche Finesline Painting: Its Evolution and Its Artists** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Moche Finesline Painting: Its Evolution and Its Artists:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Sacred Cartoons By Joseph H. Woodside This is a sumptuously beautiful and extraordinary book by two major authorities on the civilization of the Moche Indians, who lived on the north coast of Peru for much of the first millennium AD. It depicts hundreds of monochrome drawings made on the rounded surfaces of ceramics created by Moche potters as gifts or tributes to the dead. The cartoon-like vistas and tableaux encode quirky, enigmatic, sometimes horrifying, events that are quasi historical, perhaps even biographical. The works and images brought together in this book are widely referenced by other scholars in the field. On the same page with a careful, wonderfully detailed, rendition of the original painting in "roll out" format by Donna McClelland usually appears a full color photograph of the source ceramic. Such locality of reference allows the viewer to verify and admire how closely her reproductions match the originals which give a foretaste of the delightfully evocative figurines the Moche also sculpted. The descriptions, explanations, and interpretations of the iconography are spare and succinct. Anthropologists once believed the paintings illustrated every aspect of ancient Moche life, but in fact the highly stylized scenes are drawn from a restricted field of religious ritual and myth. The authors apply several techniques of analysis, first used to determine the identities of the creators of ancient Greek ceramics, in order to distinguish the individual Moche artists who made the fine line paintings. This well bound paperback book provides physical support for hours of comparing images to apprehend Moche meanings and sensibilities. One shortcoming is

that the criteria the authors use to recognize the conventions by which the Moche represent animals are left implicit. For example, why does an image represent a sea urchin (p. 273) instead of a puffer fish, a monkey (p. 111) instead of a kinkajou? Another complaint involves the suppression of the Phase Five "snow ovals" in the roll out drawings apparently to minimize visual clutter, although they seem significant in representing the ecological crises destabilizing Moche civilization. Here, the photos of the ceramics provide a remedy.<sup>3</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. Absolutely fabulous book! By Rockman I've used a few examples of Moche art in my work for years and thought I knew something about it. This incredible book set me straight. Mr. Donnan's text and Donna McClelland's extraordinary rollout drawings have brought the work of long dead Moche artists to life in a way that leaves me hungering for more. Wonderfully designed and painstakingly illustrated, this volume is a treasure-trove of information on this amazing culture. Exceptional in every way!<sup>7</sup> of 7 people found the following review helpful. An incredible resource By AK This is one of the most informative and beautifully published books I have seen in a long time. Christopher Donnan's writing and explanations of the Moche Fineline ceramics are clear and easily understood and Donna McClelland's illustrations are incredible. There are wonderful illustrations not only of the fineline paintings but of the techniques used to make the ceramic pots. It is obvious that a lot of work went into this publication and I would highly recommend it to anyone with an interest in the Moche.

The Moche culture, which flourished on the north coast of Peru between 100 and 800 BCE, has been known to art historians and archaeologists for over a century. Only recently, however, with the discovery of the fabulous Royal Tombs of Sipan, have the Moche become as well known to the public as the Inca, who appeared several centuries later. This book traces the fineline painting tradition from the beginning to the end of the Moche culture. Although the Moche had no writing system, they left a vivid artistic record of their beliefs and activities in beautifully modeled and painted ceramics. Because of their complexity and wide range of subject matter, these paintings provide a wealth of information about Moche civilization.

About the Author ART