



# **Rookwood and the American Indian: Masterpieces of American Art Pottery from the James J. Gardner Collection**

*Anita J. Ellis, Susan Labry Meyn*

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The nation's premier private collection of Rookwood art pottery featuring American Indian portraiture is on display at the Cincinnati Art Museum from October 2007 to January 2008. *Rookwood and the American Indian: Masterpieces of American Art Pottery from the James J. Gardner Collection* is a remarkable exhibition catalogue that will be of interest well beyond the exhibition because of its unique subject matter. Fifty-two pieces produced by the Rookwood Pottery Company are showcased, many accompanied by black-and-white photographs of the American Indians portrayed by the ceramic artist. In addition, the catalogue includes a brief biography of each artist as well as curators' comments about the Rookwood pottery and the Indian apparel seen in the portraits.

The catalogue also presents two essays. The first, "Enduring Encounters: Cincinnatians and American Indians to 1900," by ethnologist and co-curator Susan Labry Meyn, describes American Indian activities in Cincinnati from the time of the first settlers to 1900 and relates these events to national policy, such as the 1830 Indian Removal Act. *Rookwood and the American Indian*, by art historian Anita J. Ellis, concentrates on Rookwood's fascination with the American Indian and the economic implications of producing that line.

*Rookwood and the American Indian* blends anthropology with art history to reveal the relationships between the white settlers and the Native Americans in general, between Cincinnati and the American Indian in particular, and ultimately between Rookwood artists and their Indian friends.

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