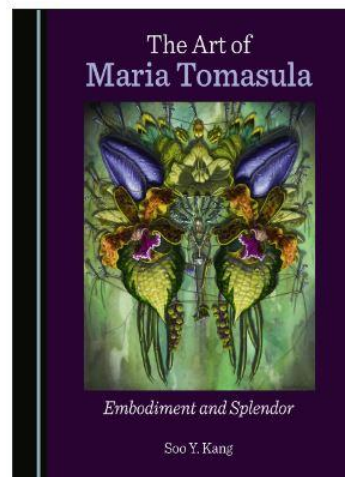


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The Art of Maria Tomasula: Embodiment and Splendor



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Maria Tomasula's still life paintings are absolutely captivating, dramatizing luscious objects of saturated colors and meticulous details through the spotlight effect against a dark backdrop. Beyond their immediate appeal, however, the still lifes usually contain disturbing features such as flowers being sharply pierced by hooks and nails or isolated body parts such as bones and organs that seem to be fiercely alive. Although the pictures are materialistically appealing due to the illusionistic style of the artist, they lend themselves to a depth of iconography that has not been accounted for in previous writings on her art.

This book is the first comprehensive monograph on Tomasula (b. 1958), unraveling her complex iconography that is founded on her Mexican American heritage and Catholicism, but also tracing the European still life tradition. It shows that her paintings reflect her feminist and philosophical leanings influenced by various intellectuals including Baruch Spinoza, Gilles Deleuze, and the proponents of New Materialism. Her still life converges the old with new interests: it pays tribute to traditional Mexican and European motifs, but also reflects ideas and mannerism that speak to the contemporary audience. This research evidences the complexity of the Mexican American experience which merges divergent cultural and ideological perspectives from Latin America, North America, and Europe in varied ways for different and unique individuals.

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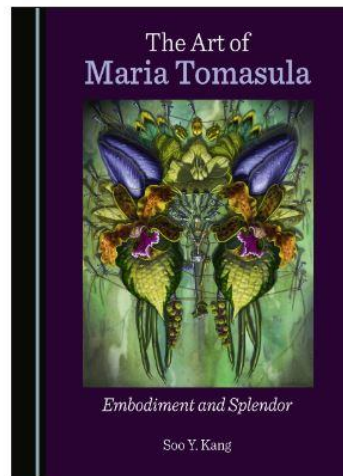
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Author Bio

Dr Soo Y. Kang is Professor of Art History in the Department of Arts and Design and the Honors College at Chicago State University. Her research areas are religious art and women's art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. She has presented and published papers on Paula Rego, Georges Rouault, and Dorothea Tanning. Her previous books are *Rouault: in Perspective. Contextual and Theoretical Study of His Art* (2000) and *This Anguished World of Shadows: Georges Rouault's Miserere et Guerre* (co-authored with Holly Flora, 2006). Her publications on Tomasula include "Embedded Still Lives: Mexican American Heritage in the Art of Maria Tomasula" in *Journal of Contemporary Painting* (2018) and "Flowers Disguised: Woman's Voice Through the Catholic Tradition in the Art of Maria Tomasula" in *Religion and the Arts* 23 (2019).

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