## The Unborn Women and Creation: The William and Bettye Nowlin Collection in Art History

The William and Bettye Nowlin Collection of Pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial Art is one of the most important collections of its kind in the world. It includes more than 1,000 objects, including ceramics, textiles, sculptures, and jewelry. One of the most striking features of the collection is its large number of images of pregnant women and women giving birth.

These images are often associated with fertility and creation, and they provide a unique insight into the lives and beliefs of the ancient peoples of the Americas. In this article, we will explore the significance of these images and their role in art history.



Reconsidering Olmec Visual Culture: The Unborn,
Women, and Creation (The William and Bettye Nowlin
Series in Art, History, and Culture of the Western

**Hemisphere**) by Jenefer Robinson

★ ★ ★ ★ 5 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

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Print length : 359 pages



The Significance of the Unborn Women Images

The images of unborn women in the Nowlin Collection are a powerful reminder of the importance of fertility and childbirth in ancient Mesoamerican and Andean cultures. These cultures believed that women were the source of all life, and that childbirth was a sacred event. Images of pregnant women and women giving birth were often used to celebrate the miracle of birth and to ensure the continued prosperity of the community.

In some cultures, the unborn child was believed to be a deity or a spirit. This belief is reflected in the way that these images are often depicted. For example, in many Maya sculptures, the unborn child is shown with a headdress or other symbols of divinity.

The images of unborn women in the Nowlin Collection also provide a glimpse into the lives of women in ancient Mesoamerican and Andean cultures. These images often show women engaged in everyday activities, such as weaving, cooking, and caring for children. They also show women in positions of power and authority. This suggests that women played an important role in these societies, and that they were not simply relegated to the role of childbearers.

## The Role of the Images in Art History

The images of unborn women in the Nowlin Collection have played an important role in art history. These images have been used by scholars to study the beliefs and practices of ancient Mesoamerican and Andean cultures. They have also been used to challenge traditional views of women in these cultures.

For example, the images of pregnant women and women giving birth in the Nowlin Collection have been used to challenge the idea that women in

ancient Mesoamerican and Andean cultures were simply passive objects of male desire. These images show that women were active participants in the creation of life, and that they played an important role in the community.

The images in the Nowlin Collection have also been used to challenge the idea that women in these cultures were not allowed to express their sexuality. These images show that women were free to express their sexuality, and that they were not simply objects of reproduction.

The images of unborn women in the William and Bettye Nowlin Collection of Pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial Art are a valuable resource for understanding the beliefs and practices of ancient Mesoamerican and Andean cultures. They also provide a glimpse into the lives of women in these cultures, and they challenge traditional views of women in art history.



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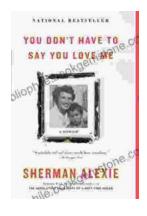
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