

FOREWORD

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I first crossed paths with Rebecca Dobkins in 1997. She had just joined the faculty at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, and wanted to meet Native artists in the area. She called me to make arrangements and came out to Siletz (about eighty miles from Salem). We had a really nice visit and discussed the Siletz Tribe’s culture and the arts. I had no idea that short visit would lead to collaborations and events that would change our lives.

The Art of Ceremony: Voices of Renewal from Indigenous Oregon is a beautifully written and illustrated examination of the regalia of the first peoples in Oregon and the ceremonies in which it functions. Dobkins does a wonderful job in portraying each ceremony through the lens of the practitioners and participants. It is extremely rare for an academic to gain such unfettered access. It shows the level of trust that Native peoples in Oregon have in her and her approach to Native arts and other issues.

The concept for *The Art of Ceremony* grew out of an earlier exhibit at Willamette’s Hallie Ford Museum of Art. Dobkins was a central figure in *The Eternal Thread*, an exhibit from New Zealand featuring a wide array of Māori arts. *The Eternal Thread* opened in 2005, and Dobkins had traveled to New Zealand the prior year to plan with Toi Māori (the National Māori Arts Organization) its venue at the Hallie Ford. Those

plans included the participation of the Tribes in Oregon with the different teams of Māori artists that came to the Northwest for each venue. It was from that participation and interaction that the seed for the exhibition *The Art of Ceremony: Regalia of Native Oregon* was planted. The only art exhibit I am aware of that featured some of the ceremonies and works from all of the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon, *The Art of Ceremony*, opened at the Hallie Ford Museum of Art and began its journey on September 27, 2008. It went on to Pendleton, Oregon (Tamástslikt Cultural Institute), Warm Springs, Oregon (The Museum at Warm Springs), and ended at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland.

In this book Dobkins tells the story of ceremony and traditions through the tribal voice. Our oral histories tell us that our peoples have been here since the beginning of time. Our ceremonies are our way of thanking the Creator for creating our world and us. Dobkins has worked for many years with the Native peoples in Oregon and beyond, and she has earned our trust and friendship. *The Art of Ceremony: Voices of Renewal from Indigenous Oregon* contains much about us, a rare view into the ceremonial life of Native Oregon.