

INFLUENCE OF TOURISM ON ARTISANAL IDENTITY IN BRUNCA ARTWORK

Brandylyn Arredondo, Kenyon College

Advisor: Daniel Rojas, PhD

This article focuses on the tourist influences on Boruca craftwork in the indigenous community of Boruca, Costa Rica. During two months of ethnographical field work, I used semi-structured interviews and daily conversations to explain this theme through community voices rather than tourist opinions. By working through this perspective, I tried to understand how tourism is affecting and changing the artisan's identity and work since the tourist boom in the 1980s. I suggest that through tourism the Boruca masks are taking on a new global function as an identity marker. The masks give the artisans a sense of agency in the growing world, allowing them to express their existence. Locally, masks represent a means to continue practicing certain cultural practices, but also split the community with their new monetary values. As masks were used in the past in *El Juego de los Diablos* to unite and transform the community and players, the masks today take on a more artistic, prideful role. Artisans work to decorate and elaborate their masks for the Games not only to impress the many tourists that arrive, but also the community. As the community interacts more with the global, they look into the past to revive those symbols and legends that are no longer used daily. Certain leaders appear in the community who interpret and influence the perspectives of not only the community, but also the tourists.