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Foreword

We are delighted to present the fifth issue of the “Art of the Latin America”, prepared by the Department of Central and South American Art, operating within the Polish Institute of World Art Studies. This time a group of articles is devoted to Pre-Columbian and popular art. This is another volume introducing various aspects of Latin American culture viewed through objects and works of an artistic nature. The formula of our journal is broad, yet all the articles are devoted to various artistic manifestations in Latin America, and in case of this particular issue – in Mexico.

The fifth volume consists of five articles. Most of them are dedicated to Pre-Columbian times. In the first one, Miriam Judith Gallegos Gómor and Ricardo Armijo Torres from Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) in Mexico, discuss various aspects of female clothing characteristic of the Mayan culture of the western areas in the Late Classical period. The authors present parts of clothing and describe their symbolic meaning.

In the second article, Daniel Ruiz Cancino (INAH) presents clay female figurines from the western region of Mesoamerica dating from 200 BC to 400/600 AD, that is, from the last phase of the pre-classical period to the middle of the Classical period. The author focuses on designs created on female bodies, which are reflected in decorations of the examined figurines. Ruiz Cancino both describes geometrized forms of ornaments (spirals, straight lines, broken and wavy lines, circles, concentric rings, triangles, crosses and points) and tries to explain their symbolic functions in relation to the life cycles of both human and the natural world.

The third article by Ulises Sebastián Serrano Arias of Puebla and Beatriz Adriana Gaytán Villalpando of Michoacán deals with bat depictions and a function of this animal in the pre-Hispanic cultures of Mesoamerica. A bat was perceived as a messenger of the gods (and even a deity itself) circulating