



The Sons and Daughters of Los: Culture and Community In L.A.

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As David E. James notes in the introduction to *The Sons and Daughters of Los*, the city of "Los Angeles developed as an agglomeration of separate communities, [where] successive waves of immigrants . . . created distinct enclaves, many of them racially homogenous and largely segregated from each other." The result is the fragmented city that exists today, more celebrated for its connections to Hollywood than its rich ethnic heritage. "Constructing community in Los Angeles is like building a sandcastle at high tide—the sheer amount of images and space that make up the raw material of the city is never stable enough to secure any reasonable foundation," writes Eric Gordon in an essay about the African-American community of Leimert Park. Still, according to Gordon and the other contributors to *Sons and Daughters*, L.A.-based artists, cultural institutions, and activists are shaping a cultural landscape that is far more reflective of the city's diversity than most mainstream descriptions suggest. From the Beyond Baroque Poetry Foundation to the Korean Cultural Center, writes James, "the organizations examined in this volume . . . were created by people, some of them oppressed or otherwise marginalized and disenfranchised, who found cultural activity to be a means of self-realization and communal discovery."