



# Fast, Easy, and In Cash: Artisan Hardship and Hope in the Global Economy

*Jason Antrosio, Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld*

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“Artisan” has become a buzzword in the developed world, used for items like cheese, wine, and baskets, as corporations succeed at branding their cheap, mass-produced products with the popular appeal of small-batch, handmade goods. The unforgiving realities of the artisan economy, however, never left the global south, and anthropologists have worried over the fate of resilient craftspeople as global capitalism remade their cultural and economic lives. Yet artisans are proving to be surprisingly vital players in contemporary capitalism, as they interlock innovation and tradition to create effective new forms of entrepreneurship. Based on seven years of extensive research in Colombia and Ecuador, veteran ethnographers Jason Antrosio and Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld’s *Fast, Easy, and In Cash* explores how small-scale production and global capitalism are not directly opposed, but rather are essential partners in economic development.

Antrosio and Colloredo-Mansfeld demonstrate how artisan trades evolve in modern Latin American communities. In uncertain economies, small manufacturers have adapted to excel at home-based production, design, technological efficiency, and investments. Vivid case studies illuminate this process: peasant farmers in Túquerres, Otavalo weavers, Tigua painters, and the t-shirt industry of Atuntaqui. *Fast, Easy, and In Cash* exposes how these ambitious artisans, far from being holdovers from the past, are crucial for capitalist innovation in their communities and provide indispensable lessons in how we should understand and cultivate local economies in this era of globalization.

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