



Masks from West and Central Africa: A Celebration of Color and Form

Mary Sue Rosen, Paul Peter Rosen

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In West and Central Africa, ceremonial masks are viewed as manifestations of the spirits, and the dramatic effect and visibility of masks is enhanced by use of vivid color. Accompanied by vivid color photographs of 266 masks, the largest representation of traditional polychrome masks from the Temne people of Sierra Leone and the Anang (Ibibio) people of Nigeria are documented here, as well as one of the largest published collections of articulated masks from the Ogoni people of Nigeria. Also illustrated is a wide range of traditional masks used by other peoples from West and Central Africa, including masks from the nations of Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Angola. Mask styles are discussed in relation to size, shape, materials, degree of abstraction, distinguishing characteristics, and context of usage. Other topics considered in this engaging presentation are the changing forms of masks in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the aesthetics of masks from the African perspective, and issues of, authenticity, as it relates to collecting African masks.

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