

AFRICA AND THE ARTS

Insights to private German collections

Edited by: Dorina Hecht, Günter Kawik

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The following pages summarize the introductory texts, including a foreword, preface and introduction (etc.), as well as an abstract of each essay.

Excerpt from the FOREWORD by Uschi Eid:

In this book, collectors and art historians have undertaken a collaboration resulting in an extraordinary addition to the list of publications from recent decades. Although seldom assumed, some of the finest works of classical and contemporary African Art can be found in German collections. These categories, classical and contemporary, are usually discussed separately; however, unlike previous publications, this book expertly traces an arc through the history of art from ancient Africa up to present day.

This publication features works of art belonging to impassioned collectors, those who preserve cultural artifacts and promote their artistic appreciation. The more significant cultural preservation through commercial trade becomes—a symptom of the art market's influence-- the more difficult it is to determine a work's value in the art historical sense. In the pages that follow, collector and arts patron Günter Kawik and art historian Dorina Hecht attempt to fill the resulting gaps. By revealing and reviewing the cultural riches of Africa with new methodologies, a similarly innovative view of the represented works appears. In addition to the editors, numerous art historians have contributed essays that share a modern style of language, abandoning traditional terminology and critiquing the current status of academic positions in contemporary discourse. The artworks' individuality and the diversity of the collections are displayed in a fascinating selection of images.

The quality demonstrated by this selection of artworks also represents a reevaluation of the culture of origin itself. This book's effective arrangement and differing academic approaches render it a treasure for all those interested in Africa. Furthermore, it will guide a new audience to Africa, for which I wish the team of editors and contributors much success.

Dr. Uschi Eid, February 2010

Vice President of the German-African Foundation

Excerpt from the PREFACE (Dorina Hecht):

Following his lengthy observations that books about African art always feature the same objects, collector Günter Kawik had the idea to self-publish a book about African art in private collections in Germany. He found this repetition monotonous, particularly since he was aware of numerous, previously unknown German collections with outstanding works. He states, "My goal was to publish a book that didn't merely portray the universally-known, traditional sculptures. Collectors are not only interested in comparing their works to those found in renowned collections or museums. When the same objects always appear in the public sphere, for the sake of convenience or fear of mistakes, it gets boring in the long run."

His original concept envisioned a publication about "traditional" African art in German collections. With this idea, he approached me. He was specifically searching for an art historian, because he wanted his publication to introduce rarely seen works from African countries in an art historical context. However, we quickly realized that reducing African art to "traditional" sculpture seemed too one-dimensional. Therefore, during the course of our work, we decided to understand African Art as something more cohesive, a process that encapsulates the "traditional," the contemporary and everything in between.

We specifically looked for collections that were as formally diverse as possible with works representing various eras. Although the majority of German collections are primarily comprised of “traditional” art, we observed that many collectors’ interests have shifted towards modern and contemporary African painting, photography and sculpture. By depicting works stemming from antiquity up to and including the art of today, the following publication attempts to suspend the division between “traditional” and “contemporary” that’s been portrayed by numerous books and exhibitions, in order to analyze how these categories actually overlap, as evidenced by the collections.

Since we wanted to achieve an interdisciplinary viewpoint, authors with collection expertise, as well as those with theory-based, academic backgrounds each have their say, in addition to a number of art historians. Besides the predominantly German authors, a French Kulturwissenschaftlerin (cultural academic) and an art historian from Benin have also written essays for the occasion of this publication. Almost every article originated in direct response to our thesis.

The following volume seeks to achieve a multi-perspective approach to its subject and to broaden the exposure of seldom seen or previously unpublished works from German collections.

Excerpt from the INTRODUCTION (Dorina Hecht und Günter Kawik):

For more than a century, art historians and ethnologists have written about Africa’s various art forms from an academic perspective. Although the interest has been consistent, the view of the continent and its art has changed considerably. For a long time the discussion revolved exclusively around African art’s influence on the European avant-garde at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the following pages, we- the collector Günter Kawik and the art historian Dorina Hecht, as well as twelve other authors- demonstrate that, in today’s discourse, completely different questions must

be posed and new approaches tested. In the theoretical section of this book, young authors with art historical or academic backgrounds in the field of visual culture discuss the intersections between traditional, modern and contemporary art. "Traditional," often rural African art, as well as contemporary, more urban art are both re-positioned in an art historical context.

The following book is divided into five chapters. In the first chapter, three young academics from the disciplines of Art History and Visual Culture discuss the subject Collecting: Art History and the Art Market. The first part confronts general questions concerning the collecting of African Art and the discourse of Art History in relation to Africa. The introductory essay identifies the collections in Germany that have already been published and where they stand in respect to the actual number of collections. In the article that follows, an art historian and an ethnologist describe how the placement of an African sculpture in a private home or museum changes the sculpture's significance in correlation to the owner's prestige. Another article compares in which respects French collectors have provided a model for German collections and discusses the term "primitive art." The final entry describes the contradictions between the presentation of African Art in ethnological museums, as well as in art museums, compared to debates of this topic by art historians.

The next three sections combine texts with a concluding series of images. In each of the three sections, young academics and collectors discuss internationally established contemporary artists with African backgrounds, local art communities in Benin (Romuald Tchibozo), specific artistic developments in Togo (Kathrin Langenohl), and the discourses in African Art around the "traditional." The innovative, discourse-critical approaches of the academics (as with Yvette Mutumba or Heike Wintershoff) differ from the positions of the collectors (such as Reinhard Klimmt or Wolfgang Meyn), which are based more on ethnological concerns and the practice of

collecting. By juxtaposing these two positions, the objects and the fields of discourse that they represent enter into a kind of dialogue with one another.

The chapter titles Contemporary Art and Local Art Communities¹, as well as African Art contextualize the pictures and objects found in the collections. However, these classifications are not definitive and should be understood as malleable concepts, since exceptions, such as Romuald Hazoumé, are unavoidable. Hazoumé is positioned in the Contemporary Art chapter, but is also mentioned in Romuald Tchibozo's article in the section on Benin's Local Art Communities. What is considered local can thus also appear in the international art market. The same applies to Colon figures: they can be distinguished as African Art, but are discussed in the chapter Local Art Communities, which encompasses developments between Contemporary Art and African Art.

The image sections in the chapters mentioned above introduce contemporary artists with African origins and their works over a two-page spread, as well as specific sculptures, such as masks. The artists and "traditional" African Art are shown in photographic illustrations with academic, art historical descriptions. A contextualization listing the works' respective functions, common in ethnological studies, has been omitted from this section of descriptions.

The fifth chapter is entitled Collection Practices and debates questions regarding the determination of age and the restoration of wooden objects and bronzes.

From the extremely diverse artworks that we discovered throughout the collections, we decided to thematically limit ourselves in these three image sections to representations of the human form. The objects, photographs,

¹ I've gathered from certain discussions regarding this heading that some would have rather seen the term "Modern Art" used. I've consciously avoided this term due to its heavily European associations.

installation art and paintings from private German collections, which are depicted show how widely the concept of the body can vary across the spectrum of African Art. Consequently, we primarily address the human figure, with the exceptions of animals with human facial expressions, as well as works dealing with notions of identity within contemporary art.

These differing positions were chosen empirically. In each private collection, we discovered a wide range of highly valuable, representative artworks, from "traditional" wooden and bronze pieces, to modern paintings and sculptures, to contemporary multi-media art. This publication captures these new discourses and recent developments in the field of collecting. Considering how varied the selected collections are in relation to each other, we've attempted to present the broadest possible spectrum: from classical tastes to a post-modern mix. Still, this book does not claim to represent the entire heterogeneous African continent, particularly since not every country is represented by the collections themselves.

An analysis of the features perceived as characteristic of African art has been consciously omitted. Similarly, this publication will not include a comparison of European modernism and African Art.

The following book offers a first overview of exemplary, highly valuable recent and older artworks in private German collections. Our concept reflects the German collector's view of African Art and illustrates the spectrum of collections that exist in Germany. We've attempted to be as diverse as possible in our approaches to the subject of what artists with African roots have created in recent decades and centuries.

Private collections provide an essential contribution to these discussions, since they have been built independently of academic disciplines and their categories. This results in new interpretations of certain objects, as well as Africa's art production in general. Collectors don't only exhibit their

sculptures differently than ethnology and art museums; they also acquire them based on completely different selection criteria. They assume the responsibility of preservation and, in their passion for collecting, often amass a far-reaching knowledge of the subject, which this book documents and discusses.

Clear answers to the numerous complex questions that have accompanied African and contemporary art since European modernism will not be offered here. The following book would much rather offer to accompany its reader and those interested in the discussion, critically and from a wealth of perspectives.

Excerpt from TERMINOLOGY

Dorina Hecht

Essays on African art require an ongoing search for precise terminology and political correctness. Authors that arrive at this field enter an uncertain semantic terrain, where every step must be carefully considered. It begins with the question if the geographical positioning of "African" or "Africa" is applicable to the vast continent's entire spectrum of visual culture. Ultimately, it subsumes around a thousand languages that are still spoken in Africa today, as well as many of their corresponding traditions (Appiah 1996, pg. 22). The concept that a specific African identity initially began as a product of the European gaze, as once formulated by Ghanaian philosopher and cultural theorist Kwame Anthony Appiah, is fairly established today (1992, pg. 71). In spite of this, European discussions surrounding the art and culture of Africa's individual countries aren't yet complex enough to finally abandon the overly generalized term "Africa." In the pages that follow, this attribution will also be treated as a Western construction. As the book's title indicates, the editors have chosen the term "Africa" despite valid objections. Geographical positioning is therefore appropriate when

considering multiple traditions concurrently, or in the event of a concrete example identifying a specific origin.

Some have long considered the division of visual culture as “art” and “not art” to be an obsolete concept that no longer applies to our global lexicon of images (Haustein 2008). So many hybrid visual influences coexist that it has become more and more difficult to defend a clear Western separation between “high” and “low” art or between the fine and applied arts. In spite of this, debates repeatedly arise as to whether “traditional” African objects can be defined as art² or, due to their non-Western influences, cannot be considered art at all. (Brög 2002, pp. 13-21; Schmalenbach 1990, pp. 16-19; Wedewer 1995, pg. 21; Wyss 2009, pg. 78; Appiah 1996, pg. 24).

Within the term “contemporary African art,” the term “art” is used self-evidently as a standard criterion of quality³. For reasons of clarity, a lack of acceptable alternatives and as an immediate signifier of quality that attests to recognition, as well as respect, the term “art” is used in this publication.

Today we understand the term “African Art” as a Western concept and realize that there is no such thing as one “African Art.” National and continental attribution must be understood as constructions implemented by our Western perspective. Kwame Anthony Appiah, who has roots in both Europe and Africa, defends the terms “Africa” and “Art” in the exhibition catalogue “Africa- The Art of a Continent” (Phillips, 1996). He argues, “If African art was not made by people who thought of themselves as Africans; if it was not made as art; if it reflects, collectively, no unitary African aesthetic vision; can we not still profit from this assemblage of remarkable objects? What, after all, does it matter that this pair of concepts —Africa, art— was not used by those who made these objects? They are still African;

² “Global Art” has also been used as an alternative term.

³ Even in this context, Simon Njami, chief curator of the exhibition Afrika Remix, chose to speak of “contemporary facts” instead of “art” (Njami 2004, pg. 22).

they are still works of art...But our first task, as responsible exhibition-goers, is to decide what we will do with these things, how we are to think of them.” (Appiah 1996, pp. 24-25)

I have therefore decided to employ the term “African Art” in my essays, although, technically speaking, one must refer to the “different objects from Africa and their contextualization within a category recently created by Westerners, entitled African Art,” as formulated by the German ethnologist Alexis Malefakis (2007, pg. 8ff).

This publication uses the term “African art” in the context of so-called “traditional” art from Africa⁴. It is considered as separate from other terminology, such as modern, post-modern and contemporary art⁵. It is a placeholder, a substitute that will eventually need to be replaced with differentiating terminology (Alexis Malefakis 2007, pg. 9).

The controversial term “traditional” will only be used in reference to a quote or when required for a specific distinction. In order to delineate this term as a substitute, it has been placed in quotation marks.

Today, artists who operate on a global scale would rather be distinguished as contemporary artists, rather than as “contemporary African artists.” Most tend to have international networks and live between multiple continents. When discussed within the parameters of the exotically incriminating term “African,” the majority often feel either scrutinized or ghettoized.

I have therefore decided to understand these artists in my essays as a part of the contemporary art community and to principally write about

⁴ Africa: Art of a Continent (1996) by Tom Phillips offers a comprehensive overview of African Art.

⁵ The books *The Short Century* (2001) by Enwezor and *Africa Remix, Angaza Africa or Contemporary African Art since 1980* are excellent summaries of contributions by living artists to modern and contemporary art, respectively.

“contemporary art.” Nevertheless, I will occasionally write about contemporary “African” art. To differentiate from Western discourse and from European, American or Asian Art, this substitutive term has also been placed in quotation marks.

As the definitions reviewed above demonstrate, it is almost impossible to determine a binding terminology that doesn’t reveal itself as insufficient during the course of discussion. Above all, this elucidates that scholarship concerning African Art is still in its infancy, or, as argued by the art historian Beat Wyss, that “the art world pretends to be global- but still has no functioning categorization for the Other.” (Wyss 2009, pg. 78)

The use of certain terms has been left up to each author and can therefore vary throughout the book.

From this semantic perspective (cf. Arndt 2004), the following volume documents artworks from private German collections, analyzes various discourses and initiates new interrogations into the intersections between African Art and contemporary art.

1. COLLECTING, ART HISTORY, THE ART MARKET

PUBLISHED COLLECTIONS OF AFRICAN AND CONTEMPORAY ART IN GERMANY

Dorina Hecht

When speaking about collections of African Art, private German collections don’t have the best reputation, especially in comparison to private collections in France, England, the United States or Belgium. It’s said that not many collections exist and besides, other nations purchase the best

objects before they can reach the German market. This opinion is widespread, but is it accurate? Which collections are actually recognized in the public sphere and which remain undiscovered?

This essay lists the published collections in alphabetical order. Collections with a thematic focus comprised of photographs, installations, sculpture, and contemporary painting, rather than ethnological objects alone, have been briefly listed, with some accompanied by illustrations.

THE UNKNOWN: THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLECTING OF AFRICAN ART

Dorina Hecht und Heike Wintershoff

Following much discussion in academic literature concerning the psychoanalytical gaze (cf. Muensterberger 1998), we want to investigate two additional aspects of collecting: firstly, comparisons between collections placed in museums, those composed by private collectors and those brought together by artists. We are interested in the questions: how does an object change in the existing collection context? How are objects viewed differently in these three types of collections and what purpose does each one serve? These questions deal with the changing relationship between object and collector, about the process of assigning meaning and about the specific gaze directed at the object. Secondly, we attempt to establish the significance of the "Unknown"- i.e. an object's distant past and possible future- in collections of our present-day society.

FRANCE: A PARAGON? ON THE COLLECTING OF "PRIMITIVE ART" IN THE 21st CENTURY, A PIONEERING ROLE AND ITS HEIRS

Sophie Eliot

In order to distinguish non-European art, art ethnological terms such as "native art," "tribal art," "Negerkunst" (negro art) and "primitive art" were developed at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. In the process, France assumed a pioneering role. Even today, German collectors laud French connoisseurship and expertise. The following text seeks to expose the contradiction between the recognition of an aesthetic in African art and the concurrent use of the colonizing term "primitive art." As such, the following essay does not confront questions regarding either the preservation of African Art by Western or African museums, nor the merits of French collectors of African Art. Rather, it questions the precedent set by countries that employ colonizing and ethnocentric terminology, an attribution used by German collectors either rarely or not at all.

AFRICA AND THE HISTORY OF ART: THE BOUNDARIES AND POSSIBILITIES OF A DISCIPLINE

Dorina Hecht

During the last 40 years, debates surrounding art from Africa have been primarily lead in ethnological museums and later in art museums. Ethnologists began to document and classify African sculptures, textiles and objects of the everyday long before art historians. However, they rarely differentiated between objects with artistic value and everyday items (cf. Enwezor 2009, pg. 12). The decision which objects can be distinguished as art and what signifies quality remains determined by art museums, the art market and art historians. Following a long period of time in which art historians showed little interest in African art production, there's been an

observable resurgence over the last 20 years. The History of Art now appears ready to expand its fundamental canonical and qualitative assignments in relation to African Art. As a result of this resurgence, current categorical approaches are increasingly developed from art historical or interdisciplinary perspectives and less from ethnological perspectives.

With a focus on Germany, the following essay names specific exhibitions in ethnological museums and art museums, as well as their discourses. In doing so, it reveals the positions taken by German art historians, as well as the ensuing debates.

2. CONTEMPORARY ART: IDENTITY AND PRESCENCE IN GLOBAL ART

REFLECTION, APPROPRIATION AND TRADITION- STRATEGIES IN CONETMPORARY ART

Dorina Hecht

Numerous discussions revolve around the appropriation of African forms within European modernism or the acquisition of objects by colonizing officials, collectors or museums (Ivanov 2001). Appropriation as an artistic strategy first entered the History of Art in the 1980's. Many contemporary artists with African backgrounds developed this strategy further, in order to confront that which had long irritated them: the demand for the exotic-traditional. Citing six male artists and two female artists as examples, all of whom have been exhibited in Germany, this essay attempts to trace which strategies they use to position themselves within their vast continent, as well as within the international art world. They create images from a massive atlas that are equally African, Asian or European and invoke, reflect, adopt and achieve new pictorial worlds.

ON THE PRESENCE OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART IN GERMANY

Yvette Mutumba

At the beginning of the 21st century, two of the genre's most engaged proponents asserted that contemporary African art is entering a "golden age," as argued in the anthology "Reading the Contemporary. African Art from Theory to the Marketplace," considered a classic text today. Since the 1980's, more and more artists, authors, academics and critics with African origins have given a voice to contemporary African art by establishing projects and institutions such as the Forum for African Arts, the Institute of International Visual Art (IniVA), London, the D'Art Biennale or the Bamako Biennale for Photography, among others, as well as periodicals such as Third Text, Revue Noir and Nka. This essay illustrates, in specific examples, the manner in which contemporary African art is present in Germany.

PAST AND PRESENT: THE OTHER AND THE SELF- THE SAME AND YET DIFFERENT

Artur Elmer

How does Africa's "cultural heritage" manifest itself in contemporary African art and to what extent is this affected by Western perceptions of art? Clearly, one can't help but observe that the questions above stem from a historical context. European Modernism discovered Africa for its own purposes and yet only partially altered Europe's existing preconceptions. The European avant-garde had other concerns besides politics or society. These questions don't just reveal a dilemma. Africa is not united geographically, politically, economically, socio-culturally or religiously. Answers, despite their fundamental desirability, are only partially feasible. Organs of human perception- the senses and the brain- are essentially the same in all people. Cultural influences vary and are perpetually shifting due to intercultural cues. When we compare the various views concerning life and death held by

religions and other belief systems, vast differences reveal themselves across the breadth of cultural perceptions.

3. LOCAL ART COMMUNITIES:

THE SEARCH FOR NEW VISUAL LANGUAGES

DIDIER AMEVI AHADSI: SCENES OF URBAN LIFE IN LOMÉ, TOGO

Kathrin Langenohl

The metal sculptures of the Togolese artist Didier Amevi Ahadsi, which primarily depict scenes of everyday life in Lomé, are represented in numerous private German collections. In 2007, the Museum of Ethnology in Lübeck organized the first solo exhibition of Didier Amevi Ahadsi, for which a catalogue was also published. The exhibition presented the collection of the ethnologist, private collector and Africa-traveler Karl-Heinz Krieg, who initially purchased three figurines by Ahadsi from the market in Lomé in 2002. His subsequent meeting with Ahadsi established a productive collaboration between artist and patron that continues today. This essay introduces select works by Ahadsi and explains how the relationships between individual creativity, traditional elements and his patron's influence all converge in the artist's works.

ART FROM BENIN IN THE 21st CENTURY

Romuald Tchibozo

For a number of years, contemporary art production in Benin has shaped its own style, combining traditional elements and specific, innovative approaches. Even in the 1980's, the contemporary tendencies of Beninese art could be described in certain categories: abstract and figurative painting

or sculpture, as well as recycling art (recuperation). Benin's art of the 21st century has now arrived. Today, it is difficult to define current art trends with any precision. The search for originality by Beninese artists, as well as artists from around the globe, has replaced the conventional academic canon. Intellectual flexibility and a strong will are required to orient oneself within this new art world and to separate oneself from the preexisting canon. This essay reveals recent developments in the Beninese art community and investigates how these artists are questioning our understanding of art and its concepts.

4. AFRICAN ART: CANON AND DISCOURSE ON THE "TRADITIONAL"

PROFANE CULT VALUE. PROVENANCE OF AFRICAN OBJECTS IN MUSEUMS AND AUCTION HOUSES

Heike Wintershoff

The term provenance comes from the Latin word „provenire“ and means “origins,” “source” and “the region where someone or something comes from.” Conventional provenance research takes this definition further and not only investigates the origin of a work, but also its authenticity, value and the artwork's previous owners, as well as restitution claims of possible heirs. However, provenance research concerning African objects should also deal with historical specifics, encompassed by these questions of value, authenticity and ownership. Thus, the text will discuss three specific aspects that constitute the character of a provenance, in relation to wooden artworks. Firstly, the text will present a history of the reception of traditional and post-modern art and cultural artifacts. The second important aspect deals with concepts of authenticity in relation to works such as those in Western institutions. The third aspect is primarily concerned with the ethical

and political implications of collecting, acquiring and exhibiting African objects. Provenance research of wooden artworks differentiates in part from provenance research of bronze objects. Since Dorina Hecht und Günter Kawik have already addressed bronzes in their texts, this essay focuses exclusively on objects made from wood.

AFRICAN HEADDRESSES: PICTOGRAMS AND REFLECTIONS OF SOCIETY

Reinhard Klimmt

Characteristic attributes of traditional African art include the disproportional depiction of the human head, as well as extremely elaborate renderings of hairstyles and head coverings, as seen in figurative representations and masks. And not only that: hairstyles and head coverings themselves are part of the African Art cosmos.

Crowns, diadems, hats, wigs and creative hairstyles are also afforded meaning in other cultures beyond their often rudimentary, practical functions. They possess layers of social relevance, especially in cultures where rituals and symbols still dominate everyday life, such as in the overwhelmingly multi-faceted cultures of Africa. The headdresses connote the power and prestige held by kings and chiefs; they reserve certain forms and materials, similar to those of healers and other dignitaries in social or spiritual contexts. Hierarchies can be inferred from their forms and designs, their complexity, materials and decoration.

IYEOBA: MOTHER OF THE KING- AN OFFICE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Angelika Tunis

The official office of "Queen Mother" was established by the 15th King of Benin, Oba Esigie (ca. 1504-1550), for his mother Idia. Back when the two kingdoms of Portugal and Benin (first contact between 1472 and 1485) cooperated as equal partners, they exchanged ambassadors and operated a flourishing trade. Consequently, the number of soldiers and weapons in Benin's army under Esigie increased, which led to a substantial growth in the country's power and wealth. When the Nigerian tribe Igala attacked Benin in the 16th century, the battle represented one of the most dramatic events in Benin's long history. As Esigie's main advisor, Idia's brave service enabled Benin's defeat of Igala in the battle of Oregbini and the Nigerians were pushed back. Esigie displayed his gratitude with the honor of an official office, as opposed to the common practice of killing the king's mother once he entered government. This essay investigates the origin and meaning of Idia's personal headdress, which doesn't portray a crown, but rather a net of coral beads that covers and the hair, while sculpting it into an upwardly sloping shape.

THE ONE-TRIBE-ONE-STYLE-PARADIGM: AN ATTEMPT AT STYLISTIC DIFFERENTIATION IN IFE AND BENIN

Dorina Hecht

When assigning attributes to African Art, many ethnologists and collectors have long appealed exclusively to the notion that art historian Sidney L. Kasfir (1984) termed "one style one tribe." In this view, "authentic" African Art must be pre-colonial, divided into oversimplified categories and viewed as an unchanging, self-contained entity. Although the older kingdoms of Ife and Benin offer early examples of intercultural exchange between not only neighboring lands, but also all of Europe, this conviction still exists. In

addition to objects from private collections, the following essay tests the logic behind common classifications of various Nigerian bronzes. The article analyzes discourse and empirically questions this method of attribution, as well as the concept of "one tribe one style" that is similarly assigned to cultures with official courts such as those of Ife and Benin.

FORMAL DIVERSITY IN AFRICAN ART: A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE TRADITIONAL ART OF AFRICA.

Günter Kawik / Wolfgang Meyn

The need to engage with non-European cultures has existed for centuries. Research materials have increased since the beginning of the 20th century and interest continues to grow. There's really no need to emphasize that the variety of form and artistic expression across the African continent is extraordinary. The continent's unbelievably vast heterogeneity is astounding.

The goal of the following essay, specifically to introduce and to position select objects in relation to their origins, can only be partially achieved and that by way of examples. The text will therefore offer an introduction to eclecticism and form in African Art. No traditional African artist has ever created sculptures and masks purely as artworks in the European sense, but rather as objects that function within a cult of ancestry and relate to social status or spiritual healing.

The views of authors Günter Kawik und Wolfgang Meyn occasionally converge from extremely different positions within traditional African art.

5. COLLECTING PRACTICES:

THE DATING AND PRESENTATION OF AFRICAN ART

THE EMERGENCE OF PATINA AND THE AGE DETERMINATION OF BRONZE OBJECTS AND ARTWORKS FROM BENIN AND IFE

Günter Kawik

This essay is based on observations and experiences gathered by the author over the last 20 years from the art market, in relation to West African bronzes. He critically discusses the controversial questions regarding forgeries and the dating of an object. As orientation for other collectors, the article clarifies how a patina looks and describes its appearance in ancient and early objects. In addition, the author explains different methods used to determine the age of an object and establishes why he believes the TL (thermoluminescence method) to be the surest scientific method. With the aid of charts, common theses regarding the material composition of bronzes are refuted and clarified, as well as reasons why materiality alone cannot provide a basis for age determination. This essay represents the scientific knowledge available in mid-2009.

ON FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE: SCIENTIFIC AGE DETERMINATION OF WOOD- AN AFRICAN ART COLLECTOR'S EXPERIENCES

Ingo Barlovic

When beginning to collect African art, one quickly feels helpless, inexperienced and deeply uncertain about the possibility of forgeries. Such is the prototypical "young collector." The problem thereby is that those who don't quickly find a specialty to which they can exclusively devote their enthusiasm, often still feel like a "young collector" ten years later, suffering from the fear of buying a fake. It becomes clear that "provenance" doesn't truly offer security or is, at the very least, extremely expensive. This is due to the absence of an authority whose word is law. Experts outside of

academic research, such as gallerists, dealers or auction houses professionally engaged with African art, all have their own self-serving interests. This essay introduces scientific methods of age determination for wooden objects and questions if and how other collectors can guide “young” and inexperienced collectors from faith to knowledge.

THE FUNCTION OF PEDESTALS AND THE RESTAURATION OF AFRICAN OPBJECTS

Hermann Becker

The expression “to knock someone off their pedestal” encompasses two statements: one exhibits the loss of significance and power, while the other presumes that a person or object without a pedestal is unstable. This essay is based on years of experience that the author has gathered as a pedestal designer and restorer of African objects. Besides his occupation as an furniture and industrial designer, the author has also developed a distinct affinity for African objects during his numerous and lengthy research trips to West Africa, together with the ethnologist and art dealer Karl-Heinz Krieg. For years, he has designed sculpture pedestals and completed restorations for numerous private collectors and museums.

Translated from German by Emilie Trice