



Invention and Tradition: The Art of Southeastern Nigeria

Herbert M. Cole

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This book celebrates and explores the sculpture and masks of the many diverse ethnic groups living in Southeastern Nigeria. The peoples of this region—the populous Igbo and a dozen nearby but smaller groups—are famous for their artistic creativity. This illuminating book focuses on the area's sculptural arts—mostly figures and masks—examining these mostly unpublished works through the dual lenses of invention and tradition, and with many early and recent contextual photographs. More than 150 examples, dating from the past two centuries, reveal both surprising similarities and differences in artwork by Igbo, Isoko, Urhobo, Ijo, Ogoni, Ibibio, Oron, Eket, Ejagham/Efut, Bokyì, Tiv, Idoma, and Igala peoples. Qualities such as the nature of realism, idealism, and abstraction, the nuances of surface and detail, and the inventiveness of facial and other features, as well as complex uses and meanings, are all addressed in this exciting fresh overview that adds considerably to our understanding of African Art.

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