



Art and Religion in Africa (Religion and the Arts)

Rosalind Hackett

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Africa's religious and artistic traditions constitute a primary example of its intellectual and cultural vitality. Artistic works play a vital role - especially where oral traditions dominate - in communicating ideas about the relationship between the human, spiritual and natural worlds. This work is a comparative study of Africa's visual and performing arts, concentrating on their geographical, material and gendered diversity, and focusing on the relation of these arts to African religion. The author combines ethnographic and art-historical methodology but does not assume any prior knowledge of African art or African religion. The text seeks a greater understanding of the philosophical and religious aspects of African art, thus challenging western perceptions of what is "important" in terms of artistic representation. This approach reveals the transformative capacities and multi-dimensionality of African art. The work also highlights the changes brought about by Christianity, Islam and the newer religious movements in post-colonial Africa.

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