

Chapter 1 : Mbari : Art and the Life among the Owerri Igbo by Herbert M. Cole (, Hardcover) | eBay

*Mbari: Art and the Life Among the Owerri Igbo (Traditional Arts of Africa) [Herbert M. Cole] on theinnatdunvilla.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. One of the most fascinating artistic phenomena in tropical Africa, mbari houses are little known outside Igboland.*

Eze Nwanyi[edit] Otherwise known as the Queen of Women, this mask represents a wealthy, senior wife and grandmother who commands enormous respect in the village. She embodies the ultimate feminine ideals of strength, wisdom, beauty, stature and dignity, and is a leader among women. Agbogho Mmuo Agbogho mmuo, or Maiden Spirit masquerades perform annually during the dry season in the Nri-Awka area of northern Igboland. The performance is also accompanied by musicians who sing tributes to both real and spirit maidens. The following are examples of quotes that may be heard during a performance: The masked spirit from the sky Udemu na lenu: My fame is potent These masks showcase an ideal image of an Igbo maiden. This whiteness is created using a chalk substance used for ritually marking the body in both West Africa and the African Diaspora. The chalky substance is also used in uli design , created and exhibited on the skin of Igbo women. Some maiden spirit masks have elaborate coiffeurs , embellished with representations of hair combs, and other objects, modeled after late 19th century ceremonial hairstyles. Now in the collection of Wolverhampton Art Gallery. The leg-tube extends approx 7cm each side of the 35cm disc. Three sites have been excavated, revealing hundreds of ritual vessels and regalia castings of bronze or leaded bronze that are among the most inventive and technically accomplished bronzes ever made. The people of Igbo-Ukwu, ancestors of present-day Igbo , were the earliest smithers of copper and its alloys in West Africa, working the metal through hammering, bending, twisting, and incising. They are likely among the earliest groups of West Africans to employ the lost-wax casting techniques in the production of bronze sculptures. Oddly, evidence suggests that their metalworking repertory was limited and Igbo smiths were not familiar with techniques such as raising, soldering, riveting, and wire making, though these techniques were used elsewhere on the continent. Uli design Uli is the name given to the traditional designs drawn by the Igbo people of Nigeria. Uli drawings are strongly linear and lack perspective; they do, however, balance positive and negative space. Designs are frequently asymmetrical , and are often painted spontaneously. Uli generally is not sacred, apart from those images painted on the walls of shrines and created in conjunction with some community rituals. The drawing of uli was once practiced throughout most of Igboland , although by it had lost much of its popularity, and was being kept alive by a handful of contemporary artists. Designs would last about a week. Members of sufficiently high rank are entitled to commission sculptors to carve the panels. Carved doors and panels were also apparently adopted or used in the houses of wealthy families as a means of displaying wealth. Igbo doors are delicately carved with deeply cut abstract designs in striated and hatched patterns that catch the sunlight to produce high contrasts of light and shadow. Mbari art Igbo art is noted for Mbari architecture. They house many life-sized, painted figures sculpted in mud to appease the Alusi deity and Ala , the earth goddess , with other deities of thunder and water. When new ones are constructed, old ones are left to decay. Some houses had elaborate designs both in the interior and exterior. These designs could include Uli art designed by Igbo women.

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Deities of the Igbo Religion Sources Roots. The origins of the Igbo , like those of many other ethnic groups in West Africa, are shrouded in myth. The best historical evidence produces two conflicting interpretations. One group of scholars, including Elizabeth Isichei, claims that the Igbo are original to the place where the majority of them still live, southeastern Nigeria. A second group, however, asserts that the Igbo , along with some ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, are descended from the Jews, using linguistic and even genetic analysis to bolster their claims. Danquah and Jacob U. Egharevba point to similarities in Igbo and Hebrew customs and religious rituals, such as the circumcision of the male child eight days after birth, systems of marriage and inheritance, and ideas about ritual purity and impurity. Wide-eyed, insomniac, you go out at cock-crow spitting malediction at a beaten, recumbent world. Your crimson touches fire the furnaces of heaven and the roaring holocaust of your vengeance fills the skies. Undying Eye of God! You will not relent, we know it, from compassion for us. Relent then for your own sake; for that building eye of madness that may be blinded by soaring motes of an incinerated world. Single Eye of God, will you put yourself out merely that men may stumble in your darkness. Single Eye, one-wall-neighbor-to-Blindness, remember! Take care that the ashes of the world rising daily from this pyre may not prove enough when they descend again to silt up the canals of birth in the season of renewal. Parallel to the idea of Chukwu as a masculine deity associated with the Sun is the idea that the Moon is feminine and closely associated with the goddess Ala—Earth. While Chukwu is in charge of creation, Ala is in charge of conserving that which is created. While Chukwu is the giver of the moral law, Ala is the enforcer of the law. Before planting and harvest, they hold days of ritual ceremonies to appease Ala so she will facilitate the growth of healthy crops or to thank her for making possible the abundant harvest soon to begin. In a year of drought or other agricultural misfortunes, the people undertake ritual processes meant to examine how they may have angered Ala and caused her to withhold her blessings. After they look for wrongdoing on the part of humans, they seek scientific explanations for crop failures. When religious and natural explanations conflict, mythical narratives are used to overcome contradictions. Chukwu and Ala are meant to represent the differences and complementarity between the sexes in Igbo culture. This principle of duality extends to minor gods as well. Agbala is the priestess of Ala. These and similar crimes are believed to be transgressions against the earth goddess. After Chukwu and Ala, the most important divinity in the Igbo religious worldview is Chi, the spirit believed to inhabit each individual. Chi is said to be the fractal representation of Chukwu that resides in each person. Spirits known as mmo do not necessarily belong to anyone in particular, but rather are believed to roam around either to protect people or to cause mischief to individuals. Often the wandering spirits are attributed to dead relatives whose funeral may not have been properly performed or altogether neglected. Depending on their characters when they were inhabiting human bodies, these homeless spirits are either benevolent or malevolent, but they are always unhappy because of their wandering state. It is believed that Chukwu may also send unwelcome spirits to rebuke or torment individuals who have committed evil acts or to protect the innocent. This belief has led some scholars to characterize the Igbo traditional religion as animistic. Closely associated with Ala is Mbari, the divine guardian of a ritual form of art central to the Igbo religious existence. The character of the deity Mbari, who is considered a close associate, if not a divine messenger or personal aspect, of Ala, is best explained by describing the artistic ritual that also bears her name. Mbari art is considered a feminine endeavor—unlike other religious rituals that are, for example, associated with war or hunting. Mbari is a ritual of peace and art and an expression of the love of play, including the satiric and comic, and the love of the beautiful. Only adult Igbo can participate in Mbari, which involves several months of seclusion, during which the participants devote all their time to creating artworks. These works may be made with materials such as wood, cloth, and ink, but rarely clay. The results are sculptures that represent the full range of the experience and imagination of each artist: In fact, the goal of Mbari artists seems to be re-creation of the everyday experience of an

average person in the wider community. Thus, a Mbari house might contain an assembly of objects arranged to look like a miniature imaginary Igbo society. The purpose of Mbari is primarily to show off the talents of artists: At the end of the months of seclusion, the Mbari house is opened to the public for view. Like visitors to a museum, people are supposed to feel a sense of recognition in the artistic—sometimes caricatured—rendition of their everyday communal lives. In return the visitors shower the artists with gifts, parties, and recognition. Unlike museums, however, Mbari houses are destroyed—or left to deteriorate unattended—at the end of each season. The Earth goddess Ala, who is also the god of fertility, is regarded as the divine patron of Mbari. Mbari artists must return to the beginning and renew creativity each year because—as in the cycle of nature—they regard art as highly creative but also improvisational. Thus, it seems that the Igbo valued the spontaneity of the artist and the technical processes of creativity more than the objects created. Some of the Mbari art objects, especially masks, have been rescued from destruction and are used in rituals from one year to the other. Similar to the god Shango in the Yoruba religion, Amadioha is the Igbo god of thunder and lightning. Dibia, or priests, are therefore asked to determine what wrong has been committed by the victim or the owner of the object. Amadioha himself, however, is presumed to be a gentle deity who gets violent only when provoked. It is not known whether any of these deities is male or female. Rather, the trickster is considered capable of being either sex at anytime, even both at once, or neither sex at all. Respected and feared, Agwu is capable of sowing confusion in the mind of even the clearest reasoner. Agwu, however, can also clarify confusion, even when it is caused by human ignorance, the finite capacity of the human mind, or the evil actions of other persons or gods. Agwu is most dreaded by Dibia, whose success as diviners depends on clarity of mind. Dibia are therefore taught ritual sacrifices that they must make to Agwu at the beginning of every divination session. Agwu is thus the patron deity of diviners. Feared as much as Chukwu is respected, Ekwensu is the Igbo Evil Spirit, much like that of the Devil in other religions. Possession by Ekwensu can lead a person to commit acts of great evil against Chukwu or against humanity. Whenever an unfathomable act of evil is committed by someone considered incapable of such a crime, possession by Ekwensu is a common explanation. Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation Day: African Creation Myths* London: Art and Life among the Owerri Igbo Bloomington: Indiana University Press, Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God: An Anthology* Malden, Mass. Cambridge University Press, Paul Radin and Elinore Marvel, eds. *Ibo Customs and Stories* London: Cite this article Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

Chapter 3 : Mbari | religious architecture | theinnatdunvilla.com

Mbari Art And Life Among The Owerri Igbo Igbo people wikipedia, the igbo people (english: / È Éà Éj b oÈŠ /; also ibo, formerly also iboe, ebo, eboe, eboans, heebo; natively á¹†•d" l•ÅĈEgbĀ² (listen)) are an ethnic group.

A museum of appeasement among Ndigbo On 7: That thing is the tendency for scholars of Igbo history and religion to ignore the significance of Igbo religious mud museums, otherwise known as Mbari. The Mbari architectural structures, commonly seen among the Mbaize and Owerri people of Imo State was an artistic appeasement to the gods, especially, the thunder god, Amadioha. Sample of Mbari Art work These Mbari structures, which were built and dedicated to the shrines of Amadioha in Okwuato, Enyiogugu, Nguru areas of Mbaize as well as the whole surrounding villages that constitute Owerri ebe iri embody in their rich treasuries of museum collections, the engaging religious and cultural history of the people. The totems that are found in the hall of the museums as well as the murals that adorn the walls of the shrines convey the complex tapestry of Igbo religious life , belief , history and mannerism. The museums in the first place are built on the instruction of fortune tellers, who are consulted by the villagers to explain mysterious happenings in the village. These mysterious happenings may be in the form of deaths, unexplainable sicknesses or other unusual things. Following such consultations, the Dibia or fortune teller may divine that a particular god, especially , Amadioha has been aggrieved and therefore demands that the people erect an mbari, as a ritual museum of appeasement for it. According to John Oparocha in his book, Mbari: Besides, they believe that there would be prosperity in the town. Often , they promised any of the gods, Ala, the earth goddess, Durujiaku, god of wealth, Agwu nsi, the author of all troubles and leader of fortune tellers or Amadioha , god of thunder that if he removes the trouble, they would celebrate an mbari in his honour. First, the construction of Mbari. Two, the cultural cum religious totemic contents of Mbari and three, how the Mbari conceptual activity explains the Igbo theory of art. Being a prestigious project, which confers a lot of respect on the priest or priestess, whose shrine is to host the mbari, a select group of people are specially invited and conscripted into a privacy otherwise known as mgbede. These people according to him, are not to be seen by any person through out the period that they build the Mbari. While at work, all their welfare and needs are provided by the community for which the Mbari construction addresses their plight. When he comes, a goat is killed as a sign of happy reception. After eating and drinking, the dibia starts his job with the priest. These sculpted images represent all the instruments and media with which the god executes its anger or make visitations on the people. It is important to note also that both in the representation of the gods and the architects , who help to construct the Mbari, that there is always an unconscious gender sensitivity and balance. There are illustrations of the thirteen lunar months, the four week days and the ancestors in the spirit world guarding their offspring. These are illustrations on the importance of honest living, respect for parents, child upbringing, hard work and industry. Besides helping to preserving the Igbo artistic and creative spirit, the museums within their different large murals and exhibition spaces also convey in very admiring terms the socio-political shifts that the host societies have undergone in the course of time. This transitional shift can be seen in the kind of sculptural images that are represented in the Mbari houses: One now notices that some of the traditional gods, which act as traditional security officers like Nguma are now represented with images of police or Soldier wielding guns. Sometimes too, the figures are dressed in English styled dresses showing the assimilation of foreign cultural aesthetics and mannerisms. An mbari at the Amadioha shrine at Umulogho village in Eziala Enyiogugu, Mbaize embody these image types. Seen largely as an artistic sacrifice of appeasement, this religio-creative activity despite its attendant celebratory depth also gives an insight into the Igbo theory of art. Going by what one sees in the content and form of Mbari, both as a religious and artistic concept, one would not but conclude that the Igbo do not believe in the philosophy of art for art sake. For the Igbo, the art that is meaningful is the art that has instructional functionality, such that mbari epitomizes.

Chapter 4 : Formats and Editions of Mbari, art and life among the Owerri Igbo [theinnatdunvilla.com]

One of the most fascinating artistic phenomena in tropical Africa, mbari houses are little known outside Igboland. Art historian Herbert M. Cole has drawn from his extensive research in eastern Nigeria to produce the first book-length study of this unusual art form.

Chapter 5 : Deities of the Igbo Religion | theinnatdunvilla.com

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Chapter 7 : Igbo art - Wikipedia

Mbari is a visual art form practiced by the Igbo people in southeast Nigeria consisting of a sacred house constructed as a propitiatory rite. Mbari houses of the Owerri-Igbo, which are large opened-sided square planned shelters contain many life-sized, painted figures (sculpted in mud to appease the Alusi (deity) and Ala, the earth goddess, with other deities of thunder and water).

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Chapter 9 : Mbari (art) | Revolv

"Mbari is life," say Owerri Igbo people, and larger ones strive to present a selective microcosm, a renewed world as a sacrifice to a major deity, normally in response to a catastrophe that has been visited upon the community.