



Lobi

Visions of Africa

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The art of the Lobi, an ethnic group of southwest Burkina Faso, has given rise to a world of unusual objects that can be divided into two broad functional groups, one characterised by ancestral cult objects, the other, by figures used in strictly private and propitiatory practices.

This society, among the most complex in the Voltaic area, has developed an art form in which the sculptures serve as an everyday reminder of the group's ancestors. The eternal presence of the ancestors' spirits, whether they are recognised as official ancestors or simply as "incomplete ancestors", determines the production of objects, which are used in the management of social and religious affairs.

This volume examines the role sculpture plays - making tangible that which is no longer corporeal - in the Lobi culture. An analysis of the works reveals functional affinities between the objects and brings to light many influences which, over the years, have blended into the formal designs of the most renowned sculptors. The volume features a selection of masterpieces from the most prestigious private and public collections including the Metropolitan Museum of New York, the Musée Dapper and Musée du quai Branly of Paris, and the British Museum of London.

Visions of Africa is a series devoted to the arts of Africa grouped according to the different populations. Each volume follows two main guidelines: one, visual and aesthetic, offers a selection of photographs of masterpieces while the other, theoretic and contextual, explores, for a broad public, the significance of these items within the population that created them. The series presents a set of introductory books for readers wishing to discover the arts of the different populations and of reference books for those who intend to learn more about them.

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