

BEADS, BODY, AND SOUL

Art and Light in the Yorùbá Universe

HENRY JOHN DREWAL • JOHN MASON

Organized and developed by the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, "Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Light in the Yorùbá Universe" is the first exhibition to focus on a wide range of Yorùbá beadwork traditions, both past and present, in Africa and the diaspora. The project is the result of more than twenty-five years of research in West Africa, Cuba, Brazil, and the United States by visiting curators Henry John Drewal and John Mason. It assembles some 150 beaded objects, including ceremonial regalia, masks, divination implements, contemporary paintings and sculpture, necklaces, and thrones.

The exhibition opened in Los Angeles at the Fowler Museum on January 25 and continues through July 19; it will travel to the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University (February 6, 1999–April 11, 1999), the Miami Art Museum (summer 1999), the Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin–Madison (January 29, 2000–April 30, 2000), and other venues in the United States. The associated catalogue is by Drewal and Mason (288 pp., 5 b/w & 420 color illustrations; \$60 hardcover, \$35 softcover).

Egúngún ensemble. Yorùbá, Nigeria. Cloth, glass beads, cowrie shells, leather, synthetic leather, plant fiber, string, 173cm (68"). UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History (FMCH) X96.3.7.

These expensive costumes are worn by masqueraders who dance to honor the memory of lineage ancestors. Interlaces on beaded panels proclaim that past, present, and future are part of the infinite cycle of existence: birth, life, departure, return.

The following text has been excerpted from the companion publication, which is divided into three sections: "Yorùbá Beadwork in Africa" by Henry John Drewal, "Yorùbá Beadwork in the Americas" by John Mason (with essays by Drewal and Pravina Shukla), and a catalogue of the African objects in the exhibition. Here, Drewal's introduction to African beadwork is followed by a selection from Mason's discussion.

YORÙBÁ BEADWORK IN AFRICA

What is a bead? Webster's (1957:128) defines it as "a small usually round piece of glass, wood, metal, etc., pierced for stringing." This may be the physical form, but what of the bead as cultural object? We seek to understand the definitions, qualities, and significances of beads for Yorùbá peoples and those who by blood or a sense of belonging have shaped the expressiveness of beads. A number of key concepts—temperament, empowerment, protection, potentiality, desire, wealth, and well-being—are associated with beads.

A bead—a colored and coloring form that reflects, transmits, and transforms light—also transforms the objects and persons it adorns. Colors are enculturated codes whose vibrations resonate meaningfully. Colors *move* those who experience them, for they connote specific attributes and modes of action.

Coloring and covering the body in beads is healing and empowering. Colorful beads are *oḍgùn* (medicines) that act upon worldly and otherworldly forces (cf. Keyes 1994). Thus, for example, to wear *pupa* (hot/red) and *funfun* (cool/white) *kélé* (neck beads) is to proclaim both the retributive and the healing, enabling presence of the thundergod, Sàngó.

Stringing, the art of beading, is by its very nature serial in process, and seriate in composition. It proceeds in a *lèsèṣèṣè* (step-by-step) or *létò-létò* (one-by-one) fashion. Such an approach is a fundamental tenet of Yorùbá social process and organization, as well as the compositions of Yorùbá performance and visual arts (Drewal and Drewal 1987).

When threaded together, beads stand for unity, togetherness, and solidarity. Like the wrapped bundle of *àtòḍrì* (wooden sticks) on an ancestral altar symbolizing family cohesiveness, or like the segments of a bamboo¹ stem connoting continuity over time, beads symbolize generation and regeneration. Encircling parts of the body (i.e., head, neck, arms, wrists, waist, legs, ankles, toes), beads literally and symbolically "tie up," seal in, protect, and enclose unseen forces that make up the inner, spiritual essence (*àṣẹ*) of persons (and things). In a sense, the body is "threaded" with pierced forms—bracelets, necklaces, rings, and anklets—that proclaim the powers of transcendence and the interconnectedness of spiritual and worldly realms.





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Left: *Adénilá* (great crown). Yorùbá, Nigeria. Glass beads, cloth, plant fiber, thread; 73.5cm (29"). FMCH X96.3.2a.

This crown was probably used on special ceremonial occasions, perhaps by a priest or ruler, to honor the *òrìṣà funfun*—the cool, composed, and patient deities.

Right: Detail of *òpá ilẹ̀kẹ̀* (beaded staff). Yorùbá, Nigeria. Glass beads, wood, iron, cotton cloth, velvet, iron nails, thread; complete staff 204.5cm (81"). FMCH X88.1038. Museum purchase with Manus Fund.

This staff was probably created by James Adétóyè or another member of the Adésinà family. Like the beaded crown, it can serve as a surrogate for the ruler. Although the crown finial has a European shape, the multicolored lines at the bottom of the crown suggest the veil of the most sacred of Yorùbá crown types, the *adénilá*, and an actual veil is suspended from the rectangular platform.



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Other beads may provoke desire. Women's waist beads known as *bèbè* and *lágídíg-bá* are explicitly erotic; they possess the power to attract and to evoke deep emotional responses, as noted in a variety of Yorùbá songs and sayings.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, beads are signs of preciousness and auspiciousness: good fortune in terms of economic wealth *and* spiritual well-being. When a person suddenly becomes rich, people ask the rhetorical question: *Tàbìtí ó jìn sínú àkún?* (Has s/he discovered a great deposit of *akún* beads? Adeduntan 1985:166). The praise *okùnṣolá, okùn nìgbì ọ̀rọ̀* (the *okùn* bead is the essence of wealth) captures the equation of beads with wealth, as does a person's invocation to ensure prosperity: *Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀ kú ú ikàlẹ̀* (Welcome beads, welcome wealth; M. Òkédìjì 1994, personal communication). Beads are equated with one of the most precious of possessions—children—as in the phrase *ilẹ̀kẹ̀ l'omọ̀* (children are beads). The names of royal women often include a reference to the coral beads used in regalia, as in the name *Iyùnadé* (coral crown). An only child (female) born into a family will often be given a name like *Sẹ̀gilolá* (*sẹ̀gi* bead is wealth), referring to very expensive, rare, beautiful, and *dúúú* (cool/dark) blue glass beads. The attention lavished on such a precious "bead child" provoked one Yorùbá friend to remark that all the *Sẹ̀gis* he knew were "spoiled!" (M. Òkédìjì 1991, personal communication).

All these themes are threaded into the discussions that follow.

Yorùbá Chromatics

Color theories, much like music theories, are cultural constructions. In Western thought, color is usually discussed as pigment or as light consisting of three variable properties: hue, value, and intensity. Such constructs shape the ways we perceive and



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understand color. Yorùbá culture defines and understands color in a different way, as outlined in an important article on indigenous Yorùbá theories of color perception by Moyòsórè Òkédijí (1991), summarized and elaborated here.

Yorùbás distinguish three chromatic groupings: *funfun*, *pupa*, and *dúdú*. Inadequately translated as white, red, and black, respectively, each group includes a range of colors and hues (as we understand them in Western culture) as well as various values (shades or tints) and intensities of each color.

Evocative associations with *temperature* and, by extension, *temperament* are the primary factors that distinguish one chromatic group from another. *Funfun*, which includes white, silver, pale gray, and chrome, evokes *etútù* (cold/coolness). *Funfun* is also associated with age and wisdom. *Pupa*, evoking *gbígbóná* (warmth/heat), includes a wide range of what Westerners might label red, pink, orange, and deep yellow.² Bridging and mediating the extremes of *pupa* (hot) and *funfun* (cold), *dúdú* includes dark and generally cool colors (black, blue, indigo, purple, and green, as well as dark browns, red-brown, and dark grays). This middle range between hot and cold can also be considered *lẹ wọ́fọ́fọ́* (warm; M. Òkédijí 1994, personal communication). Thus colors are grouped according to their “temperature” (and, to a lesser extent, value as it contributes to evocations of temperament) as hot, cold, or cool/dark/warm. Thus, color cognition for Yorùbás is a multisensorial experience; it is not solely a matter of sight, but rather of two senses: sight *and* touch.

The implications of this chromatic scheme are enormous for our understanding of Yorùbá art, not only because much of the visual impact of beadwork comes from color, but also because colors define and reveal the nature, character, or personality (*iwà*) of things, persons, and divinities. *Funfun*, *pupa*, and *dúdú* serve as visual warnings of forces

Oríkògbòfó (beaded cap). Yorùbá, Nigeria. Glass beads, cloth, burlap, cardboard, thread; 19cm (7”). FMCH X93.31.2. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Hammer.

The central projection marks the site of medicines protecting the initiated head of the ruler. The ancient triad of cool, hot, and warm hues joins the colonial chromatics of pink, pale blue, and yellow to create a bold, dynamic, shimmering surface.



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Àpò ilẹ̀kẹ̀ (beaded bag). Yorùbá, Nigeria. Cloth, glass beads, cardboard, iron, thread; 28.5cm (11"). FMCH X92.159. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. James Strain.

A Yorùbá artist has used beads to transform a European handbag into a ritual container, perhaps for an Ifá diviner or an Egúngún masquerader.

Bàtá ilẹ̀kẹ̀ (beaded shoes). Yorùbá, Nigeria. Rawhide, leather, cloth, glass beads, iron nails, thread; 27.5cm (11"). FMCH X78.2148a-b. Gift of Helen and Dr. Robert Kuhn.

Beaded shoes probably became part of royal regalia in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, when European fashions increasingly became the model for prestige wear and when Obas (rulers) began to move more freely outside the precincts of the palace.

and actions in the world for which one must be prepared. For example, Ògún, the god of iron and war, a supremely "hot" god, is symbolized by *pupa* because of his associations with blood, hot iron, the heat of battle, and the aggressiveness of one who "leaps into battle with red eyeballs" (Òkédijí 1991:20). In contrast, the *funfun* of Òrìṣànlá/Òbàtálá, divine sculptor, conveys a wise, cool, composed detachment. Between these extremes are the mediating, moderating qualities evoked by *dúdú*. The heat of *pupa* (yellow) balanced by the cool of *dúdú* (green) expresses the "restraint and tranquility...the dark, enigmatic and mysterious nature" of Òrúnmilá, founder of Ifá divination, and the deep-thinking, reflective nature of diviners (Òkédijí 1991:21). The *pupa* and *dúdú* (yellow and green) colors often worn by diviners are known as *òtùtùopón* ("cool-and-hot"). These colors epitomize diviners who reveal and mediate the myriad forces in the Yorùbá world and otherworld. Yellow is called *òfẹẹfẹẹ*, a term that developed during the colonial period (M. Òkédijí 1997, personal communication). While it suggests warmth, it also connotes something that is somewhat obscure, pale, or neutral—something that is not associated with a particular deity (A. Adéyemi 1997, personal communication). It is in a sense a color of compromise and mediation. Balancing *òfẹẹfẹẹ* is the dark, cool mystery of *dúdú* (green), an evocation of the healing forest leaves used by diviners, ancestors, and gods. *Funfun*, *pupa*, and *dúdú* are connected with powerful medicines that can heal, protect, or attack. The heat of *pupa*, for example, is also the color of certain potent poisons. Yorùbá chromatrics derive their impact from multiple, mutually reinforcing, culturally constructed aspects.



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Such enculturated views of hues are—like the Yorùbá world—dynamic and changing. Since the increasing exchange of trade items from Europe and elsewhere in the late fifteenth century, Yorùbá have been modifying their notions and nomenclature of colors. In the process, Yorùbá have devised a kind of hybrid “pidgin chromacy...constructed upon the foundation of a pidgin language, neither fully Yorùbá, nor fully English” that selectively adopts and adapts aspects of each chromatic tradition, while remaining somehow distinct and independent of both (Òkédijí 1991:25–26). This pidgin chromacy was created either by Yorùbáizing English words for color (such as *yélò* or *búlúù*) while still referring to a broad range of hues (as in the Yorùbá system) or referring to *funfun*, *pupa*, and *dúdú* according to European usage (white, red, and black) only. Though not used previously, adjectives are now applied to Yorùbá terms as qualifiers to suggest the intensity (brilliance or dullness) of certain colors (Òkédijí 1991:25–26). The impact and meaning—pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial—of color perception and classification continue to change as Yorùbás respond to changing economic, cultural, political, and historical forces (see also Thompson 1987:45–46).

Beads and Being in a Yorùbá World

Life in the world is a [transitory] journey, the otherworld is [eternal] home.

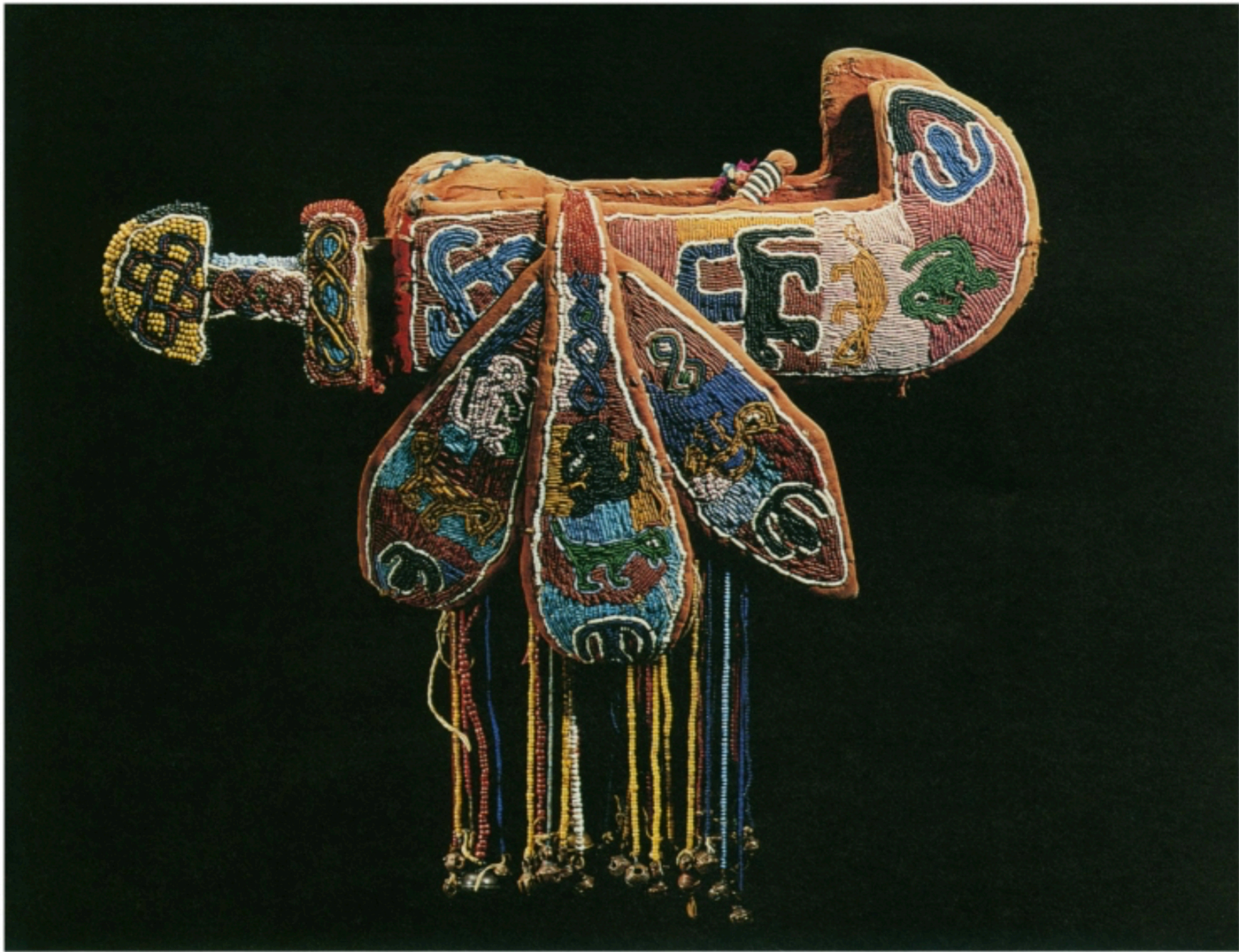
Ayé lojà, òrun nilé.

Òrò ijínlé (deep Yorùbá philosophical discourse) considers cosmic issues, those concepts that may reveal something of the dynamics of Yorùbá art and thought with reference to beads and beadwork.³ Yorùbás generally conceive of the cosmos as consisting of two distinct yet inseparable realms: the *òrun* (the invisible, spiritual realm) of gods, ancestors, and spirits, and the *ayé* (the visible, tangible world) of the living. Such a cosmos is dynamic.

Adénilá (great crown). Yorùbá, Nigeria. Velvet, glass beads, leather, wood, thread; 157cm (62"). Collection of Joseph and Barbara Goldenberg.

This *adénilá* has three tiers of ancestral faces, a cluster of birds at the summit, and two birds flanking the highest face. Distinctive features include the gaping mouths in some of the faces, as well as the diamond motif on the foreheads of the lower faces.





Ceremonial sword (*uddmalore*) and sheath (*èwú*).
 Yorùbá, Nigeria. Iron, wood, textile, glass
 beads, flannel, bamboo, copper alloy, leather,
 thread; knife 40.5cm (16"), sheath 40cm (16").
 FMCH 90.421a-b. Gift of Jerome L. Joss.

Worn among the Yorùbá, the ceremonial
 sword and sheath are the prerogative of rulers
 and the highest-ranking chiefs.

The emphasis on *passage*—birth, life, afterlife, and rebirth—underlines the theme of *transformation*. This theme is central in many ways to the essence of beads as forms that mediate light, reflecting, deflecting, transmitting, and transforming it in the process. The *aláàṣè*—rulers, priests, diviners, elders, and maskers who manipulate and mediate forces in the Yorùbá cosmos—wear beads.

The Yorùbá conception of the cosmos is often represented as either a spherical gourd whose upper and lower hemispheres fit tightly together, or as a divination tray with a raised, figured border enclosing a flat central surface. The images clustered around the tray's perimeter refer to mythic events and persons, as well as everyday concerns. They depict a universe populated by countless autonomous and competing forces. Colors mark the distinctiveness of these forces.

The encircling border of the tray also refers to an *òdìgbà/èdìgbà* (diviner's beaded necklace), which in turn alludes to the sixteen-plus-one major parts in *odù* (Ifá divination orature) that reveal cosmic forces at work. This beaded necklace is occasionally rendered realistically in the tray border. In Brazil, a diviner's necklace is often used as the border defining the space in which the divination process takes place. The intersecting lines inscribed on the surface by a diviner at the outset of divination symbolize the *oríta méta* (metaphoric crossroads), the point of intersection between the cosmic realms (M. T. Drewal 1977). The act of drawing these lines opens channels of communication between *ayé* and *òrun*; it is an act of mediation and connection. Similarly, the Yorùbá cosmogram, a circle with intersecting lines, is painted on the heads of initiates during ceremonies uniting their destinies in *ayé* with specific forces in *òrun*.⁴ Note that the *fínfín* (colored dots and dashes) covering



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Above left: *Apo ilèkè* (beaded bag). Yorùbá, Nigeria. Beads, cloth, thread; 89cm (35"). FMCH X96.3.3.

Made to carry a diviner's implements, this bag has an angular design, combined with contrasts in color, that is strikingly bold. The four faces around the central face recall the cardinal points and cosmic crossroads invoked by diviners and priests.

Above right: *Igo ilèkè* (beaded bottle). Yorùbá, Nigeria. Glass beads, cloth, wood, quill, thread; 30.5cm (12"). FMCH X95.25.2a. Anonymous gift.

Beaded bottles surmounted by birds are usually the prerogative of rulers. Their contents may be known only to their owners, for such decoration—like the beaded crowns that "contain" rulers' prepared heads—suggests awesome presences, set apart and distinguished from more benign substances.

Left: *Odighà Ifá* (beaded Ifá necklace). Yorùbá, Nigeria. Cloth, leather, glass beads, string, thread; 92cm (36"). FMCH X91.1640. Gift of Diane and Ron Ziskin.

Necklaces like this one mark Ifá diviners as comparable in importance to political rulers.



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Ère ibejì with *èwu ilẹ̀ke* (beaded gown). Yorùbá, Nigeria. Wood, cotton cloth, glass beads, cowrie shells, coins, leather, thread, camwood powder, laundry bluing; 35.5cm (14"). FMCH X86.1086a-c. Gift in memory of Barbara Jean Jacoby.

The cap of this memorial figure for a deceased twin is festooned with cash in the form of cowries and *kobo*, British pennies with pierced centers. The cool and hot colors of *Şàngó* are dominant. The figure wears carved representations of bead and iron necklaces and a Muslim amulet encasing substances for protection and empowerment.

the head bear a striking visual resemblance to beads—they are points of brightness, signs of power.

Òrun: Gods, Colors, and Temperaments

The source of *àṣẹ*, the spiritual essence or performative force animating everything, is credited to a supreme being, who is sometimes known as *Olódùmarè*. This creator, conceived as having no specific gender identity, is generally distant and removed from the affairs of both sacred and worldly entities. *Òrun* (otherworld), the abode of the sacred, is populated by countless forces such as *òrìṣà* (gods), *ará òrun* (ancestors), and *òrò*, various spirits who are close to the living and frequently involved in human affairs.

The *òrìṣà*, deified ancestors who are also personified natural forces, are arrayed along a continuum according to their *ìwà* (character) and modes of action. Colors, evocative of temperatures and temperaments, are their primary visual symbols. At one extreme are the *òrìṣà funfun*, the gods of "whiteness," like *Ọbàtálá*, who are generally calm, cool, temperate, or meditative in their actions. At the other extreme are the *òrìṣà gbígbóná*, the "hot" gods, who tend to be volatile or temperamental in behavior like *Ògún*, the god of iron and war, whose symbolic hues are in the "hot" chromatic range defined by Yorùbá as *pupa*, like the color of the dress worn by a priest of *Ògún*. Many of the countless *òrìṣà*, like *Ọrúnmìlà*, fall somewhere between these two extremes, depending on circumstances shaped by their relationships with their

followers. Their colors tend to be in a third, mediating group of cool, warm, and dark hues termed *dúdú*.

This classification of *òrìṣà* is not based on good and evil, as all gods have both positive and negative characteristics, though their modes of action differ. As Yorùbá say, "*tibi, tire*" (good and bad exist in all things). These differences are understood and experienced in terms of the evocative temperatures of colors, which in turn define temperaments not only of gods, but also of their followers. In Yorùbá cosmology, color signals the nature of forces as they interact in shaping existence.

Ayé: Beads of Distinction

Ayé—the world—is the visible, tangible realm of the living plus those invisible otherworldly forces that visit frequently and exert strong influence in human affairs. Life in *ayé* is transitory and unpredictable. Yorùbá aspirations in the world include long life, peace, prosperity, progeny, and good reputation. Ideally, these can be achieved through the constant search for *ògbòn* (wisdom), *ímò* (knowledge), and *òye* (understanding).

Yorùbá society is remarkably fluid and dynamic, like "a river that never rests." Decision-making—consensual rather than autocratic—is shared widely. An elaborate series of checks and balances ensures a generally egalitarian system (Drewal and Drewal 1987). At the same time, competition and mobility are fundamental, depending on how one marshalls the forces in one's environment. Status and rank are acknowl-

edged by wearing beads. Beads distinguish their owners and alert the viewer to matters of position, knowledge, and power.

Àṣẹ: Composition and Beading

The ideals of fluidity and equality in social interaction are rooted in the concept of *àṣẹ*, the performative power possessed by individuals and things. Unique in each person, *àṣẹ* must be acknowledged and utilized in all social matters, and taken into account in all of one's dealings with divine forces as well. Those who cultivate and utilize intensified *àṣẹ* attain positions of power and authority and are termed *aláàṣẹ*.⁵

The concept of *àṣẹ* influences how Yorùbá visual and performance arts are composed. For instance, a compositional mode can be segmented⁶ or seriate, "a discontinuous aggregate in which the units of the whole are discrete and share equal value with the other units" (Drewal and Drewal 1987:233). Attention to the discrete units of the whole produces a form that is multifocal (with shifts in perspective and proportion) and polysemic. Both the process and the product of beading epitomize such seriate composition. Each bead is a distinct entity that, when combined with others, suggests a multiplication and intensification of different presences to create something more than the sum of its parts. Yorùbá arts—whether figurative or not—mirror a world composed of structurally equal but autonomous elements.

Beaded Mediators

Bridging the realms of *ayé* and *òrun* (world and otherworld) are certain individuals and entities, cosmic mediators who include *òrìṣà* initiates, diviners, priests, rulers, elders, and maskers. It is they who wear beads as a mark of their special position and potential, for the riches associated with beads also signify their good fortune in living productive, purposeful lives with sacred support. The gods regularly enter the world through their *adòṣù/èlégùn* (mediums), worshipers whose *orí inú* (inner or spiritual heads) have been prepared to receive the spirit of their divinities during possession trances. When the gods are made manifest in this way, they speak through their followers, praying, blessing, prophesying, and giving guidance.

Babaláwo (diviners, or "fathers of ancient wisdom") use the Ifá divination system to reveal cosmic forces—the gods, ancestors, spirits, and the enemies of humankind. Yellow and green, the *pupa/dúdú* (warm/dark) colors most often used to connote Ifá, suggest the depth of wisdom, the inquisitive and meditative habits of diviners, and their familiarity with healing leaves.

The full range of hues in some diviners' beaded regalia stresses the myriad forces they confront. While Ifá suggests the revealable, Èṣù-Èlégbà, the divine messenger, in its sharply contrasting chromos of *funfun/dúdú*, connotes the unpredictable. Through the striking color oppositions in the beadwork, humans are reminded of Èṣù's constant and often unsettling activities and of the need for continuous reflection and guidance in lives of engaged action.

Oba (rulers), when donning a beaded crown, embody divinity; elders attired in beads proclaim their authority to shape the lives of others. The profusion of beads they wear signals distinction and authority in dealing with both spiritual and worldly forces.⁷

The spirits of departed ancestors (*òkú òrun*, *òṣì babarílá*, *iyánlá*), usually invisible, enter the world on appropriate occasions. At these times they manifest in the form of elaborate masking ensembles known as *Egúngún*, some of which are embellished with finely beaded panels and veils. These ensembles thus take on the aspects of the beaded regalia of rulers and elders, those aged and respected members of society closest to the departed.



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Adé nti èwú òrìṣà Òkò (staff, sheath, and crown for òrìṣà Òkò). Yorùbá, Nigeria. Cotton cloth, beads, cardboard, leather, wood, thread, metal; 152cm (60"). FMCH X88.289a-d. Gift of Peter J. Kuhn.

Dramatically contrasting colors heighten the dynamic array of zigzag, interlace, chevron, and checkerboard patterns in this sheath for Òkò, a deity that presides over many matters, including those relating to barrenness, poverty, and disease. The sheath is further embellished with two female figures, one holding a bowl, the other holding a bird. A crown for the end of the staff is shown at the top of the sheath.

□
Henry John Drewal
Notes, page 94

(Like an African Baobab; Pots Attract Vodun; Incarnations of the Vodun; Outwitting the Vodun), Ulrike Weinhold (Mind Power, Spirit Power), and Justin Barthels (The Power of Skulls; Other Objects of Vodun Religion).

Despite being beautifully produced, the catalogue is most noteworthy as a missed opportunity. The objects published without dates, town attributions, or artist names, although the year and place of purchase could

have been provided for the Cocle works if not for the others. Most probably the terracottas were acquired recently in an Aja market. Related information will be important to future scholars.

Cocle's comments on Vodun offer little new insight into the works or the underlying religion. In contrast, other priests working in this area—Roberto Pazzi among these—have been in the forefront in providing important

historical and ethnographic documentation. The other essays are also disappointing, not so much because they add little new information on the subject (which is in part understandable if one is asked to exhibit and write about a collection with which one has had little in-depth experience) but rather because the scholarship of others is either minimally acknowledged (a one-sentence note terminates the bibliographic section) or left out altogether. □

notes

DREWAL: Notes, from page 27

1. John Mason comments: "In the city of Benin, Nigeria, the original *akkarle* (staffs) used by the Edo people for honoring their ancestors were constructed of bamboo poles surmounted with carved heads. This bamboo design was later carved into wooden staffs. Bamboo staffs, topped by carved heads and used in the worship of ancestors, were created by Bini and Yorùbá slaves and their descendants in Cuba. Bamboo staffs, as well as wooden staffs carved to resemble bamboo, can be seen on the ancestral shrines of *orishá* devotees living in the U.S."

2. John Mason comments: "This same association of color and temperament is used by the Yorùbá descendants in Cuba. When a diviner warns of a 'red enemy,' a violent, unpredictable, explosive person is being described. A 'black enemy' is a hidden, unnoticed, cool, cunning, meditative adversary. In African-American idiom, a 'red-hot momma' is a liberated, aggressive, physically and sexually attractive woman who is ready, willing, and able to engage in hot, passionate sex."

3. Parts of this discussion are adapted from Chapter 1 in Drewal and Pemberton et al. (1989:13-43).

4. John Mason comments: "In Cuba, the Yorùbá cosmogram, represented as a series of concentric circles of alternating colors, is painted on the heads of initiates. It is called *òwá*. The term also applies to the ball of sacred medicine affixed to the heads of initiates and the unshaven tuft of hair left on the shaved head of an initiate. The painted *òwá* is a crown. Like a crown, it is decorated with dots/slashes/beads of color. Each *òwá*, depending on the sequence of colors, acts as a graphic lure for particular spiritual powers."

5. For discussions of *òwá*, see Verger 1957; 1964; Drewal and Drewal 1983; Drewal et al. 1989:16; Abiédún 1994.

6. John Mason comments: "Two African-American artists, J. B. Murray (1890-1988) and Joe Light (1934-), much like bead-ers, employ a compositional mode that makes use of a segmented/*finfin* stage, a television set. These two artists created 'spirit televisions' with beaded screens of autonomous elements that are segmented yet create a unified image."

7. John Mason comments: "American *orishá* priests and priestesses visiting *orishá* shrines in Nigeria were considered to be very rich by the Yorùbá they met because of the great number of *orishá* necklaces the Americans wore."

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MASON: Notes, from page 35

1. Yemoja and Oshun each hold the office of *iyúfáde*, a generic term used for the spokeswoman and leader of any society (literally, "mother in charge of external affairs," i.e., in charge of dealings between members of the society and outsiders). The *iyúfáde* is a chief in her own right and has her own special insignia of office: the necklace of special beads (*ogúgbàrà* and *iyire*), the wide-brimmed straw hats (*afé*) of the *Ondó* and the *lǐsà*, the shawl (*itagbè*) of the *lǐbù*, her personal servants, and her special drummers and bell ringers to call the women to attention.

2. Mason 1994: 288. She is also called *Okunlé* (the one who laid down the ocean).

3. The name for this road of Yemoja translates as "the one chosen for homage" (the queen).

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MARK, CHUPIN, DE JONG: Notes, from page 47

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1. Although children younger than about 12 are briefly taken to the retreat by their fathers, they do not learn secret knowledge until they participate in a subsequent *lukat*, either in their own community or elsewhere.

2. On *òkuf* see Thomas 1965; also van der Klei 1989, Mark 1992, de Jong, forthcoming (1998).

3. On change in the *lukat* see, among others, Mark 1992:55-59, Mark 1985:37-44 (for Thionk-Essyl), Thomas 1965.

4. The fundamental ethnographic text for the Jola is Louis-Vincent Thomas's *Les Diola* (1959). Thomas defines eight distinct Jola subgroups, his distinctions based primarily on linguistic criteria.

5. For a history of the Lower Casamance before and during the colonial period, see Mark 1985. This study emphasizes the region of Buluf, north of the Casamance River; in fact, it focuses on Thionk-Essyl.

6. Tensions between Niaganan ward and the rest of Thionk-Essyl stemmed from problems that were political and economic as well as religious in nature.

7. Among the heavily Mandingized and Islamized northern and northeastern Jola of Fogny and of Middle Casamance (near the Soungrougrou River) most of the agricultural labor devolves upon women. Among these groups, women's social and economic status has greatly declined in recent decades. For an outstanding comparative study of social change in three Jola communities, focusing on the status of women, see Linares 1992.

8. *Ejumbé* is Mark's transliteration for the phonetic *ejumbé*; de Jong's informants pronounced the name as *ejumbé* (pl. *sijumbé*). Other Jola groups used different terms: *usikoi*, *tesinu* ("horns"), and *kébul*. In this article the indigenous terms are sometimes in Fogny and sometimes in the dialect particular to Thionk.

9. The earliest European documentation of a horned initiation mask from the Lower Gambia-Casamance Region is an illustration published by François Froger in 1697. This picture is remarkably similar to an eighteenth-century mask preserved in the Musée de l'Homme; see Mark 1992, appendix.

The *ejumbé* masks and their history are the central focus of Mark's *The Wild Bull and the Sacred Forest: Form, Meaning, and Change in Senegambian Initiation Masks* (1992). In the present article, we address questions which could not have been answered before Thionk celebrated its *lukat* in 1994 and which therefore were not covered in that book.

10. The Niomoune masks were documented by Père Henri Goovers, a Dutch priest who lived in that community for over 40 years and who was permitted to film the initiates as they left the forest in 1965.

11. The preservation of historical memory and, one suspects, the survival of some important non-Muslim rituals reflect local political developments. Retaining local traditions in Batine could be seen as affirming the status of residents of this ward as descendants of the founding ancestors. But if historical and ritual memory are contested territory, this also reflects more recent local events. The construction of a central village mosque in 1952 on the site of a sacred forest belonging to Batine, a decision Batine adamantly opposed, deprived the ward of some of its ritual authority on a village-wide level. Even today "true sons of Batine" refuse to pray at the now decrepit mosque. In the early 1970s, the three other wards of Thionk-Essyl agreed to a reallocation of land, after which their inhabitants moved to more centrally located areas; Batine refused to participate. The new residential areas were connected to an electric grid in the late 1980s. Today, Batine is the only ward to be entirely without electricity.

12. The fact that each ward maintains several sacred forests for the initiation retreat, and that the initiation rituals are supervised by its own elders, means that it maintains a degree of autonomy in the ritual sphere. As a result, there are significant differences in ritual practice from one ward to another.

13. The songs and the corresponding dances of deceased fathers of the *kumbé*, called *awalen*, are an important part of the first dance performed, called *raas*.

14. Like the Jola, the Balanta of northern Guinea-Bissau make elaborate cattle-horned headdresses with a basketry core for the men's *fasada*, or initiation. It would be important to learn whether Balanta headpieces, too, are woven by women; this point is not addressed in the literature on the Balanta.

The Bijogo of Guinea-Bissau also wear cattle-horned initiation masks, *mas bruto*. These masks are, however, carved of wood, and women play no role in their production. In certain circumstances, where a young Bijogo male has died before his own initiation, a surviving sister may take his place in the ritual. For Bijogo men's and women's initiation see Gallois-Duquette 1983.

15. On one occasion Mark encountered a girl who was wearing an *usikoi*. This supports the idea that the horned cap does not embody spiritual power. Whether or not it is worn is the initiate's decision.

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