

## African Art As Philosophy

This collection provides a thorough introduction to African philosophy, literature, religion and anthropology through twenty-five readings from key thinkers. They discuss topics such as African culture, epistemology, metaphysics and religion, political philosophy, aesthetics, and explore rationality and explanation in an African context.

The illumination of African philosophy offered in this volume leads to the illumination of philosophy in general. Illuminating arises as an essential task of philosophy, whether African or not. What is illuminated is not already there, but is constituted at the moment of illumination. This book invites the reader to participate in the illuminating work of philosophy and necessarily, thereby, to contribute to his or her own self-constituting self-illumination. Although the focus is on African philosophy, the book also bridges the gap between African philosophy and other branches. Today more than ever, a bridging philosophy is called for, and this book helps to meet that need. This book poses philosophical questions such as who is an African and what Africa is, and seeks philosophical answers. In doing so, it contributes to the ongoing discourse on African philosophy. It addresses such issues as the African grounding of philosophy, the difference between African and Black philosophy, the African body, African art as expressed in and by Chiwara, the plight of African trees as the plight of Africans, and the symbolic meaning of Robben Island.

The essays in this 1983 volume present an innovative and unified approach to the archaeological analysis and interpretation of art and design.

Examines Bergson's work from the perspectives of critical philosophy of race and decolonial theory, placing it in conversation with theorists from Africa, the African Diaspora, and Latin America. Building upon recent interest in Henri Bergson's social and political philosophy, this volume offers a series of fresh and novel perspectives on Bergson's writings through the lenses of critical philosophy of race and decolonial theory. Contributors place Bergson's work in conversation with theorists from Africa, the African Diaspora, and Latin America to examine Bergson's influence on literature, science studies, aesthetics, metaphysics, and social and political philosophy within these geopolitical contexts. The volume pays particular attention to both theoretical and practical forms of critical resistance work, including historical analyses of anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist movements that have engaged with Bergson's writings—for example, the Négritude movement, the Indigenismo movement, and the Peruvian Socialist Party. These historical and theoretical intersections provide a timely and innovative contribution to the existing scholarship on Bergson, and demonstrate the importance of his thought for contemporary social and political issues. "This is an exceptionally strong volume that excites and inspires the philosophical imagination; it shows the centrality of questions of race and gender to philosophical inquiry and appropriation." — Keith Ansell-Pearson, author of *Bergson: Thinking Beyond the Human Condition*

Focusing on the theme of warriorhood, Sidney Littlefield Kasfir weaves a complex history of how colonial influence forever changed artistic practice, objects, and their meaning. Looking at two widely diverse cultures, the Idoma in Nigeria and the Samburu in Kenya, Kasfir makes a bold statement about the links between colonialism, the Europeans' image of Africans, Africans' changing self representation, and the impact of global trade on cultural artifacts and the making of art. This intriguing history of the interaction between peoples, aesthetics, morals, artistic objects and practices, and the global trade in African art challenges current ideas about artistic production and representation.

Decades after independence for most African states, the struggle for decolonization is still incomplete, as demonstrated by the fact that Africa remains associated in many Western minds with chaos, illness, and disorder. African and non-African scholars alike still struggle to establish the idea of African humanity, in all its diversity, and to move Africa beyond its historical role as the foil to the West. As this book shows, Africa's decolonization is an ongoing process across a range of fronts, and intellectuals—both African and non-African—have significant roles to play in that process. The essays collected here examine issues such as representation and retrospection; the roles of intellectuals in the public sphere; and the fundamental question of how to decolonize African knowledges. *African Intellectuals and Decolonization* outlines ways in which intellectual practice can serve to de-link Africa from its global representation as a debased, subordinated, deviant, and inferior entity. Contributors Lesley Cowling, University of the Witwatersrand Nicholas M. Creary, University at Albany Marlene De La Cruz, Ohio University Carolyn Hamilton, University of Cape Town George Hartley, Ohio University Janet Hess, Sonoma State University T. Spreelin McDonald, Ohio University Ebenezer Adebisi Olawuyi, University of Ibadan Steve Odero Ouma, University of Nairobi Oyeronke Oyewumi, State University of New York at Stony Brook Tsenay Serequeberhan, Morgan State University

African art is an area which has had little to no critical philosophical discussion from the African perspective, leaving the assessment and discussion this artistic experience to Euro-American scholars with scant understanding of the sensibilities inherent in African and African Diaspora art. This book looks back to the values relating to the concept of beauty in Africana art and aesthetics, making a careful effort in the first three chapters to introduce African philosophy and aesthetic values to the reader before discussing Africana art within cultural contexts.

Reading African art's impact on modernism as an international phenomenon, *The "Black Art" Renaissance* tracks a series of twentieth-century engagements with canonical African sculpture by European, African American, and sub-Saharan African artists and theorists. Notwithstanding its occurrence during the benighted colonial period, the Paris avant-garde "discovery" of African sculpture—known then as art nègre, or "black art"—eventually came to affect nascent Afro-modernisms, whose artists and critics commandeered visual and rhetorical uses of the same sculptural canon and the same term. Within this trajectory, "black art" evolved as a framework for asserting control over appropriative practices introduced by Europeans, and it helped forge alliances by redefining concepts of humanism, race, and civilization. From the Fauves and Picasso to the Harlem Renaissance, and from the work of South African artist Ernest Mancoba to the imagery of Négritude and the École de Dakar, African sculpture's influence proved transcontinental in scope and significance. Through this extensively researched study, Joshua I. Cohen argues that art history's alleged centers and margins must be conceived as interconnected and mutually informing. *The "Black Art" Renaissance* reveals just how much modern art has owed to African art on a global scale.

People all over the world make art and take pleasure in it, and they have done so for millennia. But acknowledging that art is a universal part of human experience leads us to some big questions: Why does it exist? Why do we enjoy it? And how do the world's different art traditions relate to art and to each other? *Art Without Borders* is an extraordinary exploration of those questions, a profound and personal meditation on the human hunger for art and a dazzling synthesis of the whole range of inquiry into its significance. Esteemed thinker Ben-Ami Scharfstein's encyclopedic erudition is here brought to bear on the full breadth of the world of art. He draws on neuroscience and psychology to understand the way we both perceive and conceive of art, including its resistance to verbal exposition. Through examples of work by Indian, Chinese, European, African, and Australian artists, *Art Without Borders* probes the distinction between accepting a tradition and defying it through innovation, which leads to a consideration of the notion of artistic genius. Continuing in this comparative vein, Scharfstein examines the mutual influence of European and non-European artists. Then, through a comprehensive evaluation of the world's major art cultures, he shows how all of these individual traditions are gradually, but haltingly, conjoining into a single current of universal art. Finally, he concludes by

looking at the ways empathy and intuition can allow members of one culture to appreciate the art of another. Lucid, learned, and incomparably rich in thought and detail, *Art Without Borders* is a monumental accomplishment, on par with the artistic achievements Scharfstein writes about so lovingly in its pages.

And how to not philosophize? -- How a language becomes philosophical -- What does it mean for a philosophy to be Islamic -- Against philosophy? -- A lesson in ecological philosophy -- The obligation to philosophize -- The need for philosophy -- The philosophy of reform -- The philosophy of movement -- Pluralism

Some of the most provocative questions confronting philosophers in Africa are grounded in the historical memory of conquest and the peripheralisation the continent. Mungwini offers a critical reconstruction of indigenous Shona philosophy as an aspect of the African intellectual heritage held hostage by colonial modernity. In this comprehensive work, he lays bare the thoughts of the Shona, who are credited with the founding of the ancient Great Zimbabwe civilisation. Retracing the epistemic thread in the fabric of Shona culture and philosophy, he explores the assumptions that inform their thinking. The exchange of such knowledge is fundamental to the future of humanity.

*Aesthetics and Appreciation of Tree Trunks and Branches into Sketches and Sculptures* introduces a way of seeing and experiencing art. For centuries, artists have relied on nature as their great source of inspiration. Tree trunks and branches are comparable natural sculpturing materials that are worthy of adoration and adoption. Nature, in this sense, directs the liberation of the images within these tree trunks and branches. The concept, upon which these aesthetics and appreciations were deduced, was based on the philosophy of truth which presents the materials, their sources and physical appearances as the basis of these sculptures. Therefore, the need to preserve and present the material was as crucial as the artistry. The style of these collections centered on simplified realism that clinches on plain geometric shapes and forms. Carving technique was at times interspersed with the tree bark texture, surface defects and marks from chain saw and machete. Titles of the sculptures were derived from the Akan-Fante culture and offered their English versions. Hence, the dignity of the African culture is clearly and solidly established through the form and imagery created from these tree trunks and branches.

This publication is a continuation of two earlier series of chronicles, *Philosophy of the Mid-Century* (Firenze 1958/59) and *Contemporary Philosophy* (Firenze 1968), edited by Raymond Klibansky. Like the other series, these chronicles provide a survey of significant trends in contemporary philosophical discussion from 1970 to 1985. The need for such surveys has, I believe, increased rather than decreased over the last years. The philosophical scene appears, for various reasons, more complex than ever before. The continuing process of specialization in most branches, the emergence of new schools of thought, the convergence of interest (thought not necessarily of opinion) of different traditions upon certain problems, the increasing attention being paid to the history of philosophy in discussions of contemporary problems, and the growing significance for philosophical discourse of the social, political and cultural situation in various regions of the world are the most important contributory factors. Surveys of the present kind are a valuable source of knowledge of this complexity and may as such be an assistance in renewing the understanding of one's own philosophical problems. The surveys, it is to be hoped, may also help to strengthen a world-wide Socratic element of modern philosophy, the dialogue or *Kommunikationsgemeinschaft*. So far, five volumes have been prepared for the new series.

*African Art as Philosophy* Senghor, Bergson and the Idea of Negritude

Looks at the ritualistic art, religious writings, and philosophy of the Yoruba people in Africa

A young Highland boy discovers he has the gift of Second Sight.

In its painting and sculpture since 1920, African art has combined elements from traditional tribal and modern European art. This book traces this development. Concentrating on the period from 1920 to 1965, the author discusses specific style motifs, as well as ways of handling sculptural forms and surfaces, most of which are drawn from older art. He then shows how this substratum has been shaped by the techniques, media, styles and philosophy of the West. A new introduction by the author describes and assesses current trends in African art.

In *Media Primitivism* Delinda Collier provides a sweeping new understanding of technological media in African art, rethinking the assumptions that have conceptualized African art as unmediated, primary, and natural. Collier responds to these preoccupations by exploring African artworks that challenge these narratives. From one of the first works of electronic music, Halim El-Dabh's *Ta'abir Al-Zaar* (1944), and Souleymane Cissé's 1987 film, *Yeelen*, to contemporary digital art, Collier argues that African media must be understood in relation to other modes of transfer and transmutation that have significant colonial and postcolonial histories, such as extractive mining and electricity. Collier reorients modern African art within a larger constellation of philosophies of aesthetics and technology, demonstrating how pivotal artworks transcend the distinctions between the constructed and the elemental, thereby expanding ideas about mediation and about what African art can do.

This volume of newly commissioned essays provides comprehensive coverage of African philosophy, ranging across disciplines and throughout the ages. Offers a distinctive historical treatment of African philosophy. Covers all the main branches of philosophy as addressed in the African tradition. Includes accounts of pre-colonial African philosophy and contemporary political thought.

This book reveals how five distinct African civilizations have shaped the specific cultures of their New World descendants.

In this work, Blocker extends the philosophy of art to traditional African, Pre-Columbian Meso-American, and other works of "primitive art". Contents: Is Primitive Art Primitive? Is Primitive Art Art? Aesthetic Consciousness in Primitive Art; Critical Assessment of Primitive Art.

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This book provides an engaging introduction to aesthetic concepts, expanding the discussion beyond the usual Western theorists and Western examples.

Abstract: *IncarNations'* is at once a mix and exchange between classical and contemporary art from Africa and its diasporas, looking at African art as a living philosophical practice. The masks, images and historic objects act as milestones, anchoring contemporary works in the ancient context of live creation. Taken from Sindika Dokolo's collection, the works of African artists enter into dialogue with those of the diaspora while contemporary works are presented alongside classical works. Exhibition:

Bozar, Brussels, Belgium (28.06.-06.10.2019)

This book assesses the direction and impact of African philosophy as well as its future role. What is the intellectual, social, cultural, and political territory of African philosophy? What directions will African philosophy take in the future? What problems will it face? In 10 probing essays by distinguished African, European, and American scholars, *African Philosophy as Cultural Inquiry* examines the role of African philosophy at the opening of the new millennium. Here philosophy cuts across disciplinary boundaries to embrace ideas taken from history, literary studies, anthropology, and art. Addressing topics such as the progress of philosophical discourse, knowledge and modes of thought, the relevance of philosophy for cultures that are still largely based on traditional values, and the meaning of philosophy to cultures and individuals in the process of modernization, this volume presents today's best thinking about the concerns and practices that constitute African experience. New views about personhood, freedom, responsibility, progress, development, the role of the state, and life in civil society emerge from these broad-based considerations of the crisis of the postcolonial African state. In a lively fashion this diverse book shows how philosophical questions can be applied to interpretations of culture and reveals the multifaceted nature of philosophical discourse in the multiple and variable settings that exist in contemporary Africa.

A literary primer on the influential works of the late first president of the Republic of Senegal outlines a reading approach that considers Senghor's views on African art as a philosophy, offering a particular focus on the role of the 1889 Revolution in shaping his understanding of African beliefs.

*Black is Beautiful* identifies and explores the most significant philosophical issues that emerge from the aesthetic dimensions of black life, providing a long-overdue synthesis and the first extended philosophical treatment of this crucial subject. The first extended philosophical treatment of an important subject that has been almost entirely neglected by philosophical aesthetics and philosophy of art Takes an important step in assembling black aesthetics as an object of philosophical study Unites two areas of scholarship for the first time – philosophical aesthetics and black cultural theory, dissolving the dilemma of either studying philosophy, or studying black expressive culture Brings a wide range of fields into conversation with one another– from visual culture studies and art history to analytic philosophy to musicology – producing mutually illuminating approaches that challenge some of the basic suppositions of each Well-balanced, up-to-date, and beautifully written as well as inventive and insightful Winner of The American Society of Aesthetics Outstanding Monograph Prize 2017 Subject matter consists of representational arts in the broadest sense, architecture, sculpture, painting, and other man-made objects with no limits as to time, place, or cultural environment.

"... a great read. It is masterfully presented, and is an ideal text both for advanced undergraduates and graduate students." —*International Journal of African Historical Studies* "... a detailed, critical guide to fifty years of African philosophy..." —*Teaching Philosophy* "Masolo offers an expansive and lucidly panoramic view of the origin and developments in African philosophy." —*Africa Today* "The excellence of this book lies in the wealth of perspectives that it brings to the discussion on what constitutes philosophy, rationality, and meaningful reflection. It is both thought provoking and illuminating." —*Ethics* A Kenyan philosopher surveys themes and debates in African philosophy over the last five decades. Masolo's purview includes Francophone and Anglophone philosophers in both the analytic and phenomenological traditions. Washington provides the first systematic critical look at the life and work of Alain Locke, an important American philosopher, in the context of a thoroughgoing analysis of the values, ideals, aspirations, and problems of the Black community. Alain Locke contributed significantly to the twentieth-century dialogue on ethics and society. Drawing particularly on the work of William James and Josiah Royce, Locke was perhaps the first to bring philosophy to bear on the problems of race relations and social justice in a multiracial society. He argued that racial problems in the United States stem from the fact that white Americans hold up their values as the only controlling and only acceptable model, to which other groups are forced to conform. First discussing what is meant by Black philosophy and what its concerns include, the author examines Locke's philosophic interpretation of Black America's historical experience, contributions to culture, and struggles for social justice. He provides a critique of Locke's model of the political community, with special reference to the work of Hannah Arendt. Looking at the impact of Locke, DuBois, and others on the Black community, he discusses their relation to the Black Elite, their encouragement of Black artists and their positions on educational issues such as teaching Black history, parity for Blacks, and school desegregation. Other subjects considered are the New Negro, the Harlem Renaissance, African art and culture, and Locke's views in light of changes that have occurred since his death in 1954. An important work on a philosopher whose insights are of continuing significance today, this book will be of interest for Afro-American studies, as well as for courses on American philosophy and American social and intellectual history.

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