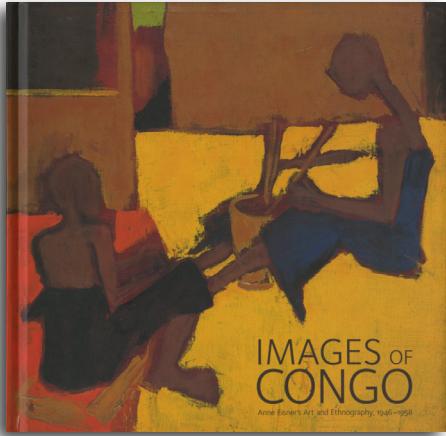


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## IMAGES OF CONGO

ANNE EISNER'S ART AND ETHNOGRAPHY, 1946–1958

*Edited by Christie McDonald*

*Images of Congo* explores the life and work of New York artist Anne Eisner who lived in the former Belgian Congo (now DRC) during the 1940s and 1950s. Her passion for maverick field anthropologist Patrick Putnam brought her to Camp Putnam (a research station, lodge and medical dispensary now named Epubu) at the edge of the Ituri rainforest. Her commitment to the people there made her stay. An eccentric in the colonial context, Eisner spent time in Mbuti pygmy camps, transcribed legends, wrote ethnographic notes and brought up three orphaned pygmy babies within a network of 'mothers'.

Celebrities, tourists, game hunters and art collectors came to Epubu for first-hand experience of the rainforest and the Pygmies: among them, Colin Turnbull who became an anthropologist famous for his descriptions of pygmy life. Eisner and Turnbull's fraught relationship in time divided them on ethnography and the importance of art in culture.

Eisner entered fully into the lives of the people whose everyday gestures and context inspired her work. Her art refracts a memory of pastoral in celebration of communal life and constitutes a refuge from the world of violence and politics, just beyond the borders of its radiant world.

This book contributes an important esthetic perspective to the understanding of an area that has long fascinated anthropologists and others. It is part of a broadly emerging review of the colonial era in Congo.

**Christie McDonald** is Smith Professor of French Language and Literature, and Chair, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, Harvard University. A literary and cultural critic and theorist, her publications include *L'Oreille de l'autre: autobiographies, transferts, traductions. Textes et débats avec Jacques Derrida* (1982), co-ed. with Claude Lévesque; Eng. translation: *The Ear of the Other* (1986); *The Dialogue of Writing* (1985); *Dispositions: Quatre essais ... autour de textes et musique* (1986); *The Proustian Fabric* (1991); and *Transformations: The Languages of Culture and Personhood after Theory* (1994), co-ed. with Gary Wihl.