



16.5 x 24 cm, 136 pp.  
53 colour and 16 b/w illustrations  
softcover  
English edition  
ISBN 978-88-7439-410-4  
French edition  
ISBN 978-88-7439-409-8  
€ 35.00

## BENIN

*Barbara Plankensteiner*

**An accessible overview and introduction to the court art of the Benin kingdom through sixty-three exemplary pieces.**

The volume explores the outstanding court art of one of the most powerful empires in West Africa between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries: the Benin kingdom of the Edo people. Renowned for their unique bronzes, ivory, and wood carvings, the guilds of court artists created thousands of artworks that were kept in the royal palace grounds of Benin City until their dispersal throughout the world in 1897, when the empire succumbed to British rule. The book introduces the complex history, iconography, and function of Benin royal art and discusses various approaches to its interpretation and stylistic development. With the focus on the pre-colonial artistic expressions that once adorned the royal palace and its shrines, which were essential elements in court rituals and representation, the text throws light on one of the most fascinating chapters in African art history.

**Barbara Plankensteiner** is Curator of the Department of Sub-Saharan Africa at the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna, and lecturer on African art, material culture, and museum studies at the Institute of Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Vienna. She curated the large international exhibition *Benin. Kings and Rituals*, which required extensive archival and field research.