

## ART IN MODERN GHANA

The country of Ghana is noted for the individuality of its peoples, and the magic and diversity of its art forms, ranging from the early Stone Age to the present age of information technology. Thus Ghanaian art spans three millennia in a variety of art forms from the coast, in the south, to the Sahelian north. There are diverse architectural forms, including wall paintings, modernist painting and sculpture, pottery and textiles, wood and metalwork and basketry. The new media of printmaking, photography, film or video, as well as computer art, are now new vehicles for challenging issues on identity.

A dominance of photographic arts found in Ghana appears in the form of advertising arts and mimetic painting, both in the parallel academies of street workshops and college-based studios, revealing its influence in modern visual practices. This development is also visible on the grave monuments and other forms of commemorative portraiture found mostly in central and southern Ghana, particularly in Kumasi. Painting has generated its own momentum, giving art making an impetus unequalled in other cities in Ghana. The biting satire of social commentary in street painting is apparent in many pictures alluding to current-affairs, from moralizing pictures on AIDS to images iconizing combatants of the GULF WAR.

The immediate impact of art in Ghana is in the way old and new traditions co-exist in unexpected ways, or become integrated within new appropriations of individual aesthetics. Ghanaian art is developed, invented, or re-presented through display, within domestic, commercial, social and religious arenas. Many forms were not regarded as pure forms until the decade of the 1950s preceding independence.

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