



Art and Risk in Ancient Yoruba: Ife History, Power, and Identity, c.1300

Suzanne Preston Blier

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In this book, Suzanne Preston Blier examines the intersection of art, risk, and creativity in early African arts from the Yoruba center of Ife and the striking ways that ancient Ife artworks inform society, politics, history, and religion. Yoruba art offers a unique lens into one of Africa's most important and least understood early civilizations, one whose historic arts have long been of interest to local residents and Westerners alike because of their tour-de-force visual power and technical complexity. Among the complementary subjects explored are questions of art making, art viewing, and aesthetics in the famed ancient Nigerian city-state, as well as the attendant risks and danger assumed by artists, patrons, and viewers alike in certain forms of subject matter and modes of portrayal, including unique genres of body marking, portraiture, animal symbolism, and regalia. This volume celebrates art, history, and the shared passion and skill with which the remarkable artists of early Ife sought to define their past for generations of viewers.

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