



Manipulating the Sacred: Yorùbá Art, Ritual, and Resistance in Brazilian Candomblé (African American Life Series)

Mikelle S. Omari-Tunkara

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At a time when the art of the African diaspora has aroused much general interest for its multicultural dimensions, Mikelle Smith Omari-Tunkara contributes strikingly rich insights as a participant/observer in the African-based religions of Brazil. She focuses on the symbolism and function of ritual objects and costumes used in the Brazilian Candomblé (miniature "African" environments or temples) of the Bahia region, which combine Yorùbá, Bantu/Angola, Caboclo, Roman Catholic, and/or Kardecist/Spiritist elements. An initiate herself with more than twenty years of study, the author is considered an insider, and has witnessed how practitioners manipulate the "sacred" to encode, in art and ritual, vital knowledge about meaning, values, epistemologies, and history. She demonstrates how this manipulation provides Brazilian descendents of slaves with a sense of agency-with a link to their African heritage and a locus for resistance to the dominant Euro-Brazilian culture.

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