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The Voyage of King Njoya's Gift: A Beaded Sculpture from the Bamum Kingdom, Cameroon, in the National Museum of African Art

Christraud M. Geary

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Among the works of art in the permanent collection of the National Museum of African Art, one object-a life size male figure-stands out as a visually compelling masterpiece of beaded sculpture. Bead embroidery covers most of the carved, wooden figure. On other areas-including the face, back of the head, hands and feet-the artists applied a thin overlay of brass. At it's base, the figure has a pole like extension, which is not visible to the visitors of the gallery because of the way the sculpture is mounted in it's case. This extension suggests that it was once planted in the ground. This imposing figure comes from the Bamum kingdom located in the Grassfields region of what is now the Republic of Cameroon. This book is an essay presenting the first full examination of this art. The first part discusses the history of the Baum kingdom and their experience under German colonial rule. The second part is devoted to the figure's unique history, which was reconstructed through information from museum records, historical documents, and letters. The third section addresses the figure's physical properties, such as the materials used in its production, and its stylistic characteristics, it then interprets the sculpture's iconography. Author:Christraud M. Geary Published by:University of Washington Press Published in:Seattle, WA Year of Publication:1994 Softcover, 60pgs

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