

Secrets - The Exhibition

Over the past ten years, the well-known ethnologist and photographer Henning Christoph has undertaken many expeditions to Cameroon. On these journeys, he came in contact with cults and ceremonies that are normally not accessible to outsiders and were even considered extinct in some cases. The current exhibition "Secrets" is dedicated primarily to these areas. The main setting is the kingdom of Oku, the most important and highest in the Cameroonian grasslands. The most important of the secret societies based there are presented here, as are their beliefs and cult objects.

Another focus of the exhibition is on three syncretistic religions from the African diaspora, which emerged under the influence of the Central African Bantu religions in the course of slavery. The forcible abduction of Africans lasted for almost four centuries - some estimate 40 million victims - and a large part of them came from Central Africa. By mixing the genuinely African religion (the practice of which was forbidden by the colonial powers) with Catholicism and the beliefs of the indigenous peoples of Brazil, Cuba and Haiti, religions such as Palo, Quimbanda and Bizango emerged in the diaspora. These are characterised by the rather hot-blooded and violent spirit powers of Central Africa, in contrast to the mostly milder West African gods. Again, these are realms that normally remain closed to outsiders - they are kept top secret. It is an extraordinary stroke of luck to be able to present altars and rites of the three aforementioned faiths in the Soul of Africa Museum.



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