

- 1. To the Western eye, an essence of Baule style is a balanced asymmetry that enlivens while suggesting stability and calm
- suggesting stability and calm.

 2. To an art historian, the most consistent feature of Baule art, and one expressed across the wide variety of Baule object types, is a kind of peaceful containment.
- 3. Faces tend to have downcast eyes and figures most often hold their arms against the body, evoking an introspective mood.
- contained by order.

 e twentieth century progressivel
- 5. As the twentieth century progressively left its mark on life in Baule villages, most types of decorative art objects ceased to be made or used.
 - 6. During the early colonial period, the railroad running through Dimbokro brought development of coffee plantations and prosperity to the Agba Baule area.
- 7. About one million people living mainly in the central Ivory Coast identify themselves as Baule.
 8. The Baule people waged the longest
 - 8. The Baule people waged the longest war of resistance to French colonization of any West African people.
- of any West African people.

 9. They maintained their traditional objects and beliefs longer than many groups in such constant contact with European administrators, traders and missionaries.
 - 10. The Baule resisted all forms of Christianity well into the late twentieth
- century, and have been even les receptive to Islam.
- 11. The origin myth of Baule tells how Queen Abla Poku, after a succession dispute, led her followers westward from the area of Denkyra, pursued by their enemies, and sacrificed her child at the impassible Comoé River for the river to part so the people could cross to safety.

 12. Baule art is cited as one of the few
 - 12. Baule art is cited as one of the few pieces of evidence of the intermingling of the Baule, Senufo, and Guro peoples.

13. The Senufo are named as the source for Baule helmet masks and the Guro for Baule figures and smaller face masks. 14. One of the central organizing concepts of Baule cosmology is the distinction between village wilderness. 15. Because sexual intercourse is a social act, sexual relations are forbidden outside the 16. Male art forms are associated with the wilderness, women's with the village 17. Baule individuals like to present themselves as striking, idiosyncratic, and highly independent—traits that are mirrored in Baule art. 18. There is no sharp orthodoxy in the forms of Baule art. 19. Because Baule objects and artworks are private, singular, and devoted to personal goals they are never discussed, and are kept where they are rarely seen The Baule do not make a distinction between a visible and an invisible world 21. The large, important class of personified supernatural powers called *amuin*, a god or spirit, requires sculpture 22. To the Baule people, *blolo*, the other world, resembles this world with spirits living in villages complete with elders and families, very much like those on earth 23. The concept of *blolo* includes a sense of vagueness and distance; the word itself contains this connotation. 24. The *blolo* is not associated with any particular direction: it is neither above nor below the earth, nor is it where the dead are buried, though after their sojourn in this world they return there. 25. The blolo is the source of human life, the place from whence comes each newborn baby It is believed that everyone had in the blolo an entire family that can continue to interfere with life after birth. 27. Baule man or woman often has a figure carved to represent and appease his blolo bla spirit wife, or her blolo bian, spirit husband. 28. As many as three quarters of all Baule figure sculptures are carved for blolo spirits 29. The human figure and face are the main motifs in every kind of Baule sculpture. 30. Even animal sculptures have human noses and scarifications. 31. For the Baule, people are the most interesting things in the visible world. 32. Baule people describe their society as filled with powerfully differentiated individuals, who purposefully distinguish themselves from one another and from the group. 33. In Baule art, idiosyncratic personal desires guide both the shape and the details for most sculptures, and single individuals are the owners and often also the sole users of most 34. Among the Baule, all artworks are individually owned, and an object different from all others can help to establish its owner or maker as different from other people, which excites the creation of novel objects. 35. Baule mobility, and the ownership of objects by individuals, have contributed to the absence of regional art styles 36. Baule people may use the same terms to speak of a sculpture, of a lump of clay and its indwelling spirit, or of the spirit itself, meaning sometimes on, sometimes the other, sometimes both, but most often the spirit as a being 37. Many ordinary objects are decorated, and undecorated things-tobacco leaves hunger to dry—are arranged with an eye for visual effect. 38. Women sweeping their yards in the morning will take care to crate regular rows of arching strokes, with rows of dipping strokes between them. 39. The Baule sculptures that Western eyes might prize are largely hidden from view. Figure sculptures are kept in private rooms, and masks are seen only in performance. 41. Some types of mask are seen only by men. 42. Baule sculpture is less physically available in the lives of most Baule people than it is on an ordinary day memorable, and important. enduring intention, never the goal of one.

in Paris or New York, where Baule art is exhibited in public places. 43. The Baule attribute great powers to their artworks-powers that Western culture would mainly relegate to the realm of superstition. 44. Baule art is made by trained professional artists, whose talents are recognized, discussed, and rewarded. 45. A single work may take a long time to produce, and will usually display consummate care and attention to visual effect. 46. Many artworks are protected and preserved for generations 47. The experience of seeing a work of art by a Baule is considered immensely interesting 48. Sculptures occupy a relatively minor role in the Baule universe. where they are always at the service of something greater and more 49. A sculpture is always the instrument of an 50. Baule art is part of a value system in which spiritual or social values, as well as non-visual forms of aesthetic expression, have a greater importance than visual art. 51. There are four Baule words for looking and seeing in general that are used in revealingly specific ways in reference to works of art. Works of art, and sometimes the

spirits they house, may be an individual's verv double. 53. Portrait masks (*ndoma*) are referred to as the double or namesake of the person they 54. Figure sculptures are made for the spirit spouse one had before birth, who may even be considered kin. 55. Human partners call their blolo bian and blolo bla their husbands and wives, while their human spouses consider these spirits their 56. The Baule inventory of names is relatively small, consisting of a core of fourteen male and female names corresponding to the seven days of the week, and a series of about a dozen names related to birth order. 57. Nearly everyone is known by nickname contractions, or by descriptors often related to their children 58. Most people become known by nicknames that reflect their circumstances or identities—names referring to special skills, habits, or events

that may change in the course of a lifetime 59. Stools occupy a special place among highly personal works of art, especially the stool or chair that will serve as an ancestral shrine after 60. In life, only one's heir has the right to sit on the stool used in an ancestral shrine. 61. The more important a Baule sculpture is, the less it is displayed 62. In public debates, the most senior and respected people speak the least.

63. The normal state of important sculpture is to be covered from view, kept in shuttered or windowless rooms that few people enter. 64. Aside from an object's owner, those who do come into these darkened, private sleeping or storage rooms would never pick up a sculpture, or approach it to examine it, nor would they allude to it in normal conversation. 65. Figure sculptures are often covered by cloths, and are seldom raised off the floor or ground, making them hard to look at casually. 66. Masks are normally stored in a bag hanging in the rafters.

67. Masks are virtually never shown or handled except in preparation and performance, when most people see them only in motion and at a 68. In Baule visual practice, the act of looking at a work of art, or at spiritually significant objects, is for

the most part privileged and potentially dangerous 69. It is believed that even an inadvertent glimpse of a forbidden object can make a person sick, can expose them to huge fines or sacrifices, or can even be fatal. 70. The power and danger of looking lie in a belief that objects are

potent, capable of polluting those who see them. 71. The primary reason of looking in Baule culture is total—seeing something is potentially more significant, more dangerous and contami nating, than touching or ingesting something. 72. The idea that good can come to a person by gazing on a good, safe,

of a member of the village. or pure object is not a tenet of Baule belief—looking has no potential 74. A practical desire to protect sculptures from thieves is often mentioned

73. There is an explicit etiquette of the gaze younger people looking directly at their elders is deemed disrespectful. as a reason for hiding them, since one hears many accounts of thefts of sculptures from the village and from the bush sanctuary.

75. One of the rare situations in which sculpture is publicly exposed is when it gets left behind when the village moves. 76. Sacred mask performances provide no occasion to see the carved masks well due to motion, distance. terror, and sometimes night. 77. More private than secret, Baule objects are

widely used in Africa for divination and

hunting than to the classical secret object.

many Westerners.

own tastes, moods, desires, and psyche.

79. The viewer's mind supples what is visually

withheld, creating lasting images to satisfy its

and observer than will be familiar to

and places. 141. Gold objects, men's masks, and figures inhabited by powerful bush spirits are considcloser to the personal amulets and garments ered sacred. 78. The completely seen objects of artworks. 143. Some of them must never be seen by women. the Baule suggest that there are ways to experience art that require a more active collaboration between artist

army. Je masks were probably the first kind of Baule mask encountered by Europeans, who, however, seized them. 211. Like other Baule art, the forms, the types, and number of Je masks vary from one village to another and from performance to performance, depending on local custom and on the occasion 212. The women's sacred dance is called advanun. occasions dominates their status as material 213. The amuin bla, literally the "women's god,"

large numbers of people in carefully 215 Men may not watch the women's dance and controlled circumstances. 147. Gold objects are beautifully arrayed during women may not watch the men's, in each case on pain of death. 148. The men's masks perform before their large male public. 149. Diviners' figures stand near the edge of the crowd during dances. 150. People say that they have "attended" these events and that certain objects were there, but they should not say they looked at the objects, or even that they saw them 151. The verb "to see," *nian*, is used only for illegal, forbidden looking, as when a woman

146. Sacred as these sculptures are,

they are nonetheless made visible to

deliberately looks at the men's masks.

own looking.

sacrifices, be treated, and saved.

into a terror of seeing the masks.

her body

implies respect.

159. One does not look straight in the face

examining, or staring are too brazen for sacred

161. Although the spiritual presence is what

approach at funerals, and the materiality

associated with them, that materiality is

work.

the artist's intervention.

masks.

the paternal line

Umien.

of sacred objects is secondary to the powers

men attend in sacred dances and what mounters

of one's elders or superiors, and looking,

art in Baule life

masks.

153. An innocent woman who saw a mask

accidentally would normally confess, make

155. Women have been carefully conditioned

156. The Baule believe that the

monkey figures called Mbra may

spirit that lodges in the figure will

'fall on" the woman, possessing

157. Occluded audiences and objects created for

unseeing spectators are central to the pattern of

not be seen by women otherwise the

158. Avoiding the bald statement that

one has seen these powerful objects

160. Being in the masks' presence is

162. Artists carving forbidden masks

or figures withdraw to the sacred

163. Gold is formed and cast right in the village.

watching goldsmiths at work.

165. Gold objects, for the metal itself, associated

with the earth, is intrinsically potent without

167. *Umien* are an ever-present feature of the

works of sculpture

and objects of gold.

important, though

173. *Umien* is believed to promote the birth

of children, but if they are neglected they will

withdraw their protection, allowing other forces

to strike their descendants, even to the point of

169. They are never represented in figures or

171. Ancestors hold the power to harm or to

nelp their descendants in both the maternal and

forest or another secluded place to

164. There are no restrictions about

166. The spirits of ancestors are called

168. *Umien* are mentioned along with

asve, the earth, and nyamien, the

firmament, whenever sacrifices are

made, but they do not inspire major

170. The two art forms associated

172. Maternal ancestors are more

174. Solid cast-gold ornaments, carved

wooden objects covered with gold

foil, and packets of unworked gold

nuggets or gold dust are wrapped

in bundles and hidden in pots or

inheritance called the aja. 175. The aia is the ancestor stools and a collec-

tion of suitcases, pots, baskets, imported wooden

and metal chests, and these containers' contents.

177. The aja is inalienable and indivisible, and

includes not only gold but cash, cloths and the

dangers and interdictions.

179. Neither the container nor its contents may

be altered by succeeding generations, and the

combined, opened for inspection, or handled

in any way, as each is considered to represent a

181. Both men and women wear small disks of

gold threaded onto a strand of white beads on

the wrist, or just below the knee, to honor many

183. Anyone who stole it, illegitimately inherited

could be killed by the amuin of the inheritance.

wealth of the family of the deceased, as well as

lie in state before burial

187. Possessions of different families are not

189. They usually depict a different range

of animals, and if the animals are the same

everything is returned to its owner.

Baule art

the treatment is different.

as well as the ancestor stools.

deceased person

men's gods.'

actual people

around the face.

impose sanctions.

and the most widespread.

distinguished in the display, and after burial

186. To give honor to the family,

and to express condolences, gold

188. The motifs found on golf and

the motifs used in other kinds of

190. As in Asante, stools are the

spirits will receive offerings.

191. They are usually kept in a separate room

which may contain ritual objects for other cults

193. The stools that eventually become ancestor

shrines are usually those used in life by the

public occasions.

ornaments, and swords

animal-heads with open jaws and prominent

"gods in/of the bush, or amuin yasua, literally

199. The masks and costumes are kept in a

198. The Baule hold them in great awe.

200. They are danced to protect the

village against threats, to discipline

202. The large bo nun amuin helmet

masks contrast with and shed light

upon the small Mblo face masks.

204. Where women and children

must stay indoors or leave the bilge

during bo nun amuin performances.

they must participate in dancing and

singing for the Mblo dances, which

206. Where the men's masks are the

most important political authority in

the village, Mblo are secular, and are

208. Bo nun amuin imply a threat to

all women who might adopt a disre-

spectful or defiant attitude toward the

210. Because the Baule sent their most

and, they hoped, to repel the French

powerful masks out to confront

is explicitly paired with the men's amuin yasua.

dancers and important men.

201. Their performances are fearsome specta-

cles, featuring violent behavior and magical

203. Where the bo nun amuin resemble imagi-

nary animals, Mblo represent real animals and

are called "women's dances."

205. Bo nun amuin are kept in the bush and

worn with raw-fiber costumes, while Mblo

are stored in the village and worn with a cloth

danced mainly to entertain

political system, the only political unit that can

207. The men's collective masks are the

principal policing force in the traditional

men or their masks.

209. Of all the bo nun amuin, Je is the oldest

women, and at the funerals of former

teeth are called *bo nun amuin*. literally

forest sanctuary outside the village.

197. Baule helmet masks representing fearsome

and those to deceased women

192. The type of stool and the

arrangement of this ancestor shrine

vary enormously, depending on the

age and importance of the family.

194. Sometimes a prosperous elder

will commission a fancy chair with

the idea that it will become his shrine,

and they will use it only for important

primary focus of the ancestor cult

for they are the locus where ancestor

gold-plated objects rarely duplicate

ornaments and cloths from the aja are

aid out around the deceased as they

it, or parted with the gold in his or her care

185. Big funerals call for a display of the

packages of gold should not be exchanged,

Baule.

family ancestor stools

different minor spirits.

of other families

sanctions

suitcases and kept in a sacred famil

176. The tradition of such an inheri-

tance is said to have come out of the

earth with the Mamla, the original

178. The *aja* symbolizes family unity

180. Any mishandling of the gold is

considered a slight to the ancestor.

182. The gold a person purchases is

not sacred until he or she dies and it

amuin, protected by supernatural

184. Any violator of the aia could be

cursed by the keeper of the inheri-

tance, and would be automatically

punished by the force of the aia itself.

enters the aja; then it becomes sacred,

and identity, and it is surrounded with

with ancestors are stools, or chairs.

more important than seeing them.

152. This word underscores the

since even the men who are the

leaders of the mask cult would not

use such a verb in relation to their

154. Gold sculpture's main purpose is

to mystify people, even if they never

aberrance of this fatal act of defiance,

80. Many adults have vividly

sculptures in childhood.

assume that many do not see even accessible

objects clearly, and that their sharpest visual

anywhere in the village.

ture is in the backs of their wrappers.

them for scrutiny.

pleasurable.

useful, and pleasurable

ness and inebriation

the works themselves are hard to see.

an alternative state. 89. Obscurity is both accepted as a normal

inconvenience and experienced as positive,

90. In performance, the most

in the uncertain light of dusk

91. The more important the mask performance,

the more likely it is to be prolonged and the

artificial illumination

locally-made source of illumination used by

95. These rules tend to have commonsense

symbolic content of those for village and bush

96. Approaching darkness puts a

to the village from the fields, and

stop to heavy work; families return

women hurry to finish cooking before

98. In the daytime, darkness is associ-

ated with shade, coolness, relief, and

100. Baule use different words for

complex culture surrounding infor-

"seeing," which implies a more

mation absorbed with the eyes.

102. These entertainment masks

are conceived within an aesthetic

whole that becomes less intelligible

and less beautiful when its parts are

101. The two Baule masks carved for entertain-

ment dances, Mblo and Goli, are not normally

103. The mask is anyway just an accessory to

an aesthetic event that arises out of an entire

participatory experience interweaving music

ened emotional state brought on by grief or

a Western audience

kept in the bush.

keep insects away

large cloths

generations.

be uncovered

words, dance, and audience, often in a height-

104. The incomplete nature

105. Masks are kept out of sight between dances.

107. Mblo masks are hung from the thatch of

their dancer's sleeping rooms in the village,

carefully wrapped in cotton cloth to prevent

women from seeing the mask's back, and to

so that the important masks

arrive and depart suddenly and

man approaching or leaving the

109. In Mblo dances, each portrait mask arrives

at the dance space concealed in a room-sized

111. Performances of high-prestige masks are

113. The reason for producing masks perfor-

relief in times of stress.

115. The dances allusively enact the great

dichotomies that articulate Baule life: the

of Baule art forms

village and the wilderness, female and male

117. Mblo masks are used in entertainment

119. Through most of the twentieth century

than any other kind of Baule mask.

dances that are newly invented every couple of

a particular known individual.

Mblo masks have been made in greater numbers

mances is only because of pleasure.

enclosure made by four men holding high four

dramatically, to prevent the crowd

110. The audience sees the masked

dancer only for a few minutes.

112. Although mask wearers are

not forbidden to unwrap a mask to

look at it themselves, or to show it to

someone, they rarely do, nor would

they ordinarily be asked to do so.

114. The adoption of Goli at a time

of social anxiety and political rever-

sals are connected to their value as

distractions offering psychological

116. Mblo masks are one of the oldest

118. A Mblo mask is a refined human

face mask that is usually a portrait of

120. The Mamla, the original Baule

claim to have brought this type of

mask with them when their ances-

122. Mblo masks embody the core

Baule sculpture style manifested in

figures and decorated objects.

124. Ornaments above the face birds, combs, horns, faces, and other

decorative motifs—are chosen for

their beauty, and have no icono-

126. The Mblo portrait mask was

considered the summit of Baule

sculpture, the most beautiful

128. Today Mblo is considered

old-fashioned, and while some

130. They are not occasions for

pointed social criticism or for

restraints, but rather for mockery

of stereotypes, clowning, and feral

132. They are marked by restraint and

134. Masks were often commissioned

by a man to honor a female relation-

homage to a woman's dance skills and

136. The carving of the mask is a kind

of standing invitation to that person

to display those skills for the whole

ship, or presented by a carver in

freedom from normal social

131. Especially when performed by women,

Baule dances seem to minimize movement,

135. The fundamental purpose of the Mblo

dance seems to be to celebrate the dance skills

137. The subject of a portrait mask, most often

a woman, sees herself impersonated by a man

133. In the Akwe area, portrait masks used to be

often it is falling out of use.

humorous scenes of everyday life, from which

villages are modernizing it, more

tors "emerged from the earth" or

"descended from the sky.

121. In non-Mamla villages Mblo masks are

believed to be so old that their origins can't

123. The idealized faces are introspective.

graphic significance.

127. "Mblo" is the name of a performance

category that uses face masks in skits and

129. Mblo performances often present

and a desire to give pleasure to others.

art form.

they draw a moral.

hilarity.

refinement

almost to internalize it.

made mainly for women

beauty.

125. Braided beards, and fine scarifications and

coiffures, denote personal beauty, refinement.

people resident in Ivory Coast,

from seeing the costumed and masked

Baule, of the carved mask by itself

can be compared to the orchestral

score of an opera without the words.

106. Goli masks are supposed to be

108. Most performances are designed

singers, dancers, sets, or costumes for

cally, conceptually, or in practice.

disassociated.

jubilation, feasting and drinking.

isolated from other art objects, either linguisti-

protective purposes, as compared to the

97. Evening is the time for socializing, for

the cessation of toil.

99. Baule objects are important in invisible ways.

93. In the nineteenth century and earlier,

cooking fires were the only substantially

and bush

nightfall

leisure and sensuous pleasures

more likely it is to be seen through semidark-

important masks appear the most

92. Baule visual culture has been

shaped partly by that until the 1950s.

most people spent half their lives in

the darkness of a night unbroken by

94. There are rules forbidding certain

activities at night, although they are

less numerous and less explicit than

those discriminating between village

briefly, at the end of the evening, often

record-keeping

83. The usual way women carry a figure sculp-

85. The capacity of Baule people for accurate

on nothing else but memory to record the

memory, like that of other people who depend

important events and transactions of their lives

cannot be compared to the more limited faculty

of memory possessed by those of us who are

used to relying on more tangible or mechanical

not of living with art, but of

87. The presence of artworks in Baule life is

strong, enduring, and visual, precisely because

86. Baule looking at artworks has

qualities of the Western experience

visiting a museum: it is occasional,

88. In Baule thinking, darkness is a

neutral reality, not a lack of light but

intentional, self-conscious, and

experiences may have occurred in their youth.

81. Almost no adults wear glasses, so one must

described their memories of seeing

82. Children, especially boys, may

have freer access to artworks than

license to join or follow any adult

84. The intention in carrying sculp-

tures in wrapper is not to display

most adults do since they have broad

216. All aspects of the women's amuin bla occur in the village, while the men's bo nun amuin are associated 217. Adyanun is open to all women, including foreigners, and women from other villages. 218. All are welcome to dance or not as they choose, and there is no initiation of any sort. 219. The conclusion is inescapable that "womanness" itself, the female power to create new life, is the deity of Adyanun 220. The source of life, women's

214. Both are collective cults, both

are very powerful, and both can kill

members of the opposite sex.

sexual organs, are the central amuin of the women's cult, and men must stay completely out of sight while the nude dances are under way. 221. There is no sculpture and there are barely any sacred objects for Advanun 222. The cult is centered on women's bodies, and it addresses sacrifices to a shrine that has no aesthetic dimension, and that is usually kept out of sight in someone's house. 223. The women dance to their amuin in times

of danger or crisis, either at the request of the men, or of the chief, or deciding to do so on 224. The women's cult, like the men's, has the purpose of supporting its members in disputes with the other 225. The main Adyanun ceremony is the dance

226. The bo nun amuin dramatize the bush/village dichotomy by embodying the bush. 227. The bo nun amuin and the amuin bla articulate and reinforce the Baule ontology not only by participating in the male/female dichotomy but also by elaborating upon the opposition between bush and village. 228. The bo nun amuin exemplify the characteristics of the bush, and in doing so teach something about not only the nature of the wilderness but

what the contrasting character for the village should be. 229. The bush is a place of no protection, where animals can be killed for food at any time. 230. The village is the contrary—a place where slaughter is governed by law, where animals can only be killed for sacrifices or social obligations. 231. The masks demonstrate the interpenetration of bush and village, the fundamental continuity that underlies the visible separation. 232. The *bo nun amuin* masks must come into the village to perform they never really dance in the bush;

the women's Adyanun only dances in

233. The largest, oldest, and most elaborate Baule figure sculptures are made as the loci for gods and spirits that possess their human partners and send messages through them in trance states. 234. Countless smaller works of art and one-of-a-kind objects are also created to please the spirits and to heighten the drama and visual interest of divination performances 235. People who have come to consult a trance diviner privately will usually sit in the small

shrine room with the diviner and his or her

works of art; many will see the figure sculptures. gong mallets, and other intriguing objects during performances in the public arena, but no one will ever say they have seen them. 236. Like the bo nun amuin, in Baule eyes these objects are associated with powers that are more potent and arresting than the physical object is. 237. The sculptures serve two main purposes, one of which is to attract public attention and to create an exciting spectacle. 238. Diviners create entertaining

comical interludes between well-timed dramas of serious social and medical advice 239. A man, woman, or child may be possessed by either of two kinds of powers: bush spirits called *asye usu*, of which great numbers wander about in nature, and occasionally follow someone into the village; and Mbla, an ancient god 240. Both supernatural powers send

their human partners into trance states as the central feature of possession cults with similar performances, costumes, and equipment, and there are similar beliefs about both. 241. At least one substantial figure sculpture (usually more) should be created as an adobe for the spirit or god, and this and the figure's uterus accessories make asye usu and Mbra cults are the focus of much Baule art. 242. Asye usu are extravagant-looking creatures that live in the bush and occasionally make contact with

cause problems until a cult is established. 244. Mbra is an amuin at the center of a similar possession and divination 245. Only certain families have Mbra, having acquired it in past generations, and it lacks the close connection with the bush that asye 246. The initial episodes of possession by bush spirits or by Mbra are

numan beings.

243. They might follow into the village and

life-transforming because they mark someone as chosen to fulfill a special calling as a trance diviner. 247. Trained to control their trances, the boy or girl, man or woman, who has been called will form a kind of pact with the god or spirit. agreeing to make regular sacrifices and to observe particular rules in exchange for the success, fame, and money that can be gained from diving with the spirits. 248. Many trance diviners are powerful, imaginative, charismatic

and sometimes unstable personalities who might have had a hard time living ordinary Baule lives. 249. Almost all of the women diviners report that they began to behave differently from their peers when they were quite young, before or during adolescence 250. Becoming a trance diviner can convert a person from a possible misfit into a respected leader of the community

251. The public role of trade diviners makes them the focus of attention, shielded by interdictions that they themselves articulate in the name of higher powers. 252. Aspiring trance diviners must inherit or purchase the objects required by their particular spirit or spirits before they can begin to

practice. 253. If their practice proves successful they will continue to accumulate objects throughout 254. Figure sculpture for Mbra and for bush spirits are of two types. 255. Those for Mbra are large, often rudely carved human or monkey figures covered with

blood offerings 256. The Mbra figure sculptures are seldom shown, one never seen by women 257. For bush spirits, asye usu, smaller, finely detailed human figures are made that are

essentially indistinguishable from spirit spouse sculptures, though artists say that they are likely to be larger and more elaborate. 258. Some trance diviners' sculptures depict figures gesturing, riding, or in other novel poses: holding objects, wearing diviners' costumes, or having other attention-getting features.

259. Asve usu figures may depict a human figure with an animal or with manmade objects and costumes—especially diviners' equipment. 260. Although asye usu are considered horrible looking and inhuman, their figures are carved in the form of ideal beautiful human beings in their prime. 261. Asye usu are described as usually filthy, but

262. If a sculpture is not beautiful, it would not be efficacious, for the asye usu would refuse to come and "sit" on it. 263. The presence of special, enigmatic objects enhances the diviner's ability to attract clients and fascinate audiences, while earnings from

to create a persuasive and arresting performance, a process in which mystifying and interesting-looking paraphernalia are a great asset. 265. Figures are carved to be as beautiful as possible, and to keep them that way, sacrifices

267. The tradition that requires the figure sculpture, gong mallet, and other shrine objects to be kept for several generations makes this type of sculpture the oldest and best preserved of Baule 268. One can consult diviners in private, in their small shrine rooms, and often without their going into a

and the most immediate outlet for a desire to be known as an artist. a reputation and to attract clients. and of the costume follow a consistent pattern but vary from occasion

variable and idiosyncratic ways. The vocation of artist is not hereditary but is a matter of personal choice, sometimes dramatized in

there are circumstances under which these objects are freely and deliberately revealed, although normally one would be discomfited if uninvited, one accidentally or surreptitiously 276. All Baule human-figure sculptrivial implement. tures are made for private shrines that belong to and serve single individuals 277. There are three types: the small bush-spirit figures, mainly for success in hunting; the spirit

spouse figures, and the large sculptures for bush spirits and Mbra trance divination cults. 278. Personal figures for hunting are called *bo usu*. 279. Bo usu are small, often rudely carved figures, sometimes even lacking definition of the

least important kind of bush spirit. 281. The other kind of spirit that is the object of individual devotions, and receives a carved figure, is the spirit spouse. 282. Spirit spouses help their human partners broadly in their lives, and can spread their good will to the children or spouse of their partner

280. Bo usu are the least dangerous,

arms or legs

274. To avoid attracting notice and

important personal possessions are

arousing envy, sculptures and all

kept out of sight in closed sleeping

275. As with other personal possessions,

283. Spirit spouses are ubiquitous, and are liable to influence crucial areas of one's life at almost any point 284. Divination usually reveals that the abandoned husband or wife in the other world has become jealous and angry and is causing troubles.

285. Infants and small children are given miniature carved wooden stools, or small figures that they may wear as amulets, but most spirit spouses do not manifest themselves until 286. A preliminary spirit spouse shrine, called tata, is established when the individual is old enough or becomes convinced it is worthwhile. which can be a simple piece of kaolin

purchased in the market and placed

in the corner of the sleeping room,

where offerings can be made 287. The shrine is like the spirit's "address," the place where it can be contacted. 288. Most people who have been told at some time in their lives that their spirit spouse is following them never oother to commission a carved figure. 289. A spirit spouse demands limited sexual fidelity: one night a week. 290. Given the demands a spirit spouse makes , many people will

as they dare.

Baule make.

291. Spirit spouse shrines are established in the corner of the sleeping room of the spirit's 292. This location in a private space shields them from view, and they are often further hidden by being draped with a white cloth.

postpone establishing a shrine as long

293. Husbands and wives of the other world are arguably the most numerous denizens of the Baule spirit world. 294. Their sculptures are probably the most abundant and among the most completely realized artworks the

295. A relationship with a spirit spouse is open

and licit, whether the human partner is married

single, or juvenile. 296. The Baule seem to be the only African people who create significant sculpture for spirit spouses, though belief in them is shared by some neighboring African peoples 297. Children may regard a parent's spirit spouse as a kind of spirit parent

especially from their mother's spirit husband once a shrine has beer established for him 299. Human spouses and lovers have vivid dreams about their spirit rivals—the spirit husband or wife of their human partner. 300. The existence of a spirit rival complicates sexual relationships enough to make people try to avoid

getting involved with anyone known

298. Children may receive favors and

protection from the spirit spouse,

301. The relationship with a spirit spouse can be positive or negative, but, unlike a human marriage, it is indissoluble. 302. The spirit spouse is said to be like a soul, something one is born 303. Some people commission a sculpture and

to have an active spirit spouse.

establish a shrine when they are gripped by illness or emergency, sacrificing aesthetic prefer ences in their haste 304. People usually get detailed information from the diviner about the wood, form, and color of their spirit

spouse figure 305. Each spirit spouse statue is different, to reflect the unique character of the individual spirit, but theses sculptures all represent a physical and social ideal. 306. Spirit spouse figures are perhaps the only sculptures their human

partner can handle and see whenever they please. 307. The presence or absence of a spirit spouse sculpture seems to have little effect on the vividness of the spirit's presence in the life of its human partner, and its form is not influenced

308. Dream narratives by the Baule do not allude to the sculptures, or to any physical characteristic of the carved figure. The spirit spouse reveals its essential characteristics and appearance, which are represented in the sculpture, but it always looks differen

spirit wife, can only be identified in the dream because they are sexual partners, or givers of wonderful or extravagant gifts 310. The dreams can be identified as about spirit spouses by their content but not by the appearance of their protagonists. 311. No one can be certain by looking at a figure whether it represents a spirit spouse or a

309. Blolo bian, spirit husband, and blolo bla,

in dreams

nature spirit 312. The two sculptures are shaped alike, although they are usually made from different woods. 313. With many exceptions, spirit spouse figures generally seem to be smaller than those for asye usu, and are less likely to have complicated

314. Mounted figures, figures on elaborate chairs or stools, and any with hats, staffs, or diviners' attributes are probably not spirit spouses. 315. Today both bush-spirit figures and those for spirit spouses are likely to wear modern

economic success replacing yesterday's fine scarifications and coiffures 316. In Baule culture, parenthood is the most important role most people ever play. 317. The spirit spouse is an alter ego, a sort of opposite-sex twin of its human partner. 318. The presence of an opposite-sex

clothing, the current signs of social and

double that might shadow all beings is an underlying theme in Baule art and belief. 319. Baule artists and householders have created a profusion of useful objects decorated with

exceptional care and skill. 320. The late twentieth century has inherited a seemingly boundless array of finely wrought objects no longer seen in villages. 321. In Baule life these objects, far more elabo-

rate than the ordinary ones, are amusing delightful to behold, and bring attention, but they are devoid of spiritual power, and Baule people finally consider them trivial. 322. In contrast to all other types of Baule sculpture, these can be looked at openly

323. They are the only sculptures that are regularly referred to with phrases that mean "to take a good, thorough look 324. The quality of decorated utilitarian objects is higher than that other types of sculpture. 325. A client might accept a less than successful

spirit spouse sculpture because it was urgently needed and would serve its purpose whatever its aesthetic flaws. 326. Decorated utilitarian objects are tossed aside if they are not artistically successful. 327. The most common and standardized

objects without specific ritual requirements—

pulleys—were made by men who specialized

in bringing a particular object type to a high

gong mallets, ointment pots, combs, and

degree of perfection, and who sold their

example on commission.

work ready-made rather than making each

328. Decorated utilitarian objects are made for pleasure alone. 329. Specialized artists or specialized villages became so well-known that they attracted buyers from great distances. 330. In Baule thinking, the pulley's physical use and appearance are its total meaning.

331. Where the loss of a spirit spouse sculpture or a mask would not necessarily predicate the end of a cult or dance, the decorated object is just a physical thing and its loss is definitive. 332. Decorated artists' tools are the most overt kind of advertising,

333. Creating decorated objects for themselves and others is a way for an artist to construct 334. Consistent with the individualistic ethos of Baule society, Baule artists learn to carve in individually

337. The Baule mask style is marked by downcast eyes, plaited hairstvle built up in represent, but instead signify an absent spirit waves over a rounded forehead scarifications around the corners of the eyes and mouth. 338. While neighboring peoples often confined themselves to carving masks and others made only statuettes. the Bale in the past were using doors, spoons, decorated loom pulleys

339. The *goli* dances combine geometrically decorated masks and animalesque effigies followed by human faces in a single ceremony 340. Europeans started collecting Baule art in the early twentieth century, as it appeared accessibly "seductive" to the Western eye. 341. Baule art came to occupy prime spaces in

342. Even before the central Ivory Coast was settled by the Baule, the area was a melting pot in protohis toric times, drawing peoples from all

points of the compass 343. The Baule myth of origin is part of an assimilatory ideology aiming to reject any local differences and reinforce the idea of belonging to a homogenous whole. 344. The origin myth was used to develop an elevating ideology aimed at drawing the indigenous peoples

together into a uniform whole. 345. The Baule's matrilineal kinship systems are an aid to unification 346. The Baule believe that cults taken from neighboring peoples are more "powerful 347. Baule society has never been centralized,

nor did any built-up area of importance develop during the pre-colonial period. 348. The Baule were once not a homogeneous society, but a mosaid of communities whose signs are still visible today in the plethora o sub-groups which constitutes the Baule people, each attached to its own identity 349. It is impossible to identify sculptors by the

dynasties that recruited them, as those who

actually commissioned a work remain unknown

administration of the territory

350. In the interests of an improved

and of the neighboring peoples, if not

of peopled by spirits of nature and

totemic animals and with a venera-

nature that influence every aspect of

France played a clear role in glorifying the local "royalty" by appointing "canton chiefs." 351. These canton chiefs underlined their authority by holding spokesmen's sticks and sitting on seats decorated with gold leaf. 352. There are striking resemblances between the effigies of the Baule

in function, at least in form 353. Baule art is the outcome of the combination of the multiplicity of styles that came together in this melting po 354. A baule lives in an organized world, where chance plays no part, in which everything is a sign, a world

tion for ancestors. 355. The Baule religious system is hierarchical and is divided into three levels, with a divine couple at the summit 356. The middle stage contains mediating divinities close to humans and at the bottom lie the spirits of

personal life.

357. In Baule religion the supreme principle has been divided into two complementary concepts: on one side Nyamien. "Heaven." and on the other a chthonic being, Asie. 358. The religious order is the result of attributes and functions being turned unside down. 359. Women are situated in sectors of society

360. Artistic creativity lies on the border between the spiritual world 361. The Baule do not make a strict distinction between visible and invisible world, any more than they do between the village, klo, and the

362. The word *amuin* does not denote

where their organizational abilities are restricted.

only the intermediate divinities, or being-forces, but also talismans to protect against bad luck. 363. Respect for the sacred is absolute in Africa. 364. Baule sculpture, like that of other African peoples, is based on the idea that what is "real" and tangible overlies invisible entities surrounding

human beings on all sides. 365. Beyond external appearances there exist spiritual beings 366. Among the Baule, certain invisible spirits need to be "conjured up" by a statuette, others never. 367. The zuzu, widespread throughout the western part of the region, along the banks of

the river Bandama, may not be represented 368. Baule statues are hugely more numerous than among their neighbors the Yaure, Mona, or Wan, 369. All sculpture takes part in a dialogue with spirits from the other world, and artistic practices reflect the will to establish connec-

tions, and create a framework for theses supernatural forces. 370. The very rules governing sculptural designs depend on this notion. by applying to sculpture the laws that are supposed to control power

relations, or by compressing into a single image the greatest possible number of positive or negative associations 371. Every entity possesses an identity, a specific role, a particular form in the human world. 372. The statuettes of spirit spouses are concerned with the private

domain. 373. Divination statuettes are concerned with a more public sphere. 374. Hunting figures have to do with the deepest forest.

375. The Baule artist is like an engraver of mottos who tires to carve in stone a series of concept, which enrich the entire context through the echoes of the various acceptations of a single term 376. Blolo is a world invisible to

common mortals and a mirror image of the physical world. 377. *Blolo* is not a "hereafter" in the Christian sense, but a parallel universe, a shadow-country, right beside the one of our normal sensory perception 378. The Baule language refers to

this place not only as blolo, but also as nanwle klo, village of truth, a revealing expression. 379. *Blolo* is a place where the deceased are only passing through and treat it as a sort of waiting room before returning in the form of a newborn child.

380. The population remains stable in the *blolo*—a year with many births is followed by several deaths. 381. Families exist in the world beyond, just as they do on the Earth. 382. Every living person has a spouse in this other dimension matching the

one he has in reality: a spirit-spouse.

383. Even before being born he has already formed an unbreakable link with his first "real," spouse, who has the privilege of a "permanent" relationship compared with his terrestrial wife. 384. The Baule's greatest fear is to feel isolated. 385. To be childless is the greatest tragedy that

can befall a Baule couple. 386. A man or a woman can only have one spirit-spouse of the opposite sex. 387. Baule women have more spirit-spouse

sculptures than the men. 388. Adult men are mostly members of masked brotherhoods, and masks have the reputation of not getting on terribly well spirit-spouses. 389. The diviner, who is the messenger of the

world beyond, in theory gives precise specifica

tions about spirit-spouse sculptures regarding its size and the position of the limbs, but at the end the sculptor often does as he pleases. 390. Sculptors are believed to be in touch with the invisible world too much like a diviner. 391. When the sculptor finishes a job, the statuette is welcome with great relief, sometimes with even a ceremony that mimics a discreet

containing offerings, and is often veiled, either hidden by a white cloth hanging from the neck to the ankles or with a piece of fabric around the waist. 393. On certain days of the week, often Fridays but occasionally other days, the earthly spouse eats alone, so he or she can have an intimate

392. A spirit-spouse statuette is kept

in its owner's room being some jugs

meal with the invisible companion. 394. Once a month, the traditional image of regeneration and possible birth, an egg, is placed in the plate. 395. One night a week is reserved for the spirit-spouse, where the statuette is laid next to the person on the mat, or some pieces of cloth, or left in its place, in the corner.

396. During this night, some people

have erotic dreams. 397. The spirit-spouse statuette, the product of the powers of desire, acts on two sensory levels, sight and touch, underscoring the importance of a "tactile" aesthetic.

398. Being an object one uses, rather than a work that is perfunctorily looked at, it implies a confrontation with corporality in that it effects a formal synthesis that satisfies the eye's tactile potential, by providing a form, but also the sensuality of the texture of the wood, together with its polish

and unforeseeable surface blemishes. the sonorousness of its matter 399. Statuettes enable individuals to overcome the contradictions of their egos, in order to establish an affective relationship with the world and turn otherness, the generator of 400. The statuettes introduce an idealized human body symbolizing

are pleasing to look at and to touch, otherwise the spirit-spouse feels affronted by such a gift. 403. In Baule culture, a woman is only really a woman when she is a mother. 404. Spirit wives statuettes showing slight signs of pregnancy can sometimes be found, as to visually symbolize gestation. 405. Although a statuette is personal and

401. Statuettes are not portraits—they do not

402. It is important that statuettes

"private," it reinforces family unity 406. There exist spirits of the wilder ness who do not correspond in the least to human concepts of beauty

and are represented by crudely carved lands, others in more circumscribed regions. statuettes 407. Hunting statuettes are anthropomorphic, rather small, 18 centimeters high at most, and nearly always with a sexual identity, except

469. Among the Baule, the *gboso* is endowed with a thick black coating made from the blood of sacrificed birds, pieces of with extraordinary power and the dancer is able eggshell and kaolin dust. 410. On their owner's death, these objects are handed down to his eldest

represent anything at all. son, who will then worship the spirits. 471. The dancer's own individuality is not sacrificed to that of the mask which animates him, but invested. 412. Domestic animals, especially 472. Designed to establish a link between the visible and the invisible. the poultry which is free to wander around all the villages, are used excluthe masks are designed not just to be seen, but to be lived. sively for sacrificial purposes, with

413. Meat, particularly for consumption by men, but includes everything that goes with it 474. At the opposite pole to the conjugations masks, entertainment masks tend to take any shape imagin able and appear during daytime festivals open to all, sometimes called "women's dances," although the masks are worn exclusively by men.

463. The primary purpose of these masked

provide protection in time of serious need.

when a curse was weighing on a village.

transgressions.

same cult.

Baule territory

animal nature

cults, in the past rather than the present, was to

464. They also exercised a degree

of social control, settling disputes

scaring off evildoers and fulfilling

themselves to reproducing a single

model, but display a variety of styles

from one area to another within the

468. Despite their differences, the

in common, but the problem lies

in the great variety of names they

470. The mask on its own does not

473. The sacredness is not confined to the effigy

475. Portrait masks, *ndoma*, explicitly depict a

have throughout the immense

varying cults have a number of features

a legal function in punishing

465. Among the Baule, sacred masks stress their

466. The Baule never confine

467. Some forms are found throughout the Baule

specific person and is exceedingly rare in Africa thanks to the introduction of photography 476. There are very good reasons for supposing that portrait masks were not meant as portraits of real people, but rather an idealized view of the

subject as he wanted to appear in the eyes of posterity. 477. A mask of this kind is not actually commisette is an animal that has been tamed. 419. The way in which the sculptor builds the sioned by the subject himself, whose name it is to bear, but by a group of admirers, who pay the sculptor to make an effigy of the "beautifu" woman" or the old man to honor them.

478. The dancer who wears the mask and who on occasion wear clothes supplied by the person depicted, is accompanied in the dances by the actual subject, who pirouettes around him dressed in his best attire, sprinkling him with perfume, covering the ground he dances on with pieces of fabric, eating away the flies which are irritating him and generally

were his child.

479. There is no attempt to depict individual

traits—the artist make no effort to achieve an

accurate likeness or physical verisimilitude

behaving towards his double as if he

480. The mask endeavors to provide a

transfiguration, rather than identify an individual's distinguishing features 481. The main object of these masks is to celebrate an ideal image, from both the aesthetic and moral standpoint and answering to Baule canons of beauty. 482. These masks are more concerned to perform a transfiguration than to attain a perfect likeness. 483. Baule art is less interested in reproducing

a person's exact physical characteristics than in conveying the intimate expressions of the sculptor's personal sensibility 484. African aesthetics aren't based on imitation, the *mimesis* of the Greeks, but on the idea of the emblem, hierophany. 485. Double masks is a form of portrait-mask with twin faces set side-by-side and worn by a

single person. 486. The Baule ascribe particularly benevolent, supernatural powers to twins, who are supposed to turn into snakes to go into their parents bedrooms or as medicine men. 487. The faces are often painted. 488. Although very well known by sculptors, these masks are relatively

little used during ceremonies. 489. Like many African peoples, the Baule love pairs of beings, as if they could not exist except through their companion. 490. The image of simultaneous birth, these double masks express the unity of a balanced duality, the force of a beneficent doubling, the harmony of fecundity.

491. In a matrilineal society, ancestors on the mother's side are crucial. 492. The word umien refers to the ancestors. 493. When the husk of the body is buried after death and the spirit has been released, the person, transfigured by death, becomes umien

494. Among the Baule, ancestors are active spirits, protecting the living but taking umbrage when they are neglected 495. All the ceremonies in which ancestors

and returns to the other world.

are involved express the anguish attendant upon a death and reflect the need to assuage any desire for vengeance among dissatisfied impatient ancestors. 496. Ancestors are honored by means of their seats, transformed into "altars" and kept in a room, bu

brought out regularly into the light of day and sprinkled with the blood of sacrificed animals, in order to celebrate the deceased, while little cups are filled with the water they 497. The seat of the deceased, which he owned or decided to have made as death approaching,

is preserved after his death and becomes his 498. In the eastern part of Baule territory, decorated canes are important status symbols and are sometimes used to remember the deceased. 499. Aja are the sacred heirlooms that give a

sense of belonging to the extended family, and

include: bags containing gold dust, scepters and fly-whisks covered in gold leaf, gold jewels, ornaments, pendants, or golden discs worn at 500. Aja is hedged about with taboos. 501. Gold becomes sacred when it is added to the treasury; it appears legitimate as long as it is hidden awa

502. It is rather looked down on to flaunt one's wealth, except on special occasions 503. Before an important person is buried, the Baule place gold objects from the aja on some

pieces of cloth in the same room where the body has been laid out, or in the courtyard 504. All the previous objects are then returned to the "treasure'

except the pieces of cloth that may have been used to wrap the body of the deceased, and are immediately replaced by similar pieces. 505. The Baule used to be obliged to make contribution to the sacred heirlooms in the form of gold objects.

506. One of the distinguishing features of the Baule compared with neighboring peoples is that they used to decorate virtually every object in use in daily life. 507. Among the Baule, sculpture is never the sole preserve of specialists.

508. The artists, often farmers by profession, have no special training carving wood is a part-time activity 509. Although the job is sometimes inherited, one can become a sculptor by vocation or in recognition of a special talent

510. In practice a certain specialization does exist: some artists carve only statuettes, other helmet-masks. 511. A considerable number of sculptors work for the cults of neighboring peoples, which goes to show that works circulate from one culture 512. Among the Baule, a sculptor

to another. from a different people is often more highly regarded than a local artist, as if distance lent him a special aura. 513. The Baule make a distinction between a bad sculptor and a talented one.

514. Few names of sculptors have stood the test of time, owing to the total indifference of those who collected

the works and tool no trouble to find 515. Locally, it is always known who the artist forbidden to women.

is to be carved. work its vital charge.

rites to be effective.

522. There exist considerable 1-336: Vogel, Susan M. Baule: African Art Western Eyes. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1997.

benefits man draws from the forces of

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Editions, Milan, 2008.

Poster Design: John Edmonds with Studio Lin

nature to be returned to them.

out who their authors were. is, except in the case of sacred masks, which are 516. The artist is expected, like the

dancing "like a woman" and wearing a mask that is her double or namesake. 138. Goli is a day-long spectacle that normally involves the whole village and includes the appearance of four pairs of masks, music played on special instruments, and the consumption of a great deal of palm

139. There are indications that for the Baule, human beings have elements of both sexes 140. In the Baule world, men and women each have their separate realms, their separate duties, powers,

142. These sacred things are the most visually restricted of all Baule

objects and overwhelms their aesthetic content.

144. None of the sacred objects should be mentioned with any of the verbs that mean "to see." 145. In Baule culture, the association of these objects with awesome powers or somber

195. Chairs with back, kannannglan, usually belong to male ancestors—the only difference in form between the memorials to deceased men 196. Essentially all Baule art associated with the ancestors derives from one sector of Akan tradition: Asante art forms strongly associated with leadership, including stools, gold

they may also be covered with gold ornaments.

the performances allow the diviner to acquire more accoutrements. 264. A diviner's reputation rests in part on their personal presence and ability

are seldom poured directly on the face. 266. Blood offerings are mainly sprinkled on the feet, preserving a relatively clean surface compared to other elements of the shrine.

art objects 269. The important consultations, however, are theatrical spectacles that attract a large audience to a public place or large courtyard. 270. In keeping with Baule practice, the details of the performance

to occasion and from one diviner to another. 271. In many ways an *asye usu* is the exact opposite of the ideal klo sran, person of the village, and the contrast helps to define an ideal human being 272. From childhood, all Baule people know that a sculpture they might glimpse at in a sleeping room is private and not to be looked at. 273. It is indiscreet or even aggressive to

allude to such an object, because, whatever

human partner.

its type, it works to bring good fortune to its

dreams or in episodes of possession. 335. Many objects are made by men who carve only occasionally and never achieve a fully realized style. 336. Self-taught artists must have relied heavily upon the easily seen carved objects in domestic settings as a source for styles and motifs.

disorder, into fruitful union. the idea of fecundity and sacralize sexual life and ensure unfettered fertility all at the same time.

and fancy drums, and they knew how to make good use of the most

where they are deliberately androgynous.

408. Hunting statuettes are covered 409. These statuettes have no identity of their own; they spring from the world of nature.

to dance barefoot on the glowing embers of the ceremonial fire before putting them out by rolling on them. 411. The Baule call these spirits *bo usu*, spirits of the forest.

comes from the animals hunted in the bush 414. Certain spirits of nature are magnified by larger, more elaborately carved figures, which display an extreme regard for the pursuit of beauty and mint be considered the apex of Baule art.

only very few exceptions.

415. It is difficult at first sight to distinguish these larger bo usu statuettes from the spiritspouse statuettes. 416 Thanks to the statuette, the spirit becomes a companion and is turned from a *boo sran*, bush being, into a klo sran, a village being. 417. Carving a statuette means casting out a hostile power and taking on the forces of darkness 418. A spirit which has become a statu

figure, giving it a confident pose is designed to give birth to a stable body from a world of chaos, immobilizing the volatile spirit and confining it within a grid, a musicality 420. In its relationship with the spirits of the earth, Baule art is made up of tension defeated, harmony offered as an increase in life-giving forces, expressing the interplay of deep, but peaceful powers, governed last as they are.

421. Acclaimed diviners possess several statu-

ettes, which, when not employed in a ceremony

the bedroom, with various ritual objects.

are placed on an altar in the house, generally in

422. Diviners' ritual objects include

contenting offerings, gout-shaped

rattles and, above all, carved gongs,

an essential article as far as artistic

pots, white cloths, earthenware plates

creativity is concerned. 423. When they go into a trance, diviners hold the carved gongs in their hands and strike them with a decorated beater, not to bring on the fit of possession, but to awaken the sleeping spirits and invite them to dance 424. The higher the regard in which the diviner is held, the more elaborately decorated and embellished is his religious paraphernalia. 425. Taller than the asie usu, dog-headed

statues take the form of a being with the face

compared with the body.

of an animal, which is disproportionately large

426. These statues are used in cults

called Mbra amuin, in which divina-

427. The head is perched on a schematic torso that has no chest features, reflecting the sculptor's intention to make it frightening 428. Those who have an *Mbra* are generally more concerned with public problems than they are with private matters 429. The statuettes are not exhibited very much and many cannot be seen by women; from the

formal point of view, they are related to the

of animal features over human.

conjuring masks, owing to the predominance

430. Unlike the *asie usu*, these statues

are kept in shelter situated outside the

village, proving that they are derived

tion is carried out in a trance.

from the wilderness. 431. Whereas the spirit-spouse statuettes are papered fed like children and dressed in white in the bedroom where they live, the abova or mbotumbo, the animal-headed statues, are designed to install fear. 432. Many cults have experienced a sharp decline, since they require a level of organization that the Baule consider to be excessive.

433. The dog-headed monkeys are among the

most anxiety statuettes, preserved as they are

434. Baule people are the outcome of

the extent that the entire people ended

the assimilation of various different 435. The Baule *goli* is a straightforward derivation dating from around the start of the twentieth century of the goli of the Wan, who live on the west bank of the River Bandama. 436. From the late eighteenth century the *goli* quickly spread eastwards throughout the whole Baule area, to

from generation to generation.

up incorporating this set of masks. 437. The *goli* cult is present throughout Baule lands and has acted as a sort of agent promoting a sense of belonging. 438. The set of goli masks became more popular at the outset of coloni zation when the colonial authors commandeered dances to commemorate Bastille Day and celebrate

the supposed converging interests of local cults and the conquering Republic. 439. Women were also able to see goli masks from very early on, although the chief one is stylistically close to men's sacred masks, which they are forbidden to see. 440. The *goli* is made up of four pairs of masks, each distinguished by sex and color, with red predominating for

female and black for male masks. 441. The set of eight masks is considered in some areas to constitute a family, and are worn in two ways: placed in front of the face and tied behind the head, or else they can be helmets fittings over the head down to the neck. 442. Holes are made in the masks to enable the wearer to see where he is

443. The ceremony lasts around five or six

hours, with the masks appearing sequentially starting with the simplest and ending with the most complex 444. The result is a sequence leading from abstraction to "realism," from the wild to the human. 445 Ronu amuin masks are sacred masks that serve as the keystone of social organization. 446. Present exclusively in male institutions, they play a role in social

sion at rites the following morning. 447. Bonu amuin means "god risen from the bush." 448. *Bonu amuin* masks conjure up ambivalent supernatural powers. 449. These figures become benevolent if they are honored through sacrifices and dances and can be celebrated through their emblems—the masks. 450. At funerals, the masks ensure the continuity of the spirit world that humans can use to their advantage by turning the deceased into ancestors

who will help their descendants.

452. These are members of discrete,

451. These sacred masks are seen by a tiny

control and are always performed at

night, with preparations during the

previous afternoon and the conclu-

though not secret, village brotherhoods, which are rather loosely structured and by no means closed clubs; a new member can be admitted without having to pass any particular test. 453. Those in charge are just the most "conscientious" in the village. 454. The only sign of the sacredness of the bond amuin masks is the ban on their being seen or even glimpsed by

number of people in each village.

unrestricted access to the most sacred masks with labels attached 456. Well before a ceremony, all women, young and old, hide away in their houses with their children after gathering stores of food and water. 457. All women know of the masks is the sound associated with them, the growls of the bull-roarer, which according to what the men say, suggest the screeching of obscure spirits, the "cries" of being-forces.

458. In the past, in order to for the

masks to be kept at a distance from

women, they used to be placed in a

women, even Western ones.

455. These brotherhoods are irritated to learn

that Baule women have come across European

art books in certain villages that gave

shelter in the sacred wood, near the men's latrines a few hundred meters from the village, where women never go. 459. Nowadays, they are kept in a sack under the dancer's bed in his house, and are carried discreetly to the sacred wood the day before a ceremony 460. The retrieval of the effigy is always preceded by offerings.

461. To the Baule, a sacrifice is an act to repair a rupture in the social stability that has put the community in danger, or an exchange of good practices between the gods and mankind, who ommunicate through the animal whose throat

462. The act releases the vital energies contained in the victim's blood and, 337-522: Boyer, Alain-Michel by reinforcing the link for which the mask is the vector, enables part of the

forces, the wood gives the finished 519. The Baule have a number of ways of expressing the idea of beauty through language. 520. Aesthetic values are paramount among the Baule, since a statuette has to be beautiful in order for the sioning the work, who has seen identical objects

diviners, to be an awèfwe, a "being from the border" separating the visible from the invisible. 517. An appropriate wood has to be chosen to suit the function of the object, as its power derives from the nature of the wood in which it 518. Impregnated with nature's active

in use and wants a form that is "fitting."

Yaure, Wan, Mona, and Senufo

Baule: Visions of Africa. 5 Continents

521. The style depends on the person commissimilarities between the Baule and their neighbors to the west: the Guro.