



Smithsonian
National Museum of African Art

William Fagg photographs, EEPA 1986-014

Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
Title:	William Fagg photographs
Identifier:	EEPA.1986-014
Date:	between 1949-1959
Extent:	2,452 Photographic Prints ((21 boxes); black and white; 8 x 10 in.)
Creator:	Fagg, William B., 1914-1992
Language:	English
Summary:	<p>The photographs document William Fagg's extensive survey work in Nigeria and his trips to Benin, Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zaire. The photographs illustrate African cultures and works of art, especially those of the Yoruba in Nigeria. Nigerian artisans portrayed include a blacksmith in the town of Jebba, a craftsman casting brass at Ijebu-Ode, and a potter at work in Nok. Celebrations and ceremonies documented include the igue oba and itue ceremonies and the festival of leaves in Benin. There are also images of dances of the Bargesh in northern Nigeria and a masked dance at Nok. Architecture documented includes altars and shrines in Benin and in Oyo, Nigeria; a Birom settlement; Brazilian-style houses in Porto Novo, Republic of Benin; an emir's house in Nigeria; a Jarawa village in Nigeria; the mosque in Keffi, Nigeria; and palaces of Yoruba kings. Most of the photographs show sculpture including Benin bronze plaques and hip masks; Esie stone sculpture; Ifa divination boards, drums, and figures; a Kuba ndop (royal statue) in the Kinshasa Museum; Nok terra-cotta and wooden figures; and Tada bronze figures. There also are images of epa (masquerade) masks; gelede (men's society) masks; a head of Olokun (a male Yoruba divinity) from Ibadan, Nigeria; and Yoruba edan ogboni (bronze staffs) and ibeji (twin figures) from Nigeria. Images of objects by identifiable artists include a palace pillar, post and sculpture by Agbonbiofe; a door and epa mask by Areogun; and a house post and lidded bowl by Olowe of Ise.</p>

Administrative Information

Provenance

Donated by Jeffrey and Deborah Hammer, 1986.

Restrictions

Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Conditions Governing Use

For study purposes only. Permission from the Royal Anthropological Institution, holder of the original Fagg negatives, must be given prior to reproduction. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical Note

William Buller Fagg (April 28, 1914 - July 10, 1992), M.A. in archaeology and anthropology from Magdalen College at Cambridge University, 1936. From 1938 to 1974, except during World War II, he worked for the Department of Ethnography at the British Museum in London, where he became deputy keeper (1955-1969) and keeper (1969-1974).

William B. Fagg's published works include, *The Sculpture of Africa* (with photographer Eliot Elisofon) in 1958; *Nigerian Images* in 1963; *Yoruba: Sculpture of West Africa* (with John Pemberton) in 1982; and *Africa and the Renaissance* (with Ezio Bassani) in 1988.

Arrangement

Images arranged chronologically by year, roll number and frame number.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Yoruba (African people)

Cultures:

Yoruba (African people)

Types of Materials:

Photographic prints

Geographic Names:

Africa

Benin

Congo (Democratic Republic)

Nigeria

Senegal

Sierra Leone