



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of African Art*

Marilyn Houlberg Nigeria Collection

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

<b>Repository:</b>	Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
<b>Title:</b>	Marilyn Houlberg Nigeria Collection
<b>Identifier:</b>	EEPA.2015-015
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1973-circa mid-1980s
<b>Extent:</b>	1,615 color slides (color; 35 mm) circa 400 Photographic prints (3 x 5 inches, 5 x 7 inches) 1 box manuscripts (document genre) 52 Cassettes (Audiocassettes- music, lectures, field records, interviews) 1 Videocassette 1 cd-r (CD-ROM) 1 Notebook
<b>Creator:</b>	Houlberg, Marilyn
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Summary:</b>	This collection contains a variety of materials including (1,615) 35 mm color slides, circa 400 photographic prints, 1 box of manuscript materials, 1 notebook, 52 audio and 1 video cassettes, and 1 CD-ROM. Many of the slides and photographs were taken during Houlberg's field work in Nigeria (1973-1975) and depict Ibeji figures, wood carvings, Egungun masquerades and masks, twins, portraits, hairstyles, festivals, shrines, textiles, and peoples including the Yoruba, Ekoi, Ibibio, and Ogoni. The audiocassettes consist of lectures, music, field records, and interviews.

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## Administrative Information

### Related Materials

The Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives also holds several other collections by Marilyn Houlberg: one collection documents Nigeria (EEPA 2005-002) and two others documents Haiti (EEPA 2012-004 and EEPA 2015-016).

### Preferred Citation

Marilyn Houlberg Nigeria Collection, EEPA 2015-015, Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

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

## Conditions Governing Use

Permission to reproduce images from the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives must be obtained in advance. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

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## Biographical / Historical

Artist, anthropologist, and art historian Dr. Marilyn Hammersley Houlberg was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1939. Houlberg received an Associate of Arts degree from Wright Junior College (1959) and a BFA from the University of Chicago (1963). After graduating, she traveled to North Africa and explored Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. In 1964, Houlberg researched Haitian art, religion, and indigenous photography in Haiti and in 1965 was awarded a scholarship for graduate study from the University of Chicago. There she completed her MAT in Art History in 1967. Following graduation, Houlberg worked at the Nigerian Museum in Lagos, where she documented Yoruba sculpture, masquerades, religion, body art, and indigenous photography. She began her teaching career at the University of Chicago as a lecturer on African art and African civilization, working there from 1971 to 1973. At the University of London, Houlberg earned a Masters in Anthropology, producing the thesis *Yoruba Twin Sculpture and Ritual* (1973). She also extensively photographed her travels abroad in Yorubaland. Between 1974 and 1990, Houlberg taught at the University of Chicago, Columbia College, Kalamazoo College, and Northwestern University. From 1974 to 2008 she continued teaching at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, lecturing on Yoruba art and ritual in West Africa and the New World, and the art and ritual of Vodou in Haiti. Houlberg has lectured worldwide at numerous museums and symposiums since 1972, including in Lagos, Nigeria; Jacmel, Haiti; Toronto, Canada; Salvador, Bahia, Brazil; and Cologne, Germany. Her essays have been published in several issues of *African Arts*. Some of Houlberg's significant publications include "Arts of the Water Spirits of Haitian Vodou," in *Sacred Waters: Arts for Mami Wata and Other Divinities in Africa and the Diaspora* (2008) and "Water Spirits of Haitian Vodou: Lasiren, Queen of Mermaids," in *Mami-Wata: Arts for Water Spirits in Africa and the African-Atlantic World* (2008). The exhibition *Mami-Wata* at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art (2009) featured her photographs.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection contains (1,615) 35 mm color slides, circa 400 photographic prints, 1 box of manuscript materials, 1 notebook, 52 audio and 1 video cassettes, and 1 CD-ROM. Many of the slides were taken during Houlberg's field work in Nigeria (1973-1975) and depict Ibeji figures, wood carvings, textiles, portraits, and peoples including the Yoruba, Ekoi, Ibibio, and Ogoni. The photographic prints include images of wooden figures, Ibeji figures, hair styles, masquerade masks, twins, portraits, and carvings by Awenke of Ketu, Yesufu Ejiboye, Ogunyomi Sona, and Awolowo Adelaku of Ikenne. Events documented include age grade processions, market scenes, the Agemo festival, and both Egungun masquerades and Gelede at Otu. There are also photographs of shrines which include the Abiku, Shango, Dada, Shoponu, and Odudua shrines. The photographs were primarily taken in Ilishan, Balufon, Ikenne, Lagos, the Field Museum (Chicago), and Akio, Ijebu.

The manuscript materials date to the 1980s and include correspondence related to Nigerian museum objects, correspondence with Susan Vogel about an Edan Ogboni photograph, articles about African art, exhibit catalogues, business cards, Nigerian and Haitian studio photography, travel brochures, and essays about styles of carving.

A few of the photographs were taken by Mark Schiltz.

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Egúngún (Cult)
- Ere ibeji
- Ibibio (African people)
- Shrines
- Yoruba (African people)

Cultures:

- Ibibio (African people)
- Yoruba (African people)

Geographic Names:

- Africa, West
- Lagos (Nigeria)
- Nigeria