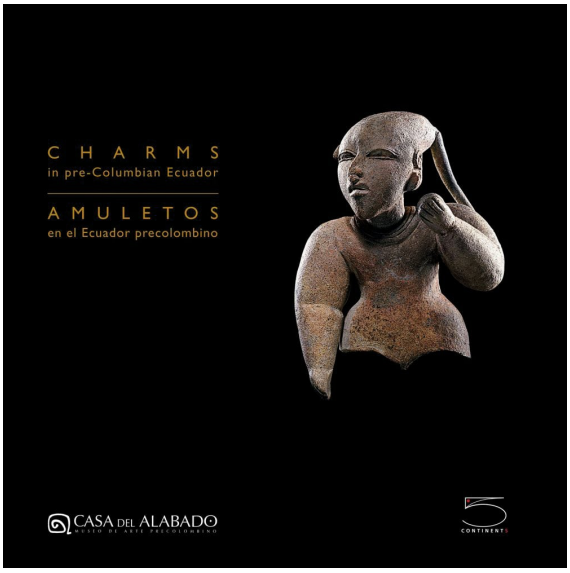
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Tel: +44 (0) 1394 389950
Email: uksales@accartbooks.com
Web: https://www.accartbooks.com/uk



Charms in PreColumbian Ecuador

Christian Mesia Montenegro

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- A wonderful world of hope, metaphors and ideas, which in spite of the time that has passed is very similar to the world we live in now

Archaeological objects offer outstanding opportunities to explore the way people conceived life in past ages. Their study demonstrates that subjects such as fertility, myths, rituals and cosmogony are embedded in all man-made artefacts, as they have always been part of daily human life. Even when creating artefacts for individual use, we have adopted imaginative and ingenious ways to represent and convey a message, a narrative that is a facet of our personal and social identity. That's why the amulets presented in this outstanding catalogue hold secrets: memories of deeds, lands and sacred representations. Objects used as offerings are full of life: the warrior recalls his heroic condition during his long mortal journey; the deceased person, who travels to the other world equipped with his objects of power, arrives satisfied and disposed to be generous toward his descendants, who receive fertility and well-being in return.

The choice of materials is a fundamental aspect of such objects. The use of metals, for example, is etched into the language of social communication, whereas the vital force that moves the universe is found immersed to a large degree in magical materials like fired clay, the product of extensive chemical transformation, or shell, a product of the sea, its brilliance a sign of spirituality, or imperishable gold, which is the embodiment of the Sun itself, ductile and able to express extraordinary religious ideas.

This catalogue introduces us to this world of magic, life and death.

Text in English and Spanish.

Christian Mesía Montenegro is the director of the Museo de Arte Precolombino Casa del Alabado. Formerly he has directed the Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia del Perú and the Museo Nacional de Chavín, and conducted archaeological research in Peru and Guatemala.

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