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Congo as Fiction

Art Worlds Between Past and Present

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Territory	World excluding Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Puerto Rico, United States, Canada, and Japan
Size	280 mm x 230 mm
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Illustrations	413 color, 16 b&w
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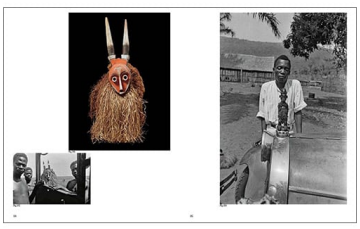
- Investigates comprehensively how Congolese artists have been exploring and reflecting upon the effects of globalised trade, colonialism, proselytisation, and virtual boundaries
- Features many previously unpublished works by Congolese artists both contemporary and the 19th and early 20th centuries
- Congo's vibrant art scene attracts great worldwide interest

A single Congo does not exist – or is in any case fictitious. Yet the Democratic Republic of Congo has an extraordinarily vibrant art scene that attracts great interest from around the world. Nowhere else in Africa art production is as manifold in form, media, and materials used. For many years, Congolese artists have been exploring and reflecting upon the effects of globalised trade, colonialism, proselytisation, and virtual boundaries. As the works of artists such as Sammy Baloji or Sinzo Aanza demonstrate, these effects never before were more topical than today.

For the first time, this book, which is published in conjunction with an exhibition at Zurich's Museum Rietberg, features objects and photographs collected by the German anthropologist Hans Himmelheber during his journey to the Congo in 1938-39. The coloured masks, imposing figures, and richly decorated everyday objects bear witness to the period's extraordinary creativity and innovativeness as well as of the collector's own idea of Congo. They are juxtaposed with works by contemporary Congolese artists and complemented by essays that investigate the fiction of Congo both as an African and Western World imagination. Thus, the book links the past with the utopia of contemporary artistic production in central Africa.

Published to accompany the exhibition *Congo as Fiction: Art Worlds Between Past and Present* at Museum Rietberg, Zurich, between 22 November 2019 and 15 March 2020.







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