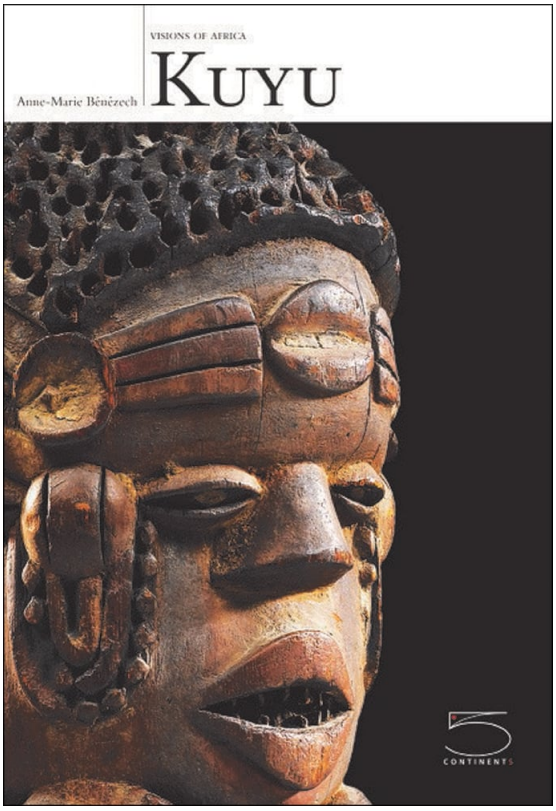
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Kuyu

Anne-Marie Bénézech

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The Kuyu are an ethnic group who live in northern Congo-Brazzaville, on the banks of the River Congo, in a part of Equatorial Africa that has remained only marginally influenced by Moslem encroachment and Western colonialism. Kuyu art can be broadly broken down into three styles, the first two — of which there are the fewest examples — are strictly associated with the Kuyu ethnic group, while the third style, which has the largest sculptural component, includes both Kuyu and Mbochi pieces. Among these are a number of statuettes and especially wooden clubs topped with a human head (the most recent being polychrome), known as Kebe-Kebe, which were used in the dance by the same name. This ritual performance has remained faithful to its original function of giving physical expression to the Kuyu cosmogony.

Anne-Marie Bénézech is an art historian and graduate of EHESS. She also has a PhD in Cultural Anthropology from the Sorbonne, Paris. She has spent several months in Congo-Brazzaville, but has been unable to return to continue her field research on account of the political upheavals in both Congos. She has held the position of Professor of African Art at the universities of Bordeaux and Pessac.







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