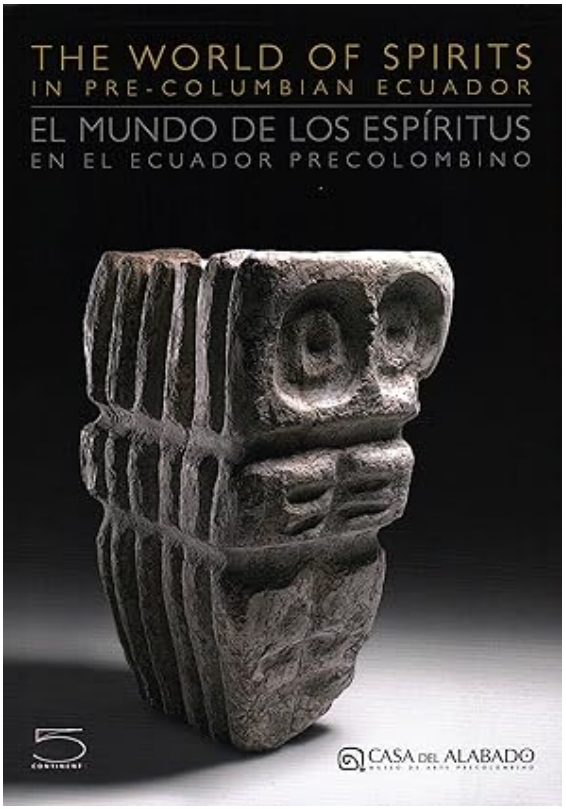
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The World of Spirits

In Pre-Columbian Ecuador

Christian Mesia Montenegro

ISBN	9788874395965
Publisher	5 Continents Editions
Binding	Hardback
Territory	USA & Canada
Size	7.48 in x 10.63 in
Pages	224 Pages
Illustrations	257 color
Price	$45.00

- Supported by a wealth of photographs of archaeological objects, this book delves into a fascinating world of ancestral spirits

Supported by a wealth of photographs of archaeological objects, this book delves into a fascinating world of ancestral spirits, revealed by the surprising richness and variety of these pre-Columbian pieces fashioned out of various materials. These works, on exhibition in the Museo Casa del Alabado, in Quito (Ecuador), outline the pre-Columbian view of the world centred on a flow of energy aimed at preserving life. These pieces evoke this primordial energy emerging from mother earth, the source of the good deeds performed by spirits and the ancestral guardian of the permanent renewal of the world of daily life, where spirits constantly draw on the balance of the forces ensuring their survival. Pre-Columbian art has the extraordinary capacity to express the power of reciprocal opposites which together provide a meaning to the existence of animate and inanimate beings.

Hard materials, such as stones and shells, served to embody powerful spirits, such as carts, macaws, or primordial ancestors. Ceramics were suitable for the depiction of ordinary plants and animals. The extraordinary growth of metalworking skills led to the creation of ornamental pieces designed for the elite (chest decorations, nose jewellery, earrings, and crowns) whose purpose was to reflect the power of the sun.

Each picture in the book is accompanied by notes explaining the function the article would have served, while acknowledging that these pieces have lost none of their expressiveness in the modern world.

Text in English and Spanish.

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Published 1st Jan 2019