



Senegal Behind Glass: Images of Religious and Daily Life (Annales. Sciences Humaines, V. 143.)

Anne-Marie Bouttiaux, Anne Marie Ndlaye

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The reverse-glass paintings of Senegal are cultural testimonies of the highest value, capturing the colour of daily life in town and country. This deceptively modest art-form involves a technique whereby the image is rendered in paint on the back of a sheet of glass; the finished work is viewed from the other side, thus taking full advantage of the transparency and luminosity of the glass. This popular art-form emerged by the end of the 19th century, and was at first limited to Islamic themes painted by anonymous craftsmen; gradually, however, portraiture, landscapes, genre scenes and other subjects came to be included in the repertory. In recent years some artists have become celebrities, and reverse-glass paintings are now bought by collectors from many parts of the world. *Senegal Behind Glass* is the first comprehensive survey of Senegalese reverse-glass painting ever to appear, and it includes some of the earliest surviving examples as well as providing a rich selection of works by the best recent artists, among them Gora Mbengue, Babacar Lo, Mor Gueye, Ibrahima Sall and Alexis Ngom. The Introduction fully sets out the particular historical and thematic issues that bear on the genesis and development of this art-form, while over 150 plates reproduced in full colour carry commentaries that elucidate the intriguing local customs, tales and proverbs these remarkably innovative artists have captured behind glass.



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