



Rastafarian Art

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The Rastafarian religion of Jamaica came into prominence in the late 1960s and early 1970s and was given international exposure through the music of one of its main exponents - Bob Marley. Music, and Reggae music in particular, was the centrepiece of Rasta creativity but Rastafarianism gave rise to a whole new cultural movement of which visual art was one of the many components. 'Official' recognition of Rasta art may be traced to the year 1980 when the National Gallery of Jamaica installed a new section dedicated to 'intuitive' artists, that is, untrained artists who were previously described as primitive or naive. The works of Rastafarians were prominent among these intuitive including those of Albert Artwell, Ras Dizzy, Ras Daniel Hartman and Leonard Daley, to name a few. Beyond that however, little recognition has been given to Rastafarian art as a particular genre within Jamaica, and the only known attempt to document and survey the art and handicraft of Rastafarians was in the form of an exhibition catalogue prepared for an exhibition in Germany in 1980 and later updated for a second exhibition in Germany. Decades after that first catalogue was produced, comes its first English translation - Rastafarian Art by Wolfgang Bender, an ethnomusicologist and director of the African Music Archives in the Institute for Ethnology and African Studies, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany. The works presented in this volume are meant to introduce a selection of Rastafarian artists from Jamaica. The collection is accompanied by photographs that depict everyday life among Rastas and scenes from the environment in which the artists live. In addition, there are interviews with a number of the artists, a chronology of events in the development of the Rastafarian movement and Rastafarian art, and an index of the artists and their works.

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