



PRESS RELEASE

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*The Williams College Museum of Art presents
Power Runs in Many Channels: Diversity in Nigerian Art*

June 30–October 21, 2012

Photos available upon request.

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Williamstown, Mass. – The Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) is pleased to present the exhibition *Power Runs in Many Channels: Diversity in Nigerian Art*. The exhibition will be on view from June 30 to October 21, 2012. On Tuesday, July 24, there will be a gallery talk, *Art for Life's Sake: Crosscurrents in Nigerian Art* by Dr. Herbert M. Cole, Professor Emeritus of the History of Art at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The talk will begin at 2:00 p.m. followed by a public reception at 3:00 p.m. This event is free and all are invited to attend.

“Power runs in many channels” is an Igbo proverb that means that everything has its own individual essence, a power that deserves recognition. Invoking the concept of dynamic variety, this exhibition explores the rich diversity of cultural and artistic production in traditional African art from Nigeria.

Art from Nigeria comprises nearly a quarter of the traditional African art in WCMA’s permanent collection. This exhibition provides an opportunity to survey this collection,

featuring the artistry of the Igbo and Yoruba people, as well as cultures from the Cross River region and Benue River Valley, including the Ejagham and Mumuye peoples. Drawn together, this selection encourages visitors to observe cross-cultural continuities and to acknowledge a history of colonialism that imposed artificial national boundaries on a complex network of peoples and places.

The gallery talk, *Art for Life's Sake: Crosscurrents in Nigerian Art* on Tuesday, July 24 will be given by Dr. Herbert M. Cole, Professor Emeritus of the History of Art at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Dr. Cole is an esteemed art historian, specializing in African art. He received a B.A. from Williams College in 1957 and, from Columbia University, a M.A. in 1964, and a Ph.D. in 1968. His major publications include *Icons: Ideals and Power in the Art of Africa* (1989), *Igbo Arts: Community and Cosmos* (1984, with C.C. Aniakor), and *The Arts of Ghana*, (1977, D.H. Ross). Professor Cole will guide visitors through the current exhibition of African art and discuss the cultural and artistic diversity of traditional art from Nigeria. The talk will be followed by a reception with Nigerian food catered by Baku's African Restaurant, based in Amherst, Mass.

Power Runs in Many Channels provides the opportunity to display objects from the collection seldom on view, including a Yoruba textile and Igbo shrine figures. Special loans from collectors Dr. Oliver E. and Pamela Cobb and Dr. Mark Groudine and Cynthia Putnam further enrich the show. "Thanks to temporary loans and recent gifts from Dr. Groudine and Dr. Cobb, we are able to devote an entire section of the gallery to art from the Benue River Valley," said Dalila Scruggs, Mellon Curatorial Fellow for Diversity in the Arts.

The Williams College Museum of Art

The Williams College Museum of Art is located on Main Street in Williamstown, Massachusetts. It is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The museum is wheelchair accessible and open to the public. Admission is FREE. For more information, contact the museum at (413) 597-2429 or visit wcma.williams.edu.

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