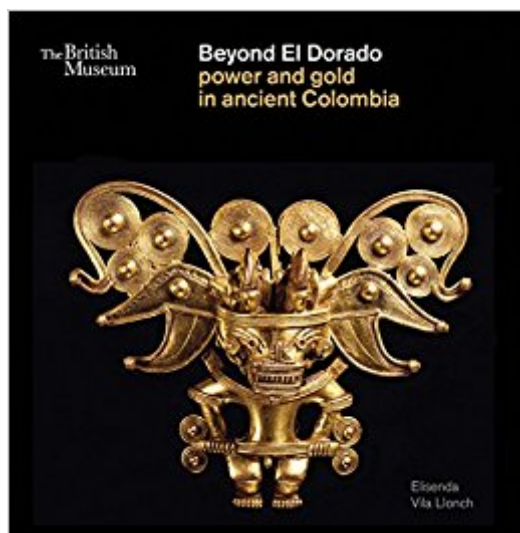


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Beyond El Dorado: Power And Gold In Ancient Colombia



Synopsis

Among the cultures of the northern Andes, gold has been revered above all other materials. Gold was believed to be a product of the Sun, the supreme procreator, and as such had special associations with fertility and power. For the people of Colombia, the value of gold lay in the symbolic and transformative properties associated with its colour, aura and malleability and it was used to fashion some of the most visually dramatic and technically sophisticated works of art found anywhere in the Americas before European contact. Drawing on the spectacular collections of the Museo del Oro in Bogota and the British Museum, this beautiful book features over 150 masterpieces fashioned exquisitely in gold, including tiny votive figures, decorative nose rings, vessels, pectorals and masks. Through these diverse objects, the author explores the myth and ritual of El Dorado (the golden man) and the legend of the lost city of gold that fascinated European explorers for over two centuries; the use of gold objects by spiritual leaders for healing, divination and guidance in the dangerous mystical "soul journey"; the importance of gold in marking the threshold between the living and the dead; and the legacy of pre-Hispanic traditions in the northern Andes today.

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: British Museum Press (October 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0714125415

ISBN-13: 978-0714125411

Product Dimensions: 9.5 x 0.7 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #1,235,172 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #107 in Books > History >

Americas > South America > Colombia #27276 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History

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Customer Reviews

This is an exhibition catalogue for a joint exhibition organized by the British Museum and the Museo del Oro, Bogota, Colombia. The latter has some of the finest examples of Colombian gold and we're very fortunate to have such a well printed and well presented book documenting many of the objects from their collection. Perhaps the only downside is that the most famous gold sculpture - the

Muisca raft - only gets a smallish image. Everything else, though, is reproduced very well. Aside from many gold pieces there are also a few ceramic ones. Objects vary from elaborate nose ornaments and diadems to ocarinas, rattles, and fishing hooks (made of gold, those were). Also represented are tools the goldsmiths used.

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