



The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts (Brown Thrasher Books)

John Vlach

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Covering basketry, musical instruments, wood carving, quilting, pottery, boatbuilding, blacksmithing, architecture, and graveyard decoration, John Vlach seeks to trace and substantiate African influences in the traditional arts and crafts of black Americans. It is a widespread tradition, he observes, readily visible in areas such as the coastal regions of South Carolina and Georgia but discernible as well in places far to the west and north. With the aid of more than two hundred photographs and numerous maps, diagrams, and drawings, Vlach not only examines the form and content of the artifacts and structures but also relates them to the complex cultural context from which they sprang?the interwoven strands of African and European influence.

Originally published in 1978 as the catalog to a major exhibit by the Cleveland Museum of Art, this book was among the first to describe and analyze the achievements of African American artisans. It is now recognized as a landmark work, the standard in its field, and is widely used by historians, folklorists, anthropologists, and sociologists.

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