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ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

## Symbols of Status and Heritage: *Ichi Marks and Igbo Ukwu Art as Reflections of Igbo Culture*

By Chuka Odike

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FEATURE  
IMAGE

**Left: Titled Igbo woman with  
full-face ichi marks, Iwollo, 1983.  
Photo: Herbert Cole.  
Right: 'Igbo Ukwu' female figure, c.  
9th century  
CE**

Article image · caption retained from the published Ozikoro article

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SYMBOLS OF STATUS AND HERITAGE

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Titled Igbo Woman with Ichi Marks, Iwollo, Ezeagu in Enugu State (1983), the images evoke a strong sense of Igbo culture and heritage.

Ichi marks are a traditional Igbo scarification design indicating beauty, strength, and status.

Titled women held respected positions in Igbo society. As seen in Iwollo, Ezeagu in Enugu State indicating an Nri Civilization and Influence in the area.

The 9th century Igbo Ukwu figure showcases early Igbo artistry and cultural sophistication as seen at an ancient Igbo kingdom known for its bronze artifacts.

The Female figures often represent fertility, motherhood, spiritual significance, titled and respected women leaders. While the Ichi marks symbolize status, beauty, and cultural identity.

The Bronze art Represents Igbo technological advancement and artistic expression in ancient time showcasing Igbo Cultural Significance.

Herbert M. Cole – Igbo Art and Culture (1982)

Igbo Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries by Thurstan Shaw (1970)

The Igbo People by Elizabeth Isichei (1976)

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR****Chuka Odi**

I'm a dedicated civil engineer with a passion for infrastructure development and community empowerment. With a strong background in engineering, my work focuses on creating sustainable solutions for urban and rural development projects. Outside of my professional career, I'm deeply interested in Igbo history and culture. I actively explores ways to impact society by using historical lessons to inspire and educate others about the rich cultural heritage of the Igbo people, aiming to bridge tradition and modern development.



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*History worth reading.*

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