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ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

Obiri Jack mask (close-up) Ogbukele festival, Ekpeye Igbo

By Chuka Odike

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FEATURE
IMAGE

Obiri Jack mask (close-up) Ogbukele festival, Ekpafia Igbo

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Obiri Jack mask (close-up) Ogbukele festival, Ekpeye Igbo

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" ". Photographed by G.I. Jones, 1930s The Obiri Jack mask is an integral part of the Ogbukele festival, particularly celebrated by the people of Ekpafia (Ekpeye) in the Riverine Igbo region of Nigeria. This mask, often intricately crafted, serves spiritual and cultural purposes during the Ogbukele festival, which involves rituals, dancing, and traditional displays...

The Obiri Jack mask is an integral part of the Ogbukele festival, particularly celebrated by the people of Ekpafia (Ekpeye) in the Riverine Igbo region of Nigeria.

This mask, often intricately crafted, serves spiritual and cultural purposes during the Ogbukele festival, which involves rituals, dancing, and traditional displays aimed at honoring ancestors and invoking communal protection.

The close-up of an Obiri Jack mask would highlight its distinct features, which typically include:

- Bold facial expressions; Often exaggerated features such as large eyes and a prominent mouth, symbolizing power or authority.
- Intricate carvings and patterns; These designs often hold symbolic meanings connected to the ancestral spirits or the community's beliefs.
- Vivid colors; Masks like Obiri Jack are usually painted with vibrant hues of red, black, and white, each color holding specific significance in Igbo tradition.
- Ornamental adornments; Materials like raffia, feathers, or beads may be added around the mask to enhance its visual and spiritual impact.

The Ogbukele festival is a communal event with deep ties to Igbo spirituality, where masquerades play a significant role in



communicating with the spirit world and conveying messages from the ancestors.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chuka Odiike

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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