



In Ghana, the funeral-celebration culture is vividly life-affirming.

GHANA Beauty & the burial

† he funeral finds its apotheosis in Ghana, where celebrations of life often become extravagant multi-day social events, complete with rituals and ceremonies, but also with drinking, dancing and splendid attire. Fascinated by the rich variety of traditional and contemporary funeral cultures throughout Ghana, Swiss costume designer Lisa Meier teamed up with Ghanaian historian Irene Odotei to produce photography book *Funeral Fashion Ghana* (Edition Patrick Frey).

'On weekends, funeral attire often dominates the public space,' the book notes. 'The clothing styles range from traditional to contemporary and are influenced by changing fashion trends. Through its funeral attire and its signs and symbols, Ghanaian society takes on a visible form.'

One of the best-known flourishes of Ghanaian funerals is the 'fantasy coffin' that is sometimes used. A sculptural coffin is carved to portray the profession or passions of the >>



>> departed: a fisherman might be buried in a fish-shaped casket, or a movie-enthusiast in a coffin resembling a camera (while, for the hedonists, there's a beer bottle or a packet of cigarettes). Traditionally, the family chose the coffin, but one coffin-maker told CNN that he was increasingly encouraging people to state their preference while still alive, lest they get stuck in the wrong symbol for eternity.

'It's only the coffin you'll be going with, and nothing else.'



Top left, below and below left Images from *Funeral Fashion Ghana* depict the traditional and the contemporary fashion of Ghana's funeral culture.

