



Portrait of an Island: The Architecture and Material Culture of Gorée, Sénégal, 1758-1837 (Early Modern Cultural Studies)

Mark Hinchman

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The once famous trading center of Gorée, Sénégal today lies in the busy harbor of the modern city of Dakar. From its beginnings as a modest outpost, Gorée became one of the intersections which linked African trading routes to the European Atlantic trade. Then, as now, people of all nationalities poured into the island; Dutch, English, French, and Portuguese came to trade with the Mande, Moor, Tukor, and Wolf tribes. Trading parties brought gold, horses, firewood, mirrors, books, and more. They built houses of various forms, using American lumber, French roof tiles, freshly-cut straw, and pulverized seashells, and furnished them in as cosmopolitan a fashion as the city itself.

Mark Hinchman's *Portrait of an Island: The Architecture and Material Culture of Gorée, Sénégal, 1758-1837* considers the houses, portraits, and furnishings of the island's early modern inhabitants. Multiple features of eighteenth-century Gorée—its demographic diversity, the prominence of women leaders, the phenomenon of identities in flux, and the importance of commerce, fashion, and international trade—argue for its place in the construction of an early global modernity. In an examination of the built and natural landscape, *Portrait of an Island* deciphers the material culture involved in the ever-changing relationships amongst male, female, rich, poor, and slave.

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