

FESTIVAL



FESTIVAL

A Celebration of African Art at the Fitchburg Art Museum







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A Celebration of African Art

FESTIVAL

DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

In my role as Director of the Fitchburg Art Museum, I am often asked why this museum – in a small, industrial city in New England - has such a large and impressive collection of African Art. There are two answers to this question. One is strategic, and proceeds from the aspect of FAM's mission that connects our curatorial programs to our community. The presence of African Art and art of the African Diaspora in our collection, and as the subject of an ambitious and ongoing series of exhibitions, reflects our commitment to two significant demographic groups here in Central Massachusetts: African Americans, and recent immigrants from countries in West Africa. It's important that these visitors see themselves, their histories, and their cultures represented in our museum, and be honored and celebrated as people vital to our community.

The second reason is Jean Borgatti, FAM's Consulting Curator for African, Oceanic, and First Peoples' Arts. Jean, an academic authority in the arts of tribal peoples, was invited by my predecessor, Peter Timms, to work (actually, to volunteer, for the most part) at FAM to oversee small collections of art from the African continent, the South Pacific, and North and Central America before European colonization, that had been gifted to the museum over many years.

Jean took this task very seriously, and with enthusiastic support of FAM's Board of Trustees and administration, expanded these collections through her expertise, life-long relationships with collectors, dealers, and artists, sheer tenacity, and an eye for a bargain. She even field-collected historical artworks, and commissioned contemporary artworks for FAM, while traveling and teaching in Africa. And recently, she led a project to create an impressive collection of twenty-first century African photography for us. Her collecting activity has been revealed to our visitors over the years through a series of large and small-scale exhibitions here at FAM, and she has led the way in creating opportunities to juxtapose African Art with global contemporary art, both at FAM and in collaboration with our cultural and community partner, ArtsWorcester.

FESTIVAL was conceived as an exhibition to show off the wonders in our African Art collection, and as our first permanent collection show to celebrate our Centennial. But at its heart, this exhibition celebrates Jean Borgatti and everything that she has done for FAM and our community.

Nick Capasso
Director



A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

I would like to thank the many individuals who have worked on FESTIVAL, the fourth long-term exhibition developed from FAM's permanent collection of African art, and whose efforts resulted in a stunning and complex installation, achieving the "WOW" effect we had been tasked with producing.

FAM's African collection has tripled in size over the past 15 years. The works themselves display diversity in size, materiality, and places of origin. They vary in age, meaning and reference. Previous exhibitions revolved around themes: Global Africa celebrated African art as a worldwide phenomenon as Africans themselves had dispersed both voluntarily and involuntarily across the globe. Moving Objects looked at how objects came into the museum. Africa Rising addressed the work of African photographers practicing in the 21st century. With FESTIVAL, the task was to create an overview.

The curatorial team consisting of Curator/Deputy Director Emily Mazzola, the Terry and Eva Herndon Assistant Curator Sarah Harper, and myself had to organize these disparate objects with no idea in mind other than to show "the collection" held by the museum. We settled together on dividing the work into four loose categories linked to type and function – masquerade, ceremonial, ritual, and domestic life. We worked our way physically through the collection to select the objects. I worked on drafting the narratives, putting together the checklist, and completing labels that were both documentary and, when possible, provided a visual context. Those labels are included in booklets in each gallery.

Emily and Sarah developed the layout: how things were to be placed, what bases, shelves, and wall mounts were necessary, color schemes, and so on. Added to their efforts was the considerable creative energy and hard work of all the preparators—the people who paint, build, frame and make the structures for display (and provide critical feedback on placement): Jesse Kenas-Collins, Eugene Finney, Justin Tarbell, Mel Bailey, and collections manager Aminadab "Charlie" Cruz whose efforts bridged all areas. Thanks go to all, and to the Education

Director Susan Diachisin and her team for enhancing the exhibition with an interactive space focused on the materiality of the works on view. Touchable objects and video labels showing African artists at work enliven the space as do video clips showing masks comparable to those on display in performance context. And, always, there are books for further exploration.

I would like to thank all who helped build the African collection at FAM, directors Peter Timms (1973-2012) and Nick Capasso (2012-present) and members of the Collections Committee who have supported the intake of African art even as our storage facilities have grown tight and who agreed to the purchase of work by contemporary artists. Last, though hardly least are the thanks due to the many individuals who have donated African art to FAM. Major donors include William Teel, Dwight and Anna Heath, the Genevieve McMillan-Reba Stewart Foundation, Bobbi & Tim Hamill and Matt Mrachek of the Hamill Galleries, Lillian Montalto and Robert Bohlen, and Simon Gregory and his family.

This catalogue, however, is the product of Livv Welch, a student at Fitchburg State University who designed it with the guidance of Professor Rob Carr through the course, Client Project Production and FAM's Terry and Eva Herndon Assistant Curator Sarah Harper. I congratulate Professor Carr on the many catalogues he has made possible since 2014 utilizing the efforts of his students and FAM curators. They constitute an important historical record of exhibits created by FAM staff, and the ideas they have explored. I would also like to reiterate my thanks to the curatorial team who read and commented on the exhibition narratives that constitute the essay and that gave order to this "festival" of African art.

Jean M. Borgatti, PhD Consulting Curator for African, Oceanic, and Native American Art





Object 23

FESTIVAL

FESTIVAL: A Celebration of African Art at the Fitchburg Art Museum opened as the first in a series of centennial exhibitions featuring treasures from its permanent collection. FAM was incorporated in 1925 and opened to the public in 1929. The Centennial honors founder Eleanor Norcross and her vision of bringing art and cultural enrichment to the people of Fitchburg.

FESTIVAL draws upon universal themes of life, death, power, love, and celebration, and is loosely organized around the ideas of Masquerade, Ceremonial Life, Ritual Life, and Domestic Life. The works on display are a selection from FAM's collection of over 1,000 objects from the continent. Terracotta from the first millennium BCE and contemporary work by transnational Nigerian artists bookend works that are best described as "traditional," or "iconic." These iconic works date from the 19th and 20th centuries but reflect much older practices. Although the exhibition does not represent all African cultures, many of the ideas and practices represented here are widely shared across the continent, but they take a range of forms and aesthetic visions across many cultures.



Objects 146 & 104

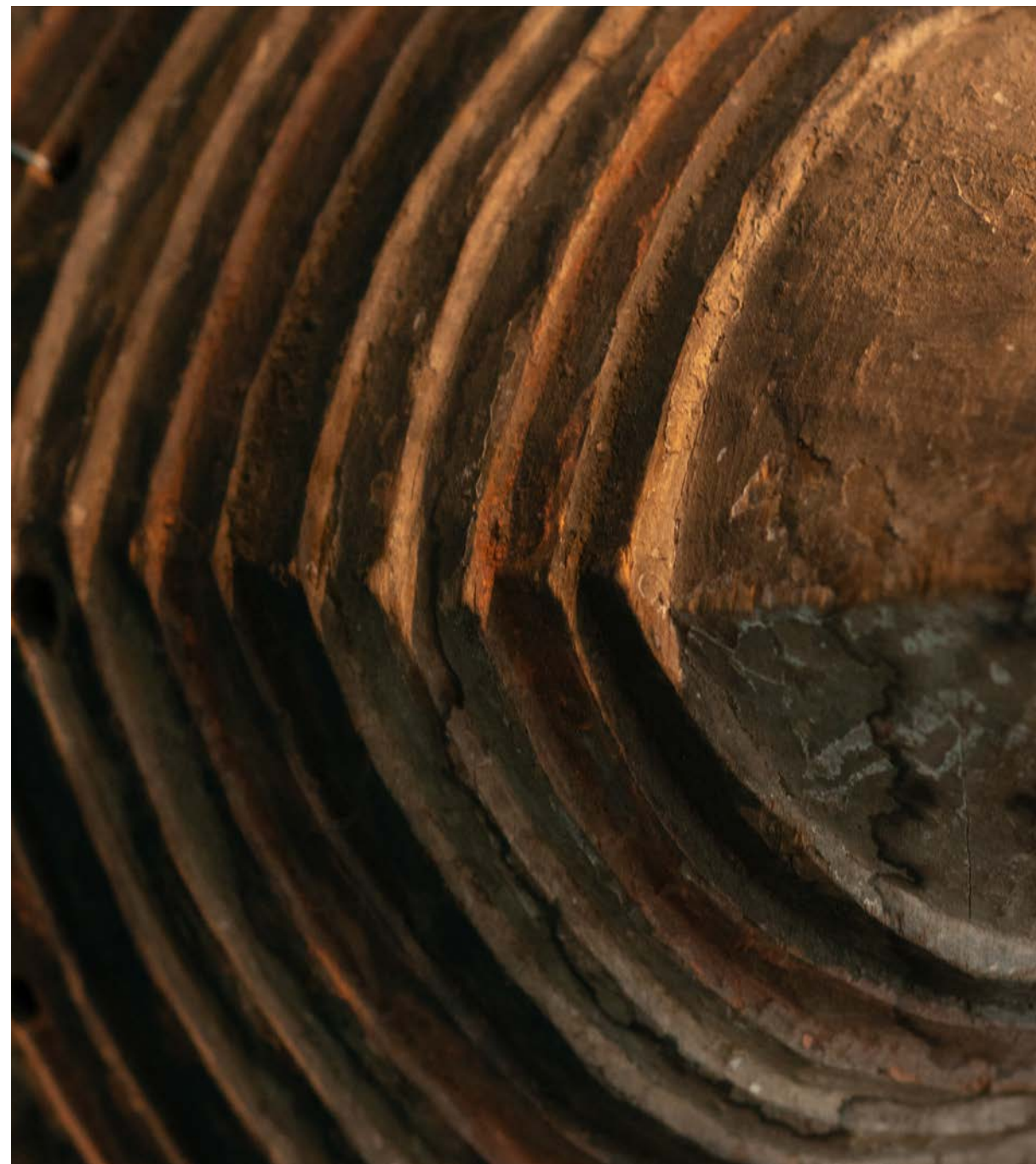
12. Lega Artist DRC
Bwami Society Mask
Artist Lega, DRC
Mascara de la
Société Bwami

13. Yaka Artist
Ivory Carved
Face Mask
Artist Yaka
Côte d'Ivoire
Mascara faciale





MASQUERADE

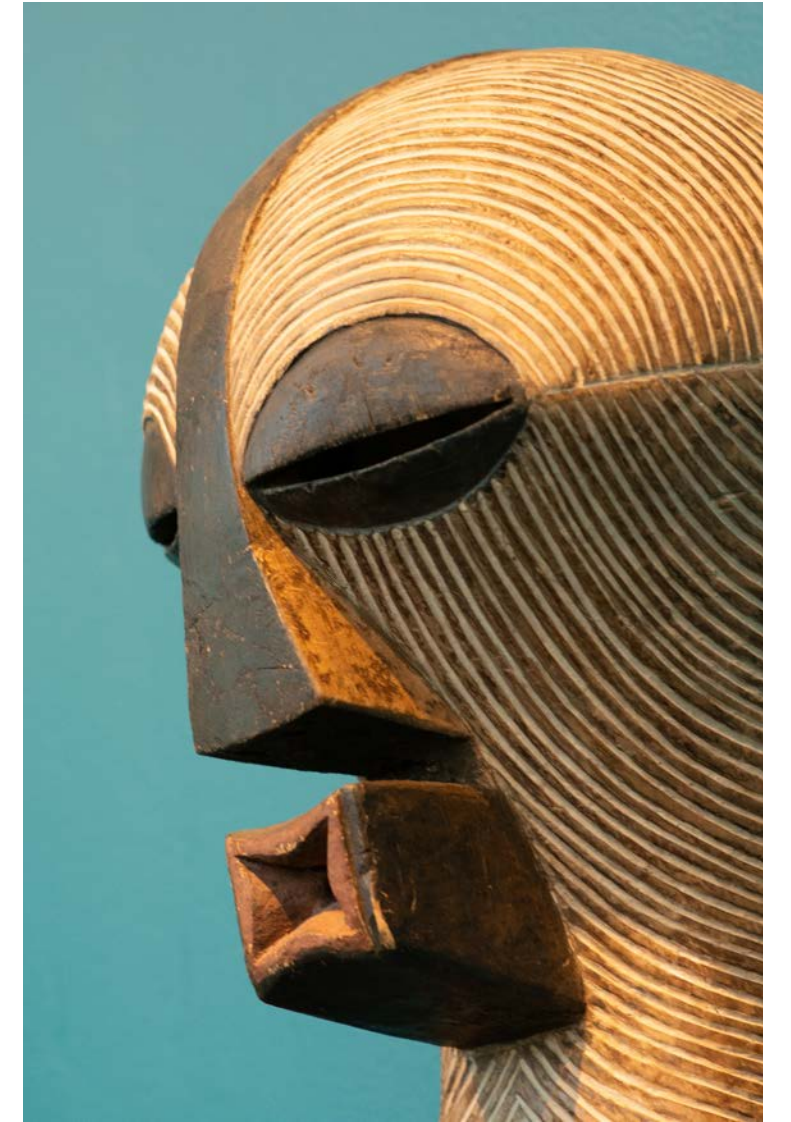


Object 1



The visitor enters through an array of masks extending down a corridor-like gallery that opens up into the Merriam Parkway galleries, the original museum. The masks are made of various materials besides wood and also show different degrees of use, such as peeling layers of paint—evidence of refurbishing the mask prior to annual use—or damage caused by such environmental factors as termites.

The masks are displayed as works of art, pieces of sculpture—as they are in most museums. However, each of these masks is actually part of a larger aesthetic construction, a masquerade, that personifies a spirit with a distinct and culturally specific personality and role. The mask or face of the spirit was the easiest part of the masquerade to collect, so this is what most museums have in their collections. Masks are also what most people think of when they think of African art, even though only a relatively small number of peoples living primarily in West and West Central Africa actually use masks as cultural tools.¹



Object 41



Object 39

There is nothing wrong with appreciating a mask in terms of its sculptural form. This is how art is appreciated in a Western context. However, it is important to keep in mind that these masks are fragments. Fragments have long littered the Western museum's landscape, probably because they allow viewers to use their imaginations and build pictures in their minds. However, it is equally important to understand that this is not how masks are seen and understood in their own contexts where they appear as fully realized characters.

Every mask represents the face of an embodied spirit, and is worn in performance. Costume, sound, and movement are intrinsic aspects of masquerade performances, developing and dramatizing the spirit's personality. Masquerades serve many purposes. Sometimes they are highly sacred and dangerous, sometimes benevolent and protective, sometimes entertaining and celebratory. In the past masquerades, as the public representatives of social organizations, provided counsel and social criticism, acted as the enforcers of law, pronounced judgement upon those who

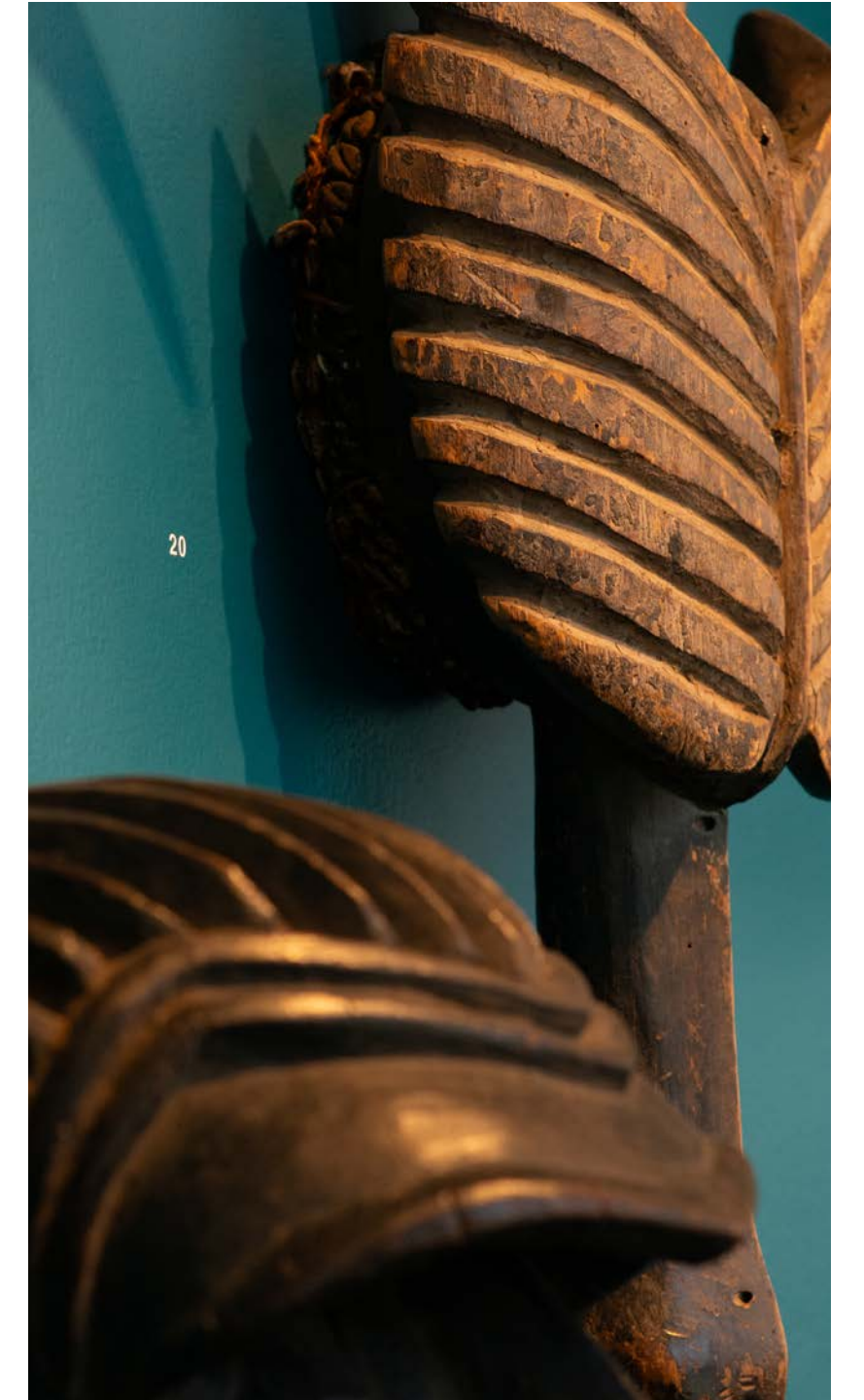




Objects 13 & 17

transgressed, demonstrated appropriate social behavior, and oversaw the education of youth. With so many different roles, masquerades took many forms, both real and imaginary, human and animal. They could be made from many materials including wood, metal, leaves and grass, cloth, and now, plastic and paper. Today, many of their functions have been taken over by institutions of the modern nation state and changing religious practices or superseded by modern technology that brings television into remote villages. However, some masquerades retain their original functions or continue to be performed as icons of cultural identity.

The masks on display represent only a fraction of those made and used historically on the African continent. Each gives insight into a specific culture, often into its social organization, and always into the imagination, creativity, and craftsmanship of the individuals who have served their communities as artists and performers.



Objects 19 & 20









CEREMONIAL LIFE



Two masquerade figures from Nigeria grace the interior space of Ceremonial Life. These are drawn from FAM's collection of full masquerade costumes, commissioned from community-based artists for display in the museum.² Odogu, informally called Ancient Mother, is the senior masquerade in a dance ensemble consisting of up to 6 characters (object 76). The masquerade figures in this case evoke nature spirits, and they represent a tradition brought from east of the Niger River in the 1930s by an itinerant artist. This is a social masquerade, not restricted to a particular time and place for performance. This costume was made by the late Lawrence Ajanaku from Okpella, an area and a people located north of Benin City in Nigeria. In the interest of counteracting the stereotype of the anonymous African artist, a stereotype that still prevails, Lawrence shared his family history with curator Jean Borgatti who subsequently published it in *From the Hands of Lawrence Ajanaku*. This title was taken from words he spoke upon completing a set of costumes commissioned in 1973 for UCLA. He said: Take these things home, and tell your people that this is what came from the hands of Lawrence Ajanaku. In a later comment, he made it clear that knowing his work was being preserved in international collections fulfilled an important goal, saying: I do not believe there is any place [now] where my name has not been heard... And that the work from my hand [being there] is enough...even if I do not reach that place.³



Left: Object 76 / Above: Object 51

The other masquerade on view is also from Okpella, a commemorative masquerade for an important elder, the type generally but not exclusively used for a man. Informally referred to as Dead Fathers in English, they do have a name as a type—omeshe, an onomatopoeic word that evokes the swish of the cloth on the earth (object 65). They are described as “that which leaves no footprint on the ground”—a description that evokes their mystery. They also carry the name of the person commemorated. This costume was designed by James Friday, the grandson of the late Father of Spirits (itilimi) in his community. He not only makes costumes but owns and performs several different types of costume during Okpella’s annual ancestral festival.⁴



Like masquerades, musical instruments, performance paraphernalia, and the regalia of chieftaincy evoke ceremonial life in an African context. Sokari Douglas Camp's *Drummers* (1988) welcome visitors into the space, as drummers often do, heralding important events in African communities or as a drum roll may introduce an announcement in the West (object 77).⁵ The first African object entering the collection is on display here—a miniature mask from the Dan or Mano culture (Liberia/Ivory Coast) (object 44). The historic work from Liberia was a personal possession, a replica of a larger family-owned mask that not only provided spiritual protection but also could serve to identify a man as being a member of an association that operated across different communities, thus giving him safe passage outside his own village.

Object 77





It is paired with a brightly colored maskette by Yinka Shonibare, an internationally recognized Anglo-Nigerian artist (object 47). Shonibare has taken an historic mask form, miniaturized it, and covered it with designs that suggest Dutch Wax printed fabric – a cloth that is both African and not African. Invented by the Dutch in the late 19th century and derived from Indonesian batiks, the cloth was marketed in Africa where it was enthusiastically adopted and where designs have developed a life and history of their own. This cloth is a signature element of Shonibare's work. He finds its ambiguity (being African but not-African) expressive of the ambiguity of the identity that many Africans have felt – as culture changed dramatically in Africa through the Colonial period and later. In Hybrid Mask, Shonibare also takes the opportunity to use both the wax print designs and a classic African mask type to open a discussion about the African roots of European modernism.⁶

Costume and accessories, especially those worn on formal occasions, signal power and authority. For example, among the Ashanti (Asante) people of Ghana, beautiful handwoven cloth was worn by men and women of distinction to indicate their wealth and status. Called KENTE, this cloth is woven in long narrow strips by men and then sewn together to create large textiles (object 66). The cloth on display, woven of silk, features patterns in yellows, orange, and reds, to suggest the gold that gives this cloth its name--‘gold dust’ – a name that refers to Ghana’s rich mineral resources. Though once reserved for royalty, Kente cloth has become a symbol of African identity and independence, not only in Ghana and throughout the African continent but in the Diaspora as well. The adjacent ceremonial sword is the type of sword used by Ashanti (Asante) kings to take their oaths of office (object 64). The openwork design cut into the blade represents the Sankofa bird, a bird that looks back over its shoulder – referring to an Ashanti (Asante) belief in the importance of history and learning from the past.



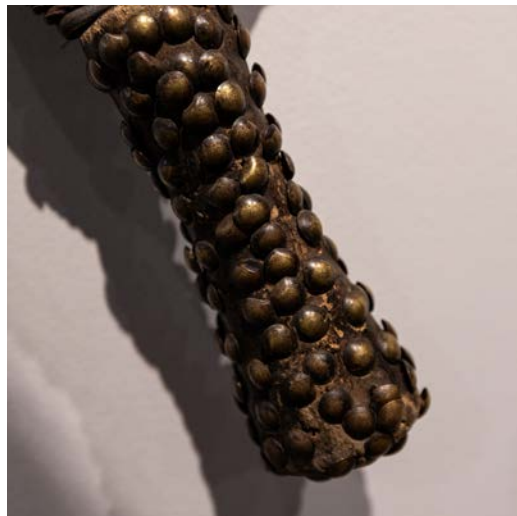
Weapons and items of regalia—crowns and hats, elaborate anklets and bells, pendant masks of bronze, also indicated authority. Weapons often became more elaborate and less functional in this context. Some weapons were used as currency because of the iron and copper out of which they were made and that allowed them to be melted down and refashioned as necessary. Two beaded crowns from the Yoruba people of southwest Nigeria express ideas about the right to rule. Their tall conical shape gives prominence to the head, a visual cue to the importance of the head in Yoruba thought where it is linked to destiny (ori), spiritual power (ase), character (iwa) and beauty (ewa) (objects 74 & 75). The stylized face suggests the kingdom’s founders; the cluster of birds, the specialized knowledge necessary to rule. Bronze anklets and face bell, also Yoruba, indicate the level of authority held by members of a non-royal group that served important political and judicial roles, including selecting the successor of a deceased king from eligible candidates (objects 83 & 84). These cast bronze objects are estimated to date from the 18th or 19th century.

IRON



The history of iron technology and its development throughout the African continent is complex and contentious. There is considerable evidence that iron was being smelted and forged in many parts of the continent during the first millenium BCE with important centers along the borderland between northern Nigeria and northern Cameroon. Early sites are associated with Nok culture (object 103) as well with many of the locations from which the iron weapons and currencies on display come. Historically, men worked as blacksmiths; their wives were often potters. In West Africa, blacksmiths often lived within their own neighborhoods in larger communities, and did not marry outside their own groups. This was less true in Central Africa where blacksmiths rose to positions of political power, and individual smiths could be found among titleholders, governing officials, and kings.

Iron tools and weapons allowed for the development of agriculture, efficient hunting, and the successful warfare necessary for kingdoms to develop and expand. Forged iron became important as a type of currency, taking forms that ranged from simple hoes and spear blades, collars and anklets, to more complex staffs and weaponry. Blacksmiths became known as makers and changers of money; the smithy was both workplace and bank where people could borrow iron, exchange worn out iron tools for new ones or trade copper currency for iron. Weapons were also repurposed as symbols of authority. Blades were dulled, aerodynamic balance decreased, and forms made lighter and more ornate than was practical for fighting but effective for communicating ideas of power, prosperity, and prestige.



Object 60



Object 62



Object 53



Object 52



Object 54



Object 64



Object 63

A Celebration of
African Art







RITUAL LIFE



Much of the historic African art found in Western museums actually refers to religious ritual, having links to animist beliefs rather than Christianity or Islam. In an animist belief system, all things contain a vital force capable of influencing human lives. Although today only 7.9% of the population of Africa is animist while Christians constitute about 49.3% and followers of Islam 41.5%, a belief in this spiritual energy remains culturally important across the continent.

African animist religions generally recognize a Creator god, but spirits associated with the land and ancestors are the most important to individuals. Objects placed in shrines represent a point of contact with the spiritual force, but rarely depict the force itself. Figures used in shrines often took human form, and, in making these figures, sculptors often abstracted and dramatized bodily forms to show what was important in human lives—oversized heads for wisdom, sturdy bodies for strength, exaggerated breasts for nurturing children.



Left: Object 142 / Above: Object 104



Ancestors, in the past and sometimes today, were individually remembered with masquerades, clay images, carved wooden portraits, or stories in cloth preserved in family shrines. Ancient burial traditions favored clay urns or bodies wrapped in handwoven cloth. Today Ghanaian artists create dramatic “Fantasy Coffins” (or Fantastic Afterlife Vehicles) to celebrate lives well-lived.

Religious specialists often use, or instruct their clients to use, creatively made instruments to help them solve problems or protect themselves. To make a power figure, a specialist adds magical medicine to a wooden sculpture along with other materials to enhance its image and effectiveness; a diviner uses well-carved tools, such as the friction oracle on view, to help someone make an important decision. Figurines might be made to remind their custodians of a moral precept or morally acceptable behavior; amulets in various shapes may be prescribed to protect those who wear them. Crosses serve a variety of purposes in Christian Ethiopian ritual. Islamic clerics and students employ carved wooden writing tablets to copy religious texts to help them memorize them (object 101). In some areas, the Mallam (a Muslim teacher of religion) may oversee the “drinking of the Koran,” washing off the ink from the tablet so that a devotee, by ingesting it, should receive Allah’s blessing.



Lobi Altar Panel

Two large works are focal points in this gallery – the Ijo funerary monument or duein fobara (object 104) and the Ghanaian Fantastic Afterlife Vehicle or FAV in the form of a 1957 Chevy (object 146). The Kalabari Ijo, located along Nigeria’s coast, served as important middlemen in the Atlantic trade from the 15th century onward, moving local goods as well as enslaved people to Europeans and bringing such Western luxuries as brassware, alcohol, and gunpowder to those in the interior. Trade was controlled by competing houses whose members, by the 19th century, honored their leaders and other important members of society after death with memorial screens. These were kept as shrines in the meetinghouse that was the group’s headquarters. Each screen depicted a particular forebear wearing the Ekine (pronounced Eh-key-nay) dance society mask that the deceased, in this case Chief Charles Magibo Briade, performed during his lifetime, and could be further personalized by marking the initials of the trading house on the frame. The central figure on FAM’s screen wears the Alagba headdress indicating that Chief Charles Briade had progressed to the senior level of the society. He also appears to be holding an elaborately carved staff in the shape of a canoe paddle as an emblem of office---recalling the lives and livelihoods of the Ijo people who live in the creeks and islands of the Niger Delta.

This screen was field collected in the mid-1970s when elders in several Ijo compounds agreed to sell old ones that had begun to deteriorate as a means of preserving them. Western art dealers purchased them, providing the funds to have replacements made.⁷





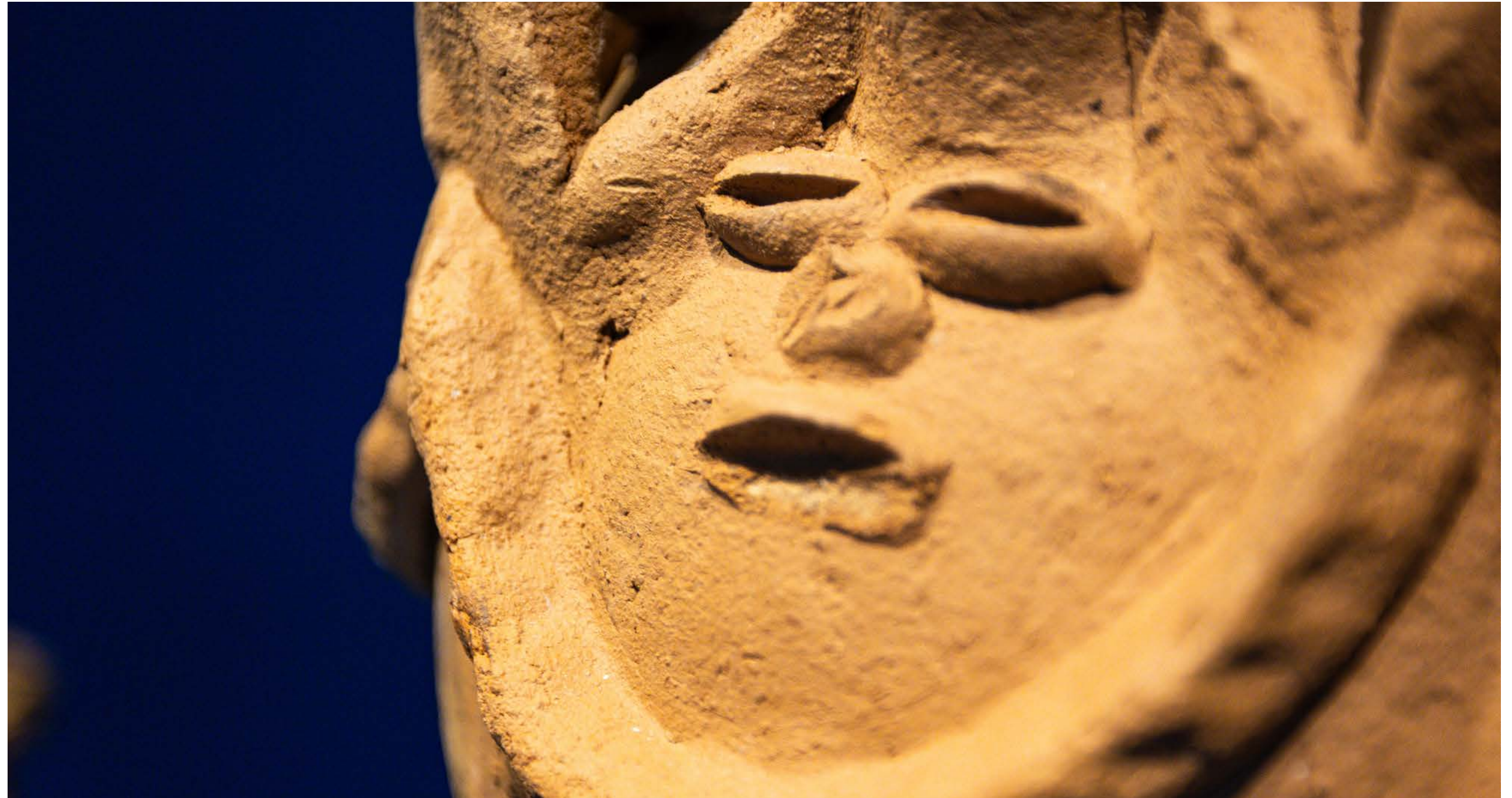
FAVs have become a feature of the ceremonial landscape in southern Ghana since the mid-1950s. These Africanized and personalized coffins are large sculptures that celebrate the achievements of the deceased through the coffin's shape. A farmer's family might have one made in the form of a cocoa pod while a businesswoman's family might make one in the shape of a Mercedes Benz. The coffins are called "boxes of proverbs" in Ghana to indicate the wisdom of a departed elder. They are paraded through the streets prior to burial as a final tribute. American and European museums and galleries have begun to collect the coffins as Ghanaian "pop" art. Why a '57 Chevy? There was an American military base located in this area in the 1950s suggesting that such vehicles might have been part of the visual landscape.

The Chevy's carver, Theophilus Nii Anum Sowah, began his career as an apprentice of the FAV tradition's founder Kane Kwei. He was Kwei's head carpenter by 1990. In 1992, he started his own shop, but maintained his relationship with Kwei's coffin painter D.A. Jasper. Jasper painted the '57 Chevy.

This gallery holds both the oldest iconic works in the exhibition, chronologically speaking, and the newest ones—reminding us of the long history of African art so often dismissed because of the ephemeral materials out of which so much of it was made. The oldest works are associated with memorial practices, the terra cottas of the Nok (c. 900-300 BCE) and Bura (200-1000 CE) cultures. The most recent, also terra cotta, are linked to ritual activity associated with the renewal of life through childbirth. The Bura monoliths were grave markers,

stylized human torsos (object 134). Recent archaeological information on the Nok culture indicates that figures were often broken and then interred (object 103).⁸ Ritual pots from Nigeria for Olokun are among the more recently made works in the collection. Olokun, a deity associated with the ocean and rivers, endows those who honor him with wealth and fertility. As the bringer of children, the deity remains important in Benin City today. Women still maintain personal shrines centered on a pot holding the fresh river water that embodies the deity. A vessel made by Mrs. Patience Iziegbe, one of the last active traditional potters in the city, speaks to the pot's importance as a container for Olokun. She created a visual pun to identify the pot with the candidate being initiated as a priestess, since both serve as vessels for the spirit. Figures, indicated by heads placed around the periphery of the pot, reach behind themselves, grasping the rim of the pot intended to hold river water. At the same time, these figures balance pots on their heads as a reference to the moment in the initiation when the candidate transforms into a vessel for the spirit.⁹ A larger pot on display by the same artist also features motifs associated with Olokun: cowry shells, snakes, ladders, canoes, and beads.

Pottery is fired using a bonfire technique. This produces a porous, fragile object subject to breakage. It is assumed that the oldest West African pottery such as the Nok figures and the Bura Grave markers were fired in much the same way. If possibly problematic for the survival of large, hollow-modelled sculptural forms, lowfired pottery was eminently suitable for domestic ware used in sub-Saharan Africa prior to the 20th century. The porosity of large vessels allowed for water to cool naturally. Moreover, such pottery could be used as cookware over an open fire, to toast cereal foods, fry beancakes, or simmer soups. Many individuals still contend that food cooked in earthenware vessels is tastier than that cooked in enamel ware or aluminum pots.

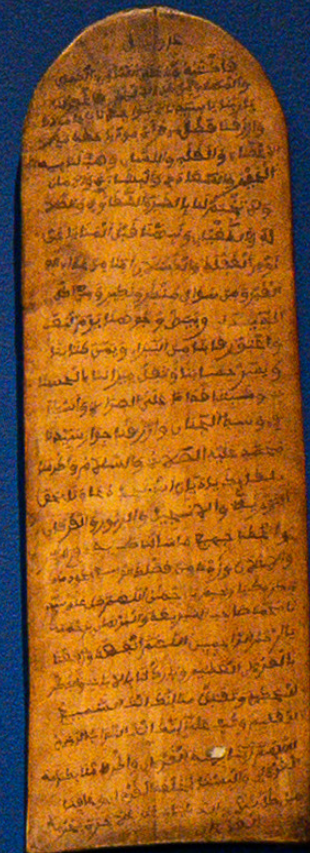


Object 92





62. Islamo, Oric, Nigeria
Chirga Islamica, Nigeria
Tela de eschura



DOMESTIC LIFE

ings that people associated with home and family were made by members of the household
Personal possessions communicated age and status and provided aesthetic pleasure. Many
re employed in rituals and ceremonies, giving them a religious function in addition to their
objects indicated lives well-lived and livelihoods successfully pursued. Large ceremonial
Dare women for their hospitality. Ashanti men displayed elaborate equipment for weaving
currency in business transactions. Men commissioned carvings to suspend the heddles they
e weaving. Heddles are an integral part of a loom that allow threads to separate during the
A skillfully made heddle pulley holder indicated a weaver's threads to separate during the
the weaver and the customers who watched her work. Things made beautifully with
els communicated the economic and social status of their owners. The amber heddles worn by
lth the weaver made their status as married women clear. The heavy brass anklets worn by
tellers to the split world during divination, indicators of sexual availability, protectors of men's
tures during sleep, and aids to vigilance for men guarding livestock—their inability preventing
Once a child was born, the figure could be used as a child's toy.
ard game now marketed in the United States as Mancala or Warl served as a form of relaxation but
the grain, taxing memory and having the ability to assess quantity quickly.

DOMESTIC LIFE

VIDA DOMÉSTICA

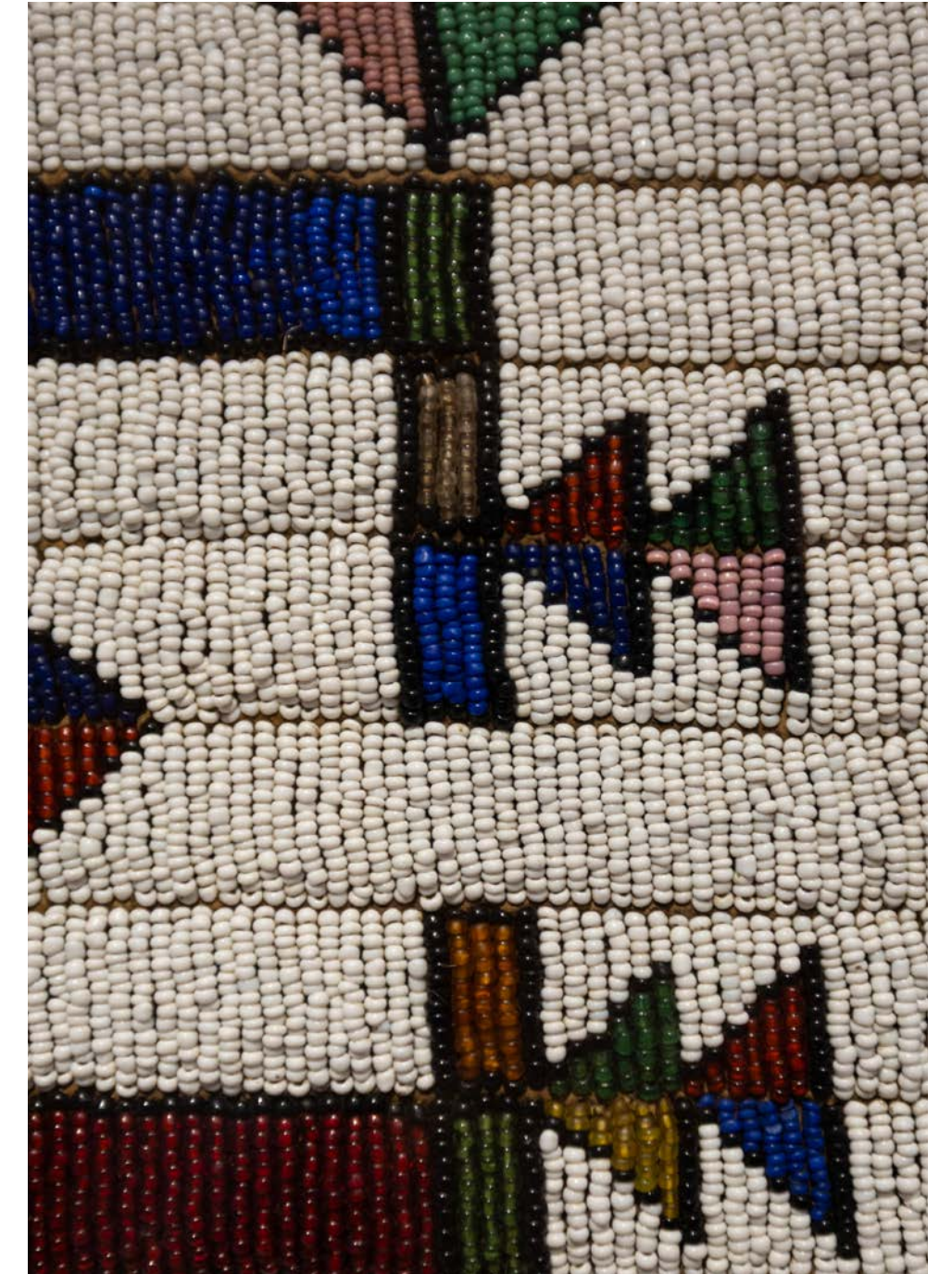
o, los objetos asociados con el hogar y la familia eran elaborados por los miembros del hogar
os locales. Las posesiones personales comunicaban la edad y el estatus de una persona y
an placer estético. Muchos de estos objetos también desempeñaban un papel en rituales y
otorgándoles una función religiosa además de su uso cotidiano. Véase objetos simbolizaban vidas
medios de sustento exitosos. Las grandes cucharas ceremoniales honraban a las mujeres. Dan
alidad. Los hombres a menudo exhibían equipos elaborados para pesar el polvo del oro, utilizado
a en las transacciones comerciales. Los hombres también encargaban talas para suspender
manipulaban mientras tejían. Los heddles son una parte fundamental de un telar, permitiendo se
e los hilos durante el proceso de tejido. Un soporte de pulgas de oro finamente elaborado indicaba
ejedor y proporcionaba placer visual tanto a él como a los clientes que observaban su trabajo.
bellamente elaborados con materiales costosos reflejaban el estatus económico y social de
Las cuentas de ámbar usadas por las mujeres fulani mostraban la riqueza familiar. Las chalcas
usados por las jóvenes dinka indicaban que estaban listas para el matrimonio, mientras que los
on cuentas de las mujeres notables señalaban su estatus como mujeres casadas. Las pasadas
tadón, usadas por mujeres igbo o ngombe, las apartaban de la fuerza laboral, haciendo evidente
a riqueza de su espacio. Los reposacabezas no eran simples "almohadillas", sino que contribuían
específicos en diferentes culturas. Eran considerados "máquinas de sueño", actualizadas como danzas
do espiritual durante la adivinación, indicaban disponibilidad sexual, protegían los paisajes
de los hombres mientras dormían y servían como herramientas de vigilancia para los hombres
de proteger el ganado, ya que su movilidad evitaba al zorro bruchido.
as africanas funcionaban como figuras de santuario y también como deities simbólicas para mujeres
ben tener hijos. En algunos casos, una vez que nació un hijo, la figura podía convertirse en un
ra niños. El juego de mesa africano, ahora comercializado en Estados Unidos como Mancala o Warl
o una forma de relajación, pero también ejercitaba el cerebro, agudizaba la memoria y mejorando la
de evaluar cantidades con rapidez.





In the past, things associated with domestic and family life were made by members of the household or local artisans. Personal possessions communicated age and status and provided aesthetic pleasure. Many of these items were employed in rituals and ceremonies too, giving them a religious function in addition to their daily use.

African “dolls” functioned as shrine figures and surrogate babies for women trying to have children (object 211-216). In some cases, once a child was born, the figure could be used as a child’s toy. Headrests were not merely “pillows” but had specific purposes in different cultures (objects 204-209). They were “dream machines”—pipelines to the spirit world during divination, indicators of sexual availability, protectors of men’s complicated coiffures during sleep, and aids to vigilance for men guarding livestock—their instability preventing deep sleep. The African board game marketed in the United States as Mancala or Wari served as a form of relaxation but also exercised the brain, taxing memory and honing the ability to assess quantity quickly (object 210).

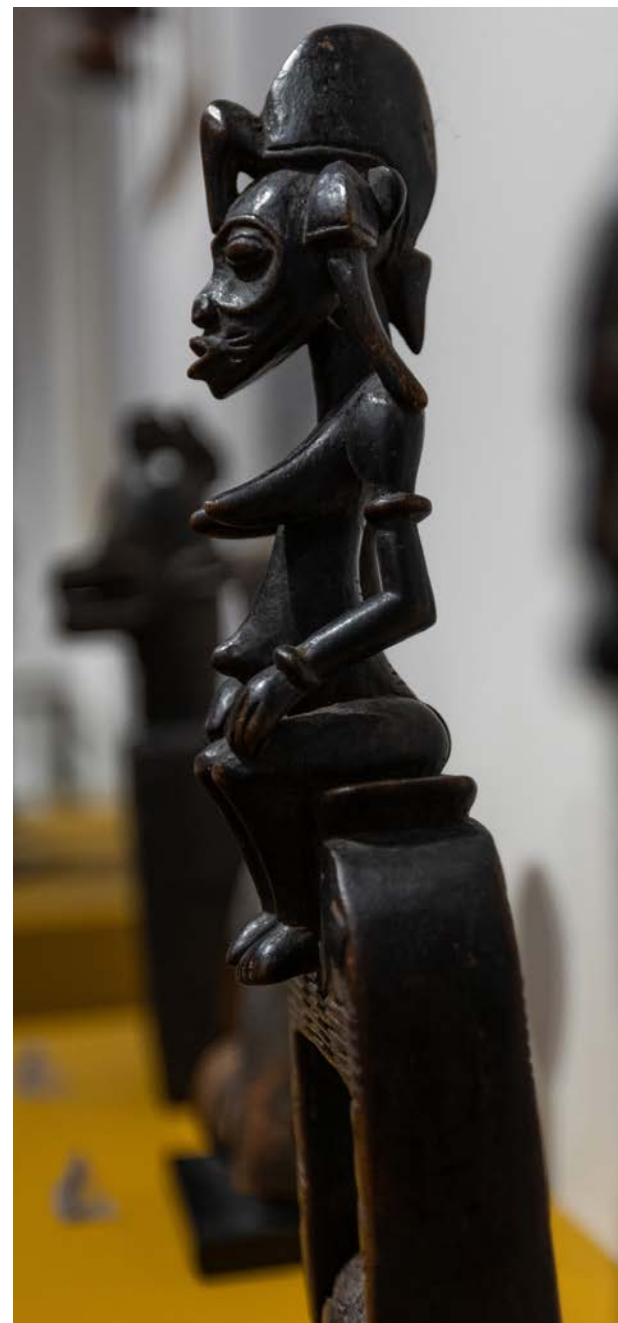
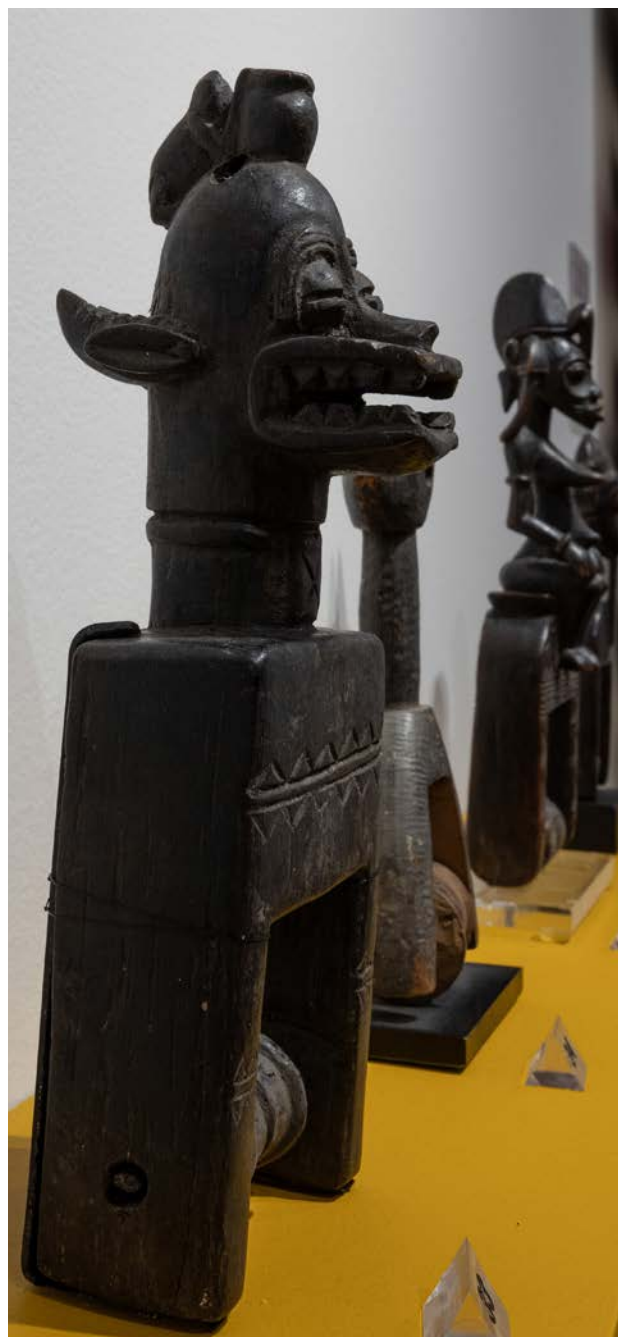


Object 173

Things beautifully made using expensive materials communicated the economic and social status of their owners. Amber beads worn by Fulani women displayed family wealth (object 191). Beaded vests worn by Dinka girls signified readiness for marriage (object 188), while the beaded aprons of Ndebele women made their status as married women clear (object 173). The heavy brass anklets worn by an Igbo or Ngombe woman removed her from the work force, making the husband's wealth plain for all to see (object 175).

Other objects indicated lives well-lived and livelihoods successfully pursued. Large ceremonial spoons honored Dan women for their hospitality (object 174). Ashanti (Asante) men displayed elaborate equipment for weighing the gold dust used as the currency in business transactions (objects 148, 156-160). Men commissioned carvings to suspend the heddles they manipulated while weaving. A skillfully made heddle pulley holder indicated a weaver's success and provided visual enjoyment for both the weaver and the customers who watched him work (objects 180-186).





Left: Object 180 / Middle: Object 177 / Right: Object 182

Two textiles in this gallery complement the Kente cloth in Ceremonial Life. The Fulani wedding blanket, also men's weave, was made by Malleebe weavers, a Fulani sub-group living in Niger today (object 187). They descend from families that were serfs to Fulani and Songhai nobility living in what is now Mali. They migrated south in the early 20th century when the French colonial government outlawed slavery. They took their knowledge of weaving in wool with them. In the 1950s, they began using machine-spun and brightly colored yarn in weaving their blankets, inventing the modern Zarma wedding blanket with its many patterned blocks.

The other textile is appliqué work in the tradition of Egyptian tentmakers (khayamiya) made by Hany Abd El Kader, a contemporary artist (object 203). He learned his craft as his grandfather's apprentice, and he still works for a local clientele interested in having a tent or marquee made. However, today most of his income derives from tourists and the international craft trade accessed through social media. The geometric configuration featured here resembles the arabesque designs that have been used on architectural tiles and marble inlay since the middle ages, while the lotus blossom motif ties his design to ancient Egypt.



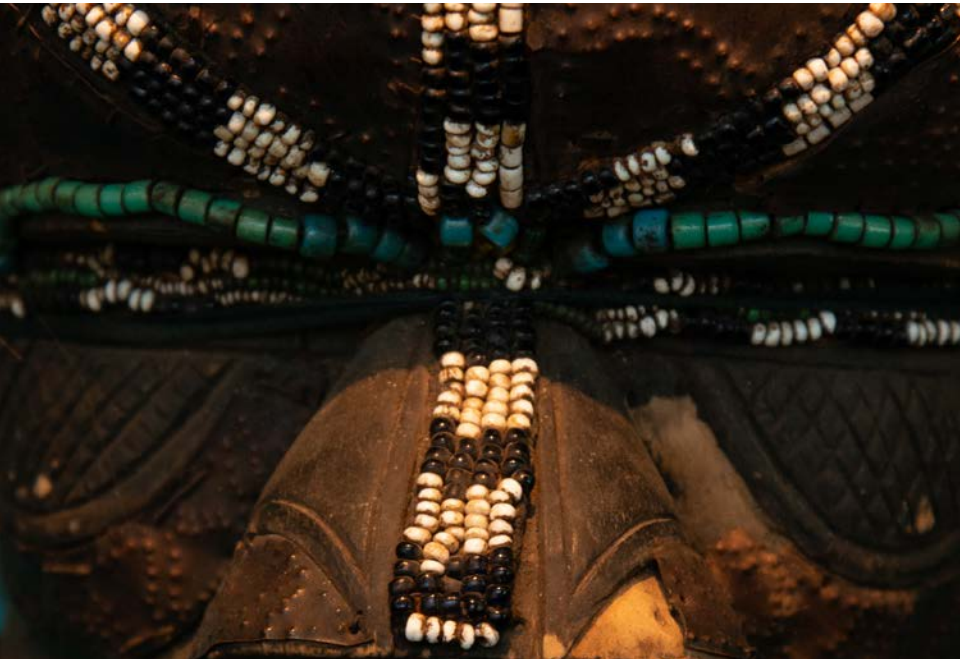
Left: Objects 185 & 186 / Right: Object 175







THE HISTORY OF AFRICAN ART AT FAM



Top: Object 62 / Bottom: Object 25

The Fitchburg Art Museum is one of the places in New England where sub-Saharan African art forms an important part of the museum’s permanent collection and is regularly exhibited. All areas of the continent are represented along with a time span that stretches from the first millennium BCE through the present. These works range from iconic or classic works from Africa in a variety of media. Most of the work was made by artists trained in the apprenticeship method, but the collection also holds modern and contemporary work made by artists working in new ways with new materials who have learned their craft through art schools or university programs. African art at FAM includes as well significant holdings in photography and a small collection of Egyptian archaeological artifacts on long-term display.

The first African art objects gifted to FAM came in 1984 and other works trickled in until 2005 when the first gifts from Dwight and Anna Heath arrived. That trickle became a torrent as major gifts were received from William Teel, the Genevieve McMillan – Reba Stewart Foundation, Bobbi and Tim Hamill, Simon Gregorry, Lillian Montalto and Robert Bohlen along with many individuals in surrounding communities—helping the Fitchburg Art Museum to broaden founder Eleanor Norcross’s goal of bringing art to the people of Fitchburg.

As African art began to achieve significance within FAM’s collections, Peter Timms (director 1973-2012) recognized the need to have someone on staff with expertise in this area. At this time a consulting curator was recruited, tasked with the responsibility of using the collection to tell a story about African art. The collection was uneven; gifts had been accepted without any evaluation of quality. These gifts were



Object 13



Object 14



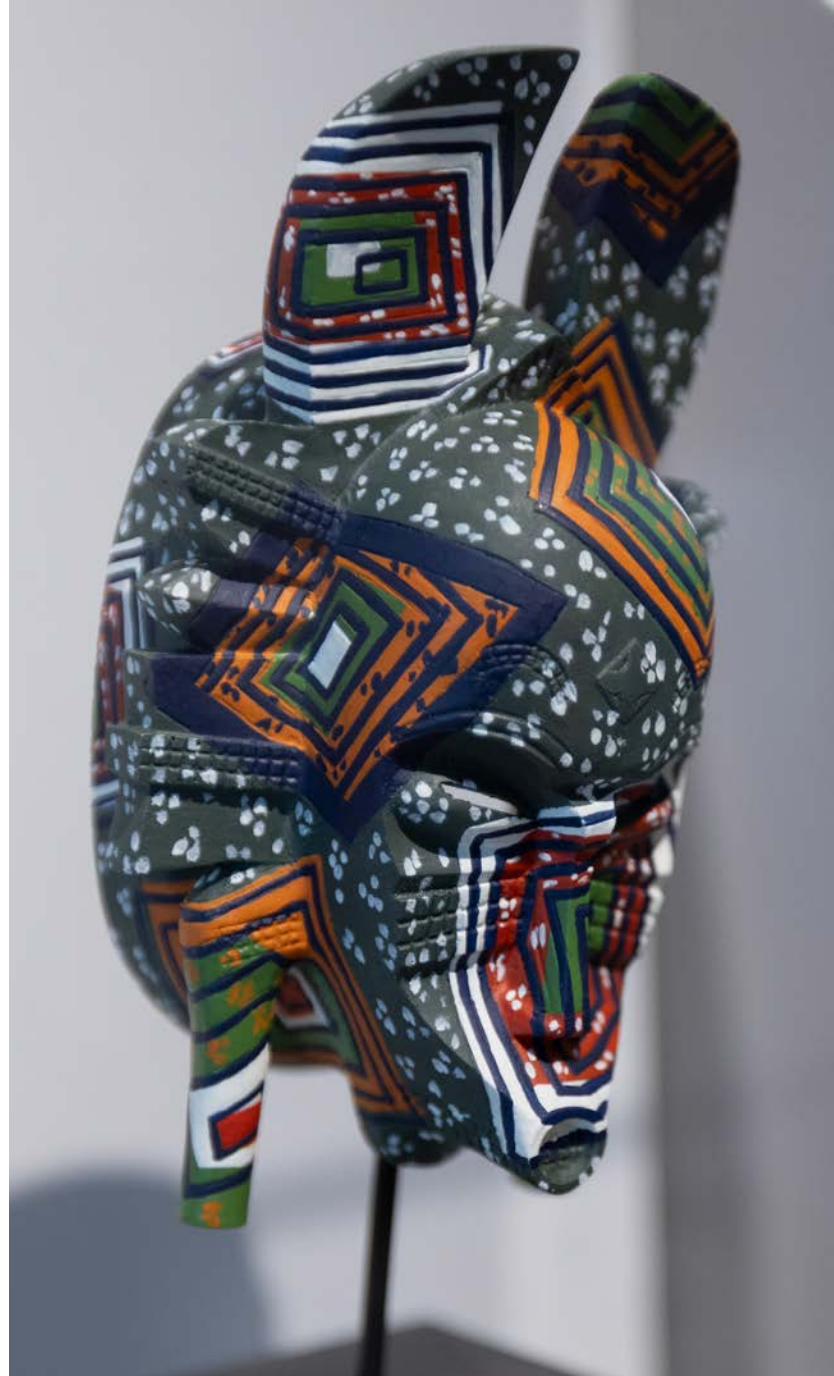
Object 44



Object 103

all in the style of iconic African sculpture, some pieces startlingly good and others a travesty of the types they were meant to represent. One of curator's first tasks was to purchase a work by a modern African artist, since no story about African art could be complete, or at least appropriately told, without representing the art currently being produced. Thus, the first work by a modern African artist entered the collection – Drummers by Sokari Douglas Camp (object 77), a Nigerian artist from the Niger Delta. As a sculptor, Camp's work had the 3-dimensionality that made it compatible with much iconic African art. Moreover, she reflected thoughtfully through her work on her own culture. Large scale, kinetic sculptures made of welded metal, Drummers had been in Camp's solo exhibition at the Smithsonian in 1988.¹⁰

Though only a small gallery had been dedicated to African art prior to 2014, the museum had held several exhibitions in the changing exhibits galleries on the second floor of the museum's new building. Telling Objects (2011) drew on African Art from the permanent collection that took advantage of important gifts from William Teel, Dwight and Anna Heath, and the Genevieve McMillan-Reba Stewart Foundation. This was paired with Maske, photographs of African masquerades by American photographer Phyllis Galembo. Wrapped in Pride: Ghanaian Kente and African American identity, an NEH-on-the-road exhibition, followed in 2012, with Nana Yaw Ampong II, Wabiri Asonahene of Breman Asikuma (currently resident in Westminister, MA) as the honorary chair. Opening festivities included an Afternoon Dance Party hosted by Gordon Halm of Lowell with cultural performances from traditional to contemporary, an African market, a weaving demonstration by Edward Brempong (then resident in Worcester) and an "Africa Today" Forum featuring Ambassador Thomas Hull (Sierra Leone 2004-2007) as keynote speaker along with other distinguished guests.¹¹ FAM also held two exhibitions featuring "interventions," Conversations and Face to Face where sculpture from the African collection was juxtaposed with work in continuing exhibitions, so that the art could enter into a conceptual and formal dialogue.

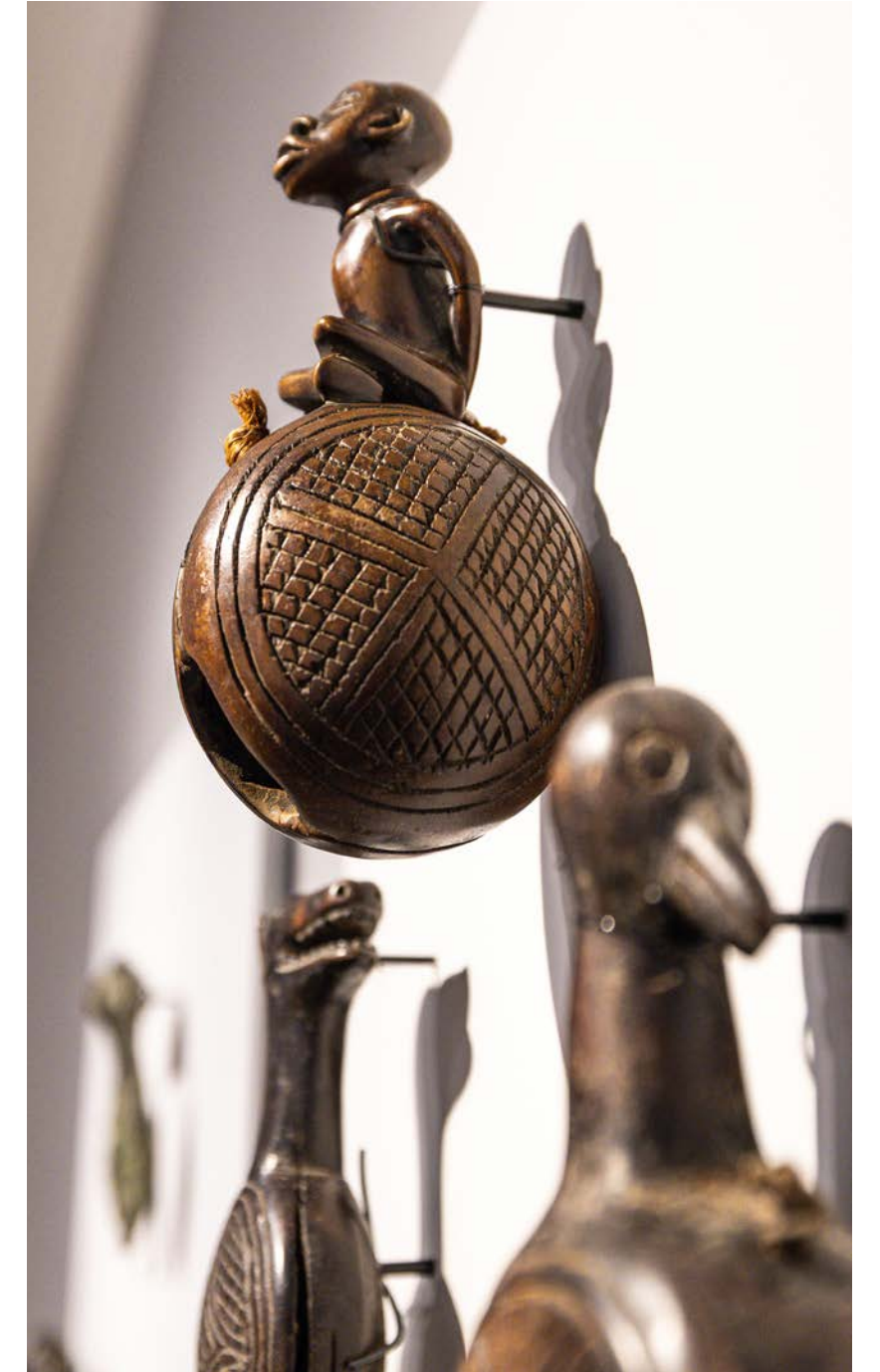


Object 47

These were not the first exhibitions of African Art at FAM. Egyptian art had been displayed, with a gallery of its own installed in 2010. The connector was the site of a long-term exhibition of sub-Saharan African Art from the William Teel Collection, some of those objects bequeathed to FAM on William Teel's death in 2013. The Hamill Gallery (Roxbury) installed an exhibition in the changing exhibits galleries in the 1990s.

Since 2014, FAM has used the Merriam Parkway galleries to focus attention on Africa, beginning with award-winning Global Africa (2014-2018) and artwork that represented African and African-heritage populations world-wide.¹² Moving Objects (2018-2024) recognized the museum as memory keeper and the many generous individuals who have helped the museum grow. Cloth is Money (2020-2021) explored sub-Saharan Africa's place in the world prior to the trade in enslaved people. Most recently, Africa Rising: 21st Century African Photography (2024-2025) demonstrated a new dimension added to both the African and Photography collections.

This journey through the museum's galleries and history has covered a lot of territory. The works on display cross the African continent, if representing only a small fraction of its many different ethnic groups, and a lot of time, centuries, during which the creation of the works has taken place. African art has a history. Objects on view display great diversity in materials, form, and technique. They unite utilitarian function and aesthetic impact making it clear that African art is not just a mask on the wall or a ritual object. African art is work made by creatives who are conscious of themselves as artists and proud of it, and whose names were known in their communities. African artists are not anonymous. This has always been true although it has not always been recognized by Westerners, even as the art has been appreciated. FESTIVAL celebrates African art, past and present – and future, as FAM's collections continue to grow, affirming the museum's commitment to its founder and her mission.



Object 86



LEARNING LOUNGE

A fifth gallery, transitional space between Ceremonial Life and the galleries housing Ritual and Domestic Life respectively, is the site of a learning lounge that holds touchable artwork in wood, pottery, woven cloth, metal, and multiple media. Adjacent video labels show African artists carving a mask, hand-building a pot, smelting and forging iron, and weaving Kente cloth. Additional video clips illustrate several of the mask types on display in performance. The gallery also contains a range of books on African art as well as a map of the African continent that shows the approximate location of each of the 90 ethnic groups whose artists have work on display and the countries from which they come. A modern version of the African counter game often marketed as mancala (and instructions) sits on a table, inviting play. To allow for the display of a greater number of objects, each object has only minimal identification on the wall. However, each gallery contains a booklet that gives a more complete identification of each work on display and additional explanation about its function or meaning, including photographs where available of comparable types shown in their cultural contexts.

ENDNOTES

1) See Walter E.A. van Beek and Harrie M. Leyten, *Masquerades in African Society: Gender, Power and Identity*, Rochester NY: James Curry, 2023, p.9. – Map showing the distribution of masks and masking in Africa indicating three masking zones located primarily in West, West Central Africa, and Central-East Africa with isolated areas in southeastern Africa.

2) Besides the two on display here, FAM’s collection of complete masquerades contains 10 additional masquerades, all commissioned from community-based artists for display, so containing no sacred material, legitimately exported, and with money paid directly to the artist rather than going through a third party. For further discussion, see Amanda Maples, Ed., *New African Masquerades: Artistic Innovations and Collaborations*, New Haven: Yale University Press in collaboration with the New Orleans Museum of Art.

3) Since 1973 when a full set of costumes was commissioned from him for UCLA, he has done work for the Smithsonian and for the British Museum. His work may also be found in the collections of the Nigerian National Museum-Benin City, the Harn Museum at the University of Florida, and in the collection of Yoruba philanthropist Yemisi Shyllon whose collection is displayed in the Pan-African University’s new museum outside of Lagos. See Borgatti, 1979, *From the Hands of Lawrence Ajanaku*. MCH Pamphlet Series Vol.1, No. 6. UCLA.

4) See Borgatti, “Okpella Masking Traditions,” *African Arts* IX, 4, 1976, 24-33 and. Essay in *Central Nigeria unmasked* and “Dead Fathers of Okpella” in Marla Berns, Sidney Kasfir and Richard Fardon (eds). *Central Nigeria Unmasked: Arts of the Benue Valley*. Los Angeles: the Fowler at UCLA, 2011, 134-139.

5) Drummers are not regularly activated in the gallery because they are uncomfortable to listen to in the constrained space of a small gallery. They are shown playing in one of the videoclips in the Learning Lounge.

6) This work is a miniaturized and fabricated version of the actual masks Shonibare uses in his *Hybridity* series where each sculpture draws inspiration from traditional mask forms of West and Central Africa. Curator Dexter Wimberly (Efie Gallery, Dubai) suggests that the mask forms decorated in Dutch wax, textiles born in the colonial trade between Europe, Asia, and Africa, become a metaphor for the complex circulation of identities, commodities, and aesthetics across continents. (<https://www.instagram.com/p/DQoBri8DI8V/> accessed Mar6,2026)

7) Nigel Barley notes only one screen created in recent times the replacement screen for Jack Rich, Buguma, 1987. His book also shows only one screen not collected and donated by P.A. Talbot to British museums. This screen is in the Glasgow Museum. *Foreheads of the Dead: An Anthropological View of Kalabari Ancestral Screens*, Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1988, pp.31-32, 68-69. A review of screens on the internet shows a number of examples, somewhat varied in style, in a number of American museum collections today. Many of these passed through the hands of New Orleans dealer Charles Davis, though not all were field collected by the dealer himself as was the FAM example].

8) FAM’s Nok figure shows only the left hand missing and a repair to the right arm which has been reattached at the elbow. The figure shows no signs of breakage like that illustrated by German archaeologists and photographed in situ (Peter Breunig, Ed. *NOK: African Sculpture in Archaeological Context*. Frankfurt:Goethe-Universitaat and Africa Magna Verlag, 2014, p.238)



9) See Joseph Nevadomsky & Norma Rosen, “The Initiation of a Priestess: Performance and Imagery in Olokun Ritual,” *TDR* (1988-), Vol.32, No.2 (Summer, 1988), p.199, fig.6 for illustration. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1145858>, accessed 27-04-2019. ..

10) See *Echoes of the Kalabari*, exhibition catalogue, Washington DC, Smithsonian, 1989. FAM ‘unveiled’ the Drummers at an event celebrating Niger Delta artists with acclaimed poet Gabriel Okara, in his 80s at the time, giving a poetry reading at the museum. He was introduced by Walter Carrington, ambassador to Nigeria during the Clinton administration. The event attracted an audience of more than 100 people. This on an August evening during the week!

11) A working loom was included in the materials of the exhibition. Weaver Edward Brempong assembled what looked like a pile of sticks into that working loom in about 15 minutes. One of the most rewarding aspects of his demonstrations was watching his children watch him weave, and receive respect for his cultural knowledge from the American audience.

12) *Global Africa* (2014-2018) received an award from ACASA, the Arts Council of the African Studies Association, as the best exhibition in a smaller arts institution at the triennial meetings held in Accra, Ghana, in 2017.



EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

MASQUERADE



Object 1

Songye Artist, DRC
(Ebombo Chiefdom)
Face Mask (kifwebe)
Mid-20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2010.62



Object 3

Igbo (Ibo) Artist
(Afikpo sub-group), Nigeria
Mask called Yam Knife (mma ji)
Mid-late 20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2010.57



Object 5

Stephen Isah (b. 1950?) and Shedetu
Bekon (b. 1955?)
Nigerian, Okpella people
Messenger Mask (anogiri), 1973
Mixed Media (Wood, mirrors, cowry
shells, abrus seeds, handwoven cloth)
Sinon Collection Fund, 2016.44

Commissioned from the artists by
curator Jean Borgatti in 1973



Object 7

Kumu Artist, DRC
Initiation Mask
Early to mid-20th century
Wood, fiber, pigment
Gift of Helen Donis-Keller, 2021.196

Acquired from Belgian dealer Marc
Felix, 1992



Object 2

Central or Northern Area Kuba Artist,
DRC
*Face Mask (pwoom itok or ishyeen
imalu)*
Mid-20th century
Wood, pigment, raffia cloth, cowrie
shells, feathers
Gift of Bobbi and Tim Hamill, 2019.130

Selected from the stock at the Hamill
Gallery.



Object 4

Dogon Artist, Mali
Antelope Mask (walu)
Mid-20th century
Wood, pigment, fiber
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2010.48



Object 6

Igbo Artist, Nigeria
Face Mask, mid to late 20th century
Wood, oil-based paint
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.41



Object 8

Chokwe Artist, DRC (Urunda area)
Initiation Mask (cihongo)
Mid-20th century
Mixed media (wood, fiber, fabric,
pigment, leather, buttons)
Gift of Helen Donis-Keller, 2021.194

Acquired 1999 from dealer Marc Leo
Felix, Brussels



Object 9

Wum Artist, Cameroon (Western Grassfields, Bafum Region)
Mwabo Mask of the Kwifom Society
 Mid-20th century
 Wood, pigment
 Gift of the Estate of Marie Jean “Monni” Adams, 2022.10



Object 11

Mende, Vai, or related culture Artist, Sierra Leone/Liberia
Sande Society Helmet Mask (sowe)
 Mid-20th century
 Wood
 Gift of Bobbi and Tim Hamill, Hamill Gallery of Tribal Arts, Boston MA, 2016.75

Selected from the stock at the Hamill Gallery.



Object 13

Yaure Artist, Ivory Coast
Face Mask
 Late 20th century
 Wood, paint, fibre
 Gift of Simon Gregory and Family, 2024.69



Object 15

Bobo Artist, Burkina Faso
Cap Mask (Bolo)
 Mid to late 20th century
 Wood, pigment, fiber, cloth
 Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.300



Object 10

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria (Southwest—Egbado Area)
Gelede Headdress (cock biting snake motif—ajangbila)
 20th century
 Wood, pigment
 African Acquisition Fund, 2019.153

Purchased from Josh Haderski, Antiques Dealer, Brimfield



Object 12

Lega Artist, DRC
Bwami Society Mask
 Mid-20th century
 Wood, pigment
 Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.159



Object 14

Galoa Artist, Gabon
Okuyi Society Face Mask
 Late 19th to early 20th century
 Wood, pigment
 Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen, 2023.322

Purchased from Galerie A. Lecompte, Paris, 2002



Object 16

Chokwe Artist, Angola
Bush Pig Mask
 20th century
 Wood, animal hide, fiber
 Gift of William E. Teel, 2009.52

Purchased from Belgian Art Dealer Mark Felix in 1990 who acquired it from an old Belgian collection.



Object 17

Igbo (Ibo) Artist, Nigeria
Crest Mask (mmanwu)
20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of Bobbi and Tim Hamill, 2019.131

Selected from the stock at the Hamill
Gallery.



Object 19

NW Grassfields Artist, Cameroon
(Wum, Kom or neighboring peoples)
Mwabwo Mask of the Kwifom Society
Late 19th to early 20th century
Wood
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen,
2023.310

Purchased from Pace Primitive, NY,
2006. Ex Collection Dr. Pierre Harter
(1928-1991), Paris, France.



Object 21

Ogoni Artist, Nigeria
Karikpo Society Antelope Mask
Late 19th to early 20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen,
2023.315

Purchased (no date) from Pace
Primitive, NY, which acquired it from a
private American collection.



Object 23

Bamana Artist, Mali (Segou Region)
Male Antelope Headcrest (chi wara)
Mid 20th century
Wood, metal, basketry
Fitchburg Art Museum Permanent
Collection, 2014.45.1



Object 18

Bidjogo Artist, Bissagos Islands,
Guinea Bissau
Bull Mask (dugn'be), late 19th to early
20th century
Wood, horns, enamel paint, fiber twine
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen,
2023.323

Purchased from Jeremiah Cole,
Atlanta, GA, 2002. Cole was the
son of African art dealer Talibi Kaba
(Guinea).



Object 20

Bamileke Artist, Cameroon
(Grassfields area)
Flying Bird Headcrest
Late 19th to early 20th century
Wood, pigment, fibre, seedpods
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen,
2023.312

Purchased from Pace Primitive, NY,
2004



Object 22

Bamana Artist, Mali (Segou Region)
*Female Antelope Headcrest (chi
wara)*
Mid-20th century
Wood
Gift of William E. Teel, 2009.46

Field collected by Charles Davis,
Bamako, Mali, 1979. Purchased from
Davis Gallery, New Orleans, 1979.



Object 24

Senambe (Senufo) Artist
N. Ivory Coast, SW Burkina Faso, SW
Mali, NW Ghana.
*Composite Animal Helmet Mask
(kponiougou)*
Late 19th to early 20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen,
2023.319

Purchased from Jacques Germain,
Montreal, 2005. He acquired it
from Loed Van Bussel (1935-2018),
Amsterdam NL who had acquired it
from a private collection in France.



Object 25

Kuba Artist, DRC
Mask (mbwoom)
 Mid-20th century
 Wood, copper, beads, cowrie shells, fiber, leather
 Gift of Martin and Wendy Tarlow Kaplan, 2021.124

Purchased in Kenya in 1984



Object 27

Ogoni Artist, Nigeria
Face Mask (elu)
 Mid-20th century
 Wood, pigment
 Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba Stewart Foundation, 2010.58



Object 29

Dan Artist, Liberia/Ivory Coast
Female Face Mask (deanglé)
 Early to mid-20th century
 Wood, fiber
 Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.237



Object 31

Central Pende Artist, DRC
Mask (mbuya) of the type called Muyombo
 Early to mid-20th century
 Wood, pigment (barkpaste, lime, charcoal), raffia
 Gift of the family of Mildred and Martin Friedman. 2017.30

Ex Collection Martin Friedman, director of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1961-1990)



Object 26

Luntu Artist, Bena Musenga Village, DRC
Helmet Mask (kalengula)
 20th century
 Raffia, feathers
 Gift from the William E. Teel, 2009.57

Purchased from Belgian dealer Marc Felix in 1994 who acquired it from a Belgian colonial official.



Object 28

Ogoni Artist, Nigeria
Face Mask (elu)
 Mid-20th century
 Wood, pigment
 Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba Stewart Foundation, 2010.59.a



Object 30

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria (Egba region, Abeokuta)
Crest Mask (egungun erin)
 Mid to late 20th century
 Wood, pigment
 Sinon Collection Fund, 2018.26

Museum purchase (Skinner). Ex Collection Gordon Lankton, Clinton African Gallery



Object 32

Mossi Artist, Burkina Faso (Risiam area)
Plank Mask (karanga)
 Mid-20th century
 Wood, pigment
 Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba Stewart Foundation, 2010.26



Object 33
Dogon Artist, Mali
Rabbit Mask (dyommo)
20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2024.51



Object 35
Bozo or Bamana Artist, Mali (Segou Region)
Composite Animal Puppet for Sogo Bo Masquerade Performance
20th century
Wood, paint
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.262



Object 37
Kru or Grebo Artist/workshop, Liberia
Face Mask
20th century
Wood
Gift from Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.301



Object 39
Yaka Artist, DRC
Initiation Mask (kholuka)
20th century
Wood, cloth, paint and raffia
Gift of Bobbi and Tim Hamill, 2019.121

Selected from the stock at the Hamill Gallery.



Object 34
Bwa or Gurunsi Artist, (Nuna, Winimia, Lela), Burkina Faso
Rooster Mask (wan norga)
20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.266



Object 36
Winiamia Artist, Burkina Faso
Face Mask with Crest (bush spirit—Keduneh)
Wood, pigment
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba Stewart Foundation via the Worcester Art Museum, 2019.76



Object 38
Igbo (Ibo) Artist, Nigeria (Awka area)
Crest Mask (agbogho mmuo)
Mid-20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba Stewart Foundation, 2010.56



Object 40
Igala Artist, Nigeria
Zoomorphic Crest Mask
Mid-20th century
Wood, pigment, fibre
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.297

CEREMONIAL LIFE



Object 41

Songye Artist, DRC
Face Mask (kifwebe kikashi)
Late 19th to early 20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen,
2022.321

Purchased (no date) from Pace
Primitive, NY, which acquired it from a
private Italian collection.



Object 43

Bwa Artist, Burkina Faso (Boni and
Dossi areas)
Plank Mask (nwantanay)
Late 19th to early 20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen,
2023.308

Purchased from Lisa Bradley, Bradley
Tribal Arts, NY, 2003. She acquired
it from a private American collection
that had acquired it from an American
who purchased it in Paris, 1950s.



Object 44

Dan or Mano Artist, Liberia/Ivory
Coast
Miniature Mask (ma)
Early to mid-20th century
Wood, black patina
Bequest of Charles B. Cohn 1984.57

This work has the distinction of being
the first piece of sub-Saharan African
art to enter the FAM collection.



Object 46

Senambele (Senufo) Artist, N Ivory
Coast, SW Burkina Faso,
SW Mali, NW Ghana
Face Mask (k'peliye'e)
Mid-20th century
Wood
Museum Purchase

Purchased from BabaMahama/Accra,
Ghana by curator Jean Borgatti, 2017



Object 42

Biombo Artist, Kete-Kuba subgroup,
DRC
Helmet Mask (cimwana)
Late 19th to early 20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen,
2023.305

Purchased in 2003 from Lisa Bradley,
Bradley Tribal Arts, NY and former
Assoc. Director of Pace Primitive,
NY, who acquired it from a private
American collection that in turn
had acquired it from an old French
collection.



Object 45

Senambele (Senufo) Artist, N Ivory
Coast, SW Burkina Faso, SW Mali, NW
Ghana
Face Mask (k'peliye'e)
Mid-20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath in
memory of their son David B. Heath,
EDU.2009.24



Object 47

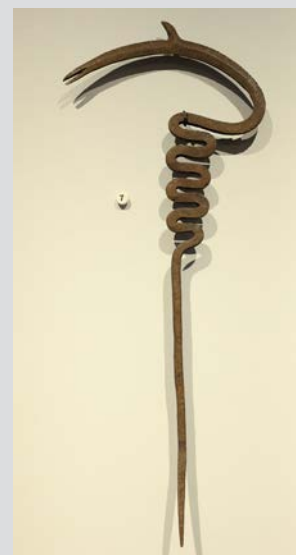
Yinka Shonibare (Nigerian, b. 1962
London), Yoruba
Hybrid Mask (k'peliye'e), 2021
Resin mask on a brass plinth
handpainted in Dutch wax design
pattern
Jamie Poppel Collection Fund,
2023.47

Purchased from Bilou Damen,
New Art Editions, The Hague –
Netherlands.



Object 48

Chamba or Verre Blacksmith, Nigeria
(Benue River Valley)
Chiefly Insignia
20th century
Iron
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.223



Object 50

Matakam Blacksmith, Nigeria and
Cameroon (Mandaras Mountains)
Throwing Knife Currency
20th century
Iron
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.258



Object 52

Ga'anda Blacksmith, Nigeria (Benue
River Valley)
Ritual Staff (wanshipta)
20th century
Iron
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.231



Object 54

Tiv Artist, Nigeria
Ceremonial Axe
Early to mid-20th century
Copper alloy, iron
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.317



Object 49

Chamba or Verre Blacksmith, Nigeria
(Benue River Valley)
Chiefly Insignia
20th century
Iron
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.224



Object 51

Ga'anda Blacksmith, Nigeria (Benue
River Valley)
Ritual Staff (wanshipta)
20th century
Iron
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.232



Object 53

Tetela Blacksmith, DRC
Ceremonial Axe (kilonda)
Mid-20th century
Wood, iron,
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2010.12



Object 55

Songye Blacksmith, DRC
Ceremonial Axe
Mid-20th century
Steel, wood, copper
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2010.10



Object 56

Ngbaka Mabo Blacksmith, DRC
Moko Ndo Throwing Knife, circa 1920
Copper, steel
Museum purchase in honor of FAM
Trustee and Treasurer Joseph Silvia,
Sinon Collection Fund, 2022.132

Purchased from B. v. d. K colonial
collection, Ixelles, Belgium via
Héritage Galerie--Virtual Traditional
Art Gallery, Belgium.



Object 58

Grassfields Blacksmith, NW Cameroon
(Bamum?)
Warrior's Sword (nyi)
20th century
Iron, wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.227



Object 60

Ngombe or Ngala Blacksmith, DRC
Ceremonial Sword (ngulu)
20th century
Steel, wood, leather
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.165



Object 62

Ingessana Blacksmith, Sudan (Blue
Nile area)
Throwing Knife (mudur)
20th century
Steel, leather, wood
Gift of Helen Donis-Keller, 2021.200

Purchased from Petit Musee (Gallery),
Montreal, 1973



Object 57

Songye Blacksmith (Nsapo clan), DRC
Ceremonial Axe and Currency (kasuyu)
Early-mid-20th century
Steel, wood, copper
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.230



Object 59

Idoma Blacksmith, Nigeria
Currency (akika)
Mid to late 20th century
Iron
Gift of Bobbi and Tim Hamill, Hamill
Gallery of Tribal Art, Boston, MA,
2016.64



Object 61

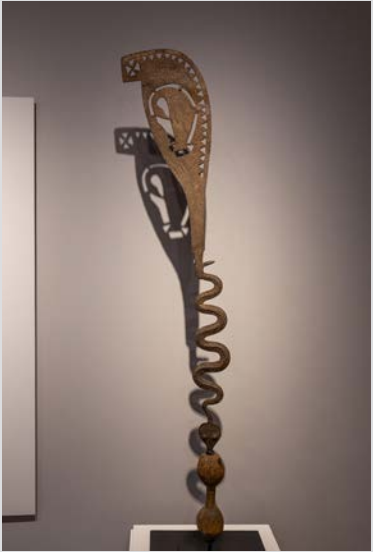
Ekonda Blacksmith, DRC
Knife Currency, eccentric (ikakalaka)
20th century
Iron, wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.156



Object 63

Ngombe or Ngala Blacksmith, DRC
Ceremonial Sword (ngulu)
20th century (before 1986)
Steel, wood, leather
Gift of Helen Donis-Keller, 2021.201

Purchased from the Hurst Gallery,
Cambridge MA, 1986



Object 64

Asante (Ashanti) Artist, Ghana
Ceremonial Sword (afenatene)
First half of the 20th century
Iron, wood
Museum purchase in honor of
outgoing President, Robert Rossi,
2010.115

Purchased from the Hurst Gallery,
Cambridge MA, in 2010



Object 66

Asante (Ashanti) Artist, Ghana
Men's Weave (kente), c. 1900-1920
Silk
Sinon Collection Fund, 2016.93

Purchased from Duncan Clarke (Adire
African Textiles), London in 2016
who was selling it for an American
collector, Mrs Barb Rich, who had
purchased it at a fair in Santa Fe
c.1996.



Object 68

Osagie Igbinosun, b. 1980? (Nigerian,
Benin City)
*Hip or Pendant Mask (uhunmwun
ekue)*, 2013
Cast copper alloy
General Collection Fund, 2014.24

Purchased from the artist in Benin
City, Nigeria, by curator Jean Borgatti,
2013



Object 70

Edo (Benin) bronze caster, Benin City,
Nigeria
Hip or Pendant Mask (uhunmwun ekue)
18th-19th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen,
2023.313

Purchased from Lucien van de Velde,
Antwerp, Belgium, in 2007



Object 65

James Friday (aka "Happiness")
(Nigerian, Okpella, b. 1980 ?)
*"Dead Father" Masquerade Costume
(Omeshe)*, 2014
Mixed Media (Primarily handwoven
cloth, women's weave from Okene,
wood, yarn, cowry shells)
Sinon Collection Fund, 2016.45

Commissioned from the artist in
Nigeria by curator Jean Borgatti in
2014



Object 67

Zaramo Artist?, Tanzania
Chief's Staff (kome?)
Mid to late 20th century
Wood
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2024.53



Object 69

Imuwahen Edabor (Nigerian, Benin
City, b. circa 1950)
Hip Mask, 2015
Cast copper alloy
Sinon Collection Fund, 2016.50

Purchased from the artist in Benin
City, Nigeria, by curator Jean Borgatti,
2015



Object 71

Lega Artist, DRC
*Bwami Elder's Title Hat (Ngandu and
Yananio grades)*
Mid-20th century
Wicker, pangolin scales, elephant hair.
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.202



Object 72

Lega Artist, DRC
Bwami Elder's Title Hat (Mukuba wa Bifungo or Nkumbu za Nsembe grades)
Mid-20th century
Wicker, cowries, elephant hair. Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.201



Object 74

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria
Crown (adé)
20th century
Seed beads, basketry, fiber
Gift of Elizabeth Van Gelder, 2019.144

Purchased from the Hamill Gallery, Roxbury MA (no date)



Object 76

Lawrence Ajanaku (1920-2014), Nigerian (Northern Edo area: Okpella people, Ogiriga community)
Odugu Masquerade from the Okakagbe ensemble, 1974
Cotton cloth, yarn, twine, seeds
Gift of Jean Borgatti in memory of Lawrence Ajanaku, 2024.78

Commissioned from the artist in Nigeria in 1974 by curator Jean Borgatti



Object 78

Makan and Mougini Dembele, Burkina Faso
Harp (kamale n'goni), 2015
Calabash, goat skin, monofilament, furniture tacks, nylon rope, metal guitar tuning pegs
Sinon Collection Fund, 2015.126

Commissioned from Malian musicians by Curator Jean Borgatti through Crocodile River Music, Worcester, 2015.



Object 73

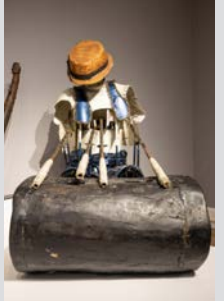
Mbum Artist, Cameroon (NW Region, Grassfields)
Royal Regalia: Hat, 2024
Crocheted cotton, porcupine quills
Gift of Bong Abi New England via Dr. Richard Ndi and Dr. Eric Mbunwe, 2024.52.2



Object 75

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria
Crown (adé)
20th century
Seed beads, basketry, leather, cotton, woven raffia
Gift of Joyce Paulson, 2023.23

Purchased from Pace African and Oceanic, NYC (formerly Pace Primitive and at time of purchase Pace Primitive and Ancient Art, 1986)



Object 77

Sokari Douglas Camp, (Nigerian, b. 1958 Buguma) Nigerian, Kalabari Ijo
Drummers, 1987
Metal, wood, paint
Margaret Simonds Sinon Collection Fund and Louise I. Doyle Collection Fund, 2011.33

Purchased from the artist



Object 79

Wé (Gueré) Artist, Liberia/Ivory Coast
Side-blown Trumpet
Early to mid 20th century
Wood, leather
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.260



Object 80

Samo, Bwa, Nuna or Bobo Artist,
Burkina Faso
Flute
Mid-20th century
Wood, hide
Gift of Helen Donis-Keller, 2021.202

Purchased from Juergen Inc. Gallery,
NYC, 1984



Object 82

Bamana Artist, Mali
Systrum
Early-mid-20th century
Wood, calabash, cloth
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.263



Object 84

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria (Ijebu area)
Ankle Rattle (saworo)
18th-19th Century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna Cooper
Heath in memory of their son David B.
Heath, EDU.2010.17



Object 86

Kongo cluster Artist, DRC
Bell (dibu)
Mid-20th century
Wood
Museum purchase, 2019.152

Purchased from Christopher England
(dealer), Brimfield Antiques Market,
September 2018.



Object 81

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria (Ijebu area)
Bell Worn as Regalia
18th-19th century
Cast copper alloy (bronze or brass)
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen,
2023.311

Purchased from art dealer Lucien van
de Velde, Antwerp, Belgium, 2002
who had acquired it in Christie's
Amsterdam sale of Tribal art, 1998.



Object 83

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria (Ijebu area)
Ankle Rattle (saworo)
18th-19th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath in
memory of their son David B. Heath,
EDU.2010.24



Object 85

Kongo Cluster Artist, DRC
Bell (dibu)
Mid-20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight and Anna Heath in
honor of Peter Timms, 2012.38



Object 87

Kongo cluster Artist, DRC
Bell (dibu)
Mid-20th century
Wood, cord
Gift of Dwight and Anna Heath in
honor of Peter Timms, 2012.36

RITUAL LIFE



Object 88

Ethiopian or Eritrean Artist, Ethiopia
(Gomu-Gofa region?) or Eritrea
Bowl Lyre (krar)
20th century
Leather, Wood
Gift of Bobbi and Tim Hamill, Hamill
Gallery of Tribal Arts, Boston, MA,
2016.63



Object 89

Kaguru Artist, Tanzania
Harp
Early-mid-20th century
Wood, calabash, cloth
Gift in memory of Evangeline G. Rossi
from Max, Jeremy, Fabienne, and Paul
Rossi, 2015.103



Object 90

Dogon artist, Mali
Post for the men's meeting house (Toguna)
Mid-20th century
Kile Wood
Gift of Tim and Bobbi Hamill in honor of
Nicholas Capasso, 2016. 54



Object 92

Mrs. Patience Iziegbe (b. 1985?)
Nigeria, Benin City area
Ritual pot for Olokun, 2015
Terracotta
African Fund, 2022.194

Commissioned from the artist in Benin
City by curator Jean Borgatti, 2015



Object 91

Mrs. Patience Iziegbe (b. 1985?)
Nigeria, Benin City area
Ritual pot for Olokun, 2015
Terracotta
African Fund, 2022.193

Purchased from the artist in Benin City
by curator Jean Borgatti, 2015



Object 93

Edo (Bini) artist, Nigeria (Benin City
area)
Medicine Pot, c. 1980
Terra cotta.
Gift of Jean Borgatti in honor of
Joseph Nevadomsky, T.1.2021

Ex collection of Joseph Nevadomsky,
Benin City, Nigeria



Object 94

Ethiopian Artist (Amhara or Tigray regions), Ethiopia
Hand Cross (mäsquäl) with painted image
Mid to late 20th century
Metal, pigment
Gift from Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.167



Object 96

Ethiopian Artist (Amhara or Tigray regions), Ethiopia
Processional Cross (qäqwami mäsquäl)
Mid to late 20th century
Metal
Gift from Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.299



Object 98

Ethiopian Artist (Amhara or Tigray regions), Ethiopia
Processional Cross (qäqwami mäsquäl)
Late 19th early 20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen, 2023.318

Purchased from Ethiopian Art dealer Milos Simovic, NY, 2001.



Object 100

Ethiopian Artist (Amhara or Tigray regions), Ethiopia
Hand Cross (mäsquäl)
17th century
Wood
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen, 2023.317

Purchased from Ethiopian Art dealer Milos Simovic, NY, 2001.



Object 95

Ethiopian Artist (Amhara or Tigray regions), Ethiopia
Processional Cross (qäqwami mäsquäl)
Mid to late 20th century
Metal
Gift from Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.285



Object 97

Ethiopian Artist (Amhara or Tigray regions), Ethiopia
Processional Cross (qäqwami mäsquäl)
Late 19th to early 20th century
Cast copper alloy with high silver content
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen, 2023.316

Purchased from Ethiopian Art dealer Milos Simovic, NY, 2001.



Object 99

Ethiopian Artist (Amhara or Tigray regions), Ethiopia
Processional Cross (qäqwami mäsquäl)
Mid to late 20th century
Metal
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.284



Object 101

Islamic cleric, Nigeria
Writing Tablet
20th century
Wood, Ink
Gift of John and Joanna McWilliam, 2025.51



Object 102

Kwale Igbo Artist, Nigeria (village of Osis).

Yam Shrine (ifejioku)

Late 19th to early 20th century

Terracotta

Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen, 2023.306

Purchased from Lucian van de Velde, Antwerp, 2002.



Object 104

In the style of the Pokia Family of Ifoko, Nigerian (Kalabari Ijo people),

Memorial Screen (duein fubara) for Chief Charles Magibo Briade, 1850-1900

Wood, cloth, pigment

Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen, 2023.307

Field Collected by Charles Davis from Sekiapu Society, Hart Biniaberi, S.I. Okpanwa in the early 1970s. Purchased from Charles Davis Gallery, 2006.



Object 106

Lobi Artist, Burkina Faso

Male Shrine Figure (bateba phuwe)

Early-mid-20th century

Wood, pigment

Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.309



Object 108

Lobi Artist, Burkina Faso

Shrine Figure associated with the spilling of blood (bateba ti bala)

Early to mid 20th century

Wood, pigment

Gift of Simon Gregory and Family, 2024.61



Object 103

Unrecorded Artist in the style of the Nok culture, Kaduna State, Nigeria

Seated Male Figure with upraised arm, 900 BCE – 300 BCE

Terra Cotta

Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen, 2023.314

Purchased from Amadou Yacine Dieng Thiam, Dakar, in 2005.



Object 105

Lobi Artist, Burkina Faso

Altar Vessel

Mid-20th century

Terra Cotta

Gift of Bobbi and Tim Hamill in honor of Peter Timms, 2012.8



Object 107

Lobi Aritst, Master of the Kelkoa style, Burkina Faso (Poni Provence)

Male Shrine Figure (bateba phuwe) with yuu buor (diviner's) hairstyle

Late 19th to early 20th century

Wood (khaberi – Afzelia Africana)

Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen, 2023.306

Purchased from Pace Primitive, NY, 2001, who acquired it from Dos and Bertie Winkel, Delft and Antwerp. Field collected in the early 1980s by Dos Winkel.



Object 109

Lobi or Gurunsi (Nuna, Winiam, Lela) Artist, Burkina Faso

C-Bracelet with jingle bells

20th century

Cast copper alloy

Gift of Deborah Stokes in honor of Max Aelwyn, 2017.53



Object 110

Lobi or Gurunsi (Nuna, Winiamama, Lela)
Artist, Burkina Faso
C-Bracelet with jingle bells
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Deborah Stokes in honor of
Max Aelwyn, 2017.54



Object 112

Lobi Artist, Burkina Faso
*Crescent Pendant with figural
decoration*
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Deborah Stokes in honor of
Max Aelwyn, 2017.45



Object 114

Lobi or Gurunsi (Nuna, Winiamama, Lela)
Artist, Burkina Faso
C-bracelet
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Deborah Stokes in honor of
Max Aelwyn, 2017.47



Object 116

Lobi or Gan Artist, Burkina Faso
Turtle Amulet
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2025.3



Object 111

Lobi or Gurunsi (Nuna, Winiamama, Lela)
Artist, Burkina Faso
Bangle Bracelet
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Deborah Stokes in honor of
Max Aelwyn, 2017.48



Object 113

Lobi or Senambele (Senufo) Artist,
Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ivory Coast
Chameleon Ring
Early to mid-20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.91



Object 115

Lobi or Gurunsi (Nuna, Winiamama, Lela)
Artist, Burkina Faso
C-Bracelet
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Deborah Stokes in honor of
Max Aelwyn, 2017.50



Object 117

Lobi or Gan Artist, Burkina Faso
Amulet—medallion with reclining figure
Late 20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2025.2



Object 118

Lobi or Gan Artist, Burkina Faso
Amulet
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2025.4



Object 120

Senambele (Senufo), Lobi, or Gan
Artist, Burkina Faso
Cuff Bracelet
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Deborah Stokes in honor of
Max Aelwyn, 2017.52



Object 122

Lobi or Gan Artist, Burkina Faso
Shrine Object (snake)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.148



Object 124

Lobi or Gan Artist, Burkina Faso
Amulet—medallion with reclining figure
Late 20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2025.2



Object 119

Senambele (Senufo), Lobi, or Gan
Artist, Burkina Faso
Cuff Bracelet
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Deborah Stokes in honor of
Max Aelwyn, 2017.51



Object 121

Lobi Artist, Burkina Faso
Cuff Bracelet
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Deborah Stokes in honor of
Max Aelwyn, 2017.46



Object 123

Lobi or Gurunsi (Nuna, Winiamana, Lela)
Artist, Burkina Faso
Cuff Bracelet
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Deborah Stokes in honor of
Max Aelwyn, 2017.49



Object 125

Lobi Artist, Burkina Faso
Diviner's Staff
Mid-20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.150



Object 126

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria
Cloaks for Royal Twin Memorial Figures
20th century
Cloth, cowry shells, beads
Sinon Collection Fund, 2015.140.1-2

Purchased from Quintessence Gallery, Lagos. 2015, by curator Jean Borgatti.



Object 128

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria
Female Twin Memorial Figure (ere ibeji)
Mid-20th century
Wood, metal, pigment, indigo
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family, EDU. 2024.1



Object 130

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria
Female Memorial Royal Twin Figure wearing cloak (ere ibeji)
20th century
Wood, plastic, fabric, cowrie shells, camwood powder, indigo
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba Stewart Foundation, 2022.201



Object 132

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria (Oyo area, Ogbomosho)
Male Twin Memorial Figure (ere ibeji)
Mid-20th century
Wood, blue pigment, camwood powder, lime, cowrie shells
General Collection Fund, 2014.23

Purchased from Abdoul Keita, Brimfield Antiques Market, 2014



Object 127

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria (Igbomina area, Ila-Omu Aran substyle)
Female Twin Memorial Figure (ere ibeji)
Mid-20th century
Wood, metal, indigo, beads
Gift of Drs. Gladys and James Strain, 2015.105



Object 129

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria (Yagba substyle)
Female Twin Memorial Figure (ere ibeji)
Mid-20th century
Wood, metal, blue pigment, indigo, cowrie shells, beads
Gift of Drs. Gladys and James Strain, 2015.106



Object 131

Ibibio Artist, Nigeria (Oron area)
Portrait of an Elder (ekpu)
Late 19th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath, 2017.184



Object 133

Katsina Artist, Northern Nigeria
Head, from a gravemarker
1300-1600 CE
Terracotta
Gift of Lillian Montalto Bohlen, 2023.319

Purchased from the Wright Gallery, NY (no date).



Object 134
Bura Artist, Niger
Grave Marker, 200-1000 CE
Terracotta
Gift of Bobbi and Tim Hamill in honor
of Peter Timms, 2012.9



Object 136
Mambila Artist, Nigeria/Cameroon
border
Shrine Figure (tadep)
Mid-20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.154



Object 138
Igala Artist, Nigeria
Female Figure
Mid-20th century
Wood, beads
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna Cooper
Heath, 2017.298



Object 140
Yoruba Artist, Nigeria (Abeokuta area)
Shrine Figures (Male and Female Pair)
Early to mid-20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of William E. Teel, 2009.49.1,
2009.49.2

Field collected by Charles Davis 1989.
Purchased from the Davis Gallery,
New Orleans, 1989.



Object 135
Ga'anda Artist, Nigeria (Benue Valley
area)
Memorial Vessel (thlef'nda)
20th century
Terracotta
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.200



Object 137
Yoruba Artist, Benin Republic (Pobé
area)
*Dance Staff for the Thunder Deity
(oshe Shango)*
20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of Bobbi and Tim Hamill, Hamill
Gallery of Tribal Art, Boston, MA,
2016.73



Object 139
Kota Artist, Gabon
*Reliquary Guardian Figure (mbulu
ngulu)*
Late 19th-early 20th century
Wood, metal
Gift of William E. Teel, 2009.38

Purchased from Boris Mirski Gallery,
Cambridge MA, 1960.



Object 141
Lega Artist, DRC
*Figurine (human) for use in the
Bwami Society*
Mid-20th century
Wood, kaolin
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.161



Object 142

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria
Small Shrine Figure (female)
20th century
Wood, pigment (Reckitt's Blue)
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2020.229



Object 144

Suku Artist, DRC
Power Figure
Mid 20th century
Wood, feathers
Gift of William E. Teel, 2009.43

Purchased from Phillips Primitive Art,
Brussels, 1978.



Object 146

Theophilus Nii Anum Sowah (b. 1968)
Ghanaian (Ga People)
Fantastic Afterlife Vehicle/FAV:
'57 Chevy, 1995
Wood, paint
Margaret Simonds Sinon Collection
Fund, 2014.58



Object 143

Yoruba Artist, Nigeria
Finial Ornament for Diviner's or
Healer's Staff (bird & leaf motifs)
20th century
Iron
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2024.62



Object 145

Kuba Artist, DRC
Friction Oracle
Mid-20th century
Wood, twine
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath in
honor of Peter Timms, 2012.37

DOMESTIC LIFE



Object 147
Tiv Artist , Nigeria
Snuff-taking Ring
Mid-20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.277



Object 149
Dogon Artist , Mali
'Sun' Pendant
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2024.66



Object 151
Senambele (Senufo) Artist , Ivory
Coast
Divination Figurine
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.78



Object 153
Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Figurative Goldweight (double gong)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.107



Object 148
Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
*Figurative Goldweight (cartridge
belt, ntoa)*
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.101



Object 150
Kirdi (Fali, Kapsiki, Matakam) Artist ,
Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad
Currency
Mid-20th century
Iron
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.281



Object 152
Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
*Figurative Goldweight (man with hand
to mouth)*
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.83



Object 154
Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
*Figurative Goldweight (man with a
bent back)*
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.104



Object 155

Bwa or Gurunsi (Nuna, Winiamana, Lela)
Artist , Burkina Faso
Figurine (bushcow)
20th Century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.93



Object 157

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Figurative Goldweight (porcupine)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift from Dwight B. and Anna C.
Heath in memory of their son David B.
Heath, Edu. 2005.39



Object 159

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Figurative Goldweight (4 birds)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2024.64



Object 161

Chamba or Mumuye Artist , Nigeria
Currency in the form of a collar
20th century
Iron
Gift from Dwight B. and Anna C.
Heath, 2017.253



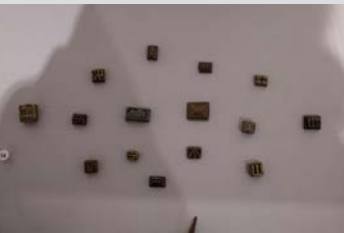
Object 156

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Figurative Goldweight (man headloading sticks)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2010.9



Object 158

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Figurative Goldweight (ram)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift from Dwight B. and Anna C.
Heath, 2017.174



Object 160

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Geometric Goldweights
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift from Dwight B. and Anna C.
Heath in memory of their son David B.
Heath, Edu.2003.1-10



Object 162

Fali or Mumuye Artist , Cameroon/
Nigeria
Currency in the form of a collar
20th century
Iron
Gift from Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath
in honor of FAM director Peter Timms,
2012.41



Object 163

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Figurative Goldweight (pair of drums)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.103



Object 165

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Figurative Goldweight (tied sticks)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.105



Object 167

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Figurative Goldweight (fan)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.100



Object 169

Senambele (Senufo) Artist , Ivory
Coast
Divination Figurine (twin motif)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.78



Object 164

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
*Figurative Goldweight (pair of
sandals)*
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.106



Object 166

Lobi, Bwa, or Senambele (Senufo)
Artist, Burkina Faso or Ivory Coast
Double Chameleon Pendant
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift from Dwight B. and Anna C.
Heath in memory of their son David B.
Heath, Edu.2005.25



Object 168

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Figurative Goldweight (peanut)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift from Dwight B. and Anna C.
Heath in memory of their son David B.
Heath, Edu.2005.26



Object 170

Kotoko Artist , Chad
Equestrian Figurine (two riders)
Late 19th to early 20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath in
memory of their son
David B. Heath, Edu.2005.43



Object 171

Kotoko Artist , Chad
Equestrian figurine
Late 19th to early 20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.316



Object 173

Ndebele Artist , South Africa
Beaded Apron (jocolo)
20th century
Leather, seed beads
Gift of Joyce Paulson, 2023.24

Field collected by Suzanne Priebatch.
Purchased from collector. (no date)



Object 175

Igbo (Ibo) Artist , Nigeria
Anklet in the form of a disk (ogba)
20th century
Copper alloy
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.181



Object 177

Mangbetu Artist , Democratic Republic
of the Congo
*Pipe Bowl (seated male, European
style cap)*
Early to mid-20th century
Wood
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2024.58



Object 172

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Gold- dust Box with lid
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.108-9



Object 174

Dan Artist , Liberia or Ivory Coast
*Feasting Spoon (wunkirmian
or wakemia)*
20th century
Wood
Gift of Bobbi & Tim Hamill, 2019.132



Object 176

Yaka Artist , Democratic Republic of
the Congo
Double-cup
20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.162



Object 178

Mangbetu Artist , Democratic Republic
of the Congo
*Pipe Bowl (seated male, French
Soldier's hat)*
Early to mid-20th century
Wood
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2024.59



Object 179

Grassfields Artist , Cameroon
Pipe Bowl
Early to mid-20th century
Cast copper alloy, very dark patina,
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2024.60



Object 181

Akan Artist , Ghana
Heddle Pulley Holder (abstract form)
20th century
Wood
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.98



Object 183

Baule Artist , Ivory Coast
Heddle Pulley Holder (head)
20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2012.32



Object 185

Senambele (Senufo) Artist , Ivory
Coast
*Heddle Pulley Holder (standing
female figure, hornbill head)*
20th century
Wood
Gift of James Plaut, 1994.57vv



Object 180

Senambele (Senufo) Artist , Ivory
Coast
Heddle Pulley Holder (mask motif)
20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.315



Object 182

Senambele (Senufo) Artist , Ivory
Coast
Heddle Pulley Holder (female figure)
20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath in
honor of Peter Timms, 2012.33



Object 184

Senambele (Senufo) Artist , Ivory
Coast
Heddle Pulley Holder (hornbill head)
20th century
Wood
Gift of James Plaut, 1994.56



Object 186

Senambele (Senufo) Artist , Ivory
Coast
Heddle Pulley Holder (hornbill head)
20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.313



Object 187

Fulani weaver (Malleebe sub-group),
Niger (Zarma area)
Wedding Blanket (men's weave)
Before 1973
Machine spun cotton thread, aniline
dyes
Gift of Jean Borgatti, 2022.163
Purchased in Niamey, Niger, c. 1974



Object 189

Carol Beckwith (American, b. 1945) and
Angela Fisher (Australian, b. 1947)
Dinka Girls – Ready for Marriage, 1978
Archival C-print
Sinon Collection Fund, 2018.38

Purchased from the artists, 2018



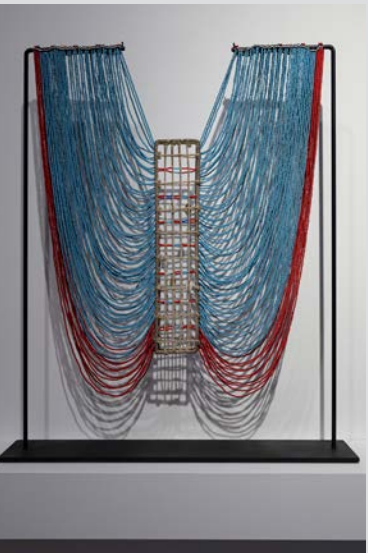
Object 191

Fulani Artist , Mali or Niger
Necklace
Mid-20th century
Faux Amber (phenolic resin), cotton
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.192



Object 193

Kirdi (Fali, Kapsiki, Matakam) Artist ,
Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad
Modesty Apron (Cache-Sexe)
Late 20th century
Plastic, glass beads, twine, cowry
shells.
Gift of Elizabeth Van Gelder, 2024.76



Object 188

Dinka Artist , Sudan/South Sudan
Woman's Vest
Mid-20th century
Beads, fibre
Sinon Collection Fund, 2018.19

Purchased from the Hamill Gallery,
2018



Object 190

Fulani Artist , Mali or Niger
Necklace
Mid-20th century
Faux Amber (phenolic resin), cotton
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.270



Object 192

Fulani Artist , Mali or Niger
Necklace
Mid-20th century
Faux Amber (phenolic resin), cotton
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.271



Object 194

Maasai Artist , Kenya
Bag (olbene)
20th century
Leather, plastic beads, buttons, fibre
twine
Gift of Simon Gregory and Family,
2024.68



Object 195

Bwa, Nunuma, Winiam, or Nuna
Artist , Burkina Faso
Ring (bushcow mask motif)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.93



Object 197

Dogon Artist , Mali
Ring (concentric circles motif)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.95



Object 199

Dogon Artist , Mali
Ring (equestrian motif)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.92



Object 201

Asante (Ashanti) or other Akan Artist ,
Ghana
Comb
20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.255



Object 196

Dogon Artist , Mali
Ring (twin cone motif)
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.94



Object 198

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Pendant Maskette
20th century
Cast copper alloy
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2013.102



Object 200

Kirdi (Fali, Kapsiki, Matakam) Artist,
Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad
Modesty Apron
Late 20th century
Plastic and glass beads, twine, cowry
shells, colonial era coins Gift of Simon
Gregory and Family



Object 202

Akan Artist , Ghana or Ivory Coast
Comb
20th century
Wood
Gift of the Geneviève McMillan-Reba
Stewart Foundation, 2010.40



Object 203

Hany Abdel-Kader (Egyptian, b. 1970)
Tent Appliqué (khayamiya)
21st century, before 2024
Cotton, canvas backing
African Aquisition Fund, 2024.3

Purchased from the artist in Cairo by
curator Jean Borgatti, 2024



Object 205

Rendille Artist , Kenya
Headrest
20th century
Wood
The Clapp Family Collection Fund,
2011.27

Ex collection Doran Ross, former
director of the Fowler at UCLA



Object 207

Qua Artist , Nigeria (Calabar area)
Headrest, 500-1000 CE
Terra Cotta
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2012.22



Object 209

Karamajong, Turkana, or Pokot Artist ,
Uganda, Kenya, Sudan
Headrest
20th century
Wood, metal
The Clapp Family Collection Fund,
2011.26

Ex collection Doran Ross, former
director of the Fowler at UCLA



Object 204

Turkana Artist , Kenya
Headrest
20th century
Wood, twine
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.177



Object 206

Fuga Artist , Ethiopia
Headrest
20th century
Wood, beads
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.241



Object 208

Me'en, Mursi, or Karamajong Artist ,
Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya
Headrest
20th century
Wood
Gift of Abdoul Keita, 2014.36



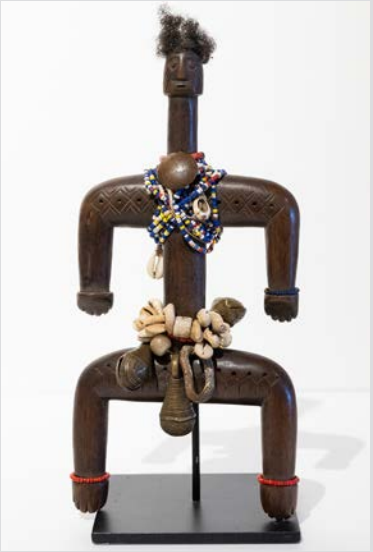
Object 210

Mano or Dan Artist , Liberia
Gameboard
20th century
Wood
Gift of Bobbi and Tim Hamill, Hamill
Gallery of Tribal Art, Boston, MA
2016.65



Object 210

Turkana Artist , Kenya, Somalia
Doll (ngide)
Early-mid 20th century
Wood, beads
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath in
memory of their son David B. Heath,
2017.244



Object 213

Namchi Artist , Cameroon
Doll
Mid-20th century
Wood, beads,
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.236



Object 215

Asante (Ashanti) Artist , Ghana
Doll (akua'ba)
Early to mid-20th century
Wood, beads
Gift of William E. Teel, 2009.55
Field collected by Charles Davis, 1991.
Purchased from the Davis Gallery,
New Orleans, 1992.



Object 212

Mossi Artist , Burkina Faso
Doll
Mid-20th century
Wood
Gift of William E. Teel, 2009.44

Purchased from Alain Schofel, Paris,
1970.



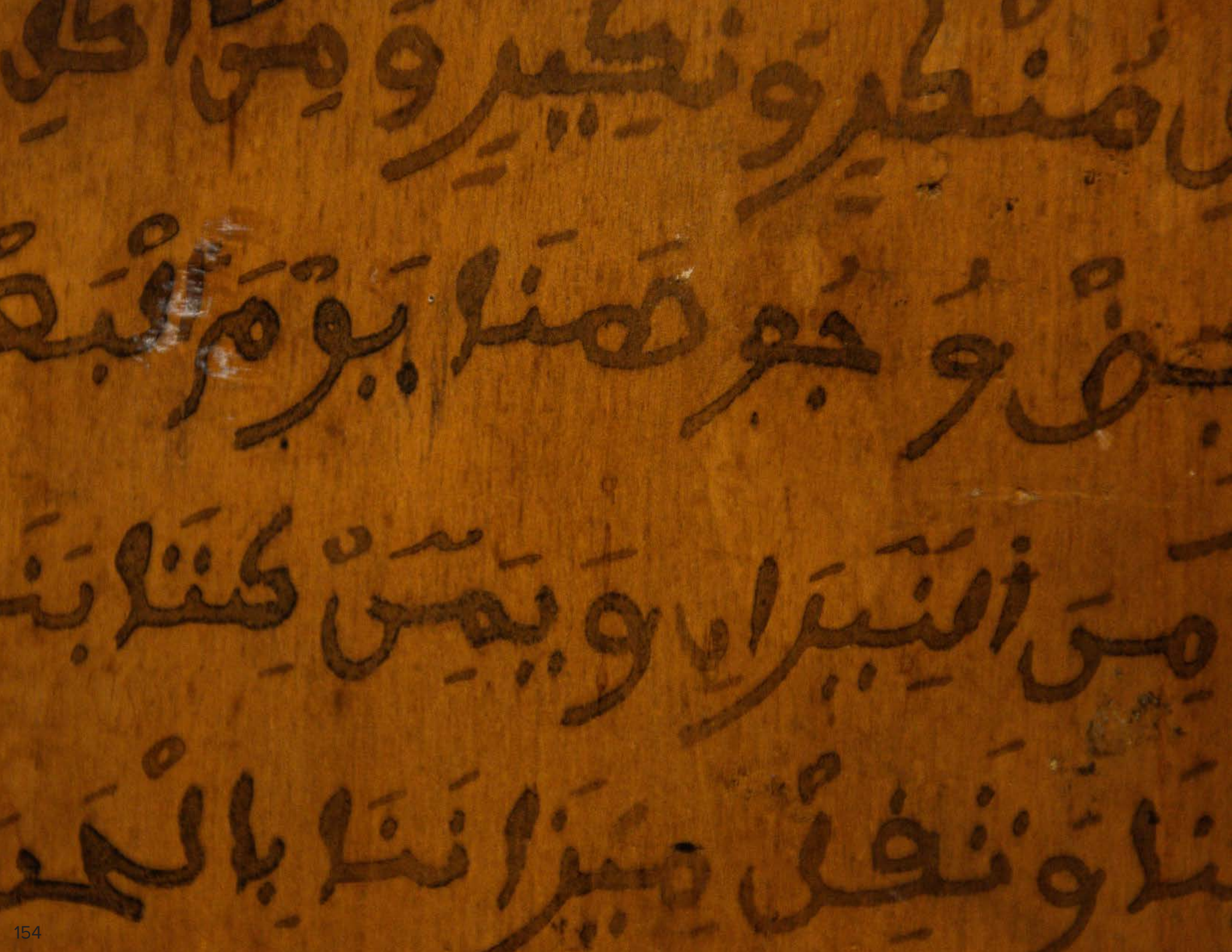
Object 214

Zaramo Artist , Tanzania
Doll (mwana hiti)
20th century
Wood
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2005.33



Object 216

Yoruba Artist , Nigeria
Doll (omolangidi)
20th century
Wood, pigment
Gift of Dwight B. and Anna C. Heath,
2017.228



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

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Bernhard Gardi, Woven Beauty: The Art of West African Textiles. Museum der Kulturen, Basel, 2009.

Frederick John Lamp. See the Music, Hear the Dance: Rethinking African Art at The Baltimore Museum of Art. Munich: Prestel, 2004

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Allen F. Roberts et al. Eds. Striking Iron: The Art of African Blacksmiths. Los Angeles: The Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2019

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Monica Visona et al., A History of Art in Africa. New York: Prentice Hall, 2007



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Object 144

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Sarah Harper: *Cover image, pages 1-2, 6-7, 9, 11, 14-18, 20, 26-37, 39, 40-58, 60, 63-85, 87-88, 90-91, 154, 156-158, all checklist images, and back cover image.*

Livv Welch: *Pages 4, 12-13, 19, 21-25, 38, 46/47, 59, 76, 86, 92, 95-97.*

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Front Cover Object 74 / Back Cover Object 140



Object 77



We would like to dedicate this catalog to Dr. Jean Borgatti for her dedication to FAM and this collection. It was a privilege to work with her to create this exhibition.

– Emily Mazzola and Sarah Harper



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A CELEBRATION OF
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