



35th Annual Conference
Sheraton Colony Square, Atlanta, Georgia, April 26-May 1

**Workshop: They Never Taught This in Library School:
African Art Bibliography**

PART 3

Slide: 2

Gaskin, L.J.P. *A Bibliography of African Art*. (1965) The first and still the most extensive bibliography of African art, and as Janet mentioned a valuable resource for publications prior to 1965. The bulk of the bibliography is arranged by region and country, and sub-arranged by a set list of topics. Includes a valuable section on "Catalogues and guides to museums, exhibitions and collections" arranged by host country. Indexed by author, geographical and ethnic terms, and subject.

Western, Dominique Coulet. *Bibliography of the Arts of Africa*. (1975) 111 p. Published by the African Studies Association; the would-be heir to Gaskin; organized by country and ethnic group; indexed by author only; lightly annotated.

Stanley, Janet. *African Art: A Bibliographic Guide*. (1985) 55 p. "Intended to be a critical 'best books' list ... As such it is highly selective, and the very inclusion of a title in this guide constitutes a recommendation," although sometimes a qualified one. Most of the bibliography is regional, but individual sections on 'crafts and utilitarian arts', architecture, rock and stone art, contemporary and tourist art, and the art market. Indexed by author.

Stanley, Janet. *The Arts of Africa: An Annotated Bibliography*. (1989- ; last issued: 1992) Annual bibliography of publications of "substance and significance" as well as "originality and uniqueness". Arranged by broad general topics and by country/geographic regions. Indexed by author and by subject (here including geography and ethnic group, both as primary and secondary index terms).

As Janet wrote to me the other day, "Arts in Africa: an Annotated Bibliography ceased publication back in 2000 when the ASA Press went belly up. There were six volumes published. Volume 7, 1993 was ready to go. I might add that I have extra copies of volumes 1-5. If anyone wants them, they are free.

"We decided that instead of looking for a new publisher we would re-focus our energy in continuing the indexing and annotating, but enter all the records directly into OCLC/WorldCat and into our online catalog, SIRIS ... and that is what we are doing since then."

The de-facto bibliography to African art literature. Includes analytic entries for edited papers and journal articles, occasionally even individual images in journals and exhibition catalogs.

Bibliographies in general monographic works not usually workable as stand alone bibliography. In the case of scholarly monographs they are too detailed; in the case of exhibition catalogs, too sketchy.

Slide: 3

Of the regional bibliographies, only two are worth singling out:

Burt, Eugene C. *An Annotated Bibliography of the Visual Arts of East Africa*. (1980)

Biebuyck, Daniel P. *The Arts of Central Africa: An Annotated Bibliography*. (1987)

Slide: 4

"Who's Who in African Art" / Guy van Rijn: "...Sprang forth from of the idea to make a contribution towards a more cohesive and annotated provenance for those of you who are interested in the field of African sculpture. Circa 15,000 names are listed. These names have been generated from 50 years of auction catalogues, and from approximately two thousand books and exhibition catalogues which included the names of authors/scholars/travelers/ explorers/field collectors/collectors. It is NOT an address list, but is meant to be used as a reference guide for background information." A shade under 500 pages of computer output text. "Quirky" says it best.

Slide: 5

Africa-focused directories are few and far between. One can scarcely count on a valuable publication or web site persisting past its first issue or web launch.

[AFRICOM](#), the International Council of African Museums, has a active (read "live") web site that features a bulletin board of activities, copies of its annual newsletter, and an online directory of African museums. The directory only lists the museums; no other information is provided. As recently as 2003 it issued a "Directory of Museum Professionals in Africa," which has proved quite valuable in a pinch for some of the smaller museums on the continent. The online link to the directory on the web site is dead, however.

In 1996 the French government underwrote the second edition of a directory entitled "*L'art africain contemporain: guide*." It is divided into three sections: Artists, Foreign Museums, and "Well Informed Contacts" – which turns out to me museum curators, scholars, gallery owners and critics. It's been eleven years and we haven't see a third edition.

Slide: 6

[Africa Research Central](#) has as its goal to centralize and constantly update information about institutions with African primary source collections so as to facilitate international research in African Studies -- be they records, manuscripts, personal papers, photographs, film, or artifacts. The core of the

site is the Repositories section with its searchable database of African archives, libraries and museums with primary source collections. Although far from comprehensive, links to the web sites of North American and European repositories are also provided.

Slide: 7

Fundamentally there aren't any basic African art reference tools. African art is subsumed under several other rubrics, whether by geography or topic.

Africana. The essay on "Art and Architecture, African," written by Suzanne Blier, is telegraphic in the extreme, but there are essays on individual art practice throughout.

African folklore: an encyclopedia. Philip M. Peek, Kwesi Yankah, eds. (2004) Don't let the retrograde-sounding title fool you. "Folklore," the introduction tells us, "is those esoteric traditions (oral, customary, or material) expressed in the form of artistic communication used as operational culture by a group within the larger society (primarily to provide group identity and homogeneity)." (Introd.) This is the finest and most authoritative source for brief articles on African art in context.

As for topical reference tools on African art, a special mention should be made here of volume three of the *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture*. The articles are scholarly and informative.

Slide: 8

As for the standard teaching texts, there really aren't any standard titles. There are frequently cited titles, and I've listed the majority above. Titles by William Fagg, while the scholarship might be dated, often provide easy-to-digest surveys of the arts covered. African material culture is typical of an edited work with a highly specialized set of essays any one of which might be assigned reading. The Pamela McClusky title was actually published in conjunction with an exhibition held at Seattle Art Museum and Philadelphia Museum of Art; I understand it is frequently used as the required text in undergraduate classes.

To amplify on a mention made in Janet Stanley's paper, I too heard that ACASA hopes to put up on the web a compilation of syllabi from its members, perhaps as soon as this summer. If it comes off it should prove a terrific opportunity to survey the landscape of currently used titles.

Slide: 9

There are a small number of periodicals specifically targeted toward African art. They vary in degrees of scholarship, based largely on their core audiences.

African arts (1967-present; JSTOR: 1967-2001, 5 yr moving wall); the flagship publication on African arts, undoubtedly already in your collections. It was just added to JSTOR in the last year, which for those of you with access to it will be an incredible boon and a relief on your beleaguered print version.

Arts d'Afrique noire (1972-2004; Art index: n.29(1979)-no.132(2004)), was until it folded in 2004 the European equivalent of African arts, with a slant more toward the collecting community than the scholarly. Nevertheless provided insightful essays from reputable author-dealers.

The late, lamented *Revue noire* (1991-1999, 34 nos. in 33; Art index: no.27(1997/98)-33/34(1999)), provided a lavishly illustrated and comprehensive coverage of contemporary African art, both on the continent (including North Africa) and the Diaspora, with special numbers on the arts of given countries and topics (Fashion, art and AIDS). What a loss!

Nka (1994-present; Art index: no. 19 (summer 2004)-present) is trying to fill the gap left by *Revue noire*. It seems to have returned to a regular publishing schedule after a brief period of infrequency. It's edgier than *Revue noire* and focused more on the United States and other Diaspora artists.

Two other titles, perhaps a little more obscure but still worth mentioning, are *Quaderni poro* (1976-1995); and *Rock Art Research* (no.22(2005)-23(2006) Art index: no.22(2005)-23(2006)).

Slide: 10

There are a number of titles that concentrate on non-Western arts formerly known as 'primitive' whose coverage of African art merits their inclusion here.

Arts & Cultures (197?-present) is the latest manifestation of a continuous publishing program out the Musee Barbier-Mueller in Geneva, which previously included *Connaissance des arts tribaux* / (later the *Bulletin of the Musee Barbier-Mueller*), and *Art tribal*. While it concentrates on the Barbier-Mueller collection, the articles nevertheless address art styles and cultures across the museum's collecting spectrum, including Africa, with high quality scholarly analyses.

Res (1981-present; Art index: no.25(1994)-49/50(2006)); is a "journal of anthropology and comparative aesthetics dedicated to the study of the object, in particular cult and belief objects and objects of art." I would expect this is already on your serial title lists.

World of Tribal Arts / Tribal (1994-date; Art Index: v.4,no.3(1997)-7, no.3(2002); v.7, no.4(2002)-11,no.2(2006)). Again, more geared toward the collecting community.

Journal of Material Culture (1994-date) "explores the relationship between artefacts and social relations. It draws on a range of disciplines including anthropology, archaeology, design studies, history, human geography and museology." The most scholarly (and the least lavishly illustrated) of these examples, this title has far more of a focus on the issues that surround the objects rather than addressing the objects themselves.

Slide: 11

There are a number of titles on Africa generally speaking which occasionally publish articles with an art or material culture focus. Large academic libraries will undoubtedly already collect these to support regional studies or relevant disciplinary programs such as history or anthropology. They are probably too non-art focused for most museum libraries without a strong collection of African art.

Africa (JSTOR 1928-2003, 3 yr moving wall; Project Muse 2006-);

African Studies Review & African Studies Review (previous title) (JSTOR: 1958-2003, 3 yr moving wall; Project Muse 2005);

History in Africa (JSTOR: 1974-2003, 3 yr moving wall; Project Muse 2005-);

Journal of African cultural studies (JSTOR: 1988-2003, 3 yr moving wall), "an international journal providing a forum for perceptions of African culture from inside and outside Africa," evolved from the journal *African languages and cultures*, with a revised focus on "African culture including African literatures both oral and written, performance arts, visual arts, music, the role of the media, the relationship between culture and power," among other stated topics.

Journal of African History (1960-2001, 5 yr moving wall).

Slide: 12

Universities with traditionally strong African studies programs are a good place to look for compiled lists of internet resources (most freely available). Most are geared more toward general topics -- maps, historical information, language and information about African peoples and countries, current events, etc. -- in addition to art.

[African Studies Internet Resources](#), maintained by Columbia University: the official African Studies index for the WWW Virtual Library. It includes "electronic African art exhibits, plus other texts, images, and sound files reflecting upon Africa's history and contemporary cultures;" organized by topic, region; e-journals & newspapers, libraries, book dealers, publishers, bibliographies, African studies programs; and it is annotated.

Slide: 13

The [African Studies Center](#), maintained by the University of Pennsylvania. It is also geared toward the more general study of Africa, but also includes art and architecture among its topics; includes images and web links (organized by topic); country pages; and it is also annotated.

Slide: 14

As Janet Stanley noted in her paper, Stanford's [Africa South of the Sahara](#) site is the most comprehensive collection of links and has a large number devoted to art related sites. It can be browsed by country or topic (African

art on the Internet, South African art, photographs, film, culture/society) or searched; and the links are annotated.

Slide: 15

[Art and Life in Africa Online](#), maintained by the University of Iowa. It contains information about African art and culture, some adapted from the Art and Life in Africa CD-ROM ("key moments in life" & "abundance"); essays, images, countries/people resources; the Stanley collection of African art database; streaming video; photographs of Burkina Faso (1970's-2000's); and brief annotations.

Slide: 16

[African Art on the Web](#), maintained by the Warren M. Robbins Library, National Museum of African Art. This site is focused on art and includes links to information about artists, museums with African collections, some African museums, online exhibitions, and galleries. It is not annotated, but it is the most concise.

Slide: 18

In closing I would be remiss if I didn't at least toot our own horn just a little bit. The Goldwater Library has for several years hosted a [news and information blog](#) showcasing African as well as Native and Precolumbian American, and Pacific arts and culture. The posts, in fact, range even farther a field, to encompass bibliography, libraries and museums, intellectual property, and copyright. It's not just about us – even though you are looking at two of the three principal contributors. We are always looking for new content, and we encourage our 'readers' to comment and make suggestions for additional content.

Slide: 19

We will be here throughout the conference. If you have any questions or comments after the conference, please get in touch with us at the museum.

Thank you.