African art’s reflection in the eye of the beholder

The ‘evolution’ of Western reception to African art
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The ‘evolution’ of Western reception to African art:

• First contacts: explorers, colonials, missionaries, ethnographers, and tourists?
“De Stadt Benin.” In Olfert Dapper's *Beschreibung von Afrika*. (Amsterdam, 1670 [1671?])
“De Stadt Benin.” In Olfert Dapper's *Beschreibung von Afrika*. (Amsterdam, 1670 [1671?])
Pende chief with beaded headdress, DRC, May 1970
Eliot Elisofon Field Photographs
Internet Mission Photography Archive

The Internet Mission Photography Archive offers historical images from Protestant and Catholic missionary centers in Europe and the United States. The photographs span the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century, reflecting missionary activities and experiences in locations such as Papua New Guinea, and the Caribbean. They document the influence of missions, visible in mission buildings, as well as the cultural impact of both indigenous and Western technology and fashion, and the emergence of indigenous views of landscapes, cities, and towns.

Search Tips

Enter Search Terms Below:

Words or Phrase: 
Contributor: All
Country: All

Search Reset Query Values
“Man from Bali dressed as a Leladancer,” Wilhelm Zürcher, ca. 1940
Tanzania, 1939
Afrique du Sud, 1923
“Jakhalave. Portrait of a woman dressed in a kanga and turban with her feet wide apart, arms akimbo, looking provocatively toward the camera.” Zanzibar, 1890
Four Obu figures, Abiriba
Yoruba sculptor Lamidi Fakeye carving an equestrian figure. Ibadan, Nigeria. 1971.
"Aje," the god of money, is worshipped by those who think they may become rich thereby, and people going to market will often put down some offering of money or food before the idol in hope of obtaining a blessing. This god is especially worshipped on the Niger.

Africa. Tobias Conrad Lotter, ca. 1760
Regna Congo et Angola, 1670

What we call ‘the world’...is not given as self-evident from the outset. It is apprehended...in an ongoing ‘crisis’ of spatial consciousness.

- E. Cassirer

The Afrterra Foundation mission centers on a long-term educational commitment to:
- Provide access to cartographic material
- Create a visual connection to heritage
- Transport through time and space
- Internalize a distant place
- Touch and feel a foundation
- Draw a line of continuity
- Know the geography of the land
- Glue homage to the ancestors of the Diaspora.
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The ‘evolution’ of Western reception to African art:

• Fashioning the canon of African art: collectors, dealers, art galleries and the Early Modern artist
Perhaps more so than in any other field in the world of art, collectors have dominated the formation of taste and construction of aesthetic value in the study and exhibition of African art.

Christopher B Steiner, "The Taste of Angels in the Art of Darkness: Fashioning the Canon of African Art," in Art History and Its Institutions.
**Negerplastik.** Carl Einstein. (1915) 26 p., 111 leaves of plates.


**Primitive Negro Sculpture.** Paul Guillaume and Thomas Munro. (1926) 134 p.


If the artist isn’t anonymous, the art isn’t primitive.

Anonymous antiquarian quoted in *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*
Plateau marketplace, Abidjan. (*African art in transit* (1994), fig. 4)
Picasso's own breakthroughs, his powerful redefinition of the whole purpose of painting, like a great political revolution, raised those dispossessed African objects into the regions of high art from their erstwhile captivity in the precincts of ethnographic study.

Arthur J. Danto, "Artifact and art," in *Art/Artifact*
Fang mask
Collections de Pierre et Claude Vérité
Hôtel Drouot, Paris
June 17-18, 2006
$7.5 million
A rare Bembe mask

African, Oceanic, and Pre-Columbian Art

Sotheby’s New York

May 9, 2006

est. $25,000—$35,000

sold $84,000 USD
Robertson African Arts at the 2006 New York Tribal & Textile arts show
African Art Museum
On-line reference to the artistic styles of Africa

Curated by Dr. Ilya Raskin and Yuri Raskin

Welcome to the collection of African tribal art featuring over 1,200 artifacts from 100 ethnic groups. The collection includes wooden and bronze statues, masks, religious, ritual and domestic objects, furniture and other cultural objects. Each item is accompanied by a brief history of each ethnic group.

To Make a Purchase, Visit our Gigantic Store

or

Start your museum tour by clicking on the ethnic group name below:

Ababua | Ababwa | Acha | Adouna | Adouna | Aduma | Adyo | Aguna | Ake | Akota | Akye | Aluena | Ama | Anekana | Anzika | Apono | Asalampasu | Asante | Ashante | Ashanti | Atemne | Atie | Atye | Awemba | Ayemba

Baboa | Babua | Babuyi | Babwa | Bacouba | Badjo | Badouna | Bafo | Baga | Bagga | Bagona | Bagya | Bafo | Bakobo | Bakouba | Bakuba | Bakusu | Bakwele | Balega

Balumbo | Balwalwa | Bamiwa | Bamangani | Bambara | Bambole | Bamileke | Bamouni | Bamoune | Banu | Bankuru | Banwanwezi | Bapende | Baptu | Basa | Basalampasu | Batsilele | Bashibiona

Bashilele | Bashilele | Bashilele | Basonge | Basongye | Basa | Bassonge | Basuku | Basukuma | Basukumal | Basukumal | Basukuma | Basukumal | Basukumal | Basukumal | Basukumal | Basukumal | Basukumal | Basukumal | Basukumal

Batsilele | Baoule | Baule | Bavili | Bawongo | Bawoyo | Bawule | Bayaka | Bayembe | Bayombe | Baz | Benia | Beni | Benu | Bepo | Bepo | Bepo | Bepo | Bepo | Bepo

DUMA (ADOUMA, ADUMA, BADOUMA)
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The ‘evolution’ of Western reception to African art:

• The museum – academe complex
There is no single right way for us to exhibit the head from Abomey or any African object—only ways that are more or less illuminating, beautiful, instructive, arbitrary; faithful to this or that school of thought. We exhibit them for our own purposes in institutions that are deeply embedded in our own culture. There is nothing strange or wrong about that. It is simply a given.

Brooklyn Museum

Digital Collections: African Art Exhibition of 1923

Browse Exhibition Catalogue: Click thumbnail to view full-size page

Page 1: Catalogue Cover
Page 2: Title Page
Page 3
Page 4

Item No. 412
Installation photograph
Image From: Brooklyn Museum

Abstract: *Primitive Negro Art* exhibition. Objects mounted on wall, on top of cabinet and blanket draped over edge of cabinet.

Source: Image Archive: Online Archival Collections
the art of Africa is already an art of the past.

North American Museums

Exclusively at:
Museum for African Art
African Art Museum of the S.M.A. Fathers
National Museum of African Art

In the context of other collections:
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Art Institute of Chicago
Cleveland Art Museum
Elvejhem Museum of Art
Fowler Museum at UCLA
High Museum of Art
Houston Museum of Fine Arts
Saint Louis Art Museum
Seattle Art Museum

Natural history museums:
American Museum of Natural History
Field Museum of Natural History
National Museum of Natural History

Houston Museum of Fine Arts
Akan, Ram´s Head Pendant
19th-20th century
97.880
Europe

AUSTRIA
Museum für Völkerkunde (Vienna)

BELGIUM
Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale

FRANCE
Musée Dapper
Musée du quai Branly

GERMANY:
Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin-Dahlem
Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin)
Linden-Museum Stuttgart
Museen der Weltkulturen (Frankfurt/Main)
Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg
Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum (Köln)
Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde München

NETHERLANDS:
Afrika Museum (Berg-en-Dal)
Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (Leiden)
Tropenmuseum (Amsterdam)

SWITZERLAND:
Musée Barbier-Mueller (Geneva)
Musée d'ethnographie (Geneva)
Musée d'ethnographie (Neuchâtel)
Museum der Kulturen (Basel)
Museum Rietberg (Zürich)
Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich

UNITED KINGDOM:
Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford)
Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts
American Museum of Natural History

Harp, Azande
Wood, hide, plant fiber cord
35.1 in. (90 cm)
Lang, coll. Niangara, 1913
AMNH 90.1/3965

Museum of African Art

Harp (kundi)
Zande peoples
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Early 20th century
Wood, hide, metal
H x W: 90.2 x 22.9 cm (35 1/2 x 9 in.)
Museum purchase 85-17-1
National Museum of African Art
Edo peoples
Nigeria
Mid 16th-17th century
Copper alloy
82-5-3

Metropolitan Museum of Art
Plaque: Warrior Chief, Warriors and Attendants, 16th–17th century
Nigeria; Edo, Court of Benin
1990.332

Guggenheim Museum
Africa: the Art of a Continent exhibition
Five Figure Plaque, Benin, 17th century, Bronze
African Voices

“People, like words, are enduring.” - Jomo Kenyatta, First President of Kenya, 1966

Africa’s history and peoples have profoundly influenced global culture and thought—and continue to do so today. America’s own past and present are strongly linked to Africa.

In this website explore objects that attest to Africa’s striking diversity and long history. Listen as Africans talk about their lives and cultures. Discover your connections to Africa.
Eastern Africa, 1800–1900 A.D.

Encompasses present-day Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, northern Zambia, northern Malawi, and northern Mozambique.

Timeline of Art History

Headrest, 18th–20th century
Somalia, Somali people
Wd. H. 6 1/2 in. (16.5 cm)
The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979 (1979.208.31)
Regional / national surveys

*The arts of Ghana.* Doran H. Ross and Herbert M. Cole. (1977)


Surveys of specific ethnic groups


*Art of the Baga: a drama of cultural reinvention.* Frederick Lamp. (1996)

Art by medium or process

African textiles and decorative arts. (1972)

African furniture and household objects. (1980)

Beauté fatale: armes d’Afrique centrale. (1992)


Art by theme

*African art in the cycle of life.* (1987)


*Icons: ideals and power in the art of Africa.* (1989)

Roy Sieber and Roslyn Walker


Margaret Thompson Drewal and Robert Farris Thompson

Flash of the spirit. (1983)
Patrick McNaughton

Mande blacksmiths: knowledge, power and art in West Africa. (1988)

Zoe Struther

Inventing masks: agency and history in the art of the Central Pende. (1998)
Christraud Geary

Surviving the lens: photographic studies of South and East African people, 1870-1920 (2001)

Susan Vogel


Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen F. Roberts

Jules Benetta-Rosette
The message of tourist art (1984)

Sidney Littlefield Kasfir
African art and the colonial encounter (2007)

Christopher Steiner
http://www.christophersteiner.com/
African art in transit (1994)

Unpacking culture (1999) (with Ruth Steiner)

Welcome to ACASA

Arts Council of the African Studies Association (ACASA)

The Arts Council of the African Studies Association (ACASA) was established in 1982 as an independent non-profit professional association affiliated with the African Studies Association (ASA) in the United States. The organization exists to facilitate communication among scholars, teachers, artists, museum specialists and all others interested in the arts of Africa and the African Diaspora. Its goals are to promote greater understanding of African material and expressive culture in all its many forms, and to encourage contact and collaboration with African and Diaspora artists and scholars.

As an ASA-sponsored association, ACASA recommends panels for inclusion in the ASA annual meeting program on such wide-ranging topics as the interpretation of meanings in African art, agency and performance, commission and aesthetics, the ethics of field collecting and research, the illicit trade in antiquities, museum exhibition strategies, the use of archival sources, as well as issues concerning various historical and contemporary artists and artistic traditions.

ACASA's annual business meeting is held during the ASA meeting each fall. ACASA is also an affiliated society of the College Art Association, and meets on an ad hoc basis at its annual conference. Kate Etra is current President of ACASA.
Welcome to H-AfrArts

Welcome to H-AfrArts, Expressive Cultures of Africa H-AfrArts is composed of two parts, a discussion list and a web site co-sponsored by Humanities and Social Sciences Online (H-Net) and the Arts Council of the African Studies Association (ACASA). Its content focuses on the expressive cultures of Africa and the African Diaspora. H-AfrArts, a refereed, multi- and inter-disciplinary discussion.

Recent Messages
Posted on H-AfrArts
- ARH: Kofi Bekoe: genocide monument documentary Rhoda Woests <R.Woests@fsw.vu.nl>
- The term “Kwanga” REPLY Frederick Lamp <frederick.lamp@yale.edu>
- QUERY: the term “Kwanga” "Doris, David" <dtorisch@umd.edu>
- ADD1 Maria-Theresa Brisco-Cheek<br> <legaroo@yahoo.com>
- CPF: Toward an Africa Without Borders’ 3rd Intl Toward an Africa Without Borders
- QUERY) Roommates Vienna Conference on Race: blacknwhite@col.com
Welcome to ACASA

Conference Department at the University of Florida

ARTS COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

14th Triennial Symposium on AFRICAN ART
March 28 - April 1, 2007 Gainesville, Florida

Conference Announcement:

The 14th Triennial Symposium on African Art will be hosted by the University of Florida’s College of Fine Arts, School of Art and Art History, Center for African Studies, and the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art. Gainesville is the site for the conference, and the theme will be Global Africa. Robin Poyntor and Rebecca Nagy are the Co-Chairs of the conference, and Victoria Rovine is the Program Chair. Susan Cooksey and Carol Thompson have planned Museum Day. Bonnie Bernau, Director of Education at the Harn, and Agnes Leslie, Outreach Director for the Center for African Studies, have organized Outreach Day.

Please remember that you must be a member of ACASA in order to participate in the Triennial. We encourage you to renew your membership now if it has lapsed. Annual membership is based on the calendar year.
The chiwara / chi wara / ci wara / tyi wara problem
Zimbabwe: East or South?

Cameroon: West or Central?

Angola: Central or South?

Sudan: North, East, or Central?

Zimbabwe: East or South?

The permutations are endless.
Wood-carving

Here are entered works of carved, cut, or gouged wood having both a decorative and functional purpose. Art works made by carving or assembling components of wood and created primarily for their aesthetic value are entered under |a Wood sculpture.
Ethnonymy

• Murdock, G.P. *Africa: Its Peoples and Their Culture History.* (1959)

• Biebuyck, Daniel P. *African ethnonyms: index to art-producing peoples of Africa.* (1996)

Languages

Ethnologue: Languages of the World

An encyclopedic reference work cataloging all of the world's 6,912 known living languages

- Overview
- Browse
  - Country index with maps
  - Language names
  - Language codes
    - See also: Three-letter codes for identifying languages
  - Language families
- Feedback and FAQs
- Preview the print version

Contact the Ethnologue Editor

This web edition of the Ethnologue contains all of the content of the print edition and may be cited as:

URL: http://www.ethnologue.com/
ITEM LEVEL ACCESS TO AFRICAN IMAGES: PROBLEMS AND SOURCES