



# REFLECTIONS: AFRICAN ART IS...

Teachers' Guide

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**Public and Educational Programming at Museum for African Art are made possible by support from:**

- City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs
- The Hearst Foundation, Inc.
- The Mitsui USA Foundation
- The New York Times Company Foundation, Inc.
- May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, Inc.
- Washington Mutual



## Welcome and Introduction to Educators

Dear Educator:

The Museum for African Art is proud to offer you this Teachers' Guide for the exhibition **Reflections: African Art Is...** which is on view from August 2005 through December 2005. The exhibition features varied approaches in exhibiting and viewing African art. *Reflections* presents African Art in a way that provides new insight into various works, while revisiting past themes presented by the Museum.

This guide is divided into two sections that are relevant to the themes of the exhibition. The first section gives a brief introduction to Africa and what is considered "traditional" African art and the second highlights ideas and objects found in the different subject areas of the exhibit. Throughout this guide you will find discussion questions and activities that may be infused with your curriculum as a complement to your museum visit.

This guide encourages interdisciplinary study of visual arts, language arts, and social studies for students, from grades 1 to 12.

The Museum for African Art offers school tours at group rates. To find out more about school tours and staff development opportunities, please contact the Museum Educator at 718-784-7700 ext. 117 or email [festrada@africanart.org](mailto:festrada@africanart.org).

Sincerely,

Francis Estrada  
Museum Educator for School and Public Programs

## The African Continent

Africa is the second largest continent in the world, containing over 50 countries and has an area of almost twelve million square miles (covering almost 21% of the world's surface area!). It lies between the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean, and is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea in the north and the Red Sea in the north-east. The climate of Africa consists of wet and dry seasons, varying from one region to another.

A common misconception about Africa is that it is comprised of jungles. In fact, the word "jungle" is unused in an African context. With the exception of the Sahara Desert, the continent is made up of grasslands, savanna, and some rain forests (with a gradation from one region to the next).

Africa is home to the largest desert in the world (the Sahara) and the longest river in the world (the Nile).

African ethnic groups are often mistakenly classified as "tribes", though the word has a negative connotation and does not necessarily apply to the groups. The term "tribe" refers to a small rural community who may not be able to trace their ancestry. This classification does not accurately describe the social structure of any ethnic group in the continent. A consistently valid way of classifying groups is through the language that they speak, since people in Africa tend to identify themselves by their home language. There are over 1,000 ethnic groups in Africa who speak various languages and related dialects belonging to four language families: Niger-Kordofanian, Khoisan, Afroasiatic (Hamito-Semitic) and Nilo-Saharan.

### ***WHERE IN THE WORLD IS AFRICA?***

As mentioned earlier, the continent of Africa consists of 54 countries and over 1,000 ethnic groups. This exercise will help you and your students become more familiar with which countries are on the African continent.

### ***Elementary, Middle, and High School***

#### **Standards and Activities**

Social Studies:

Geography: *Places and Regions*

History: *Culture, Identity*

English:

**E3b** Speaking, Listening, and Viewing: *The students participate in group meetings.*

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever heard of Africa?
2. What do you know about this continent?
3. From what you have heard about or seen on TV, what is your idea of Africa?
4. Find Africa on a map of the world.

Activity:

You will need:

- A map of Africa for all students (Appendix A)
- A blank map of Africa for all students (Appendix B)
- A list of African countries (Appendix C)
- Writing utensils

1. Hand out a map of Africa to each student, and have him/her try to commit to memory as many of the countries in the continent as possible(5 minutes).
2. Instruct your students to put their maps away, and hand out the blank maps and lists of countries. Have your students fill in as many countries as they can (10 minutes).



Map from mapquest.com

## Reflections: African Art Is...



The Museum for African Art was founded in 1984 to increase the understanding and appreciation of Africa's ancient and modern cultures. It is the only independent institution in the United States devoted to organizing and circulating exhibitions of traditional and contemporary African art of the highest aesthetic and scholarly quality. Additionally, the Museum is a major publisher of books on African art, and presents educational programs, lectures, workshops, and performances for children, students, and adults.

Over the past twenty years, the Museum for African Art has explored various approaches in fulfilling its mission: to make African art accessible to many different audiences, helping them to feel this work both emotionally and sensually and to understand it intellectually. Past exhibitions have suggested that African art can be viewed as part of everyday life, a way to communicate with the spirits, a reflection of an artist's vision, and a range of other proposals. These varied and sometimes contradictory approaches have created new ways to understand and appreciate a body of art that is moving and immediate but that also makes special demands on Western audiences.

*Reflections* continues this tradition by presenting African Art in a way that provides new insight into the works, while revisiting past themes presented by the Museum.

### What Is "Traditional" African Art?

"Traditional" African art, as perceived by most people, are comprised mostly of masks, textiles, and sculptures. They have been labeled as "traditional" for their recognizable stylistic continuity that belongs to a particular people or region. In reality, the objects we regard as art were not used or made for the purpose of being viewed as art pieces, but were created for social, religious, or utilitarian purposes.

Almost all "traditional" African art that we see today was once classified as artifacts. When "African art" was first displayed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, creators of the displayed objects did not consider themselves as artists or the creations as art (since there was no word that could be translated as "art"). Since the objects did not correspond with European art aesthetics, they were sent to anthropology museums.

In anthropology museums, artifacts served to illustrate different aspects of culture. On the other hand, art museums gathered information about the culture and used them to understand the artwork. The orientation of the museums was apparent in the way the objects were acquired and displayed:

*Anthropology museums have prized large field collections which combine extensive documentation and duplication...they sought what was typical of the culture rather than what was unique...In contrast, art museums have not traditionally been concerned with documentation, but have preferred the unique object, valuing originality and invention...Art museums have accordingly purchased works one by one (or acquired collections that were formed that way)...*

-Susan Vogel, **ART/artifact**; p. 13

However, as the interest in African art grew, anthropology and art museums began to take similar approaches in exhibiting and collecting African art. Anthropologists began to take note of the aesthetics of the works, and art historians began to employ anthropological studies in comprehending the works.

Although information about their culture and region are usually provided, African objects are sometimes seen out of context and are displaced from their original environment. For example, an exhibited mask stands alone; separate from its full masquerade, the **masker** (in most cases male) who dances its dance, or the music that usually accompanies the mask. In this case, the viewer has a different perception from the original purpose of the mask. Rather than seeing the mask in its full performance, the viewer sees only a fragment of the mask presented as a sculpture.

## **GETTING TO KNOW THE COUNTRIES AND PEOPLE OF AFRICA**

### **Elementary, Middle, and High School**

#### **Standards and Activities**

Social Studies:

Geography: *Environment and Society, Places and Regions, Human Systems*

History: *Belief Systems, Culture, Identity*

Civics, Citizenship, and Government: *Citizenship, Political Systems, Government*

English:

**E1c Reading:** *The students read informational materials.*

**E3c Speaking, Listening, and Viewing:** *The students prepare and deliver individual presentations.*

Visual Arts:

Art Making: *The students construct meanings about the world through art making.*

Making Connections through Visual Arts: *The students recognize the societal, cultural and historical significance of art.*

Activity:

You (and your students) will need:

- Using Appendix C, create strips of paper with one country listed on each strip
- Box or container to hold strips
- Poster board
- Drawing and coloring utensils
- adhesives

Africa's countries consist of a number of cultural groups within their borders. In this activity, students will produce a report of a country and a cultural group that lives in the chosen country.

1. Fold strips of papers so that the text is not visible. Place them in a container.
2. Pass the container around the classroom and instruct students to choose one folded strip.
3. When everybody has chosen one strip, inform your students that they will be doing a 5-10 minute oral report on the country that is written on their strip of paper. Using print and non-print sources, have your students produce a report that gives information about the country (geography, population, economy, climate) and focuses on one ethnic group that lives in that country. For this, they need to present general information about the group as well as talk about traditional art that is produced in their society.
4. Using the poster board, students will visually indicate where in Africa the country is located. They will also need to provide images (drawn or by collage) of traditional art created by the groups they have chosen.

Note: For information on African countries and ethnic groups, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa> and <http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/africa.htm> are good sources of information.



## Masks and Masquerades in Africa

Masks can be found among nearly all cultures around the world. In Africa, they are among the most known elements of their traditional art. Masking traditions of various African peoples remain as one of their most important religious, ritual, and social activities. They are most common among cultures in west and central Africa.

A “mask” is defined, in most cases, as an object that conceals or disguises the face. In African cultures, the mask is comprised of a full costume that covers the entire body, along with “props” that accompany the costume. Amulets, **medicines**, or other protective devices (animal fur, feathers, teeth, or antlers) intensify the power of the mask. The part which conceals the face is only a small part of the “mask”.

The headpiece (which is the part featured in most museum mask displays) is frequently made of wood and at times has cloth or raffia fibers attached to its rim. They can be categorized by how they are worn: helmet masks cover the entire head, crest masks are worn on top of the head, face masks cover the face, forehead masks rest on the forehead, and there are even shoulder masks that rest on the maskers’ shoulders.

There are also different types of masks which can be defined by their physical features. **Anthropomorphic** masks depict human form, **zoologic** masks depict animal forms, or **composite** masks which contain elements of both humans and animals and are usually inspired by myth and dreams.

Composite masks usually represent supernatural creatures or nature spirits with amazing abilities. Considered dangerous, they are mostly used in closed men’s societies and are stored in the societies’ houses or in shrines outside of the village (accessible only to initiates).

Masks may represent ancestors or serve as “houses” or containers of unseen forces or **bush spirits**. They may also act as judges, policemen, and educators. Once worn, the masker is transformed into another being that moves, behaves, and “speaks” as the mask.

In areas of Africa with masking traditions, masks dance in dramatic performances or **masquerades**. They occur in important occasions such as funerals, initiations, or for entertainment. Masquerades involve music, dance, acrobatics, rituals, sacrifice, or prayer with an audience that interacts through call and response. The masker and the mask become one entity as the masker moves as the mask would, with dances that are precisely prescribed or improvised. Masks also “speak” and sing in a secret language or sounds (understood by the initiated), or through musical instruments that usually accompany them.

Complete masks are difficult to find in most art collections because in order to keep them fresh, costumes are completely or partially remade (by the respective group) for each masquerade. Often times, they are made of organic materials that decompose, or some masks are even destroyed at the end of festivals.

In this exhibit, MAA presents four different ways masks/masquerades are exhibited: a face mask (the wooden part that covers the face) staged in a glass case, a mask with part of the costume present, full costumes arranged on mannequins, or a video that features recorded masquerades in Africa.

The Sagbwe mask of the Dan people in Côte d'Ivoire is an example of a composite mask. It has an oval-shaped face mask that combines human facial features with a bird's beak (the name signifies "the son of a bird with a long beak"). This mask appears during the dry season, and represents a bird that warns the Dan community in an outbreak of fire.



In *Reflections*, only the upper part of this mask is displayed. This approach aims to show an African mask as more than something that only covers the masker's face. Its presentation encourages viewers to look at the Sagbwe mask differently from how it is actually seen or used in the Dan community.

## **MASK MAKING ACTIVITY- GOLI MASKS**

The Baule peoples in Côte d'Ivoire celebrate *Goli*, an all-day festival in which the whole village participates in the appearance of four masks, music, and consumption of palm wine. Performed for entertainment or for funerals of important men, *Goli* has become one of the most popular and beloved dances of the Baule.

In the following exercise(s), students will create *Kple Kple* masks which are disc-shaped masks that are the first to appear during the festival. See Appendix D for examples of *Goli (Kple Kple)* masks.

### ***Elementary and Middle School***

#### **Standards and Activities**

Visual Arts:

Art Making: *Students construct meanings about the world through art making.*

#### **Activity:**

You will need:

- Paper plates (one for each student)
- Pencils
- Construction paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Brown or Red paint
- examples of *Goli* masks (Appendix D)

1. Distribute paper plates and examples of Goli masks (Appendix D).
2. Have students paint their paper plates either red or brown.
3. While the paint is drying, instruct your students to cut small pieces of construction paper into triangles, squares, or circles. Inform them that these pieces will be used to create the patterns on the mask as well as facial features.
4. Once the paint is dry, have your students glue their cut paper to form their mask's face (eyes, nose, mouth, etc.) and to arrange patterns around the edges of their plates.

## ***High School***

### **Standards and Activities**

Visual Arts:

Art Making: *Students construct meanings about the world through art making.*

Activity:

You will need:

- Paper and pencils
- Clay (use air-hardening clay to avoid use of a kiln)
- Clay carving tools (if unavailable, you may use barbecue sticks and toothpicks)
- Acrylic paint
- Brushes

1. Distribute paper plates and examples of Goli masks (Appendix D), and have your students sketch their own designs on paper before using clay.
2. Roll clay into a ball using your hands. Size will vary depending on the amount of clay used. Once clay is rolled into a ball, flatten it out using your palm and fingers to create a circular disc.
3. Roll out smaller pieces of clay to create horns/appendages to attach on the top part of the disc.
4. Using carving tools, create patterns and facial features on the disc. Toothpicks can be used to carve intricate designs on the horns.
5. Allow mask to set overnight on a flat surface.
6. Once the clay has completely dried and hardened, use paint to add color to the mask.

## Artifacts as Art

In the early 1900's the circle of avant-garde artists in Paris developed great interest in African art. They began to create artwork that resembled elements of African art, leading people in advanced circles to accept many sculptures from Africa as "art" instead of artifacts. People and museums gradually began to look at various African artifacts as art.

By the end of World War II, a number of western museums were collecting and exhibiting African objects for their aesthetic qualities. In 1957, the Museum of Primitive Art in New York became the first museum which was devoted to collecting and exhibiting "primitive" objects from Africa, Oceania, and the Americas.

*Reflections* contains a section of various artifacts presented as art. Included are a shirt and hat made of hair from Cameroon, a ladder used by the Dogon people of Mali to climb the flat roofs of their home (which were used for storage, living, and in appropriate weather, for sleeping), as well as a game board.

### Game Board (Mankala)

Mankala is a board game played by many people throughout Africa, as well as some areas of Asia and South America. The name and rules of the game vary from one place to the next. Most boards are carved out of wood, while some are made of clay, rock, or in some cases the holes may even be dug out of the ground. There are usually two to four rows of four to twelve cups, with two pits or houses at the ends (where the players sit). Cowry shells, seeds, palm nuts, or small stones are commonly used as game pieces.

As a functioning object, the board lies flat so that the participants may move the game pieces around the boards, inside the cups. In most exhibitions, it is usually exhibited upright for the viewer to see. It then becomes an art object and loses its function as a game board.

## ***BECOME A FAUX JUNIOR ARCHAEOLOGIST/ANTHROPOLOGIST!***

In this exercise, your students will act as archaeologists or anthropologists (if necessary, define what they do/study). Explain to your students the idea of exhibiting artifacts as art objects. Inform them that for this exercise, they will need to choose an everyday object and write a fabricated or exaggerated description of it.

### ***Elementary, Middle, and High School***

#### **Standards and Activities**

Social Studies:

History: *Change, Culture*

Geography: *Environment*

English:

**E2a:** Reading: *The students produce a report.*

Visual Arts:

Art Making: *The students construct meanings about the world through art making. The students develop a global perspective and recognize the power of art to communicate beliefs and values.*

Literacy in the Visual Arts: *Students hone observation skills and discuss works of art.*

Activity:

You and your students will need:

- a camera
- 11"x 14" construction paper or poster board
- glue or paste
- 5"x 6" piece of white paper

1. Look around you, observing your surroundings and looking for interesting objects such as furniture, toys, utensils, road signs, vehicles, tools, etc.

2. Photograph or draw the object as you would something that is of great importance.

Note: Try to present it in a way in which it is not usually seen (sideways, inverted, or disassembled). This will slightly obscure the viewer's perception of the object.

3. On the 5"x 6" piece of paper, compose a brief (false) description of the object. In the description, try and write it from the point of view of somebody who has never seen it before and has no prior information as to what the object is. Also note that none of the other students has any information about your object. Be creative when describing its physical form and its use within your society.

4. Mount the photograph and its description on construction paper or poster board.

5. Have your students display their "pieces" around the classroom and encourage discussions between the "junior anthropologists".



## Baule

The next two sections of the exhibit contain objects from the Baule in Côte d'Ivoire and the Yoruba in Nigeria. These sections are devoted to presenting two ethnicities and how they relate to the objects in the show, as well as the range of what people from their groups create.

The Baule, located primarily in Côte d'Ivoire, are part of the Akan speaking peoples who reside in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. They migrated westward from Ghana over 300 years ago, when the Asante rose to power. More than one million people identify themselves as Baule, making them one of the largest ethnic groups in Côte d'Ivoire. Despite constant interaction with European administrators, traders, and missionaries, the Baule have managed to maintain their traditional objects and beliefs longer than many groups.

There is a clear distinction between the bush (wilderness) and village for the Baule. This is evident in the set up of their traditional village: no trees, animals, or objects from the bush are allowed in the village. If a person comes in carrying a bunch of plantains or palm nuts, they are required to cut apart the bundle at the edge of the village before entering.

To the Baule, there is no distinction between an invisible and visible world. Everyone is aware that there are powers behind all that is seen, and that these powers can positively or negatively interfere with human life. Because of this, objects are created to localize the powers so that they may be contacted to work for the person's benefit.

Identified by early European artists as people who appreciate art for art's sake, the Baule create objects which typically have polished surfaces and elegantly detailed adornments. Surprisingly, much Baule art may only be seen by men, or in dim light, or only in rapid movement. *Reflections* highlights nine objects created by the Baule such as a slingshot, a comb, pots, figures, and a mask.

### *Spirit Spouse (Blolo Bla/Blolo Bian)*

According to the Baule, all human beings were married in the other world (**blolo**) before birth. In life, spirit spouses follow their human partners and have the ability to affect their lives depending on how they are treated and respected. They are capable of helping their human spouses in love, finances, and health; but they are also capable of increasing the chances or severity of illnesses, accidents, or other troubles. Through dreams, spirit spouses are able to communicate with their human partners.

People often commission a carving of their spirit spouse. They are the most private of Baule sculptures, and are usually kept in a shrine in the corner of their human partner's sleeping room. Sacrifices and gifts are often given to the shrines to satisfy the spirit spouse who, in return, provides good fortune.

Besides their demands for gifts, they also demand limited sexual fidelity. One night a week, the man or woman is required to sleep with their spirit spouse.



## Yoruba

The Yoruba are the largest cultural group on the African continent, made up of almost 20 million Yoruba-speaking people from Nigeria and the Republic of Benin. Archeological excavations have shown evidence of a highly urbanized society that dates back to 800 AD. The Yoruba kingdoms are widespread; with each kingdom acting as an independent city-state whose dynasty of kings remain unbroken to the present day. Some of these kingdoms are Ife, Oyo, and Ijebu.

Ife is regarded by the Yoruba as the place of origin of life and human civilization. Oyo, one of their earliest kingdoms, prospered in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and controlled a vast territory through their feared cavalry. The Ijebu kingdom, located at a coastal region, was the first of the Yoruba to have trading ties with Europeans in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century.

For four centuries, the Yoruba kingdoms prospered, but weakened in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century due to wars within their kingdoms and the Atlantic Slave Trade. The slave trade spread millions of Yoruba people throughout the world, including the Americas and the Caribbean Islands. Their late arrival in these areas, coupled with the huge number of people, ensured Yoruba influence in art, culture, and religion in the United States, South America, and the Caribbean.

The Yoruba believe that the cosmos is made up of two realms: *aye*, the visible world of the living, and *orun*, the invisible world of ancestors, spirits, and gods. To the Yoruba, the past serves as an “(accessible and essential) model for the present. They believe that persons live, depart, and are reborn...every individual comes from either the gods or one’s ancestors on the mother’s or the father’s side. In addition, rituals are (effective) only when they are performed regularly according to tenets from the past and creatively represented to suit the present.” (Drewal, Pemberton, Abiodun, p.14)

### Egungun

As mentioned earlier, ancestors may return to the world through maskers (**egungun**). *Egungun* costumes have many variations that are distinguishable by the set of materials used in their creation. The performer is covered completely in the costume, concealing the identity of these dwellers from the outside world. The costumes are created from an assortment of fabrics, mixed with beads, leather, shells, or other empowering objects. Today, the fabrics chosen are made of the best fabrics available locally and internationally.



Masquerade festivals for ancestors (*Odun Egungun*) are celebrated throughout the kingdoms of the Yoruba with dancing, drumming, and singing. In these festivals, which last for several days, ancestors revisit for remembrance, celebration, and blessings. *Egungun* performances comprise of elaborately orchestrated dances, intricate body movements, and swirling of the fabrics that drape over the costume.

In addition to their participation in the *egungun* festivals, the masquerades can be called forth for their life-sustaining powers during times of crises in the family (death of an elder), outbreak of disease, a problem with life in the village, or witchcraft.

## **POST- VISIT EXERCISE**

### **Standards and Activities**

Social Studies:

History: *Belief Systems, Culture, Diversity, Identity*

Geography: *Environment and Society, Places and Regions*

Visual Arts:

Art Making: *Students construct meanings about the world through art making.*

Literacy in the Visual Arts: *Students hone observation skills and discuss works of art.*

Community and Cultural Resources: *Students access primary resources in the community*

You will need:

-Paper and pencils (you can request these from the museum before your visit)

### ***Elementary School***

Activity:

1. During your visit to the museum, choose one object from the Baule section and one object from the Yoruba section.
2. Copy the description of each object (from the display labels). In your own words, describe what you see.
3. Make a small sketch of the chosen objects.

### ***Middle and High School***

Activity/Questions:

1. There is a common misconception that African ethnic groups live in small huts and villages in wooded areas. Much like the rest of the world, different groups live in different areas. Compare and contrast the traditional living situations of the Baule and Yoruba. Where do they live? What kind of objects do they make?
2. Examine how the Baule and Yoruba deal with the human figure. Do they have some of the same characteristics? How do they deal with physical features (design, carvings, garments, texture, color, etc)?
3. Sketch one or two objects that you like from these two sections. Write down the information from the labels to remember their descriptions.

## About Wealth, Royalty, and Wisdom

In 1957, Ghana became the first country below the Sahara to gain its independence. It is located in West Africa, bordering the Gulf of Guinea, between Togo and Côte d'Ivoire. The Akan speaking people (Asante, Fante, and the Baule) are the largest ethnic group in Ghana, making up almost half of the population. Much of what we know about their culture today comes from their oral history which has been passed down through many generations.

Their language is very rich in euphemisms and proverbs which are considered a sign of wisdom when properly used. Their proverbs are not restricted to verbal communication; they appear on their art as well. Patterns on wood carvings, building facades, textile designs, and gold weights represent various proverbs.

### Adinkra Cloth

Adinkra cloths, made and worn by the Asante, are printed with designs using a black dye made from the bark or sap of certain trees. These designs represent proverbs and are printed onto the fabric using stamps made from calabash. Early museum collections featured adinkra printed on locally woven cloth. Today, the use of imported, commercially made cloth as a background is more common.



Traditionally, red, brown, and black cloths are associated with funerals and periods of mourning, while white cloths are worn in more joyous post-mourning celebrations. To begin printing, plain cloth is laid out on the ground which is divided into small squares by drawing lines using a broad comb-like instrument. Once complete, designs are printed one square at a time. There are hundreds of stamp motifs available for adinkra, and each one is named and represents a proverb, a historical event, or an object. Cloths made for funerals often offer silent words of encouragement.

## **MAKE YOUR OWN ADINKRA CLOTH!**

Traditionally, adinkra stamps are carved from sections of calabash. The following exercise(s) will allow students to create adinkra stamp designs using materials that are easily accessible. Encourage your students to choose stamp designs and proverbs to create a piece with a message.

Note to the teacher: [http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/adinkra\\_symbols.htm](http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/adinkra_symbols.htm) is a great website for adinkra symbols

## **Elementary, Middle, and High School**

### **Standards and Activities**

Visual arts:

Art Making: *Students construct meanings about the world through art making.*

You will need:

- Printout of adinkra stamp patterns with proverbs (Appendix E)
- Large sheets of paper (butcher paper is inexpensive)
- Large Potatoes (enough to have one for each student)
- Paper towels
- Shallow dishes
- Ball point pens
- Plastic knives (for elementary and middle school students)
- Butter knives (for high school students)
- Paper clips
- A paring knife (to be used by the teacher only)
- Paint or ink

Making the stamps:

**Note to the teacher:** cut the potatoes in half so that each student has 2 halved pieces

1. Hand out printouts of Adinkra stamp patterns (Appendix E)
2. Choose 2 proverbs and draw corresponding designs on your potatoes using a ball point pen.
3. Using the plastic knives or butter knives, carve out edges of the shapes. Use the paper clips to slowly carve away small details. If additional help is necessary, teachers will use the paring knife to assist students in need.
4. Gently press your potato stamp on to a dry paper towel.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 to create another stamp using a different symbol.

The printing process:



1. Roll or spread out paper onto floor or large table top.
2. Draw grid of squares on cloth (these grids will be used as guidelines for where to print symbols). Try to make the grids large enough to fit 3 rows and 3 columns of stamps (9 stamp designs for each square)
3. Fill shallow dishes with paint or ink. Gently dip the potato stamp into the dish. Be careful not to get too much paint or ink because the image will get smeared.
4. Carefully press the stamp on to the paper.
5. Repeat using your other stamp until paper is filled with adinkra stamp motifs.

## Beautiful and Useful

The collection of objects in this section demonstrates the craftsmanship and design of items used in daily life. Even though there is no term for “art” in most African cultures, it does not mean that aesthetic values are not considered when creating items used in daily life. From meticulously assembled and designed hats, baskets, pots, or screens, this assortment of items displays the skill and thought put into creating everyday objects.

Visual aesthetics play a role in most aspects of daily life. From the arrangements of fruits in market stalls to the way women sweep circular patterns in front of their homes, art plays a great role in African daily life.

### Lega Hats

The Lega hats featured in the exhibition go beyond the purpose of simply covering a person’s head. They are used to show someone’s current initiatory status in the **Bwami** society in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Lega hats have many different forms, and are usually comprised of a combination of various materials such as feathers, cowry shells, glass beads, horsehair, straws, buttons, and horns.

## Communication with Spirits

As mentioned earlier, spirits may be housed in objects such as masks and are brought to life in masquerades. The next section of the exhibition features objects that represent or contain spirits. Most traditional African cultures believe that the world is inhabited by numerous spirits that can positively or negatively affect human life. These spirits normally dwell in the bush and only enter the village on special ceremonial events such as masquerades.

### Chi-Wara

One of the Bamana’s major associations is the **Chi-Wara**. They are in charge of teaching its members all aspects of food production and the encouragement of community cooperation in planting and harvesting crops. Both men and women are allowed to join the Chi Wara, but only initiated men are allowed to carve and wear the association’s masks.

The Chi Wara’s name comes from an old tale about a half-man, half-antelope being who taught the people how to transform the thorny bush into millet fields, using his staff and claws. In masquerades, maskers wear a crest mask which is mounted on top of a basket or wig and carry two batons. The masks are comprised of sweeping curves, delicate lines, and intricate carvings and are often adorned with leather, fibers, cowry shells, and brass jewelry. They move while in a semi-bent pose as they imitate the mythical creature tilling the soil. They are accompanied by a chorus of four adult males and young women who fan the masks in order to “diffuse” the power (**nyama**) that the beasts give off.

## Modern and Contemporary



The modern and contemporary section of *Reflections* provides insight into a diverse range of artistic impressions from various African artists living in and out of Africa. Using various media such as sculpture, photography, painting, and mixed media, some artists in this section create work using traditional motifs to preserve their respective cultural traditions. Other artists create work to express issues that

deal with identity, environmental issues, or personal ideas.

Artists such as Bruce Onobrakpeya or Sokari Douglas Camp use images from their surroundings or cultural background and incorporate them into their artwork. Internationally renowned printmaker Onobakpreya's prints contain motifs such as figures, altars, or textile designs used by various peoples in Nigeria, preserving traditions through his prints. Camp creates metal sculptures of traditional Kalabari masquerades.

With the exception of Senegalese portrait photographer Seydou Keïta, the remaining modern and contemporary artists come from South Africa and work with various media to express their artistic vision in their own words and images. Mbongeni Richman Buthelezi works with melted plastic to address environmental issues.



Claudette Schreuders uses sculpture to explore identity. Sandile Zulu's media are often natural and involve elements (fire, earth, wind,) and focus on colonization or conflicted realizations between ideas/concepts such as labor and mechanization, nature and culture, or rural ecologies and urban industrialization. Abrie Fourie illustrates his idea of the "end of the world" through a **duratrans** (photographic process using backlit images) triptych.



## Glossary

**Anthropomorphic (mask)**- refers to African masks which have human features

**Blole**- according to the Baule, refers to the "other" or spirit world

**Bush**- the forest area outside of the village in which spirits are believed to dwell

**Bwami**- society (Lega) that teaches morals and wisdom through artwork combined with music, dance, drama and singing.

**Chi-wara**- association of the Bamana that teaches its members all aspects of food production and encourages the Bamana community to work together; its philosophy: harmony may be achieved only by maintaining equilibrium between men and women to produce new generations, and between sun and earth to produce new crops.

**Composite (mask)**- refers to African masks that contain both human and animal features; usually represent bush spirits

**Duratrans**- a photographic process using transparency (color negatives) over backlit panes and light boxes

**Egungun**- in the Yoruba language, means "masquerade"; represents a physical manifestation of Yoruba ancestors

**Masker**- person (usually male) who wears the masks in African masquerades

**Masquerade**- serves as a means of communication between past and present, humans and nature, through music and dance; can be described as the process in which a mask possesses a spirit

**Medicines**- devices (animal fur, feathers, teeth, or antlers) added to figures, masks, or other African art/objects that intensify their power

**Nyama**- a hot, wild energy or force the Mande believe is the animating force of nature

**Zoologic (mask)**- refers to African masks that have animal features

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Appendix A



Appendix B



## Appendix C

### List of Countries in Africa

Algeria	Angola	Benin
Botswana	Burkina Faso	Burundi
Cameroon	Cape Verde	Central African Republic
Chad	Comoros	Congo, Democratic Republic of
Congo, Republic of the	Cote d'Ivoire	Djibouti
Egypt	Equatorial Guinea	Eritrea
Ethiopia	Gabon	Gambia, The
Ghana	Guinea	Guinea-Bissau
Kenya	Lesotho	Liberia
Libya	Madagascar	Malawi
Mali	Mauritania	Mauritius
Morocco	Mozambique	Namibia
Niger	Nigeria	Rwanda
Sao Tome and Principe	Senegal	Seychelles
Sierra Leone	Somalia	South Africa
Sudan	Swaziland	Tanzania
Togo	Tunisia	Uganda
Western Sahara	Zambia	Zimbabwe

Examples of Goli Masks



## Appendix E



Adinkra hene (Adinkra king). Chief of all the adinkra designs. Forms the basis of adinkera printing.



Aban (fence). Representing fenced homes. A protector. Double security. Safe and sound. Fool-proof.



Keerapa (Musu yide). Good fortune sanctity. “Kerapa te se okera.Okyiri fi.” Sanctity like a cat. Abhors filth. Symbol of sanctity and good fortune.



Osrane (moon). “Osrane nnfityi preko ntware man.” It takes the moon sometime to go round the nation.



Biribi wo soro. “Nyame biribi wo soro na ma embeka mensa (God there is something in the heavens, let it reach me.)” A symbol of hope.



Akoko nan tiaba na enkum ba (The hen treads upon its chicks, but it does not kill them).



Akoma (the heart). “Nya akoma (take heart).” Have patience. Symbol of patience and endurance.



Nkyin kyin (ohema nkyinkyin). Changing one’s self. Playing many roles.



Afena (a state ceremonial sword). “Akofena kunim ko a, wobo afena kye no safohene.” The retiring great warrior always has a royal sword of rest. Recognition of gallantry.