

The Art of Africa

Ancestors, Spirits and Divination

HA/CAAS 404

FALL TERM 1992

Professor Sharon F. Patton  
120 Tappan Hall  
763-5917  
office hours: 2:30-3:30 W

103A West Engineering  
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Required Texts:

Mbiti, John. African Religions and Philosophy. (1990)  
✓ Sieber, Roy, and Rosalyn Walker. African Art in the Cycle of Life. (1987)  
Willetts, Frank. African Art (1985)

Course Description and Requirements

This course will survey art and architecture which represent traditional spiritual beliefs, concepts and practices, primarily in West and Central Africa. Art, dating from the fifth to the late twentieth centuries, of various media and type will be examined in regards to placement, presentation, and use such as shrines, masquerades and rituals. This course also will examine the role and status of the artist, the relevance of art and aesthetics, and the influence of Islam and Christianity on art within the context of spirituality in specific ethnic communities. Two exams and one term paper are required. The course will be presented in a lecture format, however, class discussions are expected. Therefore, there will be assigned readings from publications in the University library system and on reserve in the fine arts library. A course syllabus will include lecture topics, bibliography, a glossary and checklist of represented works.

First class meeting	September 14th - 10:00 am.
Mid-term Exam.	October 19th
Paper	November 18th

Length: no more than 10 pages (excluding bibliography).  
Typed. double-spaced; photocopied illustrations, and selected bibliography. Topics may pertain to art by peoples not covered in lectures; theme such as changes in meaning

✓-CAAS Library owns

and/or form in traditional religious art; or broad topic such as contemporary art and spirituality. Recommend consultation with professor prior to submission.

Last class meeting Dec. 9th

Scheduled final exams Dec. 18th - 10:30-12:30

### Course Outline

Refer to Sieber and Walker, African Art in the Cycle of Life for text and illustrations. Refer to appropriate sections in Mbiti for additional background knowledge on the religion and philosophy of African peoples.

Note: All photocopies items have restricted circulation; held at the desk, Fine Arts Library.

#### I. Introducing Africa and African Art

##### a) Assigned Readings:

- Willett, F. African Art. Chap. 1 "Introducing Africa" Chap.2 "The Development of the Study of African Art."  
Bascom, W. "African Arts: An Introduction" in African Arts (xeroxed)  
Gillon, W. Introduction in A Short History of African Art.  
Vansina, J. Introduction in Art History in Africa, pp. 1-19.

##### Recommended Readings:

Fage, J.D. A History of Africa. Part I: The Internal Development of African Society.

##### b) Assigned Readings:

Willett, F. African Art. Chap 6 "Understanding African Sculpture," pp. 208-222.

##### Recommended Readings:

- Crowley, D. "An African Aesthetic," pp. 315-327  
Sieber, R. "The Aesthetic of Traditional Africa," pp. 127-131.  
Thompson, R. F. "Aesthetics in Traditional Africa," pp. 374-381 in Art and Aesthetics in Primitive Societies.

c) Assigned Readings:

Willet, F. African Art Chap 6 "Understanding," pp. 222-238

Vansina, J. Art History. Chaps. 7 & 8

Recommended Readings:

Fagg, W. "The African Artist," pp. 42-47

Gerbrands, A. "The concept of Style in Non-Western Art", pp. 58-70 in Tradition and Creativity in Tribal Art

Laude, Jean. The Arts of Black Africa. Chaps. 3 & 4 (xeroxed)

II. **Overview of the Spiritual in Africa: Traditional/ Indigenous**

Assigned Readings:

Mbiti, John. African Religions Chaps. 1,2,4,8,15

Olupona, Jacob. "Introduction" pp. 1-14

Westerlund, David "'Insiders' and 'Outsiders' in the Study of African Religions: Notes on Some Problems of Theory and Method." in African Traditional Religions (xeroxed)

Siroto, Leon. "Introduction" in African Spirit Images and Identities, pp. 6-22 (xeroxed)

Willet, F. African Art. Chap. 6 "Understanding" pp.164-188

Recommended Readings:

Peek, P. Divination Systems Introduction, pp 1-22

III. **Overview of the Spiritual in Africa: Islam & Christianity**

Assigned Readings:

Mbiti, John. African Religions. Chap. 19

Recommended Readings:

Bravmann, Rene. Islam in Africa. Introduction

Lewis, I. M. Islam in Tropical Africa.

Pt. I Introduction.

#### IV. Sacred Spaces and Sacred Structures

##### Assigned Readings:

- Prussin, Labelle, "An Introduction to Indigenous African Architecture," (xeroxed)  
Willett, F. African Art. Chap. 4 African Architecture

#### V. The History of Sacred Art in Africa: Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern

##### Assigned Readings:

- Gillon, W. A Short History of African Art. Chaps. 2, 4, 8, 10 (pp. 164-70).  
Willett, F. African Art. Chap. 3 , pp. 43-65.

##### Recommended Readings: (for review of visual images)

- Eyo, E. and F. Willett. Treasures of Nigeria  
Fagg, B. Nok Terracottas  
Laude, J. African Art of the Dogon

#### VI Geographic Survey of Art and the Spiritual World in West and Central Africa, 19th & 20th Centuries

##### Assigned Readings:

- Sieber, R. and R. Walker, African Art in the Cycle of Life  
Willett, F. African Art. Chap. 6 "Understanding" pp. 164-188.

##### Recommended Readings: (for review of visual images)

- Allison, P. African Stone Sculpture  
Bravmann. R. West African Sculpture  
Cole, H. Igbo Arts  
Cole, H. and D. Ross. The Arts of Ghana  
Cornet, F. Art of Zaire  
Drewal, H., et. al. Yoruba, Nine Centuries of African Art  
Elisofon, E. and W. Fagg. The Sculpture of Africa  
Ezra, K. Royal Art of Benin  
Gillon, W. A Short History of Africa  
Northern, T. Expression of Cameroon Art  
Schildkrout, E. African Reflections  
Schildkrout, E. & M. Anderson Wild Spirits, Strong Medicine  
Thompson, R. African Art in Motion  
Four Moments of the Sun  
Vogel S. For Spirits and Kings

## Selected Bibliography

Note: selection based on current (9/1/92) holdings in Library system (Mirlyn). Those with asterisk are not in library.

African Arts. vol 1 (1967) holdings in Art/Arch & Fine Arts

\*Amos, Paula. Benin Art (1980)

Barley, Nigel. Foreheads of the Dead, and Anthropological View of Kalabari Ancestral Screens (1988)

\*Bascom, William. African Art, an Exhibition at R. H. Lowie Museum (1967)

\_\_\_\_\_ African Art in a Cultural Perspective (1973)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ifa Divination (1969)

Beier, Ulli. African Mud Sculpture

\_\_\_\_\_ Contemporary Art in Africa (1968)

Biebuyck, Daniel. Tradition and Creativity in Tribal Art (1969)

\_\_\_\_\_ The Arts of Zaire. vol. I (1985): II (1986)

Boone, Sylvia. Radiance from the Waters (1986)

Boston, John. Ikenka Figures Among Northwest Igbo and Igala (1977)

Bourgeois, Arthur. The Yaka and Suku (1985)

Brain, Robert. Art and Society in Africa (1980)

Brain, R. & A. Pollock. Bangwa Funerary Sculpture (1971)

Bravmann, Rene. West African Sculpture (1970)

\_\_\_\_\_ Islam and Tribal Art in West Africa (1974)

\_\_\_\_\_ African Islam (1983)

Cole, Herbert. Igbo Arts: Community and Cosmos (1984)

\_\_\_\_\_ Mbari, Art and Life Among Owerri Igbo (1982)

\_\_\_\_\_ Icons: Ideals and Power in the Art of Africa (1989)

Cole H. & D. Ross. The Arts of Ghana (1977)

Cornet, Joseph. Arts from Zaire (1975)

\_\_\_\_\_ Art of Africa, Treasure from the Congo (1971)

DeMott, Barbara. Dogon Masks (1982)

Denyer, S. African Traditional Architecture (1978)

\*Drewal, H. African Artistry (1980)

Drewal, Henry. et. al. Yoruba, Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought (1989)

Drewal, Henry. Gelede: Art and Female Power Among the Yoruba (1983)

Elisofon, E. and W. Fagg. The Sculpture of Africa (1958)

Evans-Prichard, E. Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande (1976)

Eyo, Ekpo. and F. Willett. Treasures of Nigeria (1979)

Ezra, Kate. Royal Art of Benin (1992)

Fagg, Bernard. Nok Terracottas (1977)

Fagg, William. Nigerian Images (1963)

\_\_\_\_\_ African Tribal Images (1968)

- \*Fischer, Eberhardt. and H. Himmelhaber. Art of the Dan (1976)
- \*Fraser, Douglas. African Art as Philosophy (1974)
- \*Gebauer, Paul. Art of Cameroon (1979)
- Gillon, W. A Short History of African Art (1984)
- Glaze, Anita. Art and Death in a Senufo Village (1981)
- Goldwater, Robert. Bambara Sculpture from the Western Sudan (1960)
- Griaule, Marcel. Conversations with Ogotemeli, and Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas (1970)
- Hodge, C. T. Papers on the Manding (1971)
- Huet, Michael. The Dance, Art and Ritual of Africa (1978)
- Jopling, Carol. ed. Art and Aesthetics in Primitive Societies (1971)
- Karp, Ivan. and Bird, eds. Explorations in African Systems and Thought (1987)
- \*Kennedy, Jean. New Currents, Ancient Rivers, Contemporary African Artists in a Generation of Change. (1992)
- Laude, Jean. African Art of the Dogon (1973)
- LaBurthe-Tolra, P. Fang. (1992)
- MacGaffey, W. Religion and Society in Central Africa; the Bakongo of Lower Zaire (1986)
- Mbiti, J. African Religions and Philosophy (1970)
- McCall, Daniel. and E. Bay, eds. African Images: Essays in African Iconology (1975)
- McClelland, E. The Cult of Ifa Among the Yoruba (1982)
- McLeod, Malcolm. the Asante (1981)
- MccNaughton, Patrick. The Blacksmith (1988)
- Northern, Tamara. The Expressions of Cameroon Art: The Franklin Collection (1986)
- Olupona, J. African Traditional Religions (1991)
- Ottenberg, Simon. Masked Rituals of the Afikpo Ibo (1975)
- Peek, Philip. African Divination Systems (1991)
- Pemberton, John. and W. Fagg. Yoruba Sculpture of West Africa (1982)
- Perrois, Louis. Ancestral Art of Gabon. (1986)
- Picton, John. and J. Mack. African Textiles (1979)
- Prussin, Labelle. "An Introduction to Indigenous African Architecture." Journal of Society of Architectural Historians, 33, no. 3 (1974), pp. 183-205
- Schildkrout, Enid. African Reflections: Art From Northeastern Zaire (1990)
- Schildkrout, Enid and M. Anderson Wild Spirits, Strong Medicine; African Art as the Wilderness (1989)
- \*Shaw, T. Unearthing Igbo-Ukwu (1977)
- Sieber, Roy. and A. Rubin. The Sculpture of Black Africa (1968)
- \*Siroto, Leon. African Spirit Images and Identities (1976)
- Starkweather, Frank. Traditional Igbo Art (1966)
- Swartz, B. K. and R. Dumett. Continuity and Change in African Culture.
- \*Tagliaferri, A. Fabulous Ancestors: Stone Carvings from Sierra Leone (1974)
- Thompson, Robert. F. African Art in Motion (1974)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Black Gods and Kings (1976)  
\* \_\_\_\_\_ The Four Moments of the Sun (1981)  
Vansina, Jan. Art and History in Africa (1984)  
Vogel, Susan. For Spirits and Kings (1981)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Baule Art as the Expression of World View  
(1977)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Africa Explores (1991)  
Walker Art Center. Art of the Congo
- Whisson, M. and M. West. Religion and Social Change in Southern Africa (1975)  
Willet, Frank. African Art (1985)  
Williams, Denis. Icon and Image: A Study of Sacred and Secular Forms in African Classical Art (1974)

Selected Bibliography  
General Resources

- Balandier, G. and J. Maquet. Dictionary of Black African Civilization (1974)  
Bennett, Norman R. Reconstructing African Cultural History  
Curtin, Philip, et. al. African History (1978)  
Davidson, Basil. African Genius, Introd. African Culture  
Fage, John. D. A History of Africa (1980)  
Holt, P. M. The Cambridge History of Islam (1970)  
Mudimbe, V. Y. The Invention of Africa  
Murdock, George. Africa, Its Peoples and Cultural History  
(1958)  
Oliver, Roland and M Crowder. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Africa (1980)  
Paden, John and Sonja. The African Experience. 3 vols.  
(1973)  
Parrinder, E. West African Religion  
Skinner, E. Peoples and Cultures of Africa  
UNESCO. General History of Africa 8 vols.

Source: GILLON W. A Short History of African Art (1984)

