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
764-5516
office hours: by appt.

Required Texts:

Willett, 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 that 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
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:

Bascom, W. "African Arts: An Introduction" in African Arts (xeroxed)

Recommended Readings:


b) Assigned Readings:


Recommended Readings:

c) **Assigned Readings:**

Willet, F. *African Art* Chap 6 "Understanding," pp. 222-238
Vansina, J. *Art History.* Chaps. 7 & 8

**Recommended Readings:**

Gerbrants, 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:**

Mbti, 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)
Willett, 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:**

Mbti, John. *African Religions.* Chap. 19

**Recommended Readings:**

Bravmann, Rene. *Islam in Africa.* Introduction
IV. Sacred Spaces and Sacred Structures

Assigned Readings:

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).

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
African Art in a Cultural Perspective (1973)
Beier, Ulli. African Mud sculpture (1968)
Ifa Divination (1969)
(1986)
Boone, Sylvia. Radiance from the Waters (1986)
Boston, John. Ikenga Figures Among Northwest Igbo and Igala (1977)
Islam and Tribal Art in West Africa (1974)
Mbari, Art and Life Among Owerri Igbo (1982)
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. 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. Willet. Treasures of Nigeria (1979)
Ezra, Kate. Royal Art of Benin (1992)
Fagg, Bernard. Nok Terracottas (1977)
African Tribal Images (1968)
*Gebauer, Paul. *Art of Cameroon* (1979)
Gillon, W. *A Short History of African Art* (1964)
Goldwater, Robert. *Bambara Sculpture from the Western Sudan* (1960)
Hodge, C. T. *Papers on the Manding* (1971)
Jopling, Carol. ed. *Art and Aesthetics in Primitive Societies* (1971)
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)
McClelland, E. *The Cult of Ifa Among the Yoruba* (1982)
*Shaw, T. *Unearthing Igbo-Ukwu* (1977)
Swartz, B. K. and R. Dumett. *Continuity and Change in African Culture.*
Thompson, Robert. F. *African Art in Motion* (1974)
Selected Bibliography

General Resources

Bennett, Norman R. Reconstructing African Cultural History
Mudimbe, V. Y. The Invention of Africa
Parrinder, E. West African Religion
Skinner, E. Peoples and Cultures of Africa
UNESCO. General History of Africa 8 vols.
### Sahara and Namibia

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<th>Ballana</th>
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