The Path of Power
February 20–May 15, 2016
The University of Iowa Museum of Art
The Path of Power explores social justice in Africa through objects that support the expression of authority, status, and archetype. Upholding these aspects of identity commonly relies upon the creative display of privilege and exclusion, which are central to the politics of equality. These objects were created for spirits, elites, initiates, colonists, and art collectors. Regardless of sacred or secular context, settings that surround each object emphasize social mobility as integral to artistic function. In this sense, these examples of African art both create and become the path that leads to a change or preservation of identity. The visionary quality and exceptional skill with which these objects were made demonstrates the power of artistic imagination to shape and define identity and status in Africa. Through exhibition programs, hands-on learning activities, and art historical research, the UIMA collection of African art continues to raise the educational status for hundreds of people every year.

El Anatsui (Ghanaian, b. 1944– )

Transit, 2002
Wood, pigment
10.16 x 60.96 cm (4 x 24 in.)
Purchased with funds from the Stanley-UI Foundation Support Organization, 2002.106a–o

The Path of Power explores social justice in Africa through objects that support the expression of authority, status, and archetype. Upholding these aspects of identity commonly relies upon the creative display of privilege and exclusion, which are central to the politics of equality. These objects were created for spirits, elites, initiates, colonists, and art collectors. Regardless of sacred or secular context, settings that surround each object emphasize social mobility as integral to artistic function. In this sense, these examples of African art both create and become the path that leads to a change or preservation of identity. The visionary quality and exceptional skill with which these objects were made demonstrates the power of artistic imagination to shape and define identity and status in Africa. Through exhibition programs, hands-on learning activities, and art historical research, the UIMA collection of African art continues to raise the educational status for hundreds of people every year.

Cover:
Nigeria; Yoruba peoples
Edan (pair of figures for Ogboni society)
Bronze
11 5/8 x 10 5/8 x 2 in. (29.53 x 26.99 x 5.08 cm)
The Stanley Collection, X1986.502
Sovereignty, Law, and Authority

African art for political and/or spiritual leaders involves social justice on a wide scale. Rulers, priests, and powerful spirits have the privilege to define it for an entire kingdom or community. Sacred and secular powers are commonly divided in the West. Leadership arts in Africa, however, regularly combine them in order to legitimize a divine control of the profane and to justify a hierarchy of religious and political power.

Royal Power
Royal arts are central to the legitimization and public support of hierarchy. In Africa, as elsewhere in the world, kings, queens, and other elites rely heavily upon creative expressions of social and political inequality in order to control power and authority. All objects in this section of the exhibit are intended for public spectacle, which commonly take shape through inauguration, courtly procession, and other ceremonies visually saturated with elaborate regalia. Such power is equally manifest through the monumental scale and elaborate construction of a palace, commonly decorated with images of military might.

Nigeria (Benin Kingdom); Edo peoples
Plaque
16th–17th century
Bronze
29.21 x 24.77 x 1.91 cm (11 1/2 x 9 3/4 x 3/4 in.)
Purchased with funds from Mary Jo and Richard H. Stanley, 2001.27

This brass relief plaque from the Benin Kingdom depicts a court official wielding an *eben* (ceremonial sword) in the right hand. The left hand appears above a leopard hip-pendant. Along with the spiral-relief elephant tusk behind the figure’s right shoulder, this object demonstrates the way in which powerful animals appear in royal art to signify the political strength of the king. A beaded fire-coral sash, ivory or copper bracelets, and leopard tooth necklace also demonstrate how the public display of rare and expensive materials evoke wealth and elite status. In order to make plaques such as this during the 16th and 17th centuries, Benin obtained brass from the Portuguese in exchange for pepper, ivory, beads, cloth, and slaves.
As an *nskishi* (power object), the hole in the top of the head of this figure was meant to receive medicinal substances that enhanced its ability to heal and affect political change. The gesture of a woman holding her breasts is common in Luba sculpture, and directly refers to a link between the power of women and Luba kingship. Luba women safeguard the secrets of kingship and royal regalia such as thrones and staffs. They also typically form the central imagery within such objects. Although Luba men serve as kings, the office of Luba kingship is female in gender. During moments of political transition, women serve as a sacred vessel for the spirit of a recently deceased king. Scarification patterns on the abdomen enhance the ability of women to serve in this capacity and represent Luba notions of ideal feminine beauty.

The Mossi chief’s figure and mask (1979.43) refer directly to a pre-colonial separation of rights between farmers that had settled present-day Burkina Faso prior to 1500, and a ruling class that arrived soon thereafter on horseback. Mossi masquerades legitimize settlement claims by reenacting ancestral encounters with benevolent spirits, and at the same time, Mossi royalty legitimizes sovereignty through the public display of figures that are exclusive to the *nakomse*, or ruling class.
Cameroon; Kom peoples
Mask
Wood, copper, brass
39.69 x 32.07 x 15.88 cm (15 5/8 x 12 5/8 x 6 1/4 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1990.601

Kom masks such as this, covered with a thin sheet of copper and imported tacks, refer to rank and are typically exclusive to members of the royal who perform them to commemorate the royal power of the Fon (king). Worn face-up on top of the head, a thinly woven sleeve covers the lower half of the performer’s head and a large tunic covers the upper half of the body. The raised headdress represents a prestige cap, the variations of which there are many in the Grasslands region of Cameroon.

Democratic Republic of the Congo; Kuba peoples
Ndop (portrait of a king)
Wood
34.29 x 12.7 x 11.43 cm (13 1/2 x 5 x 4 1/2 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1990.694

This figure represents a nyim (Kuba king) whose identity is linked not to physical likeness, but a personal emblem placed before the seated ruler. In this example, it represents a game board that is exclusive to the representation of Shamba Bolongongo, who reigned from 1600 to 1620. The raised platform, wide belt decorated with cowry shells, shoulder rings, sword, and shody (elite headdress) mark his royal status. As a vessel for the spirit of the king, ndop were also placed beside his wives during childbirth to ensure safe delivery.
Spiritual Power

Spiritually empowered African art objects commonly appear during transitional periods, such as initiation, funerals, and changes in authority. *Nkisi*, *boli*, and Kono masks are particularly important for settling legal disputes and formalizing agreements. Spirits involved may be ancestral in origin, linked to abstract powers of the natural or supernatural world, or all of the above.

**Burkina Faso; Mossi peoples**

*Crest mask*

*Wood, fiber, pigment*

*215.9 x 73.66 cm (85 x 29 in.)*

*The Stanley Collection, 1979.43*

The Mossi chief’s figure (1979.43) and mask and refer directly to a pre-colonial separation of rights between farmers that had settled present-day Burkina Faso prior to 1500, and a ruling class that arrived soon thereafter on horseback. Mossi masquerades legitimize settlement claims by reenacting ancestral encounters with benevolent spirits, and at the same time, Mossi royalty legitimizes sovereignty through the public display of figures that are exclusive to the *nakomse*, or ruling class.

**Nigeria; Yoruba peoples**

*Edan (pair of figures for Ogboni society)*

*Bronze*

*11 5/8 x 10 5/8 x 2 in. (29.53 x 26.99 x 5.08 cm)*

*The Stanley Collection, X1986.502*

Prior to the British colonization of Nigeria, male and female members of the Ogboni society held great power in Yoruba society. Ogboni functioned as a court of law, a counterweight to royal authority, and provided administration for capital punishment. Ogboni members maintain great prestige today and continue wear *edan* around the neck in public as an emblem of office. The chained male and female pair simultaneously evokes a union between members of the opposite sex, and a gendered reference to the Earth (female) and Heavens (male) in Yoruba cosmogony.
Democratic Republic of the Congo; Ding peoples
*Ngongo munene* (chief of the earth)
Copper
30.48 x 21.27 x 7.3 cm (12 x 8 3/8 x 2 7/8 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1990.652

This copper mask is an important agent of order and social control among Ding peoples. Associated with the sun, men wear it during ceremonial offerings to ancestors and the installation of a chief. The latter wears it for the initiation of young boys, and it may also temporarily appear beside the corpse of an elite as a sign of respect.

Democratic Republic of the Congo; Kongo peoples
*Nkisi nkondi* (power figure)
Wood, iron nails, glass, resin
51.44 x 27.94 x 20.32 cm (20 1/4 x 11 x 8 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1986.573

Throughout the Lower Congo and Kwangu-Kwilu River regions of Central Africa, *minkisi/minkishi* (power objects) are central to communication with the spirit world as an important source of justice and well being. Figural examples such as this commonly include an abdominal cavity to hold medicinal substances prepared by a diviner. Kongo diviners embed nails, blades, pins, and other metal objects into the surface of a *nkisi nkondi* to seal an oath or bind an agreement with a client that is benevolent or harmful in nature.
Among Bamana peoples of Mali, those with the greatest juridical authority prior to and during the early period of colonial rule were men who belong to Kono. This power association, however, develops through interaction with a female spirit. Members use large masks that combine the form of an elephant and bird, and boliw, which take on a variety of forms. Through repeated sacrificial offerings of animal blood, alcoholic liquids, millet porridge, and saliva, the owner appeases the inhabiting spirit.

Created by a hereditary caste of male blacksmiths, boliw (boli sing.) commonly take the form of a ball, human figure, or cow. It is composed of a complex mixture of materials empowered with nyama, a dangerous life force that inhabits the Bamana world. As a model of the universe, religious associations such as Kono use boliw to enforce law and settle conflict in Bamana society.

Among Bamana peoples, bogolanfini garments
Democratic Republic of the Congo; Tabwa peoples
*Mipasi* (ancestor figure)
Wood
29.21 x 6.35 x 8.26 cm (11 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 3 1/4 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1990.704

A Tabwa chief’s collection of ancestor figures such as this confirms his genealogical link to previous rulers. Sculpted by religious specialists and placed upon a shrine, care of the object corresponds to the cycle of the moon, whose significance in Tabwa social and political thought is further indicated by geometric motifs in the lower back side of the elaborate hairstyle.

Cameroon and Gabon; Fang peoples
*Eyima Bieri* (reliquary guardian figure)
Wood
42.55 x 11.43 x 11.43 cm (16 3/4 x 4 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1986.540

From the mid-eighteenth through the nineteenth century, Fang peoples migrated from what are now Chad and the Central African Republic to Equatorial Guinea, northern Gabon, and southwest Cameroon. During this time, graves shifted into portable reliquaries guarded by a *bieri* in the form of a carved wooden head or anthropoid figure—an artistic tradition that lasted until the early twentieth century. Fang men presented ancestral skulls within the reliquaries to boys during initiation, when they received an adult name and information regarding taboos.
Colonial Power

Many art objects from Africa demonstrate a response to European colonial power. Some demonstrate resistance, such as Kongo figures called mangaaka recently exhibited at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. As a specific type of nkisi nkondi (X1986.573), the imposing scale and aggressive stance strongly suggests a sovereign form of power and defiance. Such “traditional” images of African power, however, should not be broadly categorized as forms of colonial resistance. While the Mossi chief’s figure (X1986.385) provides justification for rule in West Africa, the same type and style of figure appeared in the French popular press beside the Mossi Emperor and a fonctionnaire in 1935, suggesting colonial alliance that was in fact highly coercive in nature.1

African objects that appropriate European forms and motifs provide subtler responses to colonial encounter. Artistic borrowing is neither simply an affirmation nor a critique of the source, and depending on audience and context, objects such as the Youruiba chief’s headdress may serve conflicting audiences simultaneously. Even among objects created directly for export, African artists find creative ways to maintain agency through parody. In the Solongo ivory object (X1990.647), for example, art history professor Christopher D. Roy, notes that there “seems to bear the perplexed expression of someone who has been forced to deal with the Belgian colonial administration” (Roy 1992:217).

Contemporary African artists such as El Anatsui and William Kentridge, among many others, continue to make work that addresses African colonial history and its complex legacies today.


Sikire Kambire (1896–1963)
Burkina Faso; Lobi peoples
Janus head staff
Wood
66.04 x 17.78 x 5.72 cm (26 x 7 x 2 1/4 in.)
From the Collection of Al and Margaret Coudron, 1996.187

In 1931, French colonial ethnographer Henri Labouret was the first to publish Lobi art made for export.2 The masks he published were created by Sikire Kambire, the same artist that made this Janus head staff. While Lobi male elders use such staffs as status symbols, the Janus motif refers to the power to simultaneously communicate with the realm of the living and the dead. Kambire made staffs, figures, stools, masks, and other objects for colonists and tourists until his death, and several Lobi sculptors continue to work in a similar style (called “Bonko”) for personal shrines and the market today.
Mali; Bamana peoples
Bogolan (mud-dyed cloth)
Cotton, pigment
Width 121.920cm (48 in.)
African Art Purchase Fund Stanley–UI, 2000.19

A Bamana artist from Mali uses bogolan to address a new world order, where peace is synonymous with an education in global geography, European history, math, and French language skills. According to the banner centered on the African continent at the upper right of the textile, peace on earth is for people (or perhaps just men) of “good will,” rather than everyone.

William Kentridge (South African, b. 1955–)
The General, 1993–1998
Drypoint with hand-coloring on handmade paper
120.02 x 80.01 cm (47 1/4 x 31 1/2 in.)
Museum purchase with funds from Shawn Zeitz and Emily Gatsby, and the Print and Drawing Study Club, 2001.4

South African artist William Kentridge depicts a highly decorated military officer with frenzied lines, an acrid palette, and a piercing gaze that evokes the anxiety of Africa’s colonial past. During WWI, the monocle and standing collar was common in Germany, which had just massacred 75,000 peoples in Namibia from 1904 to 1908.

El Anatsui (Ghanaian, b. 1944–)
Transit, 2002
Wood, pigment
10.16 x 60.96 cm (4 x 24 in.)
Purchased with funds from the Stanley-UI Foundation Support Organization, 2002.106a–o

(Illustrated on page one.) Titles for and designs in many of El Anatsui’s artworks suggest the strip-woven structure of kente textiles and by association, the artist’s Ghanaian identity. However, the artist plays down such connotations for his current large-scale metal cloths. In wooden panels such as this, charred slashes, gouges, and splintered edges deliberately evoke violent forces of colonial mapping and turbulent histories of nationalism in Africa. A vibrant palette, however, tempers the bleak nature of these associations.
Nigeria; Yoruba peoples
Chief’s headdress
Beads, fiber
38.1 x 23.5 x 23.5 cm (15 x 9 1/4 x 9 1/4 in.)
General Education Fund, 2009.3

Nigeria was a British colony from 1914 to 1960, and this Yoruba chief’s headdress appropriates the secular form of a British magistrate’s wig. The small cone on top recalls the hairstyle of a Yoruba priest and the form of a royal crown, however, and so refers to the sacred authority of an Oba (Yoruba king). Red also signifies Shango, the Yoruba god of thunder and imperial expansion, which suggests subversive resistance to colonial power.

Democratic Republic of the Congo; Solongo and neighboring peoples
Export ivories
Dimensions variable

One of the most important ways for Africans to demonstrate “good will” during the colonial era was to support the export economy. From the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, the European demand for ivory took advantage of slavery as the cheapest way to obtain the material from the African interior. Trade in ivory flourished from 1830 to 1900 along the coastal region of Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola, where artists commonly used it to represent missionaries, colonial bureaucrats, and slavery itself. While a dramatic increase in the production of these secular objects appeared alongside the mass destruction of “fetishes,” or sacred objects, nkisi remained a significant form of resistance to colonial power in Central Africa during the early twentieth century.
**Status, Rank, and Prestige**

Among politically non-centralized societies in Africa, art provides an important means of social control. The exclusive display of an object signifies power, status, the possession of secret knowledge, and law. Initiation offers restricted access to objects and membership in prestigious grade-level societies and religious associations. Many shrine objects from the Lower Niger Delta focus upon the individual means of achieving success in life. Spirits in sacred objects require control through repeated physical interaction, which commonly results in encrustation or a smooth, glossy patina.

**Initiation**

In Africa, passage through key moments in life commonly involves initiation. Children, adolescents, adults, elders, and ancestors each belong to their own age group, and transition from one to another commonly requires education and interaction with spirits that oversee such moments of change. Among Lobi peoples, for example, one cannot join an adult conversation until initiation in *joro*, which provides a foundation for adulthood. Among many African peoples, public authority belongs to a council of elders whose status, rank, and prestige is marked not only by age and education, but the ownership and display of exclusive art objects.

---

**Not illustrated:**

Democratic Republic of the Congo; Lega peoples
* Lukwakongo (mask)
  Ivory, kaolin, fiber
  19.37 x 12.07 x 3.49 cm (7 5/8 x 4 3/4 x 1 3/8 in.)
  The Stanley Collection, X1986.571

Democratic Republic of the Congo; Lega peoples
* Iginga (figure)
  Ivory
  12.54 x 5.08 x 2.54 cm (4 15/16 x 2 x 1 in.)
  The Stanley Collection, X1986.560

Democratic Republic of the Congo; Lega peoples
* Iginga (figure)
  Ivory
  10.48 x 4.13 x 2.86 cm (4 1/8 x 1 5/8 x 1 1/8 in.)
  The Stanley Collection, X1986.585

Democratic Republic of the Congo; Lega peoples
* Mukubal/Kekumba (man’s Bwami hat)
  Fiber, raffia, beads, wire, buttons, and elephant tail
  40.64 x 15.24 x 27.94 cm (16 x 6 x 11 in.)
  Anonymous gift in honor of Betty Stanley, 1986.76

---

**Democratic Republic of the Congo; Lega peoples**

Art among Lega peoples supports membership within Bwami, a hierarchical initiation society for men and women. *Iginga*, or anthropoid ivory objects, belong to *kindi*, the highest grade-level, and wooden *lukwakongo* masks belong to *yananio*, the second highest grade-level. While Bwami is open to all, women can only gain access through marriage and may never exceed the rank of a husband. Without such a wife, a man cannot join the highest Bwami grade-level, which includes the privilege of wearing a beaded/buttoned cap.
with an elephant tail (see 1986.76). Participation in Bwami assures a sense of belonging and promotes virtues of ethical conduct, moral development, law, and peace. However, this social code takes shape through art and power divided unevenly by gender. Although Bwami is not overtly political in nature, colonial Belgium outlawed it in 1933 and the association did not resurface in public again until independence in 1960.

While the identity of the spirit associated with this figure is uncertain, ichi (scarification patterns) on the forehead and the crested hairstyle suggest elevated social rank. In southern Igala country, women collectively own ojibo, which are stored in the eldest woman’s house. During funerals, women dress them, decorate them with beads, and present them in public to celebrate the status of the deceased.

In contrast to African objects that mark status attained through social cooperation, examples from the lower Niger River stand out through their emphasis on psychic strength and individual achievement. Ikenga belong to men who use the altarpiece for personal gain, seeking status through individual determination rather than social or institutional support. Ichi appear on the forehead, and are associated with rank.
Cameroon; Bana Guili peoples
Dibul Kouan (woman’s beaded apron)
Beads, shells, fiber
21.59 x 59.06 cm (8 1/2 x 23 1/4 in.)
Museum of Art African Collection Fund with support from J. Randolph Lewis, M.D. and Linda Lewis, 2003.23

Bana Guili women wear beaded pubic-coverings during initiation, wedding celebrations, and other important ceremonies. They are worn to protect the owner from harmful spirits, and to display various stages of personal identity and social ties. When Cameroon gained political independence in 1961, the government banned the public display of women’s beaded aprons among all women in the country. Women continue to wear them however, in remote areas less subject to this post-colonial intervention. After the 1980s, beaded aprons saw a shift in design and scale. These recent examples are larger, include representational motifs, and patterns appear less improvised.

Democratic Republic of the Congo; Kuba peoples
Cut-pile cloth
Raffia, dye
71.12 x 31.75 cm (28 x 12 1/2 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1990.618

Cut-pile embroidered textiles entered the Kuba kingdom during the incorporation of Shoowa peoples in mid-seventeenth century. Weaving remains the material basis for royal architecture and ceremonial dress, and for expressing status, wealth, and personal states of transition. Kuba elites drape prestigious textiles such as this over the shoulder or upon a stool as a symbol of status, and men collect them as shrouds to celebrate high status during their funeral.

South Africa; Ndebele peoples
Mapoto (married woman’s apron)
Glass, plastic, beads, leather, cloth
48.26 x 45.72 cm (19 x 18 in.)
Museum purchase, 1998.66

Commonly worn with a larger ensemble of beaded garments and jewelry, mapoto indicate status as a married woman. Fastened around the waist, the lower edge of the garment typically reaches beyond the knees, allowing additional beaded ornaments to be displayed around the ankles. A mapoto is typically square in format, and includes a beaded fringe flanked by two flaps at the base. Ndebele patterning, whether found in beaded garments or on the painted surface of domestic architecture, is characterized by a strong symmetry and outlined rectilinear forms.
Cameroon; Bamileke peoples
Shüöto (man’s hat)
Cotton, raffia
17.8 x 15.2 x 15.2 cm (7 x 6 x 6 in.)
Anonymous gift in honor of Betty Stanley, 1986.86

This Bamileke hat is made of looped and woven cotton and was likely worn by a man of high status. Like the other kingdoms of Cameroon, Bamileke was highly stratified, and so developed a rich tradition of clothing and other personal adornments that reflect the many positions held by the royal family, members of the court, and lesser officials.

Mali; Bamana peoples
Jonyeleni (female figure)
Wood, fiber
60.3 x 14 x 13.3 cm (23 3/4 x 5 1/2 x 5 1/4 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1986.485
Norms, Ideals, and Outcasts

Through the dramatization of social norms, ideals, and outcasts in sacred (initiation) and secular (entertainment) contexts, masquerades contribute significantly to identity politics in Africa. They regularly animate standard concepts of gender, moral character, beauty, and (im)proper behavior. Relying upon audience participation in order to develop such archetypes, masquerades provide a highly creative and collective means of affecting social equality in Africa.

Idealism

The dramatization of gender through masquerade or ceremonial display renders identity as performance. Though elaborately constructed, gender norms become codified and naturalized through art during key moments in life, such as initiation and funerals, and through entertainment for large audiences.

Among Dan peoples of Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia, the dark color and smooth patina in sensuously carved ladles signify the ideal woman as hostess, and the source of sustenance and indiscriminate hospitality (X1986.522). Following initiation, young Bamana men use jonyeleni figures (X1986.485) with ideal physical attributes, such as gleaming, scarified skin; large, conical breasts; and metal jewelry in order to demonstrate interest in finding an attractive partner and potential wife.

During okoroshi masquerades at Owerri, Nigeria, Igbo Spirit Maiden masks (2006.377) embody the light, graceful beauty of women. During dry season festivals and funerals of high-ranking individuals, mgbedike masks (1995.238) embody the spirit of male aggression. They also enforced social justice prior to British colonization. Among Chokwe peoples of Angola, mwana pwo (X1986.501) represents a young, beautiful, initiated woman ready to marry, while chihongo (X1990.598) represents wealth, nobility, and masculine power.
Nigeria; Igbo peoples
*Mgbedike* (mask)
Wood, metal, clay, shells
78.74 x 27.94 x 30.48 cm (31 x 11 x 12 in.)
Gift of Dr. Meredith Saunders, 1995.238

Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia; Chokwe peoples
*Chihongo* mask
Wood, fiber, cotton, bark, raffia
29.21 x 22.86 x 27.31 cm (11 1/2 x 9 x 10 3/4 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1990.598

Nigeria; Igbo peoples
*Agbogho mmuo* (maiden spirit mask)
Wood, pigment
45.72 x 41.91 x 20.32 cm (18 x 16 1/2 x 8 in.)
John Harrison Estate Acquisition Fund, 2006.377

Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia; Chokwe peoples
*Pwo* mask
Wood, fiber
35.56 x 33.02 x 30.48 cm (14 x 13 x 12 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1986.501
Sierra Leone; Mende peoples
Gonde or sowe mask
Wood, pigment, metal
39.37 x 19.37 x 24.13 cm (15 1/2 x 7 5/8 x 9 1/2 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1986.336

This crested helmet mask from Sierra Leone was created for use in the Sande initiation society, which cultivates ideal beauty, moral perfection, and education for young women. At first glance, the object conforms to the sowe mask type, whose flawless, gleaming surface celebrates the model of feminine beauty among women after initiation. Through closer inspection, however, a damaged surface suggests it may belong to the gonde mask type, whose clown-like performance provides a foil for refined ideals cultivated among female initiates.

Mali; Bamana peoples
Korè mask, called sukuru (hyena)
Wood
45.72 x 20.96 x 24.13 cm (18 x 8 1/4 x 9 1/2 in.)
The Stanley Collection, X1986.210

In addition to initiation for young Bamana boys, select members of the Korè society perform masks such as this in order to promote standards of social conduct. Through acts of ritual buffoonery, they mock those with great knowledge and power, such as religious leaders, hunters, and warriors. This mask represents the hyena, an animal associated with wisdom, forgetfulness, and a voracious thirst for knowledge.
Suggested Reading


Exhibition checklist

1. Democratic Republic of the Congo; Luba peoples
   Mikisi mihake (female figure)
   Wood
   34.93 x 8.89 x 9.84 cm (13 3/4 x 3 1/2 x 3 7/8 in.)
   The Stanley Collection, X1986.298

2. Burkina Faso; Mossi peoples
   Female figure
   Wood
   57.15 x 16.51 x 11.43 cm (22 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.)
   The Stanley Collection, X1986.385

3. Democratic Republic of the Congo; Kuba peoples
   Ndop (portrait of a king)
   Wood
   34.29 x 12.7 x 11.43 cm (13 1/2 x 5 x 4 1/2 in.)
   The Stanley Collection, X1990.694

4. Democratic Republic of the Congo; Solongo and neighboring peoples
   Export ivories
   Dimensions variable
   The Stanley Collection, X1990.702, X1990.647,
   X1990.691, and X1990.692

8. Sikire Kambire (1896–1963)
   Burkina Faso; Lobi peoples
   Janus head staff
   Wood
   66.04 x 17.78 x 5.72 cm (26 x 7 x 2 1/4 in.)
   From the Collection of Al and Margaret
   Coudron, 1996.187

9. Nigeria (Benin Kingdom); Edo peoples
   Plaque
   16th–17th century
   Bronze
   29.21 x 24.77 x 1.91 cm (11 1/2 x 9 3/4 x 3/4 in.)
   Purchased with funds from Mary Jo and Richard
   H. Stanley, 2001.27

10. Mali; Bamana peoples
    Jonyeleni (female figure)
    Wood, fiber
    60.3 x 14 x 13.3 cm (23 3/4 x 5 1/2 x 5 1/4 in.)
    The Stanley Collection, X1986.485

11. Mali; Bamana peoples
    Korè mask, called sukuru (hyena)
    Wood
    45.72 x 20.96 x 24.13 cm (18 x 8 1/4 x 9 1/2 in.)
    The Stanley Collection, X1986.210

12. Sierra Leone; Mende peoples
    Gonde or sowe’i mask
    Wood, pigment, metal
    39.37 x 19.37 x 24.13 cm (15 1/2 x 7 5/8 x 9 1/2 in.)
    The Stanley Collection, X1986.336

13. Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo,
    and Zambia; Chokwe peoples
    Chihongo mask
    Wood, fiber, cotton, bark, raffia
    29.21 x 22.86 x 27.31 cm (11 1/2 x 9 x 10 3/4 in.)
    The Stanley Collection, X1990.598

14. Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo,
    and Zambia; Chokwe peoples
    Pwo mask
    Wood, fiber
    35.56 x 33.02 x 30.48 cm (14 x 13 x 12 in.)
    The Stanley Collection, X1986.501

15. Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia; Dan peoples
    Wakemia (ladle)
    Wood, metal
    64.77 x 17.78 x 11.43 cm (25 1/2 x 7 x 4 1/2 in.)
    The Stanley Collection, X1986.522

16. Cameroon and Gabon; Fang peoples
    Eyima Bieri (reliquary guardian figure)
    Wood
    42.55 x 11.43 x 11.43 cm (16 3/4 x 4 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.)
    The Stanley Collection, X1986.540

17. Cameroon; Kom peoples
    Mask
    Wood, copper, brass
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1990.601</td>
<td>Ngongo munene (chief of the earth)</td>
<td>Copper</td>
<td>30.48 x 21.27 x 7.3 cm (12 x 8 3/8 x 2 7/8 in.)</td>
<td>The Stanley Collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1990.652</td>
<td>Edan (pair of figures for Ogboni society)</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td>11 5/8 x 10 5/8 x 2 in. (29.53 x 26.99 x 5.08 cm)</td>
<td>The Stanley Collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1986.502</td>
<td>Nkisi nkondi (power figure)</td>
<td>Wood, iron nails, glass, resin</td>
<td>51.44 x 27.94 x 20.32 cm (20 1/4 x 11 x 8 in.)</td>
<td>The Stanley Collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1986.573</td>
<td>Mipasi (ancestor figure)</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>29.21 x 6.35 x 8.26 cm (11 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 3 1/4 in.)</td>
<td>The Stanley Collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1990.618</td>
<td>Ikenga (personal altar)</td>
<td>Wood, encrusted patina</td>
<td>41.91 x 10.16 x 10.16 cm (16 1/2 x 4 x 4 in.)</td>
<td>The Stanley Collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1986.162</td>
<td>Ikenga (personal altar)</td>
<td>Wood, fiber</td>
<td>38.1 x 23.5 x 23.5 cm (15 x 9 1/4 x 9 1/4 in.)</td>
<td>General Education Fund</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1986.571</td>
<td>Shüöto (man’s hat)</td>
<td>Fiber, raffia, beads, wire, buttons, and elephant tail</td>
<td>40.64 x 15.24 x 27.94 cm (16 x 6 x 11 in.)</td>
<td>Anonymous gift in honor of Betty Stanley</td>
<td>1986.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1986.86</td>
<td>Mukuba/Kekumba (man’s hat)</td>
<td>Cotton, raffia</td>
<td>17.8 x 15.2 x 15.2 cm (7 x 6 x 6 in.)</td>
<td>Anonymous gift in honor of Betty Stanley</td>
<td>1986.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1990.618</td>
<td>Ojibo (female figure)</td>
<td>Wood, pigment</td>
<td>50.8 x 16.51 x 16.51 cm (20 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/2 in.)</td>
<td>The Stanley Collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1986.571</td>
<td>Dibul Kouan (woman’s beaded apron)</td>
<td>Beads, shells, fiber</td>
<td>21.59 x 59.06 cm (8 1/2 x 23 1/4 in.)</td>
<td>Museum of Art African Collection Fund with support from J. Randolph Lewis, M.D. and Linda Lewis</td>
<td>2003.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
32. Mali; Bamana peoples
*Bogolan* (mud-dyed cloth)
Cotton, pigment
Width 121.920 cm (48 in.)
African Art Purchase Fund Stanley–UI, 2000.19

33. William Kentridge (South African, b. 1955–)
Drypoint with hand-coloring on handmade paper
120.02 x 80.01 cm (47 1/4 x 31 1/2 in.)
Museum purchase with funds from Shawn Zeitz and Emily Gatsby, and the Print and Drawing Study Club, 2001.4

34. El Anatsui (Ghanaian, b. 1944–)
*Transit*, 2002
Wood, pigment
10.16 x 60.96 cm (4 x 24 in.)
Purchased with funds from the Stanley-UI Foundation Support Organization, 2002.106a–o

35. South Africa; Ndebele peoples
*Mapoto* (married woman’s apron)
Glass, plastic, beads, leather, cloth
48.26 x 45.72 cm (19 x 18 in.)
Museum purchase, 1998.66

36. Burkina Faso; Mossi peoples
Crest mask
Wood, fiber, pigment
215.9 x 73.66 cm (85 x 29 in.)
The Stanley Collection, 1979.43

37. Mali; Bamana peoples
*Kono mask*
Wood, encrusted patina
88.9 x 30.48 x 20.32 cm (35 x 12 x 8 in.)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gaston de Havenon, 1969.485

38. Nigeria; Igbo peoples
*Mgbedike* (mask)
Wood, metal, clay, shells
78.74 x 27.94 x 30.48 cm (31 x 11 x 12 in.)
Gift of Dr. Meredith Saunders, 1995.238

39. Nigeria; Igbo peoples
*Agbogho mmuo* (maiden spirit mask)
Wood, pigment
45.72 x 41.91 x 20.32 cm (18 x 16 1/2 x 8 in.)
John Harrison Estate Acquisition Fund, 2006.377

40. Mali; Bamana peoples
*Boli* (altar)
Wood, clay, organic materials
46.99 x 27.94 x 63.5 cm (18 1/2 x 11 x 25 in.)
Purchased with funds from the Friends of the Museum of Art Foundation, 2008.26

41. Mali; Bamana peoples
*Bogolanfini* (mud-dyed cloth)
Cotton, pigment
88.9 x 152.4 cm (35 x 60 in.)
Purchased with funds from Robert F. and Delores DeWilde Bina, 2000.18
Learn more about African art online at “Art & Life in Africa” (africa.uima.uiowa.edu), hosted by the UIMA.