



Stanley Museum of Art

University of Iowa
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Iowa City, Iowa 52242
stanleymuseum.uiowa.edu

NEWS RELEASE

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Latest Textile Exhibition at the Stanley Museum of Art Celebrates the African Immigrant Community of Iowa City

Iowa City, Iowa – The University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art presents the exhibition, *Weaving Narratives: African Textiles in Iowa*, opening November 1, 2025. This exhibition features a selection of African textiles from the museum’s permanent collection and loans from the Roy and Sophie Sieber Collection with video-recorded interviews of individuals in Iowa represented culturally and nationally by the textiles in the exhibition.

Organized by the museum’s Curator of African Art, Cory Gundlach, and Mellon Curatorial Fellow, Peju Layiwola, and curated by representatives from the African community in Iowa City— Anne Kiche, Sunday Goshit, and Walla Osman—the exhibition honors the lived stories and cultural legacies shared by Africans in Iowa.

“This exhibition is more than art, it’s a bridge,” said Gundlach. “And it is a bridge meant to strengthen the Stanley Museum of Art’s rapport with Iowans represented in the African collection. It is about honoring textiles as carriers of identity, memory, and belonging, and about weaving together our community through shared cultural expression.”

“We are exploring the ways in which African Iowans connect with their culture through textiles and how these textiles resonate with other Iowans,” said Layiwola. “For many, African textile brings back lots of memories and serves as a cultural identifier in a place that has now become their new home.”

While the Stanley Museum acquired its first African textiles prior to Betty Stanley’s bequest in 1990, her gift of nearly forty textiles laid the foundation for a collection that has grown to include nearly 600 examples of fiber art from across the continent. To honor the legacy of this gift, the exhibition will include select works from Betty Stanley’s collection, along with other acquisitions and loans from the Roy and Sophie Sieber Collection.

Weaving Narratives: African Textiles in Iowa is presented with support by an anonymous trust and additional support by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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About the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art

The University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art is a leading university art museum that serves as a focal point for members of the public as well as a multi-disciplinary tool and creative hub for students across campus. The Stanley has one of the most important university-owned art collections in the country, including significant holdings of African art, 20th-century painting and sculpture, works on paper, textiles, and ceramics. Their world-class collection began with acquisitions made in the 1930s to support the nation's first Master of Fine Arts program. The collection continued to evolve as generations of UI faculty and students, including Grant Wood, Elizabeth Catlett, Miriam Schapiro, Philip Guston, and Ana Mendieta, shaped the field of American art.

Learn more at stanleymuseum.uiowa.edu.

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive.

Learn more at mellon.org.



Itjogolo/Ijogolo (marriage apron), Ndebele style, 20th century. Beads, brass, fiber, leather. The Roy and Sophie Sieber Collection, 342.2025. Unrecorded artist; South Africa.



Detail view of *kanga* (printed cloth), Swahili style, ca. 1985. Cotton. Museum purchase, 2003.347. Unrecorded designer at Rivatex; Eldoret, Kenya



Left to right: Shihabedin M. Ali, Khalda Mohieldin, Walla Osman, and Peju Layiwola at the Stanley Museum of Art. Photo by Mahvish Farid.



Anne Kiche, Professor of Global Health Studies, Chairperson of the African Communities Network of Iowa, and faculty member in Iowa's African Studies Program talks about *kanga* cloth at the Stanley Museum of Art. Photo by Mahvish Farid.

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