African Art and Aesthetics  (Anth 112a)
Professor: Mark Auslander
Teaching Fellow: Olajide Olajunju
Special Assistant for Community-Engaged Learning: Bashir Martin
Block P - T,F 03:10 PM - 04:30 PM
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Spring 2007

Aims of Course: This course explores the diverse and inspiring arts of Africa and African-descended communities. We consider the paradoxes of masks and masking, the ritual and spiritual power of sculpture and textiles, the cultural politics of the transnational trade in African art, and exciting developments in contemporary art within Africa and in the African Diaspora. Particular emphasis is given to how social power is reproduced, negotiated and contested through tactile and aesthetic forms: in what respects does art transform or work upon the world of social relations?

Students will undertake research on the artistic and performance traditions of African immigrant communities in the greater Boston area; these will be the basis of field reports and, in some instances, presentations and research papers.

Course Requirements and Evaluation. Work for this course will count towards the final grade in the following fashion:

- Short paper (7 pages) 20%
- Community Project/field reports 20%
- Powerpoint presentation 20%
- Research Paper. (12-15 pp.) 30%
- Class participation 10%

All papers must be typed, double spaced, and in 10 or 12 point. Please use internal citations (Steiner 1996:132). Append a bibliography indicating all sources used in any way during the writing of the essay. Each essay must demonstrate mature, thoughtful engagement with all the various readings for the relevant section of the course.

All written work should be submitted in hard copy form. The research paper should also be submitted in electronic form over email, as an attached MS Word file and with the text pasted into an email message. Please also submit a hard copy of the research paper in Dr. Auslander’s mailbox in the Anthropology Department office.

Community project. We will have several community meetings with African and African diaspora immigrant community partners; we will help to document their artistic
and cultural traditions. We may work especially closely with the southern Sudanese and Haitian community in the greater Boston area. Please submit timely field reports after each interview or performance session. (A guide to reports will be handed out.)

The **Research Paper** is your opportunity to explore in detail one specific work or performance piece of African, African Diaspora, African-inspired art; in most cases, this will be a work that you have had a chance to view (“live”) in the Boston area, in the Museum of Fine Arts, at the Peabody-Essex Museum or through field research with an African/African Diaspora immigrant community. Please consult with the instructor and library staff as soon as possible to discuss the research paper topic and to explore resources and strategies for writing the paper.

**Powerpoint Presentation.** This in class presentation explores the topic of your research paper. Please bring the file on a CD or DVD to class on your assigned day, and give an oral presentation. Please be prepared to answer questions from the class about your research.

**Attendance,** on time, is required. Please be sure to sign the sign in sheet each time. For each 3 unexcused absences, the final grade may be reduced by one letter grade.

**Readings** must be done by the assigned date. In addition to the six books, shorter readings are available in electronic form on JSTOR, through Academic Search Premiere, or through the class WebCT site. (Please see the reading list at the end of the syllabus for the on-line location of each article). The only work not available electronically is the Wyatt MacGaffey; copies are on library reserve and in the Anthropology department.

Students are expected to bring hard copies of the readings to class, along with their readings notes. For each class session please type out or write out at least one sentence or paragraph from the readings for that day that especially fascinated, moved, annoyed or perplexed you, and write a few lines in which you reflect on the passage: why did it have the effect on you that it did? These pages will be collected at the start of class, from time to time; they will be evaluated and reflected in your final grade.

The following books are available for purchase in the Brandeis Bookstore:

- Chernoff *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*
- Steiner, Chris. *African Art in Transit*
- Zachary Kingdon. *A Host of Devils: The History and Context of the Making of Makonde Spirit Sculpture*
- Doring, Tobias. *African Culture, Visual Arts and the Museum* (recommended)
**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism.** You may only submit your own original work in this course; this includes quizzes, exams, field observations, written papers, and other media. Please be careful to cite precisely and properly the sources of all authors and persons you have drawn upon in your written work. Plagiarism (from published or internet sources) is a serious violation of academic integrity and of the relationship of trust between student and instructor. Please take special care to indicate the precise source of all materials found on the web, indicating the correct URL address of any material you have quoted or in any way drawn upon. Remember, you must indicate through quotations, indentation and citation when quoting from any outside source (internet or print). On Powerpoint presentations, please indicate the sources of all images.

**Late work** will only be accepted under exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the instructor, and if accepted, may be penalized.

**Accommodations.** If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately, as accommodations may not be made retroactively.

**Supplementary course materials,** including powerpoint files and suggested websites, will be accessible through the course WebCT site; please check this site regularly for updates, reading questions and informal class discussion.

**Community Project** Over the course of the semester, we will work with African immigrant communities, documenting their artistic and performance practices.

This class is a **cell phone free environment.** Please turn off all mobiles, pagers, etc.

**Course Schedule**

**Tuesday, Jan 16.** Introduction

*Thursday, Jan. 18. Required: screening of film, “God Grew Tired of Us: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan” (Wasserman Cinemateque, International Business School) 7:00 p.m. Followed by panel discussion.*

*Field report #1: tour the exhibition, “Leave the Bones and Catch the Land: Southern Sudanese Art from Kakuma Refugee Camp” (Goldfarb library, levels 1,2,3). Listen to the ipod audio tour. Write a 2 page review of the exhibition, due on Friday, January 26 at start of class, relating the exhibition to the film, “God Grew Tired of Us.”*

**Friday, Jan 19. Orientations: Communicative and Pragmatic Approaches to African Art**

Paula Ben-Amos. 1989 African Visual Arts from a Social Perspective

Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-0206%28198909%2932%3A2%3C1%3AAVAFAS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-T

Object and Intellect: Interpretations of Meaning in African Art
Henry John Drewal
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0004-3249%28198822%2947%3A2%3C70%3A0AIOM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-X

Vogel, Susan Mullin People of Wood: Baule Figure Sculpture

Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0004-3249%28197323%2933%3A1%3C23%3APOWBFS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-N

Tuesday, January 23. Theorizing Secrecy: Masking and Masquerades

Secrecy: African Art That Conceals and Reveals
Mary H. Nooter
African Arts, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Jan., 1993), pp. 54-69+102
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28199301%2926%3A1%3C54%3ASAATCA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-T

Kenji Yoshida
Masks and Secrecy among the Chewa, pp. 34-45+92
African Arts, Vol. 26, No. 2, Apr., 1993

Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28199304%2926%3A2%3C34%3AMASATC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E

Notes on Egungun Masquerades among the Oyo Yoruba
Marilyn Hammersley Houlberg
African Arts Vol. 11, No. 3 (Apr., 1978), pp. 56-61+99
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28197804%2911%3A3%3C56%3ANOEMAT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y

The Fancy and the Fierce
John Nunley
African Arts > Vol. 14, No. 2 (Feb., 1981), pp. 52-58+87-88
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28198102%2914%3A2%3C52%3ATFATF%3E2.0.CO%3B2-1
Friday, January 26. **Women and Masking**

Women=Masks: Initiation Arts in North-Western Province, Zambia
Elisabeth L. Cameron
*African Arts* > Vol. 31, No. 2, Special Issue: Women's Masquerades in Africa and the Diaspora (Spring, 1998), pp. 50-61+93
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28199821%2931%3A2%3C50%3AWIAINP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-J

Men Portraying Women: Representations in African Masks
Elisabeth L. Cameron
*African Arts* > Vol. 31, No. 2, Special Issue: Women's Masquerades in Africa and the Diaspora (Spring, 1998), pp. 72-79+94
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28199821%2931%3A2%3C72%3AMPWRIA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-1

Elephant Women, Furious and Majestic: Women's Masquerades in Africa and the Diaspora
Sidney Littlefield Kasfir
*African Arts* > Vol. 31, No. 2, Special Issue: Women's Masquerades in Africa and the Diaspora (Spring, 1998), pp. 18-27+92
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28199821%2931%3A2%3C18%3AEWFAMW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z

Saturday, January 27. Recommended; Attend Creole language worship service at 11 am. Temple Salem, Dorchester/Mattapan. (transportation will be arranged: leave Brandeis at 10:00 a.m.) This is a nice chance to meet members of the Haitian community.

Tuesday, January 30. **Mami Wata**

Performing the Other: Mami Wata Worship in Africa
Henry John Drewal
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1054-2043%28198822%2932%3A2%3C160%3APTOMWW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4

See film: *Mami Wata: In Search of the White Spirit of Nigeria*

Wed, Jan 31. Last day to see Sudanese art show in library.

Friday, Feb. 2. **Masking and Masculinity.**

Due: Tuesday, Feb 6. Short field report (2 page) Visit the African art displays at the Boston Museum Fine Arts or the Peabody Essex Museum and discuss at least one work, in light of the readings we have done.

Case Study: Yoruba Aesthetics, Philosophy and Cosmology

Tuesday, Feb. 6. Rowland, Abiodun. Understanding Yoruba Art and Aesthetics; The Concept of Ase.
African Arts. Vol. 27 (3) p. 68 ff.

Or in more detail:
Àẹ: Verbalizing and Visualizing Creative Power through Art
Rowland Abiodun
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?SICI=0022-4200%28199411%2924%3A4%3C309%3AAAVAVCP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-5

Àwòrán: Representing the Self and Its Metaphysical Other in Yoruba Art
Babatunde Lawal
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?SICI=0004-3079%28200109%2983%3A3%3C498%3AARTSAI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-G

Friday, February 9.

Efe: Voiced Power and Pageantry
Tuesday, February 13,
Aesthetics of Yoruba Recreational Dances as Exemplified in the Oge Dance
Omofolabo Soyinka Ajayi
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0149-7677%28198923%2921%3A2%3C1%3AAOYRDA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-N

Gelede Masquerade: Imagery and Motif
Henry John Drewal
African Arts > Vol. 7, No. 4 (Summer, 1974), pp. 8-19+62-63+95-96
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28197422%297%3A4%3C8%3AGMIAM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U

Portraiture and the Construction of Reality in Yorubaland and beyond
Margaret Thompson Drewal
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28199007%2923%3A3%3C40%3APATCOR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8


*Paper 1 due at start of class (7 pages)  Art, Power and the Technologies of Enchantment. To what extent may “tradition-based” African works of art be understood as technologies of power and enchantment, oriented towards profoundly altering persons, communities and relations between visible and invisible worlds?

Feb 20  No class: vacation
Feb 23  No class: vacation

Tuesday, Feb 27, African Music and Percussion.
Chernoff African Rhythm and African Sensibility (conclude)

*Thursday, March 1.  5:00 pm., free concert by Amazones in Shapiro campus center atrium (required)

Friday, March 2.  Class attends Lynn Marshall Linnemeir’s presentation, in the context of the symposium, “Women Crossing Borders” (Slosberg Auditorium, Slosberg Music Building) Please attend as much of symposium from 12 pm-4:30 pm as you can.

Saturday, March 3.  Recommended: Concert by Amazones (tickets for sale) at 8 pm in Spingold Theater.

Tuesday, March 6.  **The Making of “African Art”**

Christopher Steiner. *African Art in Transit*. pp. 1-79

View & discuss video: *In and Out of Africa*

*Due: One paragraph abstract on research paper and annotated bibliography (at least 5 sources)*

Friday, March 9.  Greater Boston Anthropology Consortium student conference at Tufts University. No class, but please try to attend some or all of the conference.

*Due: Tuesday, March 13. Field report on community project (details to follow)*

**Kongo Worlds**

Tuesday, March 13.

MacGaffey, Wyatt. “The Eyes of Understanding” from *Astonishment and Power*. (Library reserve; photocopy in Anthropology Department, also on WebCT)


See also:
Complexity, Astonishment and Power: The Visual Vocabulary of Kongo Minkisi
Wyatt MacGaffey
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0305-7070%28198801%2914%3A2%3C188%3ACAAPT%2E2%0.CO%3B2-G
Thursday, March 15.  Strongly recommended: seminar by Wyatt MacGaffey on theorizing religion. (3:30 p.m.)

Friday, March 16.  *Wyatt MacGaffey in class.*


Tuesday, March 27.  *Adornment, Textiles and Fabric Art*

The Shirts That Mande Hunters Wear  
*Patrick R. McNaughton*  
*African Arts* > Vol. 15, No. 3 (May, 1982), pp. 54-58+91  
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28198205%2915%3A3%3C54%3ATSTMHW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E

Moba Weaving?  
*Christine Mullen Kreamer*  
*African Arts* > Vol. 19, No. 2 (Feb., 1986), p. 8  
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28198602%2919%3A2%3C8%3AMW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-0

African Weaving and Traditional Dress  
*Frederick Lamp*  
*African Arts* > Vol. 9, No. 2 (Jan., 1976), pp. 63-64  
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28197601%299%3A2%3C63%3AATD%3E2.0.CO%3B

Friday, March 30  *Architecture and Urban Space*


View and discuss video: Turabi.

The Survival and Impact of Igbo Mbari  
*Herbert M. Cole*  
*African Arts* > Vol. 21, No. 2 (Feb., 1988), pp. 54-65+96


Tuesday, April 3: No class: vacation

Friday, April 6: No class: vacation

**Diaspora Worlds: Haiti**

Tuesday, April 10.

Eternal Potential Chromolithographs in Vodunland
Dana Rush
*African Arts*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Winter, 1999), pp. 60-75+94  (JSTOR)

Art and Resistance: Haiti's Political Murals, October 1994
Karen McCarthy Brown
*African Arts*, Vol. 29, No. 2, Special Issue: Arts of Vodou (Spring, 1996), pp. 46-57+102

Lois E. Wilcken

Friday, April 13. Film: Divine Horseman of Haiti (instructor out of town)

Middelanis, Carl-Hermann "Blending with Motifs and Colors: Haitian History Interpreted by Edouard Duval Carrie" Small Axe - Number 18 (Volume 9, Number 2), September 2005, pp. 109-123

Philogene, Jerry "Visual Narratives of Cultural Memory and Diasporic Identities: Two Contemporary Haitian American Artists" Small Axe - Number 16 (Volume 8, Number 2), September 2004, pp. 84-99

Tap-Tap, Fula-Fula, Kia-Kia: The Haitian Bus in Atlantic Perspective
Robert Farris Thompson
*African Arts*, Vol. 29, No. 2, Special Issue: Arts of Vodou (Spring, 1996)

Tuesday, April 17. **New Orleans and the American South**
Second Lines, Minstrelsy, and the Contested Landscapes of New Orleans Afro-Creole Festivals
Helen A. Regis
Stable URL: [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0886-7356%28199911%2914%3A4%3C472%3ASLMATC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0886-7356%28199911%2914%3A4%3C472%3ASLMATC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R)

Indian Altars of the Spiritual Church: Kongo Echoes in New Orleans
Stephen C. Wehmeyer
Stable URL: [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28200024%2933%3A4%3C62%3AIAOTSC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28200024%2933%3A4%3C62%3AIAOTSC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S)

Tradition and Innovation in African-American Yards
Grey Gundaker
Stable URL: [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28199304%2926%3A2%3C58%3ATAIAY%3E2.0.CO%3B2-A](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28199304%2926%3A2%3C58%3ATAIAY%3E2.0.CO%3B2-A)

Friday, April 20. **African Immigrant Arts and Aesthetics: The Southern Sudanese Diaspora**


*Symposium on Southern Sudanese art and aesthetics (to be scheduled)*

Tuesday, April 24. Student Presentations

Friday, April 27. Student Presentations

Tuesday, May 1. Student Presentations (last class)

**Tuesday, May 8** Research papers due.
African and Afro-Atlantic Contemporary Art
V.Y. Mudimbe (WebCT), “Enunciations and Strategies in Contemporary African Arts” in Reading the contemporary: African art from theory to the marketplace By: Olu Oguibe and Okwui Enwezor (WebCT)


Cosentino, Henrietta and Fabius, Carine. First Word: Body Talk (Luba and Saar) African Arts; Summer 2001, Vol. 34 Issue 2, p1, 8p, 4c
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0001-9933%28200122%2934%3C1%3ABT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-%23

Verbal Art and Performance

Transformation in African Verbal Art: Voice, Speech, Language
Linda Hunter
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-8715%28199621%29109%3A432%3C178%3ATIAVA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R

An Opera of the West African Bondo: The Act, Ideas, and the Word
Frederick Lamp
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1054-2043%28198822%2932%3A2%3C83%3AAOOTWA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B

See also:

The State of Research on Performance in Africa.  Margaret Thompson Drewal
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-0206%28199112%2934%3A3%3C1%3ATSOR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4