

# African Art

## ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

- Human life began in Africa.
- African art is active and interactive with other art forms.
- African art is meant to be used, not just viewed.
- Formerly thought of as static and primitive, today African art is seen as interactive with many cultures and ever changing.

## ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

- Rock art is the earliest art form found in Africa. It depicts animals and human activity.
- The spreading Sahara caused migrations to southern Africa where the arts flourished.
- African art is truly interdisciplinary, encompassing a wide variety of media, materials, and performances.
- African art addresses the spiritual world. It can be seen on everyday items, as well as on items associated with royalty.
- Art can be commissioned by a shaman or a worshipper. It is often used as part of an elaborate and prescribes ritual.
- Art permeates all important aspects of society. Rituals initiate coming of age, leadership, or family communion, and often have elements of contact with ancestors.

## IDEAS AND CONCEPTS

1. Art objects are often manipulated and interpreted in rituals. Historic accomplishments are orally preserved by poets and historians who use objects to identify with their stories.
2. Large leadership centers, as in Zimbabwe, show that Africans sometimes used monumental structures to mark settlements and territory.
3. African art has been preserved in an oral tradition. Outsiders have used a written record of historical events.
4. Collectors of African art have often ignored the usual data associated with art history the names of artists and the dates of creation.
5. African art has had a global impact.
6. The function of Great Zimbabwe.
7. Nkisi n'kondi can function as a tool for recovering from disease, helping communities out of difficulties, and destroying enemies.
8. Understand the purposes of masquerade ceremonies and how they may differ.
9. The problem of attribution and dating caused by colonialism and slavery. The function of Great Zimbabwe.
10. Nkisi n'kondi can function as a tool for recovering from disease, helping communities out of difficulties, and destroying enemies.
11. Understand the purposes of masquerade ceremonies and how they may differ.
12. The problem of attribution and dating caused by colonialism and slavery.

## VOCABULARY

Aka	Nkisi n'kondi
Bieri	Pwo
Bundu	scarifications
ciren perdue	torons
fetish	
ikenga	
Lukasa	
Mblo	
Ndop	

## RESOURCES

How African Art influenced Modernism  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=200&v=V9RrO0dtu5M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=200&v=V9RrO0dtu5M)  
 Queen of the Golden Stool  
<https://www.africanexponent.com/post/8142-nana-yaa-asantewa-the-african-warrior-queen-the-west-would-rather-ignore>  
 The New King  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-pl7jliNOQ>

# African Art

## JOURNAL

*Nkisi Nkondi*  
 (3.1, 3.3, 1.4)  
*Kwaluittl (Transformation Mask)*  
 (3.1, 1.2, 2.1)

## CONTEXT

Despite the incredible vastness of the African continent, there are a number of similarities in the way in which African artists create art, stemming from common beliefs they share. Africans believe that ancestors never die and can be addressed; hence a sense of family and a respect for elders are key components of the African psyche. Many African sculptures are representation of family ancestors and were carved to venerate their spirits. Fertility, both of the individual and the land, is highly regarded. Spirits who inhabit the forests or are associated with natural phenomenon have to be respected and worshipped. Sculptures or suckling mothers are extremely common; it is implied that everyone suckles from the breast of God.

Great ancient civilizations in Nubia, Egypt, and Carthage dominated politics in North Africa for centuries before empires began to develop in southern Africa, or much of the rest of the world. African kingdoms came and went with regularity; more populous and dominant people occupied wide swaths of African territory. Strong indigenous states were established in Christian Aksum in present-day Ethiopia in the fourth century, and in the Luba Empire concentrated in central Africa beginning in the fifteenth century. In the twelfth century an important center evolved in southern Africa on the Zimbabwe plateau. Whatever the location, African states developed strong cultural traditions yielding a great variety of artistic expression.

African affairs were largely internal struggles because outsiders were held back by natural barriers like the Sahara Desert and the Indian Ocean. However, by the fifteenth century African politics became greatly complicated by Asian and European incursions on both the east and west coasts of the continent. In general, outsiders restricted themselves to coastal areas that afforded the most access to African goods, and few bothered with the interior of the continent. All this changed in the late nineteenth century when a large series of invasions called the "Scramble for Africa" divided the continent into colonies.

The era of European control spanned less than a century. Most states achieved independence in the 1960s, with the Portuguese colonies waiting until the 1970s. Colonization brought African cultural affairs in direct contact with the rest of the world. Today African artists work both at home and abroad, using native and foreign materials, and marketing their work on a global scale.



## ASSIGNMENTS

- Read Gardner's pages 539-553 & 1121-1139
- Complete homework packet
- Write journal
- Fill in flashcards
- Start topic essay #2

## WORKS OF ART

- Great Mosque of Djenne. Mali 1200
- Conical tower and circular wall of Great Zimbabwe. Southeastern Zimbabwe. Shona peoples 1000-1400
- Wall plaque, from Oba's palace. Edo peoples, Benin (Nigeria) 16th cent
- Sika dwa kofi (Golden Stool). Ashanti peoples (south central Ghana) 1700
- Ndop of King Mishe miShyaang maMbul. Kuba peoples (Democratic Republic of the Congo) 1760-1780
- Power figure (Nkisi n'kondi). Kongo peoples (Democratic Republic of the Congo) 19th cent.
- Female (Pwo) mask. Chokwe peoples (Democratic Republic of the Congo) 19th-20th cent.
- Mblo, Baule peoples (Cote d'Ivoire) 20th cent.
- Bundu mask. Sande Society, Mende peoples (Sierra Leone and Liberia) 19th-20th cent
- Ikenga (shrine figure) Igbo (Nigeria) 19th-20th cent
- Lukasa (memory board). Mbudye Society, Luba peoples (Democratic Republic of the Congo) 19th-20th cent
- Aka elephant mask. Bamileke (Cameroon, western grassfields region) 19th-20th cent
- Reliquary figure (byeri). Fang peoples (southern Cameroon) 19th-20th cent
- Veranda post of enthroned king and senior wife (Opo Ogoga). Olowe of Ise (Yoruba peoples) 1910-1914

**HOMEWORK DUE:** \_\_\_\_\_