

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
Spring 2011-2012

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Off. Hours: Tuesday 3:10-3:50 pm
Thursday 5:20 pm- 5:50 pm, and by appointment

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**African Art From the Primitive to the Global:
Collections, Tourism, and Museums
Thursdays 1:20 pm - 3:20 pm,
Humanities-George Mosse 5245**

The seminar will introduce students to the foreign valuation of African artifacts as ethnographic objects and “primitive” or “tribal art.” We will travel to museums, collections, galleries and fairs, looking at the politics of collecting and exhibiting from the 19th century to the present. In contemporary Africa, we will examine art through two angles, first through the production of tourist art, and second through the work of contemporary African artists (“fine art”) and popular painting for middle-class consumption.

For the first 8 weeks, students will do book length readings and start researching for their final paper. The remaining weeks will be devoted to researching and writing. Students will write a draft of their research essay and give an oral presentation on it in class on week 15.

Requirements

Participation in class discussions: 20%
Paper 1 on Live Exhibits (6 page), due 02/16 in class: 10%
Report on African Section in Chazen (6 page) due on 03/08 , instructor’s mailbox: 10%
Paper 2 on Tourist and Fine Art (6 page) due in class 03/15: 10%
Final Essay (15-20 page): 50%

Readings

We will read several articles and/or book length studies every week, so be prepared for intensive reading. I collected essays in a reading packet available for purchase at the Humanities Copy Center, room 1651. Articles not included in packet will be handed out in class ahead of time. The following books are required. They are available at the University Book Store, and on reserve at the College Library.

Bernth Lindfors, ed., *Africans on Stage*, Bloomington, 1999.
Christopher Steiner, *African Art in Transit*, Chicago, 1994.

Kathleen Bickford Berzock and Christina Clarke, *Representing Africa in American Art Museums*, 2011.

Weekly Sessions

1. Thursday January 26— Introduction

Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Arts of Africa," *New York Review of Books*, 1997, 1-13 available on:
<www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1997/apr/24/the-arts-of-africa/?pagination=false>
James Clifford, "Museums as Contact Zones," in *Routes*, 1997, 188-219

2. Thursday February 2 -- The Politics of Collecting, and Creating the Primitive

Sally Price, *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*, 1989, 1-36
James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," and "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern," in *Predicament of Culture*, 1988, 189-251

3. Thursday February 9 -- British Museums and Imperialism

Annie Coombes, "The Spectacle of Empire I," "The Spectacle of Empire II," "National Unity and Racial and Ethnic Identities: The Franco-British Exhibition of 1908," in *Reinventing Africa*, 1994, 63- 108, 187- 216

4. Thursday February 16 -- Freak Shows: Ota Benga, Pygmy in the Bronx Zoo (c. 1883-1916)

*****Five-Page Paper on Live Exhibits due in class****

Bernth Lindfors, ed., *Africans on Stage: Studies in Ethnological Show Business*, all book.

On Ota Benga:

Rachel Adams, "Freaks of Culture," in *Sideshow U.S.A.: Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination*, 2001, 25-59

Parezo Nancy and Don Fowler, "Anthropology Villages," in *Anthropology Goes to the Fair*, 2007, 194-233

5. Thursday February 23 -- Exhibiting African Art in the US

Kathleen Bickford Berzock and Christina Clarke, *Representing Africa in American Art Museums: A Century of Collecting and Display*, 2011

6. Thursday March 1st -- Tourist Art in Africa

Sidney Littlefield Kasfir, "Samburu Souvenirs," in *Unpacking Cultures*, edited by Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, 1999, 67-83
Christopher Steiner, *African Art in Transit*, all book

7. Thursday March 8 – Visit to the Chazen. No class meeting

Plan a visit to the Chazen Museum, African Section. Use Bickford Berzock and Clarke, *Representing Africa Art in American Museums* for guidance and comparison. You can also plan a meeting with a curator. Write a critical appraisal of the Chazen exhibit on Africa.

*****Five Page Report on Africa Section in Chazen Museum due on 03/08 before 5:00 pm (instructor's mailbox)*****

8. Thursday March 15 -- Contemporary African Artists

*****Five Page Paper on Tourist Art and "Fine Art" in Contemporary Africa due in class*****

Susan Vogel, "Art of the Here and Now," in *Africa Explores*, 1991, 114-129
Bogumil Jewsiewicki, "Urban Painting in Zaire. From the Invention of the West to the Invention of the Self," in S. Vogel, *Africa Explores*, 1991, 130-151
Elsbeth Court, "Africa on Display," in *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, edited by Emma Barker, 1999, 147-173]

9. Thursday March 21 -- Working on Research Project

***** Summary of Research Project and Bibliography due *****

10. Thursday March 28 -- Research Workshop

Students meet individually with Prof. Bernault to discuss their research project.

11-14. Working on Research Paper

*****Put a completed draft of your essay in instructor's mailbox on *****

15. Thursday April 26—Students' Oral Presentations on Research

16. Thursday May 3rd – Finalizing your Research Essay

*****FINAL RESEARCH ESSAY DUE *****

Other Readings

[Note that African Art books are located in the Art Library, call numbers N 7380 to N 7399]

- “Authenticity in African Art.” 1976. *African Arts*, special issue.
- Ames, Michael M. 1986. *Museums, the Public, and Anthropology: A Study in the Anthropology of Anthropology*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Ames, Michael M. 1992. *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*, Vancouver : UBC Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun. ed. 1986. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Blanchard, Pascal et al. 2008. *Human Zoos. Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Barthes, Roland. 1979. “African Grammar,” in *The Eiffel Tower, and Other Mythologies*, New York : Hill and Wang.
- Conklin, Alice. 2002. “Civil Society, Science, and Empire in Late Republican France: The Foundation of Paris’ Museum of Man,” *Osiris* 17 (July).
- Conklin, Alice. 2007. “Skulls on Display: Scientific Racism in Paris’ Museum of Man, 1920-1950,” in Daniel Sherman, ed., *Museums and Difference*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Dias, Nelia. 1991. *Le Musée d’ethnographie du Trocadéro, 1878-1908: anthropologie et muséologie en France*, Paris : Editions du CNRS.
- Douglas, Mary “If the Dogon,” *Cahiers d’études africaines*, 1967, 28, 659-672.
- Drewal, Henry, ed. 2008. *Sacred Waters: Arts for Mami Wata and Other Divinities in Africa and the Diaspora*, Bloomington : Indiana University Press.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973 [2000]. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books.
- Graburn, Nelson. 1976. *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions From the Fourth World*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Haraway, Donna. “Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936,” in *The Donna Haraway Reader*, London: Routledge.
- Jules-Rosette, Benetta. 1984. *The Message of Tourist Art*,
- Karp, Ivan and Levine, Steven. 1991. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Karp, Ivan. 2006. *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Kasfir, Sidney Littlefield. 2000. *Contemporary African Art*, London: Thames and Hudson.
- Kasfir, Sidney Littlefield. 2007. *African Art and the Colonial Encounter: Inventing a Global Commodity*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Lebovics, Herman. 1999. *Mona Lisa’s Escort: André Malraux and the Reinvention of French Culture*. Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press.
- Leiris, Michel and Delange, Jacqueline. 1968. *African Art*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. 1992. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, New York : Routledge.

- Rubin, William, ed. 1984. *"Primitivism" in Twentieth century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*. 2 vols., New York : Museum of Modern Art.
- Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism*, New York : Pantheon Books.
- Saïsselin, Rémy. 1984. *The Bourgeois and the Bibelot*.
- Stocking, George W., ed. 1985. *Objects and Others. Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Vansina, Jan. 1984. *Art History in Africa : An Introduction to Method*, London ; New York : Longman.

african tribal art - african primitive art - black african art - african art work. I believe this mask to be Nigerian, but it doesn't say. Instead it provides a history of western civilization, starting in pre-historical Africa. Interesting and well written, it is too expansive, covering too much time, distance, and subject matter for this small format. Image courtesy of the Linden Museum Stuttgart. Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Stuttgart, Germany (#33.286). Height: 29 cm. Provenance: Private Collection, Los Angeles Published: African Art from the Leslie Sacks Collection, Refined Eye, Passionate Heart, Skira 2013, p.126 Online bidding Bid on Invaluable. African Art. Decor. Nevertheless, the museum has kept the African art alive by conversation of the ancient artistic heritage of most African countries including Nigeria. This led to the establishment of western museums in Nigeria, the first of its kind is the Esie museum commissioned in 1945 as the first museum in Nigeria to house the 1500 soapstone sculpture found in the community. Most of these museums were necessitated in compliance to house Nigeria's spectacular sculptural traditions accidentally found and unearthed through archaeological excavations. Notably amongst them is the Nok art, Igbo-Ukwu, Ife, Owo, Benin, Esie, Yoruba, Ibibio etc. The unique art works in the collection of Nigeria museums enjoys a high reputation among local residents, domestic and international. African art describes the modern and historical paintings, sculptures, installations, and other visual culture from native or indigenous Africans and the African continent. The definition may also include the art of the African diasporas, such as African American, Caribbean or art in South American societies inspired by African traditions. Despite this diversity, there are unifying artistic themes present, when considering the totality of the visual culture from the continent of Africa. Indigenous African art on display in France. Stolen object to be returned by the Met Museum. Brazilian Parrot Feather Dress, from Indigenous Tribe of Tupinambas, currently in Denmark. There are African artifacts at the Musée du quai Branly in Paris because this museum is dedicated to the so-called Arts premiers which means early (and not primitive) arts: Exhibitions. Eventually, their book collection became so big, that the book collection of the British Museum was split off in the 1970s to create the British Library. That cast aside some really good museums that were only an hour drive from the various metropolises, like the Evel Knievel Museum in Topeka, the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi, or the Tinkertown Museum near Albuquerque. Moreover, many Primitive Masterpieces derived their authenticity from the idea that they could have appealed to Picasso and other modernists (Errington 1994; Torgovnick 1990). If the former notion eliminates disjunctive or hybrid settings such as the Sculpture Garden, the latter idea dismisses tourist art. ... This paper compares two contemporary aesthetic expressions: tourist art from the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea and the New Guinea Sculpture Garden at Stanford University. Both aesthetic expressions undermine the conventional categories that classify art. Sepik River tourist art is motivated not by the drive to lend individual, subjective experience a material expression but by monetary desire.