Face. Off. Faceoff: Mapping African Representations in Western Art Institutions

Samantha Lyn Goral Maloney
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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FACE. OFF. FACEOFF:
MAPPING AFRICAN REPRESENTATIONS IN WESTERN ART INSTITUTIONS

by

Samantha Maloney

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Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

FACE. OFF. FACEOFF:
MAPPING AFRICAN REPRESENTATIONS IN WESTERN ART INSTITUTIONS

by

Samantha Maloney

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Under the Supervision of Professor Jennifer Johung

In this project, I analyze the influential perceptions of African art objects, cultures, and histories formed through audience interactions with museum representations of Africa. In the Western world, curiosity cabinets and natural history museums first presented African objects as cultural artifacts aimed to intrigue and educate viewers about distant, exotic lands. Later, art museums reclassified African objects as art and some displays highlighted this shift, but African art exhibitions largely conformed to the anthropological models previously established. Scholars have analyzed these distinct display techniques while considering the visual environment from which these works were historically significant. Despite this critical scholarship, institutional presentations of permanent African art collections remain stagnant and hierarchical.

Building on this research, I consider the various display techniques implemented Chazen Museum of Art - Madison, The Art Institute of Chicago, Yale University Art gallery, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and The Menil Collection to inform my own installation of African objects in a gallery setting. Through the catalogue and exhibition, I investigate how influential representations of African art objects, cultures, and histories within Western art museums impact contemporary museum audiences. African artworks, installed in two distinct types of displays, demonstrate the constructed and mediated nature of museum exhibits. This two-part exhibition highlights the need for transparency within
museum installations, encouraging visitors to question the selection of objects shown, how these objects are staged for viewing, and what type of information frames this viewing.
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Introduction

When one visits American art institutions, one observes noticeable differences between the treatment of Western art compared to Non-Western Art. Frequently, encyclopedic art museums that hold a broad range of collections representing most cultures spanning from ancient to contemporary feature Western art in the opening galleries while Non-Western art is commonly delegated to separate wings. Depending on the institution, visitors can easily miss these Non-Western galleries unless specifically sought out. In other institutions these galleries are only reached after all else has been seen.

In essence a hierarchy is created within art institutions. Museums grant priority to Western collections, drawing visitors through galleries promoting a Western art lineage that stems from ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman cultures through the Medieval period, the Renaissance, the Early Modern era, and on to Modern, Post Modern and Contemporary arts. Audiences experience this progression of culture in galleries organized in chronological order. Then, in side galleries or wings this progression is disrupted by Non-Western art installations (fig. 1). Here, artworks call to past eras and cultures fixed in time with little progression towards the contemporary art realm. The depictions of these cultures stand in opposition to the advancements of Western cultures.

Even as one moves into the galleries containing works from Non-Western cultures a difference exists in how these objects are installed compared to their Western counterparts. Multiple objects inhabit protective cases and long explanatory labels accompany object groupings or featured artworks. Lighting is softened, and wall colors bring to mind the natural world. Objects crowd singular galleries in an attempt to showcase work from large geographical regions representing centuries worth of creations. Historically, scholars have explored the implications of installation techniques developed in art institutions. Though sometimes at odds with each other, many museum theorists, ranging from Friedrich Schiller to John Dana Cotton to Ivan Karp, explored the influences and purposes of art institutions. In most cases these scholars came to the same conclusion that art institutions can affect
society, whether as a unifying agent, an institution of control and punishment or as a platform for community support. This belief that art institutions can influence society by applying different installation methods prompted this two-part exhibition of African art.

To better understand how art museum installations can influence society and what these effects are I constructed an experiment of sorts. I curated an exhibition utilizing similar ancient, traditional and contemporary African objects with two separate types of display. Within these separate installations I employed distinct presentation tactics to develop two unique visitor experiences of the same object types. Beyond exploring questions of installation-audience influence, I intend to demonstrate the constructed and mediated nature of museum exhibits, encouraging visitors to question the selection of objects shown, how these objects are staged for viewing, and what type of information frames this viewing. In the case of *Face. Off. Faceoff* the two representations of African cultures are but two interpretations possible among many, fashioned by a singular curator. The representations draw on historic display methods as well as the current practices employed by major art institutions like the Chazen Museum of Art - Madison, The Art Institute of Chicago, Yale University Art gallery, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and The Menil Collection, Houston.

**History of African Object Displays**

In the Western world, curiosity cabinets and natural history museums first presented African objects as cultural artifacts aimed to intrigue and educate viewers about distant, exotic lands. Here, the original context of the displayed objects was all but erased, as these collectors primarily organized displays which advertised their own wealth and power. Eventually, these same private curiosity collections were incorporated into both public natural history museums and art museums. The latter reclassifying certain African objects as art. These divergent paths of African objects forced scholars to consider the differentiating elements of artifact versus art, thus exploring how each object, maker and
culture should appropriately be presented to audiences.\textsuperscript{11} To this day particular art institutions with permanent African collections continue to conform to more anthropological models of display. Objects displayed represent a portion of larger sampling of objects that enable the formation of generalized information explaining the history, economy, political organization, and religious beliefs of particular communities and cultures.\textsuperscript{12}

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Art Institute of Chicago both present their African collections in a manner more analogous to these anthropological modes of display. Cases line walls with objects grouped to encourage typological looking with a few more prominent objects isolated for more intimate viewing.\textsuperscript{13} Gold objects of varying types, from the esteemed Alfred C. Glassell Jr. Collection, adorn the initial gallery spaces of the African, Oceanic, Pre-Columbian and Native American Arts wing in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (fig. 2). Subsequent galleries house wood-based objects embellished with various beads, fabrics and pigments.\textsuperscript{14} Again, these objects stand in as emissaries, whether a mask, headrest, pipe or ancestral figure, that represent a larger sample of similar objects. Little individuation is afforded any singular object; the connected galleries offer few delineations between any of the cultural objects displayed within the wing. To the untrained eye, one homogenous culture is represented rather than four distinctly different cultures spanning different temporal eras across diverse geographical regions.

As a whole, the Art Institute of Chicago organizes its African collection in much the same way. Objects fill cases with a few works featured more prominently. However, in this African art gallery contextual information frames the African collection within a global world. A large map illustrates from where these objects and cultures came. A world timeline beginning in 100,000 B.C. situates the African continent within a global history, though events described give African cultures little agency beyond their own borders while the rest of the world, particularly the United States, appear quite influential within African countries (fig. 3).\textsuperscript{15} Above this full-wall timeline three video projections stream glimpses
of different African cultures, though no narration describes the happenings unfolding on the wall (fig. 4). A wall label on the opposite end of the gallery acknowledges the filmmaker and project backers, though still no context is provided for viewers as sounds, too often associated with “primitive” cultures, fill the gallery; drumming and chanting dominate the feed over other ambient sounds.\textsuperscript{16}

Though the Chazen Museum of Art – Madison also utilizes anthropological modes of display, the African art gallery also incorporates presentation techniques commonly used for contemporary art; objects are individualized within the installation. Within the small gallery, towards the end of the museum, traditional African objects crowd the walls and central floor with a few contemporary artworks demonstrating the relevance of African art within the art continuum. Eric Adjetey Anang’s fantasy coffin, \textit{Abebuam Adeka (Box of Proverbs – Eagle)}, 2015 (fig. 4), ushers viewers into the gallery and develops a striking visual connection the traditional African works from the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries.\textsuperscript{17} The integration of contemporary artworks displayed amongst the traditional pieces produces a promising African artistic lineage that projects into the future.

With more space to work with, the African art collection at the Yale Art Museum welcomes visitors on the first floor of a four level Non-Western wing (fig. 5). This installation of objects expertly combines anthropological and artistic display techniques in equal parts. It is the type of information, however, that is the key innovation in this gallery. The larger gallery is segmented into four major categories. Within these groupings, the accompanying text organizes objects chronologically by material then also thematically by cultural beliefs.\textsuperscript{18} Perspectives of Western influences on African culture stand beside examples of African influences on the West.\textsuperscript{19} Beyond that the gallery is ringed by windows, illuminating objects with a natural light while the carefully selected wall colors of magenta, pale yellow and blue complement the materials of the artworks (fig. 6). This type of installation encourages multi-layered viewing and interpretation by audiences, rather than the single-minded display techniques utilized by other institutions.
On the other end of the spectrum, the installation of African objects at the Menil Collection in Houston supports an aesthetic viewing experience, focusing on each object as a singular entity. Viewers must still navigate through arts of Western antiquity before reaching the African installations. Just as the Western objects have limited identifying information provided on the wall texts so do the African objects. Between these galleries the only distinguishing factors between Western and Non-Western objects are their backdrops. In opposition to the windowless white walled gallery of the ancient Western art, the African art is presented in rooms lined with windows. These windows allow natural light into the gallery in much the same manner as the Yale Art Museum, but at the Menil, the windows reveal an interior green area. Though the natural lighting clearly illuminates these objects, the green space suggests the idea of “wild” cultures, untouched by the progression of the rest of the world (fig. 7).

Objects and the Categories

Before any exhibition is installed it is necessary to select the objects to be displayed. For this project the majority of the objects chosen came from the 2012 Emile H. Mathis II donation that included over six hundred traditional African objects. To supplement these, a handful of objects gifted by Mark and Mary Jo Wentzel, Dr. Quentin and Emmy Lou Schenk, and Eugene and Inez Gilbert also represent the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Emile H. Mathis collection. Additionally, to fill in still more temporal and geographic gaps the Chazen Art Museum, Madison and the Wright Museum of Art, Beloit generously donated the three contemporary prints (fig. 8, 9, and 10) and the two shabti tomb figures (fig. 11 and fig. 12). All together these objects represent about twenty African countries and fifty different cultural groups.

In order to best categorize these objects into groups, I isolated various themes, forms, and functions to more accurately connect cultures together through their art. Figures, one of the most common motifs in African art, stood out as an obvious division, though the many nuanced beliefs and
purposes behind these figural sculptures required more distinct groupings. The “Paired Figures”
category stems from the creation of partnered figures meant to maintain the balance between worlds:
the living civilized world, the wild spirit world or the world of the deceased. Further, the power of the
deceased reoccurred across many cultures prompting the separation of various “Ancestral Intercessors,”
mainly shabti tomb figures and reliquaries, that exemplified the relationship between the living and the
dead in particular cultures. The “Power Figures” displayed in this exhibition all take human form,
securing their own figural grouping. This left a number of figural sculptures without such distinct
characteristics, though the need to further underscore the importance of the human form in much of
African art united this more general “Figures” grouping together.

The “Masks” category reveals a diversity in style and function similar to that of the figural
objects. However, the general use of masks as social and political tools of control, guidance and
education across many cultures unified this large group. The pronounced number of ci wara
headdresses in the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee’s art collection and the extensive recognition of
these forms, in part due to their popularity among Western artists like Constantin Brancusi and
Ferdinand Léger, justifies the creation of a separate “Ci Wara Headdress” category. The isolation of
this specific type of masquerade headwear acknowledges the propensity for Western collectors to
amass these distinctive mask types.

With fewer nuances to navigate, other categories seamlessly formed themselves. In particular I
separated utilitarian objects like pipes, gold dust boxes, headrests, various vessels for daily and ritual
use, weapons, and worn items into autonomous groups. These categories, like the ci wara headdresses,
demonstrate the varied styles and constructions a certain object takes. These forms often develop
within certain cultures as distinct aesthetic values and construction methods varying from region to
region. The four pipes displayed come from three regions and take four different forms, though the
objects were made for the same purpose – as smoking devices. The Cameroonian cast bronze Elephant
Pipe (fig. 13) and the Western African carved wood and cast bronze Pipe (fig. 14) both utilize animal motifs in their design while the Bamum cast bronze Pipe (fig. 15) and the Yaka carved wood Pipe (fig. 16) take figural form. Though these pipes share analogous motifs, their material, construction and stylization underline variances among the separate cultures. The shrine house doors, house doors and granary doors similarly function as their own category of utilitarian edifices. Displayed through the central axis of the gallery the doors also divide the two sides of the gallery separating the two different object presentations.

Side A: Wonder and Aesthetics

In order to further map these display techniques, how they influence viewers and in what way, this exhibition-as-experiment presents two distinct representations of African art and culture. A single object from each category appears in the first half of the gallery, “Side A,” while the remaining objects of each group are displayed together in the second half of the gallery, “Side B.” By dividing the objects into these groups before isolating objects for display on Side A, I hope to maintain a connection across the gallery division, highlighting the differences in the presentation of the same types of objects.

In the first part of the gallery on Side A, viewers encounter an installation encouraging them to engage with objects on a formal and aesthetic level in much the same manner that the Menil Collection presents its African art. This type of display emphasizes the individuality of objects with each work privileged to occupy its own pedestal, platform, glass case, or wall, conforming to a more Western aesthetic and viewing practice. There is little reference to the cultural context from which these objects came, but rather these objects are transformed into art for the sake of art.

This notion of art for art’s sake stems from ideas beginning with Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Schiller that art should replenish individuals. Through means of pleasurable calming entertainment, art has the power to unify society. As art museums became public, those in power viewed them as tools of
social control and mollification, a practice mapped by Tony Bennet’s writing on Foucault’s theories of institutional articulations of power and knowledge relations. In his essay, “The Exhibition Complex,” Bennett evaluates the credence of the controlling power of museums, “– a power made manifest not in its ability to inflict pain but by its ability to organize and co-ordinate an order of things and to produce a place for the people in relation to that order.” Therefore, those who view the displays of art museums could perceive themselves to be in control of society, though the true cultural power remains with the institution. By making art exhibitions soothing, enjoyable and public, society could be lulled into a sense of authority and ownership of the objects on display and themselves, resulting in societal tranquility.

Though Side A appears to cater to a docile experience, certain installation decisions counter this with aims to disrupt potential passivity with active interactions. The objects of Side A are evenly spaced, with plenty of room for audiences to contemplate each object individually. Clean white walls provide a blank background on which to observe these objects while the spotlight lighting promotes an aura of value and genius (fig. 17). Together, all these display elements culminate with the potential to prompt an awe-inspiring reaction. Individual objects command the attention of viewers, encouraging them to stop in wonderment. Ample space around each object provides the room needed to truly reflect on the artworks. Close contemplation as well as distant observation are accommodated. One can intimately familiarize themselves with individual objects, stimulating reverent consideration. Viewers are faced with unfamiliar objects though in such a way so as to assuage any possible unease in the unknown. Instead it is the novel and strange that is celebrated and prized, drawing one deeper into the exhibition to uncover the next exotic treasure.

Accompanying object labels provide little contextual information to further support this act of meditative looking. The label acts as the mediator between maker, exhibitor and viewer, a concept outlined by Michael Baxandall. The lack of descriptive and explanatory background information
provided on the object labels diminishes the exhibitor’s interpretive footprint. What little textual framing exists on Side A is carefully selected to divorce the objects from their social and cultural interpretations, thereby raising the esteem of the object and maker. If an artist is known, they become the focus, encapsulating the inherent genius of their practice. A concentration on construction techniques also advance this notion of creator as genius and object as unique artistic product. As a result, the viewer must rely on the object itself, how it is presented (spacing, lighting, placement in the gallery etc.), and on the knowledge and experience they bring into the exhibition space. Ideally this will heighten the aesthetic and formal qualities of the objects to promote more emotive readings that are subject to viewers’ interpretations.

The objects chosen to represent Side A do not all conform to what the West has historically labeled as African art. Traditionally, Western art institutions valued African objects with figural representations or objects formed through more advance processes of creation. In other words, the West valued objects that looked familiar or that required technical expertise to make. Although the Emile H. Mathis Art Gallery has plenty of African objects that meet these requirements, many of the objects installed on Side A reject this framework. For example, the Malian Dogon Figure (fig. 18) is a large wooden sculpture is chosen to represent the “Figures” on Side A. This sculpture is made of general geometric shapes to construct a slender masculine figure, though the enlarged pectoral muscles hint at gender ambiguity.

The simplified and unadorned form of the Dogon figure raises questions pertaining to its privileged placement amongst other more intricate and embellished objects on Side A. The Malian Bamana Male Ci Wara Headdress (fig. 19) also displayed on Side A seems to satisfy a more Western aesthetic model. This example of a ci wara headdress is exceptional due to the feathers, fibers, leather, shell and metal embellishments on the wooden frame. The unexpected placement and juxtaposition of
objects such as these prompts a more critical engagement with the preferential object selection process every museum navigates.

Overall, the combination of individually displayed objects, spotlight lighting, the minimal use of explanatory labels set against white gallery walls aims to elevate the admiration and reverence of the objects and their makers. Seen as individual objects with pools of light to create an aura around them, these carefully selected objects become appreciated as vivid works fashioned by artists. The object and the maker become larger than life as the aesthetic and formal elements are regarded. Devoid of social and cultural context, audiences determine the meaning. As such, the unfamiliar objects transform into fantastical artworks worthy of the prestigious museum installation granted to them.

Side B: Resonance and Culture

In contrast to the aesthetically geared Side A, Side B offers social and cultural contexts for the groups of objects displayed. The multitude of cultures represented within these distinct object categories eliminate the differentiating boundaries of individual creators and cultures, speaking instead to the assumed universalism of the objects’ cultural values and functions. The softened lighting reduces the spotlight effect experienced on Side A, in the hopes of creating equality among the grouped objects. No artwork outshines the greater group, rather the variation and diversity seen within each grouping adds layers to the understanding of Non-Western cultures. The assorted materials, construction techniques and aesthetic models utilized in the making of the objects reveal the differing resources, skills and ideals valued across the African continent.

Displayed in groups by object type, the objects of Side B rest compactly on pedestals and densely line the walls, painted green to reference nature just as the outdoor spaces seen through the gallery windows at the Menil frame objects within a purportedly wild environment (fig. 20 and 21). It becomes impossible to isolate singular objects forcing viewers to consider the groupings as a whole. For
instance, masks, the largest of the categories presented in this exhibition, overtake the east wall of the
gallery. Although none of the masks are the same, the proximity to one another diminishes the
individual characteristics of each. Instead similarities become evident; the bell shape of the helmet
masks, the geometric shape of the eyes often interrupted with a slit, the fabric, hair and tactile materials
manipulated to create depth and texture on surfaces. Or consider the patterning included on each of the
worn objects: all the patterns are different, and yet a relationship is developed between the detailed
elements of the blocked shapes, intersecting lines and repetitive color combinations on the individual
pieces.

Just as the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Art Institute of Chicago organize their African
collections, here, lengthy explicatory labels describe the social and cultural forces from within which the
objects arose. The foundation of this anthropological display is steeped with descriptions that foster an
understanding of unfamiliar objects, utilities, makers and cultures. As a result, the objects and cultures
displayed on Side B are marked as inherently different from objects displayed for their aesthetic value
on Side A. Similar objects are assembled together, eliminating any individuation, instead developing
typological examples. The act of classifying object types reveals the desire for explicit labeling and
clarification that frequently accompanies unfamiliar Non-Western objects in museums.

The information present on Side B addresses the object categories as a whole, rather than
focusing on singular objects. While the standard identifying information still distinguishes individual
objects, longer descriptive texts for each object grouping elucidates generalized social and cultural
functions of the whole category. Once again, I employ Baxandall’s investigation of the influence
explanatory object labels may have on audiences. The understanding of the exhibitor takes precedent as
more information is offered for viewer consumption leaving less opportunity for their independent
interpretations. Instead viewers are subject to the constructed interpretations provided.
Questions pertaining to the makers’ social standing, guidelines for object creation, and regulations for object utility are addressed within these texts. Makers, rather than individuals imbued with immense creative capabilities, are examined based on their role in society. For example, the sculptures represented in the “Paired Figures” group (fig. 22) are often made based on the recommendation of a diviner. A craftsperson was employed to make these figures according to the diviner’s specifications. In this case the creator of the figure(s) was a means to an end, rather than an individual of inherent genius. This type of information creates obstacles that interrupt modes of strictly aesthetic viewing and force viewers to contemplate how these objects function within an active society.

Furthermore, objects are linked to when and how they are used, deepening the understanding of the objects’ cultural purposes. The “Gold Dust Boxes” group label elucidates the general function of the small cast bronze boxes (fig. 23) within Ghanaian society. These objects were used not only to store gold dust, a commodity used to pay for important events in society, but also as personal weights to standardize the value of gold traded. No single gold dust box is highlighted, rather the grouping stands as a collective, allowing for a typological classification.

In order to accommodate the inevitable curiosity that accompanies the unfamiliar, Side B provides more specific descriptions that unveil the function of certain objects. This added information, however, ultimately reinforces the generalized classification of the entire group. The individual wooden Luba Headrest (fig. 24) description, for example, highlights the incorporation of the coiffured hairstyle, mikada, on the figure supporting the top of the headrest which points to an underlining function of headrests more generally; as tools to protect the owners’ elaborate hairstyles, which often denoted the owners’ status in the community. The functions of these objects divulged through the explanatory text are indicative of larger African societal values and practices, essentially creating a homogenous African culture.
Even though Side B’s wall texts frame the objects as tools utilized by societies, African cultures are often displayed as stagnant entities, never achieving the level of progress reached by Western cultures. In part, this is due to the lack of a developed artistic lineage. To counter this frequent practice particularly among anthropological representations of cultures, Face. Off. Faceoff integrates two small Ancient Egyptian shabti tomb figures from as early as the 10th century B.C. within the exhibition (fig. 11 and 12). These miniature figurines with delicately carved hieroglyphics and painted details reestablish the link between Egyptian art and the rest of the African continent in order to reclaim the African art lineage often hijacked by the Western world. Along with these two figurines, the addition of the three prints made by contemporary African artists validates a current, active art practice. Visual elements found within older objects in the exhibition can be discerned within the 2003 print by Thando Mama creating a pictorial link between the old and the new. The circular pattern emerging from a disc shape in the bottom of Mama’s print, When I Awake (fig. 8), seems to reference the patterned manes of the ci wara headdresses (fig. 19), or the concentric designs of the Maasai collars (fig. 25 and 26) from the “Worn Objects” group. The stylized figure with elongated limbs recalls the impossibly long arms and legs of the Dogon Male Figure (fig. 18). Further still, newly created objects and the adaption of ritual practices to accommodate contemporary lifestyles destabilize the notion of inert societies and remove any musings of primitive African cultures trapped in the past.

On the surface, Side B appears to employ a display technique rooted in ethnographic and anthropologic schemes. The typological presentation paired with the low-key lighting allows viewers to contemplate these objects as a group. The information that accompanies these categories furthers this concept of the collectivizing impulse despite the inclusion of objects from multiple different peoples, countries and regions. Although the dynamism of variation and individuation is swallowed into the whole, an African art legacy is established. Beginning in ancient Egypt and continuing to a current
practice pungent with potential future creations. The universal African culture presented is capable of morphing, adapting and progressing in a contemporary world.

The Faceoff

The need to present an exhibition that utilizes two distinct display modes, clearly separated, becomes apparent when one considers how many scholars believe art institutions should function. Reaching back to the turn of the 20th century, Henry Cole and John Dana Cotton outlined the need for museums to serve their communities.41 This can only occur with active community engagement, and exhibitions grounded in the needs of the community.42 For this to happen, viewers require a better understanding of how exhibitions are constructed. By installing the same types of artwork with two distinct modes of interpretation and display, the constructed nature of any exhibition becomes more evident.

This transparency within the exhibition rewards audiences with the ability to critically engage with the objects and cultures presented to them. Though presenting two alternate interpretations of the same cultures, Face. Off. Faceoff is reliant on my singular aesthetic tastes and point of view. However, this side by side comparison of display modes offers viewers the opportunity to contemplate their own preferences, preexisting knowledge, and interpretations regarding what is represented in the gallery. Perhaps some would select a very different object to aesthetically represent an object group. Others might evaluate the Emile H. Mathis Art Gallery’s African collection online and prefer objects omitted from the exhibition over the objects that made the final cut. It is vital for audiences to realize the power of critiquing exhibitions is one that can be applied to any museum. This particular experimental exhibition strives to make this power evident.

If viewers acknowledge the need for transparency and critically engage with exhibitions, this undercuts the false notion that a museum is a neutral authoritarian institution above questioning.43 Just
as I have constructed representations of African cultures, so too do other art institutions mediate how cultures are presented to the public. As long as audiences allow these representations to go unquestioned, museums will hold a monopoly on our understandings of our own culture as well as others. In order to counter the long-accepted hierarchies of the art world, viewers must actively and critically engage not only with what is and is not presented, but how these objects are presented as well.

Effects of this Experimental Exhibition

As this exhibition challenges viewers to critically engage with object presentations, various survey questions will further stimulate audience participation. At the gallery exit survey questions (Appendix C) await viewers to capture how they interacted with the two installations. This information will allow me to map how these modes of display influence audiences, and further, what these affects look like. Responses will be collected throughout the exhibition to better understand the impacts of the two types of displays presented. To mark the conclusion of the exhibition, a closing reception will function as a platform for myself, a guest speaker, and gallery visitors to further reflect on the experiences afforded by Face. Off. Faceoff. Following this event and the closing of the exhibition, I will formulate an afterword to quantify the influences I believe this installation of art have on those who attended. This in turn may open larger questions regarding the effects our cultural institutions have on our society. Through the exhibition, catalogue, and afterword I hope to continue the discussions surrounding art displays, cultural representations and interpretations, and the need to be critical museum goers.
Afterword

As with many experiments, the survey data I collected over the duration of this exhibition opened more possible avenues of exploration and raised additional questions. The questions I asked of the exhibition visitors called for personal reflections and preferences regarding museums, aspects of the exhibition installation, and their pre-existing knowledge of Africa. These same questions were ones I myself considered throughout the process of planning *Face. Off. Faceoff*, then revisited once the exhibition was installed.

One of the main factors I needed to consider in evaluating the survey responses was the visitor demographics of the UWM Emile H. Mathis Art Gallery. As a gallery imbedded within the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee campus, many gallery visitors were affiliated with the school. Further, the gallery hours of Monday through Thursday from 10am to 4pm inhibited those who worked typical business hours beyond the campus from visiting the exhibition. Although the opening and closing receptions for *Face. Off. Faceoff* extended gallery hours into the evening on two select nights, the majority of visitors remained students or university employees. As such, many explored the gallery in the 10 minutes they had in-between classes or meetings. Few individuals remained in the galleries longer than 15 minutes.

With the audience demographics established, I considered how they engaged with the exhibition. The first, and possibly most important questions on the survey – “Why do you go to art museums?” and “What do you hope to get out of a visit?” – informed my understanding of the gallery visitors and what they hoped to obtain from art exhibitions more broadly. Most visitors desired new knowledge to foster a better understanding of different cultures. Consequently, as prompted by question two, many expressed their preference for Side B. Here they could compare objects side-by-side and learn about the objects’ creation, purpose, and function.
With question three I asked visitors to consider the textual information included in *Face. Off* — “How did the information accompanying objects on both sides of the gallery influence/ not influence your viewing experience and understanding of African culture?” Visitors admitted to spending minimal time reading the installed texts, thus the written components of the exhibition held little influence. Alternatively, those who did read the accompanying object information expressed great intrigue and appreciation for the new knowledge they acquired. I could have easily misconstrued this lack of engagement with the text as indifference in learning about the creation, purpose and function of the objects, I believe this detachment was for reasons beyond disinterest in the text offered.

As I noted, visitors spent small increments of time in the gallery and thus optimized this by looking at the objects presented. If truly interested in a specific entity, a viewer might glance at the text for just long enough to identify its basic information. I saw this neither as a positive or negative interaction, but rather as another detail to be assessed. By observing viewers’ engagement with the objects while also considering the survey responses, I came to the conclusion that many visitors had never encountered this many African art objects in person at one time. Viewers were awestruck by the objects. Digesting the textual information became secondary as the audience grappled with the physical objects in front of them first.

In the last two survey questions I prompted viewers to reflect on their prior knowledge of Africa and how it possibly shifted after experiencing *Face. Off. Faceoff*. The first of these questions — “How did the inclusion of the Ancient Egyptian Shabti tomb figurines and the three contemporary prints alter/not alter your notion of Africa?” — prompted unexpected, yet gratifying responses. Many more visitors seemingly scoffed at this question as they rightfully pointed out that Egypt was part of Africa, and as such, objects from Egypt should, of course, be included in an African art exhibition. A few responses from this pool also highlighted that Egyptian culture is often integrated into the Western cultural timeline, a practice I strove to destabilize in *Face. Off. Faceoff*. For those less familiar with the geography
of Egypt and Africa, the inclusion of the Shabti tomb figures unveiled the connection between the country and continent. Further, a number of visitors expressed surprise, then pleasure, in seeing contemporary prints included as they rarely had the occasion to engage with art by contemporary African artists. In this way, my exhibition decisions to extend the breadth of the show both geographically and temporally proved fruitful as I helped forge new understandings of African cultures.

The final question, though simple, was possibly the most revealing in regards to how the gallery visitors perceived Africa. A simple word association exercise – “What are three words you would use to describe Africa prior to experiencing this exhibition? What are three words you would now use to describe Africa?” While there were many visitors whose perceptions minimally altered, for the majority, their viewpoints shifted, often towards more positive perspectives. Frequent descriptions first included words like “primitive,” “spiritual,” “survival,” and “similar.” These insights altered after experiencing and engaging with the exhibition. As a result, visitors used words such as “nuanced,” “contemporary,” “depth,” and “diverse” to describe Africa upon leaving the exhibition.

The responses to the five questions presented on the survey for Face. Off. Faceoff validated my endeavor to juxtapose art installation narratives. Audiences want to learn from museums, and many will only ever encounter cultures through these mediated exhibitions. This underscores the necessity for institutional transparency in art display practice. However, it is one thing to recognize the need for more transparency and another to put this into practice. As I found through the surveys, the question “what is the correct way to display African art?” lacks a straightforward answer. This vast grey area called for my own reflection on my process of thesis conception, planning, and installation to seek a possible answer.

In planning this exhibition, I had a clear opinion on how I believed African and Non-Western art should be displayed. At the beginning of this project, I supported the reinstallation of African art galleries to mimic the presentation of Western art galleries with object placement allowing for individuation, information focusing on artists and their techniques, and accessible gallery locations. But
then my outlook shifted in conjunction with visits to five art institutions with distinct African gallery installations, my own exhibition installation, and the survey responses.

A major turning point was my visit to the Yale University Art Gallery. With the African Art gallery directly off the main entrance, this art institution immediately set itself apart from others I visited. Once in the gallery, it appeared similar to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Art Institute of Chicago, or the Chazen Art Museum. However, upon closer investigation this gallery framed the African art in a very different way. The three sections of the gallery explored different themes while the entire installation followed a chronological organization. The first section set the tone with the focus on materials, with ivory, bronze, terracotta and clay objects arranged together. Within these different groups the accompanying information painted diverse narratives. The ivory carvings revealed the exchange of cultural influences between European and African makers. Metal works showed the diverse manipulation afforded this material to accommodate an assortment of religious belief systems. The terracotta works mapped the progression of cultures across the continent. The display of each object grouping was as distinctive as the materials presented resulting in a multilayered object installation that highlighted a diverse, multicultural, and complex continent.

The Yale University Art Gallery prompted me to reconsider what I previously thought was the best way to present African art to the public. Rather than relegating installations to one type of presentation style, galleries could, and I argue should, explore dynamic display tactics. A layered installation caters more fully to a diverse audience as each individual visitor engages and experiences art in different ways. For the sake of this exhibition-as-experiment, a clear distinction between display types was necessary to highlight the different possibilities curators navigate when planning an installation. As such, before installing Face. Off. Faceoff, I still aligned more fully with the Side A framing despite my experience in the Yale University Art Gallery. Perhaps this type of display could alleviate the distinctions made between Western and Non-Western art objects. Further, I believed this side would be more
engaging for audiences as each singular object allowed for undivided contemplation and room for interpretation.

Once both sides of the gallery were installed, I discovered my preference aligned more with the Side B installation rather than Side A. The grouped objects appeared dynamic with distinct works that also fostered comparisons within the greater categories. The diversity of African art rose to fore. The framing information, though generalized, helped to illustrate the lives these objects once occupied. Despite my previous inklings that this type of generalizing typological display further supported the hierarchies of the art world, I was forced to reckon with the notion that the “right” type of display was not necessarily as clear as I originally thought.

Although the surveys seem to support the methods of installation already in place at many Western art institutions, a more critical consideration needs to be made. With audiences seeking knowledge, it is the responsibility of art institutions to be critical of how this knowledge is offered to their viewers. This is where the transparency of installations, curators, and institutions is vital. This transparency can unveil the origins of objects, how they came into the collection, the history of the objects and cultures, then also their futures. By breaking down the authoritarian voice and structure of art displays, viewers can develop the skills needed to critically engage with the arts and cultures they encounter within these institutions. Art establishments should display art with authority while simultaneously offering layers of information for viewers to make their own connections and interpretations.
Figure 1. *Museum Map*, Art Institute of Chicago.

Figure 2. *Alfred C. Glassell Jr. Collection Gallery*, Fine Arts Museum, Houston. Photo by author.
### 1981–present

**Cases of HIV/AIDS rapidly increase across the African continent, affecting from one to as much as fifteen percent of the population in areas where statistics are kept.**

- **1983**
  - The United States enacts the Cultural Property Implementation Act to realize parts of the 1970 UNESCO convention.

- **1989**
  - Soviet-style Communism is brought to an end.

- **1990–94**
  - Civil war in Rwanda leads to genocide.

- **1992**

- **1993**
  - At Mali’s request, the United States imposes import restrictions on certain archaeological material. Mali, like many other African nations, also has internal laws protecting archaeologically or culturally significant material.

- **1994**
  - Black nationalist leader Nelson Mandela is elected president of South Africa in the first democratic elections allowing people of all races to vote, marking the end of the Apartheid Era; the country also adopts a new constitution.

- **2001**
  - September 11 terrorists attacks

- **2001-03**
  - In response to the September 11 attacks, the United States invades Afghanistan. This is followed in 2003 by the invasion of Iraq by a multinational force led by the United States.

- **2005**
  - The Kyoto Protocol, which sets targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by industrialized nations, is implemented. As of 2020, 197 nations have ratified the protocol; the United States has signed but not ratified.

- **2009**
  - President Barack Obama visits Ghana in his first official trip to sub-Saharan Africa. Obama’s visit to Ghana in the first year of his presidency has important symbolic significance for many Africans. Obama sees the trip as an opportunity to illustrate that “Africa is not separate from world affairs.”

- **2010**
  - As 17 African nations celebrate 50 years of independence from colonial rule, Africans still face serious challenges to economic growth, national unity, political stability, and public health. African artists continue to adapt to shifts in cultural, economic, religious, and social practices.

- **2011**
  - Wireless technology connects growing numbers of people across the globe, improving lives by providing access to easy, low-cost, and reliable communication.

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*Figure 3. Portion African Art Gallery Timeline, Art Institute of Chicago. Photo by author.*
Figure 4. Eric Adjetey Anang’s fantasy coffin, Abebuam Adeka (Box of Proverbs – Eagle), 201, Chazen Art Museum. Photo by author.

Figure 5. Floor plan, Yale University Art Gallery. Photo by author.
Figure 6. Terra cotta forms framed by magenta wall, Yale University Art Gallery. Photo by author.

Figure 7. African Art Gallery, The Menil Collection, Houston. Photo from https://www.menil.org/collection/5049-arts-of-africa
Figure 8. Thando Mama, *When I Awake*, from the portfolio “Cross Cultural Identities,” 2003, Chazen Art Museum. Photo from http://embarkkiosk.chazen.wisc.edu/OBJ?sid=7416&rec=226&port=771&art=0&page=226


Figure 10. Roxandra Dardagan – Britz, *This Land is Mine*, from the portfolio “Cross Cultural Identities,” 2003, Chazen Art Museum. Photo from http://embarkkiosk.chazen.wisc.edu/OBJ?sid=7416&rec=222&port=771&art=0&page=222

Figure 11. *Shabti Tomb Figure*, Wright Museum of Art, Beloit College. Photo by Paul Maloney.
Figure 12 *Shabti Tomb Figure*, Wright Museum of Art, Beloit College. Photo by Paul Maloney.

Figure 13 *Elephant Pipe*, UWM Art Collection. Photo by Paul Maloney.
Figure 14. Pipe, UWM Art Collection. Photo by Paul Maloney.

Figure 15. Pipe, UWM Art Collection. Photo by Paul Maloney.

Figure 16. Pipe, UWM Art Collection. Photo by Paul Maloney.
Figure 17. *Side A, Face Off. Faceoff*, UWM Emile H. Mathis Art Gallery. Photo by author.

Figure 18. *Male Figure*, UWM Art Collection. Photo by Paul Maloney.

Figure 19. *Ci Wara Headdress*, UWM Art Collection. Photo by Paul Maloney.
Figure 20. Side B, Face. Off. Faceoff, UWM Emile H. Mathis Art Gallery. Photo by author.

Figure 21. Side B, Face. Off. Faceoff, UWM Emile H. Mathis Art Gallery. Photo by author.
Figure 22. *Paired Figures, Face-Off. Faceoff*, UWM Emile H. Mathis Art Gallery. Photo by author.
Figure 23. Gold Dust Boxes, Face Off. Faceoff, UWM Emile H. Mathis Art Gallery. Photo by author.

Figure 24. Headrest, UWM Art Collection. Photo by Paul Maloney.

Figure 25. Beaded Collar, UWM Art Collection. Photo by Paul Maloney.

Figure 26. Beaded Collar, UWM Art Collection. Photo by Paul Maloney.
6 McClellan, 13-52.
9 Vogel, 12.
11 Vogel, 14-16.
14 The Museum of Fine Arts.
19 Yale University Art Gallery.
21 The Menil Collection.
27 McClellan, 21-28.
29 Bennett, 89.
30 McClellan, 21-28, Bennett, 89.
32 Greenblatt, 49-52.
34 Greenblatt, 49-52; Baxandall, 37-39.
35 Vogel, 13-14.

Baxandall, 37-38.

University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art, “Ere Ibeji (twin figures),” Stanley Museum of Art, accessed January 25, 2019, https://africa.uima.uiowa.edu/media/photos/show/162?back=media%2Findex%3FPeople%3D105%26MediaType%3DImage%26action_%3DUse%2BFilter


McClellan, 28-32.

Private collection, purchased April 1, 2019.

McClellan, 28-32.


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The Metropolitan Museum of Art. “Headrest: Female Caryatid Figure.” Accessed January 25, 2019. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/314378?searchField=All&amp;sortBy=relevance&amp;ft=luba&amp;offset=0&amp;rpp=20&amp;pos=12


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|1. | **Bamana**  
Mali  
**Ci Wara (Male Headdress)**  
Carved Wood, fiber, shell, metal, leather  
*UWM Art Collection  
Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.060* | ![Bamana Image]  
[Bamana](#)  
Mali  
**Ci Wara (Male Headdress)**  
Carved Wood, fiber, shell, metal, leather  
*UWM Art Collection  
Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.060* |
|2. | **Thando Mama**  
South African  
**When I Awake**, from the portfolio  
“Cross Cultural Identities”  
2003  
Relief  
*On loan from the Chazen Museum of Art  
Gift of John Hitchcock, 2005.29.1m* | ![Thando Mama Image]  
[Thando Mama](#)  
South African  
**When I Awake**, from the portfolio  
“Cross Cultural Identities”  
2003  
Relief  
*On loan from the Chazen Museum of Art  
Gift of John Hitchcock, 2005.29.1m* |
|3. | **Fang Artist**  
Gabonese  
**Nlo Bieri Reliquary Figure**  
Carved wood and metal  
*UWM Art Collection  
Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.243* | ![Fang Artist Image]  
[Fang Artist](#)  
Gabonese  
**Nlo Bieri Reliquary Figure**  
Carved wood and metal  
*UWM Art Collection  
Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.243* |
|   | Baule Artist  
Ivorian  
**House Door**  
Wood and pigment  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.192*
|---|
|   | Senufo Artist  
Ivorian  
**Shrine House Door**  
Wood  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.190*
|   |
|   | Dogon Artist  
Malian  
**Granary Door**  
Wood  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.321* |
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Hemba Artist Male Panel Figure</td>
<td>Congolese</td>
<td>Congolese</td>
<td>Carved wood, pigment, and wire</td>
<td>UWM Art Collection</td>
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| 10. | ![Dogon Artist](image1) | **Dogon Artist**  
Malian  
**Figure**  
Carved wood  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.041*
| 11. | ![Asante Artist](image2) | **Asante Artist**  
Ghanaian  
**Gold Dust Box**  
Cast bronze with applied parts  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.236ab*
| 12. | ![Kambata Artist](image3) | **Kambata Artist**  
Ethiopian  
**Headrest**  
Carved wood  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.427*
| 13. | ![Dan Artist](image4) | **Dan Artist**  
Burkinabé  
**Hornbill Mask**  
Carved wood, raffia, metal, fiber and pigment  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.081*
|   | **Baule Artist**  
|   | Ivorian  
| **Asie Usu (Nature Spirit Figures)** | Carved wood with patina  
|   | *UWM Art Collection*  
|   | *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.169ab*  
|   |   | **Yaka Artist**  
|   | Congolese  
| **Pipe** | Carved wood and pigment  
|   | *UWM Art Collection*  
|   | *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.384*  
|   |   | **Makonde Artist**  
|   | Tanzanian  
| **Power Figure** | Carved wood, fiber, and unknown encrusted materials  
|   | *UWM Art Collection*  
|   | *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.430*  

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| 17. | Ethiopian | **Liquid Container**  
Wicker, leather and cowrie shells  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.487* |
| 18. | Congolese | **Spear**  
Pounded metal and copper wire  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.481* |
| 19. | Massai Artist  
Tanzanian | **Beaded Collar**  
Wire, beads and cowrie shells  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II, 2012.003.532* |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ci Wara</strong></td>
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| **20.** | ![Image](image1.png) | **Antelope Headdress (Ci Wara)**  
Mali  
Wood and pigment  
*UWM Art Collection  
Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.309 |
| **21.** | ![Image](image2.png) | **Stylized Antelope Headdress (Ci Wara)**  
Bamana Peoples, Mali  
Wood, fiber, and pigment  
*UWM Art Collection  
Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.310 |
| **22.** | ![Image](image3.png) | **Horizontal Antelope Headdress (Ci Wara)**  
Bamana Peoples, Mali  
Wood and fiber  
*UWM Art Collection  
Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.341 |
| 23. | **Antelope Headdress**  
*(*Ci Wara)*  
Bamana Peoples, Mali  
Wood  
**UWM Art Collection**  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.447 |
| --- | --- |
| Contemporary | **Music Makers**  
Yinka Adeyemi  
Born 1941  
Yorùbá, Nigeria  
1971  
Woodcut  
*On loan from the Chazen Art Museum, University of Wisconsin - Madison*  
*Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John T. Medler*  
1976.25 |
| 24. | **This Land is Mine**  
From the portfolio “Cross – Cultural Identities”  
Roxandra Dardagan – Britz  
Zimbabwe born 1962  
South Africa  
2003  
Intaglio  
*On loan from the Chazen Art Museum, University of Wisconsin - Madison*  
*Gift from John Hitchcock*  
2005.29.1i |
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<td>26th Dynasty</td>
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<td><strong>Reliquary Statue</strong> <em>(Nlo Bieri)</em></td>
<td>Fang Peoples, Gabon</td>
<td>Wood and metal</td>
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<td><strong>Reliquary Figure</strong> <em>(Mbulu-ngulu)</em></td>
<td>Possibly Kota or Hongwe Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
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<td><strong>Doors</strong></td>
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<td><strong>House Door</strong></td>
<td>Senufo Peoples, Côte d'Ivoire</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
<td>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</td>
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<td><strong>Shrine House Door</strong></td>
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<td>![Shrine House Door Image]</td>
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<td>![Shrine House Door Image]</td>
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| 36. | **House Door**  
Bambara Peoples, Mali  
Wood  
*UWM Art Collection  
Gift of Emile H. Mathis II  
2012.003.323*
| 37. | **Figure**  
*(Bateba)*  
Lobi Peoples, Burkina Faso  
Wood  
*UWM Art Collection  
Gift of Emile H. Mathis II  
2012.003.027*
| 38. | **Soapstone Figure**  
Kissi Peoples, Guinea  
Soapstone  
*UWM Art Collection  
Gift of Mark and Mary Jo Wentzel  
2008.002.31* |
| 39. | **Healing Figure**  
Bassa Peoples, Liberia  
Wood  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.607 |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| 40. | **Male Figure**  
Senufo Peoples, Côte d'Ivoire  
Wood  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.074 |
| 41. | **Beaded Figure**  
Bamileke Peoples, Cameroon  
Wood, fiber, and glass beads  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.031 |
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<th>Female Divination Figure</th>
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<td>Bamileke Peoples, Cameroon Wood</td>
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|   |   | *UWM Art Collection*  
|   |   | *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
|   |   | 2012.003.261 |
|   |   | Female Figure |
| 43. |   | Lega or Hemba Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo Wood and pigment |
|   |   | *UWM Art Collection*  
|   |   | *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
|   |   | 2012.003.017 |
|   |   | King Portrait Figure  
|   |   | *(Ndop)* |
|   |   | Kuba Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo Wood and metal  
|   |   | *UWM Art Collection*  
|   |   | *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
|   |   | 2012.003.248 |
|   |   | Gold Dust Boxes |
|   | **Gold Dust Box**  
|   | *(Amanphruwa)*  
| 45. | Asante Peoples, Ghana  
|   | Bronze  
|   | *UWM Art Collection*  
|   | *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
|   | 2012.003.237  
|   | **Gold Dust Box**  
|   | *(Amanphruwa)*  
| 46. | Asante Peoples, Ghana  
|   | Bronze  
|   | *UWM Art Collection*  
|   | *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
|   | 2012.003.238  
|   | **Gold Dust Box**  
|   | *(Amanphruwa)*  
| 47. | Asante Peoples, Ghana  
|   | Bronze  
|   | *UWM Art Collection*  
|   | *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
|   | 2012.003.240  
|   | **Headrests**  
|   | **Headrest**  
| 48. | Tuareg Peoples, Mali or Niger  
|   | Wood  
|   | *UWM Art Collection*  
|   | *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
|   | 2012.003.324  

| 49. | **Headrest**  
Baule Peoples, Côte d'Ivoire  
Wood  
_UWM Art Collection_  
_Gift of Emile H. Mathis II_  
2012.003.150 |
| 50. | **Headrest**  
Kaffa Peoples, Ethiopia  
Wood  
_UWM Art Collection_  
_Gift of Emile H. Mathis II_  
2012.003.468 |
| 51. | **Headrest**  
Boni Peoples, Somalia  
Wood and leather  
_UWM Art Collection_  
_Gift of Emile H. Mathis II_  
2012.003.428 |
| 52. | **Headrest**  
Luba Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Wood  
_UWM Art Collection_  
_Gift of Emile H. Mathis II_  
2012.003.139 |
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<td>53</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Headrest" /></td>
<td><strong>Headrest</strong></td>
<td>Tutsi People, Rwanda</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
<td><em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em></td>
<td>2012.003.425</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Mask" /></td>
<td><strong>Mask</strong></td>
<td>Marka Peoples, Mali</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
<td><em>Gift of Mark and Mary Jo Wentzel</em></td>
<td>2008.002.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Mask" /></td>
<td><strong>Mask</strong> <em>(Satimbe)</em></td>
<td>Dogon Peoples, Mali</td>
<td>Wood, fiber, and dye</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
<td><em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em></td>
<td>2012.003.389</td>
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| 56. | **Mask**  
Dogon Peoples, Mali  
Wood, fiber, and pigment  

*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.271 |
|---|---|
| 57. | **Mask**  
*Keduneh*  
Winiama or Mossi Peoples, Burkina Faso  
Wood and antelope hide  

*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Mark and Mary Jo Wentzel*  
2008.002.26 |
| 58. | **Ox Mask**  
Bidyogo Peoples, Bissagos Islands, Guinea-Bissau  
Wood, leather, hair, fiber, metal, horn, and pigment  

*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.036 |
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|59. | ![Poro Society Mask](image) | **Poro Society Mask**  
Gere or Wobe Peoples, Liberia  
Wood, metal, hair, and pigment  
**UWM Art Collection**  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.353 |
|60. | ![Mask](image) | **Mask**  
Bété Peoples, Côte d’Ivoire  
Wood, pigment, and metal  
**UWM Art Collection**  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.180 |
|61. | ![Contemporary Mask](image) | **Contemporary Mask**  
*(Gyela lu Zauli)*  
Baule or Guro Peoples, Côte d’Ivoire  
Wood and polychrome  
**UWM Art Collection**  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.005 |
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<th>Image</th>
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| 62. | ![Antelope Mask](image) | **Antelope Mask (Zamble)**  
Guro Peoples, Côte d'Ivoire  
Wood and pigment  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Mark and Mary Jo Wentzel*  
2008.002.21 |
| 63. | ![Face Mask](image) | **Face Mask**  
Dan or Gere Peoples, Côte d'Ivoire  
Wood, hair, bronze, and fiber  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.037 |
| 64. | ![Male Mask](image) | **Male Mask**  
Dan Peoples, Nigeria  
Wood, fiber, metal, and pigment  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.073 |
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</table>
| **Mask**  
 (*Egungun*) |   |   |
| Yorùbá Peoples, Nigeria  
 Fabric, wood, and pigment |   |   |
| *UWM Art Collection*  
 *Gift of Mark and Mary Jo Wentzel*  
 *2009.002.28* |   |   |
| **Body Mask** |   |   |
| Yorùbá Peoples, Nigeria  
 Wood and pigment |   |   |
| *UWM Art Collection*  
 *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
 *2012.003.304* |   |   |
| **Gelede Mask** |   |   |
| Yorùbá Peoples, Nigeria  
 Wood and pigment |   |   |
| *UWM Art Collection*  
 *Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
 *2012.003.070* |   |   |
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<tr>
<td>68.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Female Mask" /></td>
<td><strong>Female Mask</strong> <em>(Mukudj)</em></td>
<td>Punu Peoples, Gabon</td>
<td>Wood and pigment</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em>&lt;br&gt;2012.003.242</td>
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<td>69.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Ancestral Mask" /></td>
<td><strong>Ancestral Mask</strong> <em>(Lukwakongo)</em></td>
<td>Lega Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Wood, hair, shell, glass, burlap, and pigment</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em>&lt;br&gt;2012.003.081</td>
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<tr>
<td>70.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Mask" /></td>
<td><strong>Mask</strong> <em>(Kifwebe)</em></td>
<td>Luba Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Wood and pigment</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em>&lt;br&gt;2012.003.119</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 71. | **Helmet Mask**  
Luba Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Wood, metal, and pigment  

*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.352 |
|---|---|
| 72. | **Helmet Mask**  
*(Hemba)*  
Suku Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Wood and pigment  

*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.246 |
| 73. | **Helmet Mask**  
*(Hemba)*  
Suku Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Wood and pigment  

*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.120 |
| 74. | **Mask**  
(Mukinka) | Salampasu Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Wood, copper, rope, and rattan  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Mark and Mary Jo Wentzel*  
2008.002.03 |
|---|---|---|
| 75. | **Bird Mask**  
(Chikweke) | Chokwe or Lunda Peoples, Angola  
Wood, cloth, and fiber  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.376 |

**Paired Figures**
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<td>76.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Nommo Figures" /></td>
<td><strong>Nommo Figures</strong></td>
<td>Dogon Peoples, Mali</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
<td><em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>77.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Twin Figures" /></td>
<td><strong>Twin Figures</strong> <em>(Ere Ibeji)</em></td>
<td>Yorùbá Peoples, Nigeria</td>
<td>Wood, pigment, and beads</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
<td><em>Gift of Eugene and Inez Gilbert</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>2011.024.18ab</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>78.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Twin Figures" /></td>
<td><strong>Twin Figures</strong> <em>(Ere Ibeji)</em></td>
<td>Yorùbá Peoples, Nigeria</td>
<td>Wood, beads, and shells, and fiber</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
<td><em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>2012.003.297</em></td>
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</table>
| 79. | Twin Figure *(Ere Ibeji)*  
Yorùbá Peoples, Nigeria  
Wood, shells, and fiber  
UWM Art Collection  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.195ab |
|---|---|
| 80. | Twin Figure *(Ere Ibeji)*  
Yorùbá Peoples, Nigeria  
Wood, pigment, beads and glass  
UWM Art Collection  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.279ab |
| 81. | Pipe  
Cameroon  
Brass  
UWM Art Collection  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.349 |
| 82. | Pipe  
Bamum Peoples, Cameroon  
Bronze and wood  
UWM Art Collection  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.354 |
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</table>
| 83. | ![Pipe](image) | **Pipe**  
West Africa  
Wood, bronze, and snake skin  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.358 |
| 84. | ![Power Figure](image) | **Power Figure (Ikenga)**  
Igbo Peoples, Nigeria  
Wood, feathers, rope, pigment and empowered materials  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.360 |
| 85. | ![Horse Skull Reliquary](image) | **Horse Skull Reliquary**  
Igbo Peoples, Nigeria  
Horse skull and woven cane  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.293 |
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<td>86</td>
<td><strong>Power Figure</strong></td>
<td>Chokwe Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Wood, cloth, pigment, and metal</td>
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<td>87</td>
<td><strong>Power Figure (Minkisi)</strong></td>
<td>Kongo Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Wood, glass, resin, metal, fiber, and empowered material</td>
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<td>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II 2012.003.112</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td><strong>Power Figure (Pfembe)</strong></td>
<td>Kongo Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Wood, glass, teeth, and empowered material</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
<td>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II 2012.003.028</td>
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<td>89.</td>
<td><strong>Power Figure</strong></td>
<td>Teke Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Wood, fiber, cloth, feathers, and empowered materials</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em></td>
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<td>90.</td>
<td><strong>Bound Female Power Figure</strong></td>
<td>Zaramo or Pare Peoples, Tanzania</td>
<td>Wood, fiber, and empowered material</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em></td>
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<td><strong>Kola Nut Bowl</strong></td>
<td>Yorùbá Peoples, Nigeria</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis</em></td>
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<td><strong>92.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Food Serving Plate</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Wood</td>
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<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
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<td><strong>Liquid Container</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Wicker and fiber</td>
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</table>
| 95. | ![Meat Container](image) | **Meat Container**  
Turkana Peoples, Kenya or Ethiopia  
Wood, leather, and fiber  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis*  
2012.003.493 |
| 96. | ![Gourd Container](image) | **Gourd Container**  
Kikuyu Peoples, Kenya  
Gourd, glass beads, leather, fiber, and mother of pearl  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.439 |
| 97. | ![Cup](image) | **Cup**  
Kuba Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Wood  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.046 |
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<td>Vessel</td>
<td>Possibly Mangbetu Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Wood</td>
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<td>99.</td>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>Tutsi Peoples, Rwanda</td>
<td>Wood</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>Bolgo Basket</td>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>Palm tree fiber and pigment</td>
<td>UWM Art Collection</td>
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**Weapons**
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<td><em>Sword</em></td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Brass, wood, and leather</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
<td><em>Gift of Dr. Quentin and Emmy Lou Schenk</em> 1988.008.09</td>
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<td>102</td>
<td><em>Decapitation Knife</em></td>
<td>Congo Area Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Metal, wood, cloth</td>
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<td><em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em> 2012.003.476</td>
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<td>103</td>
<td><em>Ceremonial Wooden Knife (Ikul)</em></td>
<td>Mongo Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
<td><em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em> 2012.003.125</td>
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<td>104</td>
<td><em>Knife</em></td>
<td>Ngala Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Metal, wood and fiber</td>
<td><em>UWM Art Collection</em></td>
<td><em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em> 2012.003.129</td>
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<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td><strong>Knife</strong></td>
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<td>Ngala Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
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<td>Metal and bone</td>
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**Worn Objects**

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<th>106</th>
<th><strong>Beaded Robe</strong></th>
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<td></td>
<td>Yorùbá Peoples, Nigeria</td>
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<td>Beads and fiber</td>
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<td><em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em></td>
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<td>2012.003.281</td>
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<tr>
<th>107</th>
<th><strong>Belt</strong></th>
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<td>Page</td>
<td>Image</td>
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| 108  | ![Belt](image1.jpg) | **Belt**  
Yorùbá Peoples, Nigeria  
Fabric, cowrie shells, and buttons  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.546 |
| 109  | ![Belt](image2.jpg) | **Belt**  
Kuba Peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Beads, cowrie shells, and leather  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Emile H. Mathis II*  
2012.003.538 |
| 110  | ![Cartridge Belt](image3.jpg) | **Cartridge Belt**  
Ethiopia  
Fabric, leather, and metal  
*UWM Art Collection*  
*Gift of Dr. Quentin and Emmy Lou Schenk*  
1989.012.04 |
<table>
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<th>Page</th>
<th>Image</th>
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<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Beaded Belt Piece" /></td>
<td><strong>Beaded Belt Piece</strong>&lt;br&gt;Maasai Peoples, Tanzania&lt;br&gt;Beads and metal&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>UWM Art Collection</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>2012.003.543</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Beaded Collar" /></td>
<td><strong>Beaded Collar</strong>&lt;br&gt;Maasai Peoples, Tanzania&lt;br&gt;Beads and wire&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>UWM Art Collection</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>Gift of Emile H. Mathis II</em>&lt;br&gt;<em>2012.003.535</em></td>
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**Face. Off. Faceoff**  
*Survey Questions*

Please respond to questions and deposit in the tray. These questions will be used by the curator to better determine the effects of this exhibition-as-experiment.

1. **Why do you go to art museums?**  
   What do you hope to get out of a visit?

2. **What is more familiar to you, African art collections presented like Side A (fewer objects) or Side B (More objects)?**  
   Which gallery did you prefer?  
   Why?

3. **How did the information accompanying objects on both sides of the gallery influence/ not influence your viewing experience and understanding of African culture?**

4. **How did the inclusion of the Ancient Egyptian Shabti tomb figurines and the three contemporary prints alter/not alter your notion of Africa?**

5. **What are three words you would use to describe Africa prior to experiencing this exhibition?**  
   What are three words you would now use to describe Africa?