

Final Report for *Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Life in the Yorùbá Universe* Chazen Museum of Art

Overview

The Chazen Museum of Art presented the exhibition *Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Life in the Yorùbá Universe* from January 29 through May 21, 2000. Organized by UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, the exhibition was curated by UW–Madison Evjue-Bascom Professor of Art History Henry Drewal. The exhibition of some 150 luminous beaded objects, including ceremonial regalia, crowns, and contemporary paintings and sculpture, represented the concepts of color, light, and philosophy of Yoruba peoples of Africa and the Americas.

Attendance for the exhibition totaled 39,900. Response to the exhibition and accompanying educational programs was overwhelmingly positive, with praise for the high aesthetic, educational, and cultural qualities of the exhibition.

Comments collected from a survey and from comment books stationed throughout the galleries testify to the exhibition's aesthetic and educational value:

"The beautiful colors and beadwork were shown to their full potential here and the historical references helped a great deal to place these works in context"

"I like the stories, histories, and explanations of the people and their beadwork."

"Well organized, visually attractive, and pretty accurate to the message intended to be sent to the public."

During the run of *Beads, Body, and Soul*, the Chazen Museum hosted an opening and a closing reception, 11 lectures, 111 docent-led tours, 8 bead-making demonstrations, several musical and dance performances, and a mini-exhibition of beadwork by area schoolchildren. Other features of the Chazen's presentation of the exhibition included a storyteller, special curriculum guide materials prepared for school teachers, and a film series.

The Chazen assembled an outreach committee to ensure the success of its public outreach efforts. Representatives from the Madison Metropolitan School District, neighborhood centers, local churches, service organizations, and publications serving Latino and African-American communities served on the committee, which began meeting early in the planning and preparation stage of the exhibition. The committee also included representatives from the UW–Madison school of music and departments of dance, African studies, Afro-American studies, art history, Latin American and Iberian studies, and environment, textiles, and design.

The outreach committee extended the reach of the exhibition and helped the museum implement a multidisciplinary approach to its presentation of related programs. In addition, the advisory committee resulted in an increased amount of collaborative activity with other organizations.

The Chazen Museum was awarded a Governor's Award for Public Humanities Programming by the Wisconsin Humanities Council on October 13, 2000 for its presentation of *Beads, Body, and Soul*.

Educational Programs and Events

The Chazen organized and presented a rich series of educational and collaborative programs in conjunction with the exhibition. The tour program served a total of 12,850 individuals (32% of exhibition total attendance). 62 schools and 49 non-school groups requested and participated in docent-led tours of the exhibition (see attached list of school and non-school groups). The tour program assists visitors of all ages to better appreciate the works on view. 10,577 schoolchildren participated in guided tours of the exhibition. Of these, 8,795 were students K-8 and 1,782 were

students in grades 9–12. Adults participating in tours numbered 2,268.

The Chazen Museum hosted eleven lectures related to the *Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Life in the Yorùbá Universe* exhibition. In addition to the exhibition's curators, Henry Drewal and John Mason, speakers from diverse areas of scholarship and artistic experience addressed themes such as Yorùbá culture and philosophy and beads in artwork. All lectures were presented free of charge to the general public. Audiences for lectures totaled 1,103.

Two residencies took place during *Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Life in the Yorùbá Universe*. Master Afro-Cuban drummer Carlos Eguis-Aguila traveled from Chicago with his wife and translator Anne Benison for three days of performances and lecture-demonstrations at the Chazen and with UW-Madison classes. Eguis-Aguila plays congo drums and sings from the various African traditions brought to Cuba hundreds of years ago. On Friday night, May 5 (in conjunction with Downtown Gallery Night) Eguis-Aguila performed some traditional rumbas and some of his own composition, with narration provided by Anne Bennison, for an audience of 100 people. He also conducted two two-hour congo drumming master classes for UW students in the School of Music. On Saturday, May 6 Eguis-Agiula presented a lecture-demonstration for the 60 members of the general public on drumming techniques. Eguis-Agiula returned to Madison to participate in the Sin Fronteras Parade and the Closing Festival for the exhibition on May 20.

Clyde Alafiju Morgan traveled to Madison from February 20 to 26 to present master classes for UW students, to visit area elementary schools, and to present a major performance on campus. A member of the Yorùbá religious community, Morgan enlisted the participation of UW-Madison dance and music students and local talent from the community to assemble a "troupe" to dance and play percussion in a special performance of sacred and secular Afro-Brazilian/Yorùbá dances. Morgan and the troupe rehearsed for one week to prepare for the public performance. During his week in Madison, Morgan also visited and worked with schoolchildren at Hawthorne Elementary, Cherokee Middle School, and Lincoln Elementary schools. In addition, Morgan gave a keynote address to the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education Conference.

On February 25, 2000, the Chazen Museum of Art, UW-Madison's Latin American and Iberian Studies Department, the School of Music and Dance Department, and MMSD co-sponsored two special performances at Music Hall entitled "From MesoAmerica to Brazil: Sin Fronteras Multicultural Winter Extravaganza." The evening featured Honduran music sensation Guillermo Anderson, as well as Clyde Morgan, his troupe of dancers, and percussion by local musical group The Handphibians. In addition, the event included special mini-performances by schoolchildren from three Sin Fronteras barrio schools from Madison. (Sin Fronteras is a two year community-wide education and integrated arts initiative celebrating MesoAmerica.)

To show the ongoing vitality of beading, five artists demonstrated their beadwork for public audiences at the Chazen. Manuel Vega (from New York), Felipe Garcia Villamil (from Cuba), Gerthie David (from Haiti), Gerald Duane Coleman (from Milwaukee), and Sonya Clark (from Madison) each presented a slide-lecture and a beading demonstration. All demonstrations were held on Saturday afternoons, with a special demonstration scheduled during public school vacation for students first grade and older. 449 people attended the beading lectures and demonstrations.

In conjunction with Madison elementary schools, the Chazen organized Children Are Beads, an exhibition of beadwork produced by 270 students. On view from March 4 through April 30, the exhibition opened with a Children's Carnival which included refreshments, demonstrations of

hair-braiding, guided tours of *Beads, Body, and Soul*, and music, dance, and poetry readings by J.C. Wright Middle School students.

A film series offered audiences the opportunity to learn more about different aspects of Yorùbá culture and history. Admission to all film screenings was free and open to the general public. 62 people participated in the film series, which featured:

- “The Orìshà Tradition: An African World View” (February 3, 2000)
- “Taafe Fanga (Skirt Power)” (February 3, 2000)
- “Pièces d’Identités” (February 10, 2000)
- “Quilombo” (February 17, 2000)
- “Bahia, Africa in the Americas” (February 24)
- “Daughters of the Dust” (February 24)

The Chazen Museum also hosted Nigerian storyteller Dr. Ademola Iyi-Eweka on Saturday, February 19. Dr. Iyi-Eweka entertained an audience of 66 with tales appropriate for both children and adults.

The Chazen Museum worked with other institutions to expand the reach of *Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Life in the Yorùbá Universe*. Programs presented by other organizations included:

- Gallery of Design: *Joyful Blues: Pattern in Yorùbá adire Cloth*
January 28–March 9, 2000
A presentation on the technical processes, cultural meanings and dynamic aesthetic designs of *adire*, the resist-patterned, indigo-dyed cloths made by the Yorùbá people of West Africa
- Union Art Galleries: *Dancing with Gandhi in Afro Brazil: Photographs by Pravina Shukla*
February 18–March 19, 2000
Dr. Shukla received her Ph.D from UCLA in Folklore. She is the Exhibition Content Coordinator, Department of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History. Her photographs focus on Afro Brazil, specifically the Filhos de Gandhi, an all male carnival group that parades each year dressed in long white tunic dresses and multiple strands of beads and perfumes.
- Union Art Galleries: *Common Ties: Dots and Dashes, Beads and Beauty*
February 18–March 19, 2000
Nigerian painter and UW scholar Bolaji Campbell, and African-American textile and bead artist and UW professor of textile design, Sonya Clark, presented a visual exploration of the connections between their shared African heritage. Both draw from *Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Life in the Yorùbá Universe* culture as a source of inspiration for their work.
- Olbrich Botanical Gardens
January 29, 2000
Milwaukee’s Ton K-Thi Children’s African Dance Company performed West African dance with live drummers and traditional African costumes. Part of a series designed to teach children about the cultures of people who live in rainforest areas.

The Chazen Museum’s education department prepared slide/curriculum resources targeted towards school groups arranging a guided tour of *Beads, Body, and Soul*. The 98-page, illustrated package contains a broad study of Yorùbá culture through 6 lessons, classroom activities, and 20 slides. A resource kit was loaned to teachers one week before their field trip, to be returned on the

day of the tour. Resource kits were also available for sale in the museum's gift shop; 40 of these were sold.

Four inservice workshops were conducted in April, October, 1999 and February, 2000 for Madison Metropolitan School District educators. Sonya Clark, Assistant Professor of Environment, Textiles, and Design at UW-Madison and a bead artist, and Bolaji Campbell, a Yorùbá graduate student in art history at UW-Madison and a specialist on Yorùbá color theory led the teacher workshops. All workshops for teachers were advertised through the MMSD Staff Development bulletin and website.

The Chazen Museum of Art celebrated the completion of the exhibition *Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Life in the Yorùbá Universe* with a special closing festival on Saturday May 20, 2000. Scheduled from 2–4 p.m. in the Chazen's central Paige Court, the festival featured two local musical groups, remarks by exhibition curator Professor Henry John Drewal, and hair braiding demonstrations. The Mt. Zion Baptist Church Choir, accompanied by Leotha Stanley, gave a performance, followed by traditional and contemporary African music performed by the group Kweku Ananse and Sweet Vibrations. Admission to the festival and the exhibition was free of charge. The *Sin Fronteras* Carnival Parade preceded the festival. Organized by the Madison Children's Museum and the University of Wisconsin–Madison Latin American and Iberian Studies Program, the parade began at 12 p.m. and traveled from the Madison Children's Museum at 30 on the Square near the Capitol down State Street to the Library Mall. The parade featured local schoolchildren in costume from the four Sin Fronteras Barrio Schools: Lincoln Elementary, Hawthorne Elementary, Cherokee Middle School, and Malcolm Shabazz City High School, as well as specially decorated floats and an array of talented musicians.

Publicity and Outreach

- Madison Metropolitan School District in-service on January 17 (topic: *Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Life in the Yorùbá Universe* and *In the Public Realm: Installations by Bradley McCallum*)
- Television coverage by WHA for their Weekend program in May
- Radio coverage by Jean Feraca, WERN/WPR, The Ideas Network, January 28
- Promotion through Chazen participation in summer festivals: Triangle Ethnic Fest, Africa Fest, Fiesta Hispana, African World Festival, Juneteenth Celebration, Bayview Festival
- Webcast of dele jegede lecture
- WYOU aired videotapes of most programs, and closing festival
- Bus signs on back of Madison Metro buses
- Banner on front of building

Press Coverage:

- “Yorùbá beads will brighten the Chazen”, The Capital Times, January 19, 2000
- “ ‘Beads, Body and Soul’ links artistry in Africa, Americas”, Wisconsin Week, January 19, 2000
- “Beautiful Beads”, Wisconsin State Journal, January 27, 2000
- “A bead on the world”, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, January 31, 2000
- “Bedazzling Beadwork,” Wisconsin Trails, January/February, 2000
- “African art on display at Chazen”, Discourse Multicultural Magazine, February 2000
- “Chazen Delivers Yorùbá culture to Madison”, The Daily Cardinal, February 1, 2000
- “Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Life in the Yorùbá Universe”. Isthmus, February 11, 2000
- “Beads: African art show a big draw at Chazen”, The Capital Times, February 25, 2000

- “Beads, body and soul: Art and Light in the Yorùbá universe”, The Madison Times, January 21–27, 2000
- “ ‘Children Are Beads’ in Yorùbá culture: Beadwork by Madison elementary art students at Chazen”, The Madison Times, March 31–April 6, 2000
- “Art of West Africa Featured in New Chazen Exhibit”, Simpson Street Free Press
- “Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Life in the Yorùbá Universe”, UMOJA, May 2000

Schools and Groups Served by Chazen Tour Program

Schools (location is Madison unless otherwise indicated)

Adams Friendship Middle School (Adams, Wisconsin)

Allis Elementary School

Artworks

Badger Middle School (West Bend, WI)

Belleville High School (Belleville, WI)

Berlin High School (Berlin, WI)

Brodhead High School (Brodhead, WI)

Cambridge Elementary (Cambridge, WI)

Cherokee Middle School

Crestwood Elementary

DC Everest High School (Scofield, WI)

DeForest High School (DeForest, WI)

Dowdna Elementary School (Dowdna, WI)

Eagle School

Edgerton Elementary (Edgerton, WI)

Elkhorn Area High School (Elkhorn, WI)

Chazen Elementary

Falk Elementary

Fennimore High School (Fennimore, WI)

Fort Atkinson Extended Learning Class (Purdy School, Fort Atkinson)

Glacier Creek Middle School (Cross Plains, WI)

Glen Stevens Elementary School

Immaculate Heart of Mary (Monona, WI)

James Madison Memorial High School

Jefferson Middle School (Jefferson, WI)

LaFollette High School

Lincoln Elementary

Lindberg Elementary School

Little Red Preschool (Middleton, WI)

Madison West High School

Marathon High School (Marathon, WI)

Mauston High School (Mauston, WI)

Mendota Elementary

Merrimac Elementary (Merrimac, WI)

Middleton High School (Middleton, WI)

Mineral Point Elementary (Mineral Point, WI)

Mineral Point High School (Mineral Point, WI)

Mt. Horeb Middle School (Mt. Horeb, WI)

Mt. Horeb Primary Center (Mt. Horeb, WI)

Notre Dame Academy

Oregon Middle School (Oregon, WI)
Our Lady Queen of Peace
Pleasant River (Sauk City, WI)
Poynette Elementary (Poynette, WI)
River Bluff Middle School (Stoughton, WI)
Rufus King High School (Milwaukee, WI)
Sabish Junior High (Fond du Lac, WI)
Schenk Elementary School
Shorewood Elementary
South Division High School (Milwaukee)
Spruce Street School (Sauk City, WI)
St. John's (Princeton, WI)
St. Michael's (Dane, WI)
St. Paul Elementary (Wonewac, WI)
Sun Prairie High School (Sun Prairie, WI)
Thoreau Afterschool Program
University Art League Appreciation Interest Group
Van Hise Elementary
Waterloo High School (Waterloo, WI)
Waunakee High School (Waunakee, WI)
West High School
Westside Elementary (Mauston, WI)
Wright Middle School

Groups

Attic Angels
Atwood Community Center
Beloit College
Colonial Club Adult Day Center
Core Knowledge Charter (Verona, WI)
Cornell College Art History
Culture Power Lunch
East Madison Community Center
Edgewood College Women
Elderhostel
E.S.L.
Fiber Arts Group
Girl Power
Guild.com
History Honors
International Students
Karen Zilavy Book Group
Madison Area Technical College Drawing
Madison Bead Society
MATA
Outreach for Mendota Adults
Peterson Group
Project Bootstrap
Robert Farris Thompson
Salvation Army Learning Center (5-12 year olds)
Sauk County Art Association

SS Morris Anne Church
St. Mary's Adult Day Health Center
Sun Prairie teachers
University League Art Appreciation
UW Art Education
UW Classics
UW Curriculum and Instruction
UW Creative Writing
UW English
UW Folklore
UW French 288
UW History
UW German
UW Integrated Liberal Studies
UW Outreach Development
UW Portuguese
Viteriod
Volk Travel Group
Winwood West
Wisconsin Alumni Association
Women in Focus
XI Alpha Delta