



General Information
Calendar
News
Virtual Tour
Collection
Exhibitions
Programs & Services
Events
Publications
Museum Shop
Membership/
Donations
Staff
Volunteers

LVM Home
UW Home
Comments?

Perspectives: African Art from the Bareiss Family Collection

April 16-June 27, 2004, mezzanine

This exhibition features approximately sixty objects including masks, sculpture, ceramics, metalwork, and textiles from about twenty cultural groups across sub-Saharan Africa. Objects date from the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries. These objects have been chosen for their aesthetic qualities and how they illustrate ideas of performance, power, encounter, and design, just four of countless perspectives to regard the collection. Masks from cultural groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, and Mozambique, as well as a pair of rare life-size wooden marionettes from Sukuma peoples in Tanzania exhibit the creativity African societies bring to performance. Such emblems of authority as leadership staffs and "power figures" from Songye peoples of the Democratic Republic of Congo demonstrate ideas of power. These dramatic figures were designed to embody spiritual and ancestral power to influence and protect individuals and communities. Another assortment of works from west and central Africa concern encounter and contact between Africa and the western world, through trade and colonialism. An eighteenth- to twentieth-century wood and bronze crucifix from the Kongo peoples of the Democratic Republic of Congo attests to the long and complex history of Christianity brought by the Portuguese at the end of the fifteenth century. A medley of personal arts such as pottery and textiles from west to central Africa demonstrate inventive and dynamic design, among which will be miniature, finely woven, covered baskets made by Tutsi artists in Rwanda during the twentieth century. By looking at objects relating to performance, power, encounter, and design in African art we find multiple ways to consider African art and the magnitude of the Bareiss Family Collection.

Bareiss Family Collection of African Art

Approximately 800 objects from various cultural groups from across sub-Saharan Africa make up the Bareiss Family Collection of African Art, which includes objects from Burkina Faso to Malawi, or from west to southeastern Africa. Collector Walter Bareiss, now 84, and his wife Molly have spent their lifetime collecting—artist's books, Greek vases, Japanese woodcuts, Chinese ceramics, in addition to African art. Much of the African collection was formed during the 1970s and 1980s. His children carry on an interest in African art.

This collection is on loan to the Elvehjem Museum of Art.

Curatorial talk on exhibition

Thursday, April 29, 4:00 p.m. Mezzanine

Nicole Bridges, curatorial intern, on Perspectives:
African Art from the Bareiss Family Collection

The aesthetics of African art evoke social contexts and significations particular to the objects and cultures from which they come. This gallery talk will be a dialogue between visitors and curator, while they examine the diverse objects on view from this collection. They will consider how objects such as masks, sculpture, ceramics, and textiles illustrate nuances of performance, power, Western encounter, and artistry.

The Elvehjem Museum of Art is open Tuesdays-Fridays 9-5 pm; Saturdays and Sundays 11-5 pm; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission to galleries and educational events is free. The museum is located at 800 University Avenue on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is accessible to wheelchairs from the Murray Street (north) entrance. Parking is available at the city of Madison's Lake Street and Frances Street ramps, university lot 46 on Lake Street between Johnson and University Avenue, university lot 47 on Johnson Street between Park and Lake streets. Evening and weekend parking is also available under Grainger Hall with entrance on Brooks Street between University Avenue and Johnson streets. The Elvehjem Museum of Art will provide sign language interpreters for associated programs by three-week advance request to Anne Lambert, Curator of Education, weekdays, 608 263-4421 (voice).

[<-Return To Exhibitions](#)