

ARTFUL ANIMALS

Activity Guide

THIS
BOOK
BELONGS
TO

This collaborative programming project has been supported by the Smithsonian School Programming Fund.

cover
Edward Saidi Tingatinga
1935–1972, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Conger Birds (detail)
1972
Oil on fiberboard
Gift of Ambassador and
Mrs. W. Beverly Carter, Jr., 79-28-50

below
Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1966

below right
Paa Joe
b. 1945, Ghana
Fantasy coffin
Late 20th century
Wood, paint
Collection of Kenneth and Bonnie Brown

Symbols of animals and insects representing leadership may be found throughout Artful Animals. This guide includes the motifs and meanings for 13 animals and insects embroidered on the Fante “cloth of the great,” illustrated on the back cover.

Symbols and meanings based on the field research of Doran H. Ross. From “Cloth of the Great,” a gallery handout for the 1992 exhibition Elimina: Art and Trade in the West African Coast at the National Museum of African Art.

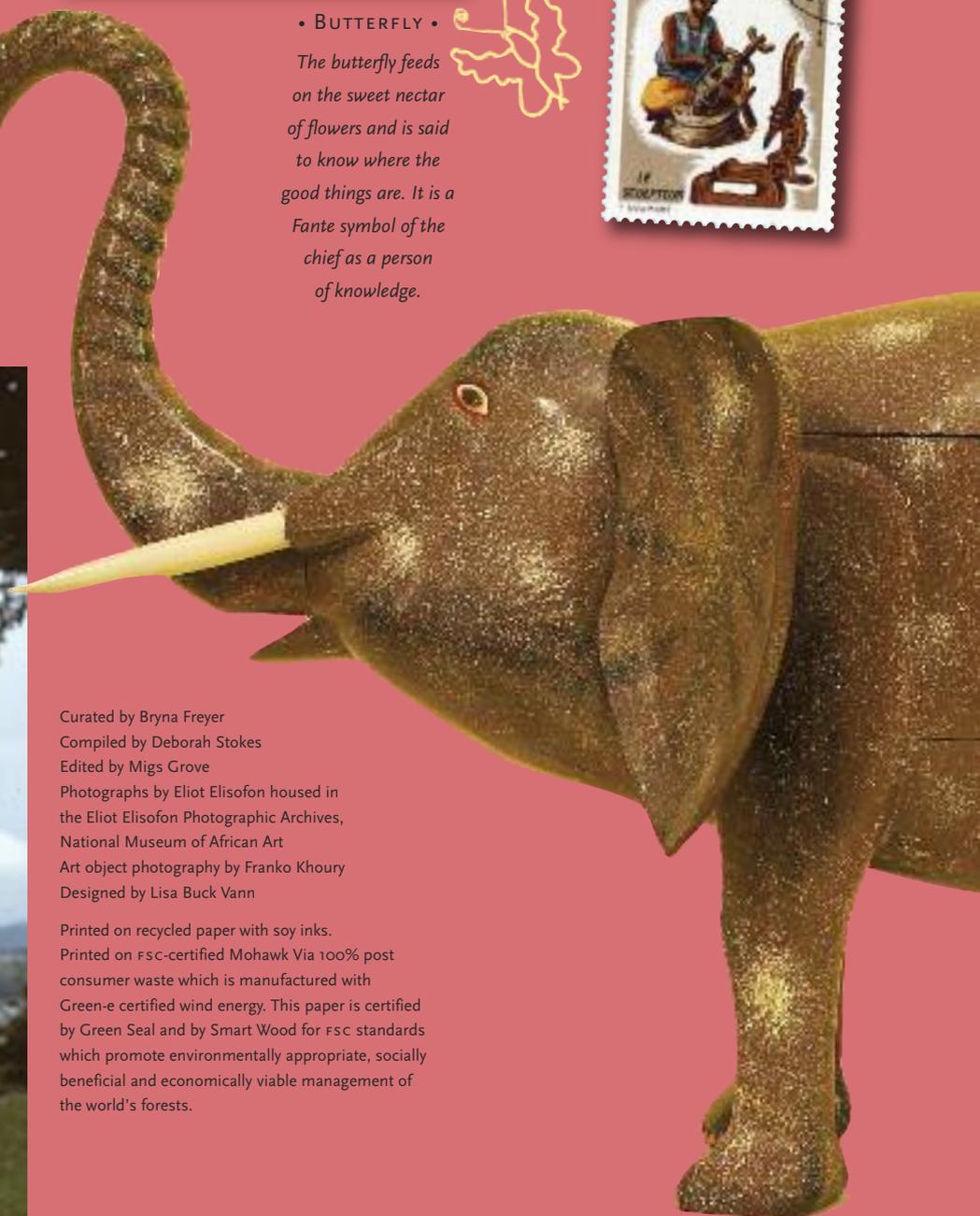
• BUTTERFLY •

The butterfly feeds on the sweet nectar of flowers and is said to know where the good things are. It is a Fante symbol of the chief as a person of knowledge.



Curated by Bryna Freyer
Compiled by Deborah Stokes
Edited by Migs Grove
Photographs by Eliot Elisofon housed in the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
Art object photography by Franko Khoury
Designed by Lisa Buck Vann

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ARTFUL ANIMALS AND THIS ACTIVITY GUIDE



Artful Animals (July 1, 2009–February 21, 2010) showcases 125 artworks that feature African mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and even fantasy animals serving as metaphors for leadership, royalty, beauty, spiritual affiliation and moral values. Colorful children’s labels throughout the exhibition provide information about the animals’ traits and their symbolism in African cultures.

The National Museum of African Art partnered with the Discovery Theater and the education departments of the National Postal Museum, the National Zoo and the National Museum of Natural History to develop activities at each site that further explore and complement the *Artful Animals* theme. Activities from each partner are included in this guide. For more information about the exhibition, visit africa.si.edu/exhibits.



ARTFUL ANIMALS AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART



There are lots of ways to think of animals . . .

Some we love as pets.

Some we visit at the zoo.

Some we see only in books.

The animal world also includes human beings, the main subject of *Artful Animals*. As you travel through the exhibition, ask yourself

- what can we learn about *ourselves* by looking at our relationship to animals?
- what is *our* place in nature and the world?

On this visit, we can learn by **looking**.



As you go through the exhibition, look for **10 large letters** and write them below.

Unscramble the letters to identify the **mystery animal!**

(Find the answer at the end of the exhibition.)



• CHAMELEON •

The proverb, "The chameleon can change its clothes but not its soul," evokes the need for chiefly character.



Gomintogo or gomintogo mask
Dogon peoples, Mali
Mid- to late 20th century
Wood, pigment, paint
Bequest of Eliot Elisofon,
73-7-546

Let's see which animals we find most often in African art.

Let's get started!

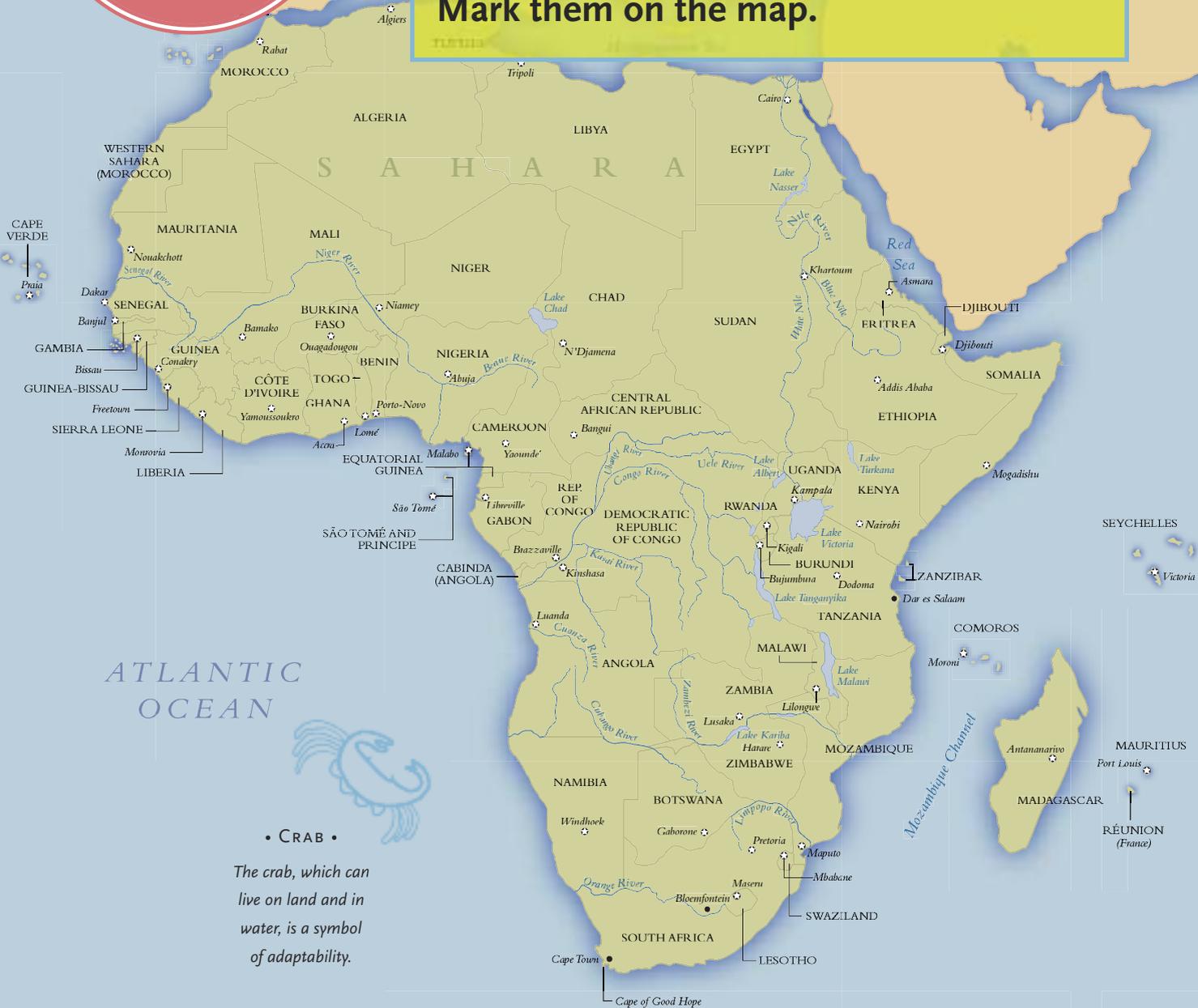
How many countries can you find?

.....

Art in Africa is a mix of old and new. Many of the works in *Artful Animals* were made 50 to 100 years ago. Others were created more recently in villages as well as modern, urban cities.

The objects in *Artful Animals* come from many of the **54** countries that make up the African continent.

Mark them on the map.



• CRAB •

The crab, which can live on land and in water, is a symbol of adaptability.

AFRICA

☆ National capital

INDIAN OCEAN



Kaballa, b. 1920, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Untitled , c. 1940s–1950s, oil on paper, anonymous gift, 2002-11-4

In *Artful Animals* you will find

the familiar

- dog
- chicken
- pig
- horse

the unusual

- pangolin
- aardvark
- chameleon

the untamed

- antelope
- leopard
- crocodile
- elephant
- spider
- snake



• CROCODILE •

The image refers to the crocodile as a symbol of chiefly strength and power: "Fish in the stream grow fat . . . for the benefit of the crocodile who eats them."



MY JOURNAL OF ANIMALS

{AS YOU WALK THROUGH THE EXHIBITION, KEEP A JOURNAL OF THE ANIMALS YOU SEE AND WRITE A STORY.}





• DOUBLE CROCODILE •

Double crocodile with one stomach

*This image—
“many mouths,
one stomach”—
symbolizes the
need to share.*

Initiation rituals among the Yaka peoples (detail)
Near Kasongo Lunda, Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1951



African masks and sculptures have a **purpose**. The **form** of an object can often tell us its **function**. Would you use a baseball bat to write a story? a bicycle to go swimming?

Objects are unique to the cultures that create them. Their forms are designed for particular purposes. The objects in *Artful Animals* include **designs** that represent an animal or part of an animal.

Match the animal to its special feature.

Antelopes have pointed

Leopards have lots of

Crocodiles have big

Roosters have a red

Elephants have a long

Snakes have dangerous

Spiders have eight

Chameleons have a spiral

Butterflies have colorful

tail

horns

wings

legs

comb

fangs

spots

trunk

teeth

WHAT DO YOU WEAR
OR OWN THAT HAS AN
ANIMAL DESIGN?

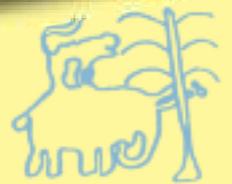
1

2

3



Lion face mask (detail)
Bamana peoples, Mali
Early to mid-20th century
Wood, plant fiber,
pigment, cotton, nails
Museum purchase,
2004-14-1



• ELEPHANT NEXT
TO A PALM TREE •

This image was a symbol of the Gold Coast colony (present-day Ghana). The lion on the elephant may refer specifically to the Fante town of Anomabu.



A **symbol** is a shape that stands for or reminds us of something.

What does a heart shape suggest?

What does the American flag mean?

What qualities does the American bald eagle represent?

When we don't understand the symbol, its meaning may be hidden.

African artists observe the special talents of animals in nature. They use animals to represent ideas such as strength, beauty, power and protection.

Read the colorful children's labels to discover the meanings of Africa's artful animals.

Choose an animal symbol to represent you!

My special talents are

My friend is as special as



• FISH •

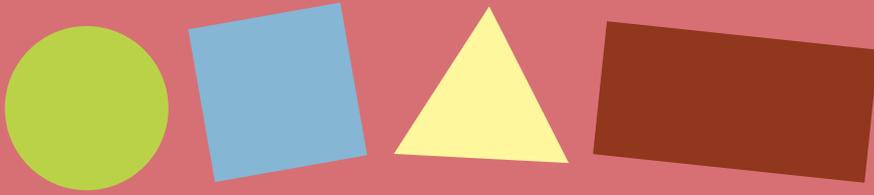
This image refers to the Fante proverb, "Fish in the stream grow fat . . . for the benefit of the crocodile who eats them," and symbolizes lesser chiefs or subjects.

Dogon *dyomo* masqueraders during *dama* ceremony (detail)
Sanga, Mali
Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1970



When creating works of art, African artists often use geometric *shapes*.

Find



Some African artists cut or paint a decorative *pattern* on the surface of their masks or figures.

Complete the unfinished pattern



above
Gaboon viper panel
(detail)
Nkanu peoples,
Democratic Republic
of the Congo
20th century
Wood, pigment
Collection of Kenneth
and Bonnie Brown

left
Python-pattern bowl
(detail)
Artist: Tamdyna
(1930–1978)
Sara-Nar peoples, Chad
c. 1970–73
Gourd, pigment
Gift of Ellen Patterson
Brown, 94-2-4



• ROOSTER •

*The rooster, who
crows to begin the
day, is a Fante symbol
of the chief's ability
to initiate action.*

Look for other animals in art when you walk around the Smithsonian Institution.

AT HOME

Look through your local newspaper for the names of sports teams. What animals did the teams choose?

.....
They are symbols for.....

ANIMALS I FOUND
IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD

1

2

3

ANIMALS I FOUND
AT THE SMITHSONIAN

1

2

3

ANIMALS I FOUND
IN MY ROOM

1

2

3



• SANKOFA BIRD •

The bird who looks back—“Pick it up if it falls behind you”—is a Fante symbol of the ability and wisdom to learn from the past.

background
Asiru Olatunde
1918–1993, Oshogbo,
Nigeria
Untitled (detail)
1966
Aluminum
Gift of Bernice M. Kelly,
95-7-1

ARTFUL ANIMALS AT THE NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM



Postage stamps not only pay for the mail, they also use pictures to visually describe world cultures. In fact, looking at postage stamps from all over the world is a fun and inexpensive way to travel around the globe.

African postage stamps showcase a variety of different ideas, especially art from all over the continent. You can build your own postage stamp collection using the pictures on your stamps to write your own creative story.

Step 1

Head into the museum's Philatelic Gallery. The pullout frames hold stamp collections from the African countries listed on the poster board. Use the catalogue on the wall to find the Congo, Nigeria and many more.

Step 2

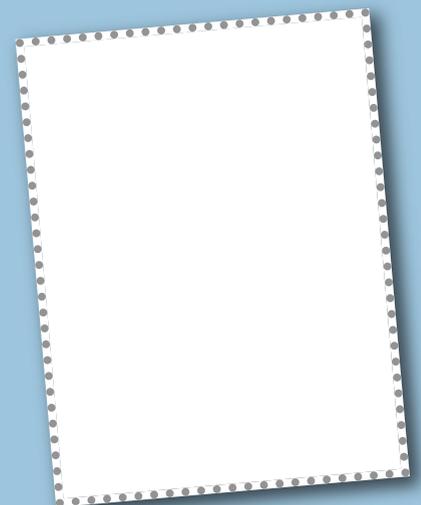
Choose an African stamp frame to investigate and ask the following questions:

DO THE STAMPS SHOW PEOPLE? WHO?

DO THE STAMPS CHANGE OVER TIME? HOW?

WHAT KIND OF STORY DO YOU THINK THE STAMPS TELL?

WHICH STAMPS ARE YOUR FAVORITES? WHY?



Step 3

Choose **five** stamps to draw in the stamp frames below. Use these stamps to create a story. The story can be about anything you like. Use your imagination and be creative!

{WRITE YOUR STORY HERE}



- SHIELD
FLANKED BY
BIRDS •

Inspired by a European coat of arms, this image was adopted as the symbol of the national government of Ghana.



ARTFUL ANIMALS AT THE NATIONAL ZOO



Mix and Match

Many of the creatures seen in African artwork combine parts of different animals. The *chi wara* that taught the Bamana peoples of Mali to farm was part oryx antelope, part pangolin and part aardvark.

Create your own mythical animal. Grab something to draw with and let your imagination go wild.

{MY MYTHICAL ANIMAL}

Can you move like an animal?

Animals move in some amazing ways.



- Don't get dizzy trying this one!

A chameleon can move its eyes in opposite directions.

Can you?

- Hidden in the forest, the Gaboon viper can stay still for hours before attacking its prey.

Can you sit perfectly still without moving a muscle?

- Quick, what's that behind you? The mythic *sankofa* bird can look straight backward.

Can you see what's behind you?

- The *chi wara* taught the Bamana peoples to farm.

The motions of the antelope as it uses its hooves and horns mimic the farmer as he breaks the earth with his hoe.

Can you dig the ground with your toes?

Photograph by
Ann Batdorf,
Smithsonian's
National Zoo



• SNAIL •

Like the tortoise, the snail refers to an important food gathered by hand. It is thus a Fante symbol of peace.



The Spider and the Leopard: A Fable

ONCE upon a _____(noun), Spider went down

the _____(adjective) path that led to the

_____ (noun). Leopard was there with a _____(adjective)

look in his eye. Spider _____(past-tense verb) behind a great _____(noun), and

Leopard could not find him. "Never mind," Leopard thought. "I will go to Spider's

_____ (noun). I will _____(verb) behind his _____(noun) and then I will

_____ (verb) him."

Spider was scared when he got home, so he hatched a _____(noun). He

_____ (past-tense verb) out, "Ho! My _____(noun)!" Nobody answered. "That's

funny," said Spider loudly, "my little _____(noun) always answers me." With all his

_____ (noun), he _____(past-tense verb), "Ho! My house. How are you?"

A _____(adjective) voice answered. "I am fine,

Mr. Spider. Come on in."

The Spider _____(past-tense verb)

out laughing. "Now I know where you are,

Mr. Leopard, and you shall never catch me."

THE END



ARTFUL ANIMALS AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY



African artists throughout history have created powerful works of art using images of animals. From rock art to contemporary painting, animals are used as symbols in royal art, in masquerades and to show respect for ancestors. Many of the elements of design are derived through direct observation of the animals in their natural habitat.

Pick up a floor map at the information desk. Let's start at the big mounted elephant in the Kenneth E. Behring Family Rotunda on the 1st floor.

Walk completely around it and take a good look!
Are elephants solitary animals or do they live in herds?

SOLITARY IN HERDS

Name 3 other creatures that share the elephant's habitat.

.....

Next, go to the 2nd floor and find the Elephant Discovery Station.

Find the elephant mask.
When is it worn?

What does the elephant symbolize in the Kuba peoples' culture?

Read the proverb that compares a ruler to an elephant. What qualities do they share?



Photograph by Chip Clark

far left
Elephant mask
Kuba peoples, Democratic
Republic of the Congo
Early 19th century
Beads, cowrie shells, hide,
fur, raffia, horn rattan
National Museum of
Natural History, E385718

FIND THE TWO CASES DISPLAYING AFRICAN MONEY. PICTURES OF ANIMALS CAN BE FOUND ON MANY OF THESE. LIST ALL THE ANIMALS YOU CAN SEE.

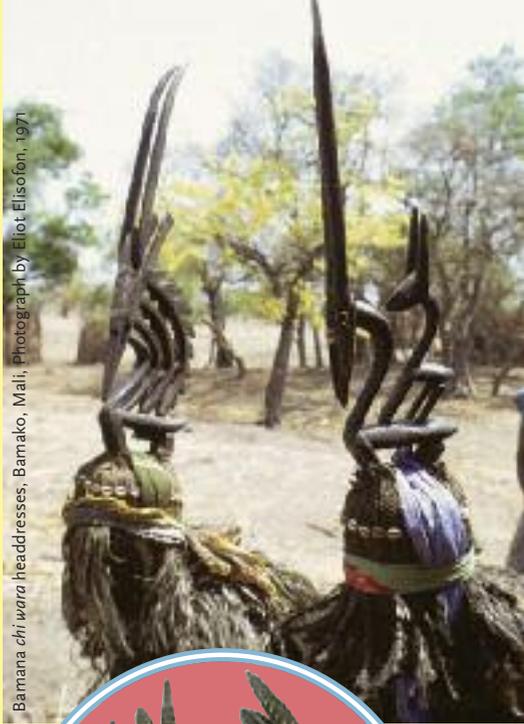
{Hint: there are more than 10!}

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

Go to the African Voices exhibition on the 1st floor.

Look for the carved head-dresses. Worn on top of the dancer's head, they are a traditional art form created in Mali by Bamana carvers. They represent the mythic ancestor *chi wara* (chee-WAR-rah) who taught the Bamana peoples how to farm. One is male and one is female. How can you tell the difference?

right
 Pair of *chi wara*
 Artist: Siriman Fane
 Bamana peoples, Mali
 1970
 Wood
 National Museum of Natural History,
 gift of Dr. and Mrs
 James Pascal Imperato,
 E428439-40



Bamana *chi wara* head-dresses, Bamako, Mali. Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1971



Look for these objects.

Design your own paper money with an animal that means something to you!

• SPIDER •

Ananse, the trickster spider of Akan folklore, is a symbol of wisdom and cleverness.



FOR MORE AFRICAN ANIMALS, GO TO THE BEHRING HALL OF MAMMALS OFF THE ROTUNDA. WATCH OUT FOR THE LION ON YOUR LEFT! HUNT FOR THE ORYX AND THE GAZELLE.

Find the teeny tiny animal behind the zebras. What is it?



Photograph by Meghan Murphy, Smithsonian's National Zoo

ARTFUL ANIMALS AT THE DISCOVERY THEATER



Artful Animals is coming to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art on the National Mall, the National Zoo, the National Postal Museum, the National Museum of Natural History—and Discovery Theater will be there with great shows and educational programs for every age!

Sunset Serenade: Mother Africa

Thursday, July 23, 2009

6:30–8:00 p.m.

National Zoo

Soul in Motion performs at the band shell on the green. Enjoy a family picnic with your favorite African animals.

FREE
PROGRAM!



Animals R Us! Activity Programs

National Identity and Animal Stamp Art

Tuesdays and Thursdays in July 2009

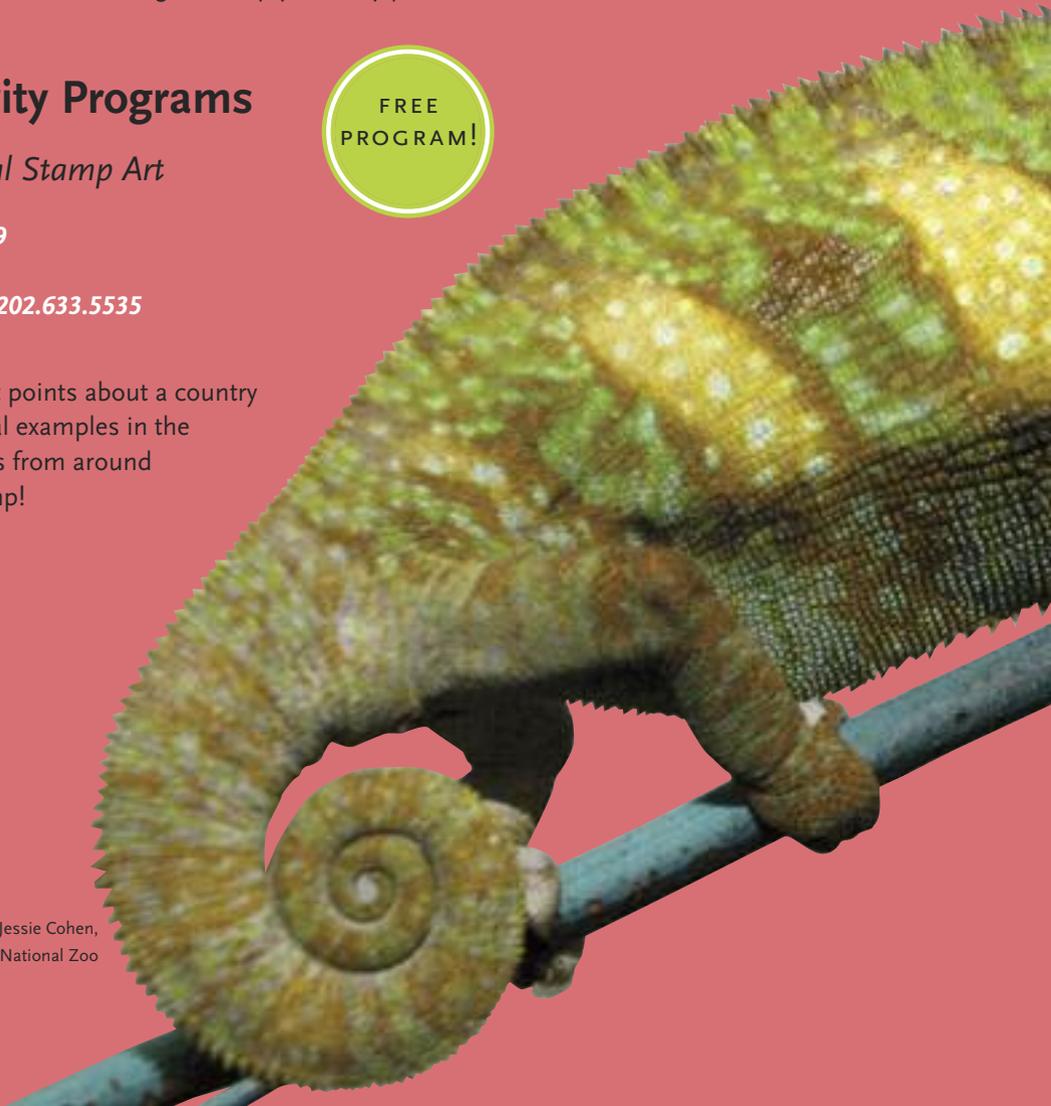
10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Advanced registration encouraged, 202.633.5535

National Postal Museum

Learn how animals make important points about a country and its people, look for artful animal examples in the stamp vaults, collect animal stamps from around the world and create your own stamp!

FREE
PROGRAM!



Photograph by Jessie Cohen,
Smithsonian's National Zoo



Animals R Us! Family Day

National Identity and Animal Stamp Art

Saturday, August 1, 2009

1:00–3:30 p.m.

National Postal Museum

Enjoy presentations about African animals, folklore and peoples with Discovery Theater's Soul in Motion. Explore examples of artful animals in the stamp galleries, collect animal stamps from around the world and design your own stamp!



Artful Animals at Play

Thursday & Friday, August 6 & 7, 2009

10:15 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 11:45 a.m., and 12:30 p.m.

National Museum of African Art

Discovery Theater, Meet the Museum Program

Limited seating; for tickets, call 202.633.8700 or visit

<http://discoverytheater.com/shows/aug/artful.shtm>

Enjoy an intimate, close-up, interactive show with stories, drumming and more with performers from Soul in Motion. Then go into the gallery for your own *Artful Animals* experience!



Mother Africa @ Natural History

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

10:15 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Baird Auditorium, Natural History Museum

Discovery Theater, Meet the Museum Program

Limited seating; for tickets, call 202.633.8700 or visit

<http://discoverytheater.com/shows/sep/mother-africa.shtm>

Join the Soul in Motion drummers and dancers for a joyous dance concert with audience participation. Afterwards, visit the African Voices and Mammals halls to explore more about the land, the animals, and its people. School groups welcome!



• TORTOISE •

The tortoise is a symbol of peace. It is an important food source gathered by hand, not shot with a gun.

above
Male *chi wara* mask
Bamana peoples, Mali
Early to mid-20th century
Wood, metal, plant fiber,
hide, cowrie shells
Bequest of Eliot Elisofon,



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African Art

950 Independence Avenue, SW
Metro: Smithsonian
202.633.4600
africa.si.edu

National Postal Museum

2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Metro: Union Station
202.633.5555
www.postalmuseum.si.edu

National Zoo

3001 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Metro: Woodley Park or Cleveland Park
202.633.4800
www.nationalzoo.si.edu

National Museum of Natural History

10th Street & Constitution Avenue, NW
Metro: Smithsonian or Federal Triangle
202.633.1000
www.mnh.si.edu



Photo: Graph by Elliot Ellisofof, 1972

LOCATIONS

Man's wrapper or
"cloth of the great"
Fante peoples, Ghana
Mid- to late 20th century
Mill-woven wool,
embroidery thread
Museum purchase,
84-6-10

