

Part II Communication in West African Culture: Proverbs

Comparative Arts Exercise and Learning to Look

The following six images are part of the National Museum of African Art's permanent collection. Carefully examine each object. Pay close attention to texture, color, size, tone, point of view, symbolism, imagery, and metaphorical concepts. Write a description for each of the objects. Create an original proverb that personifies each of the objects.



Helmet Mask

MAKER:

Senufo artist

MEDIUM:

Wood, pigment

DIMENSIONS:

H x W x D: 61.6 x 40.6 x 27.9 cm (24 1/4 x 16 x 11 in.)

TYPE:

Mask

GEOGRAPHY:

Côte d'Ivoire

DATE:

Mid 20th century

DESCRIPTION:

Wood janus helmet mask, light weight. All over spots of red and white pigment. Open jaws with carved teeth and warhog tusks. No lower teeth on one jaw. Seated monkey/man and chameleon flank tall cylindrical cup on top of head.

PROVENANCE:

African trader, Liberia, -- to 1965-1967

Robert and Nancy Nooter, Washington, DC, 1965-1967 to 1971

OBJECT NUMBER: 71-16-3



Monkey Mask

So'o [human chimpanzee] Mask

MAKER:

Hemba artist _

MEDIUM:

Wood

DIMENSIONS:

H x W x D: 23 x 16 x 12.1 cm (9 1/16 x 6 5/16 x 4 3/4 in.)

TYPE:

Mask

GEOGRAPHY:

Democratic Republic of the Congo

DATE:

Early to mid-20th century

PROVENANCE:

Mohamed Kaba, 1972

Emile M. Deletaille, Brussels, 1972 to 1985

OBJECT NUMBER:

85-15-16



Turtle Toy

MAKER:

Undetermined artist _

MEDIUM:

Gourd, plant fiber

DIMENSIONS:

H x W x D: 10 x 20.6 x 13.5 cm (4 x 8 1/8 x 5 5/16 in.)

TYPE:

Sculpture

GEOGRAPHY:

Harare, Zimbabwe

DATE:

Late 20th century

PROVENANCE:

Mildred A. Morton, Falls Church, Virginia, collected Harare, Zimbabwe, 1995 to 2000

OBJECT NUMBER:

2000-29-56



CREST MASK

MAKER:

Ijo artist _

MEDIUM:

Wood, paint, nails

DIMENSIONS:

H x W x D: 14.6 x 26 x 81.6 cm (5 3/4 x 10 1/4 x 32 1/8 in.)

TYPE:

Mask

GEOGRAPHY:

Southwest region, nigeria

DATE:

Mid-20th century

PROVENANCE:

Warren M. Robbins, Washington, D.C., -- to 1979

Tribal Arts Gallery, New York

CREDIT LINE:

Museum purchase

OBJECT NUMBER:

79-13-11



[Pipe Bowl \(Hyena\)](#)

MAKER:

Shilluk artist

MEDIUM:

Ceramic, pigment, gourd, reed, leather, bottlecap

DIMENSIONS:

H x W x D (pipe bowl): 15.2 × 6 × 12.1 cm (6 × 2 3/8 × 4 3/4 in.)

TYPE:

Sculpture

GEOGRAPHY:

Malakal, Upper Nile State, South Sudan

Chad

DATE:

Early to mid-20th century

PROVENANCE:

Eliot Elisofon, New York, collected Malakal, Sudan, 1947 to 1973

OBJECT NUMBER:

73-7-735



Face Mask (Lion)

MAKER:

Bamana artist

MEDIUM:

Wood, plant fiber, pigment, cotton, nails

DIMENSIONS:

H x W x D: 48.3 x 27.9 x 15.9 cm (19 x 11 x 6 1/4 in.)

TYPE:

Mask

GEOGRAPHY:

Mali

DATE:

Early to mid-20th century

PROVENANCE:

African colonial collection, southern France, 1950s

Johan Henau, Antwerp

OBJECT NUMBER:

2004-14-1