

Date: October 28, 2016

Class Trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Today, we will be looking at Masks and Headdresses in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Arts of Africa and Oceanic collections. Many of the masks, headdresses and sculptures in these collections were created in Africa and the Pacific South Seas Islands in the late 19th and early twentieth century, the same era that European modernists were liberating painting and sculpture from classical traditions, such as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, André Derain, Henri Matisse, Maurice de Vlaminck, Amedeo Modigliani, Constantin Brancusi, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Paul Klee. Many of these artists like Picasso visited the Musée du Trocadero in Paris, other ethnographic museums and the antiquities sections of tradition museums throughout Europe. As early as 1450 European Trading Vessels began visiting Africa's Atlantic coast and collecting "curiosities", but it was not until the 20th century that African art was "discovered." The "discovery" of African art really had more to do with the fact that European painters and sculptors considered these cultural artifacts as works of art. In addition to these artifacts from Africa, were the ones being brought back from the South Pacific by explorers and traders. Many of the objects in the Met's collection are similar to, or in fact, the same art objects that were on display in the Musée du Trocadero in Paris at the turn of the 19th into the 20th century.

We will begin our tour in the Gallery 350 of the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas. As you pass through these galleries locate the following sculptural works:

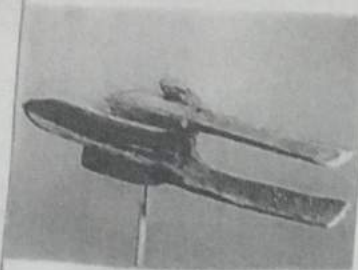
Worksheet 2:

1.



Face Mask: Hyena (Sourokou Koun) (Gallery350)
19th-20th century
Mali, Bélé Dougou region
Wood, cowrie shells, pigment
The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection
Accession Number: 1979.206.161

2.



Kònò Helmet Mask

(Gallery 350)

19th-mid-20th century
Mali, Bamana peoples
Wood, sacrificial materials
The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection
Accession Number: 1978.412.362

3.



Helmet Mask: Janus

(Gallery 352)

19th-mid-20th century
Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bembe peoples
Wood, paint, clay
The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection
Accession Number: 1979.206.243

4.

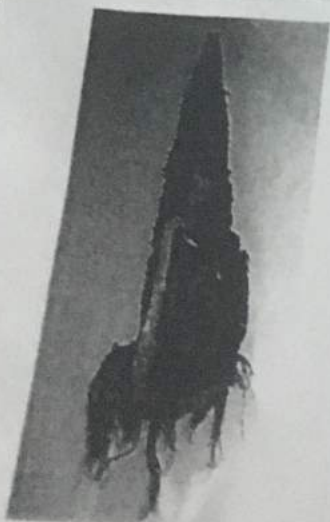


Headdress: Spirit Elephant (Ogbodo)

(Gallery 352)

19th-20th century
Nigeria, Igbo peoples
Wood
Gift of Drs. Herbert F and Teruko S. Neuwalder,
1991
Accession Number: 1991.377.1


5.



Mask

(Gallery 354)

1885-1914
Papua New Guinea, New Britain, Gazelle Peninsula
region, Sulka peoples
Bark, bamboo, leaves, fiber, paint
Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Milton F. Rosenthal Gift,
1983
Accession Number: 1983.504

6.		<p>Flute Mask (Gallery 354) 19th-early 20th century Papua New Guinea, Lower Sepik River region, Angoram or Kopar peoples Wood, paint, seeds, fiber The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection Accession Number: 1979.206.1410</p>
7.	A work of your choice from this collection.	

Analyze the sculptural nature of each work in terms of subject matter, its form and what the artist was trying to say through it. Does the mask or headdress have distinctive characteristics that stand out from the other objects around in the display case? If so, describe them. What does the piece of sculpture tell how the artist saw the world? Analyze how the artist designed his work in terms of mass and void, sculptural form and use of materials. What do you liked or disliked about each work of art and why? Be sure to read wall texts, and object labels near each object. Use your sketchbook to record your thoughts and make several small drawings of each mask or headdress in your sketchbook from different angles that I assign you to look at.

Be sure to do these assignments thoroughly as you will need the information for a written paper and for your next sculpture project.