

# AFRICA

**BIG IDEA 1: Artists manipulate materials and ideas to create an aesthetic object, act, or event.**

1. **What is art and how is it made?**

- Materials (Environment/Geography)
- Art making techniques
- Why make art? (Function)

**BIG IDEA 2: Art making is shaped by tradition and change.**

1. **Why and how does art change?**

- What features/changes of a tradition do you see?
- Why was the art influential?

**BIG IDEA 3: Interpretations of art are variable.**

1. **How do we describe our thinking about art?**

- What are the **formal** qualities and content of the art?
- What is the **context** of the art? (**context = differing interpretations**)
- What **attributes** of a work can we attribute to other works of art? (similarities and differences?)



What is the FUNCTION of this art work?

Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Concise Global History

STOKSTAD, 5th Edition, Chapter 14

## CONTEXT

**Human life began in Africa**, developed over millions of years, and radiated beyond the continent. The earliest African art dates to 77,000 years ago. Human beliefs and interactions are instigated by African art. The arts are **active, motivate behavior, contain and express belief, validate social organization and human relations**. African arts are meant to be **performed rather than viewed**. **Africa's interaction with the rest of the world led to intellectual and artistic traditions that sustain hundreds of cultures.**

- **African art is a combination of objects, acts, and events**, created in a variety of media (vocal, aural, visual) and materials (wood, ivory, metals, ceramic, fiber, elements of nature) carved, cast, forged, modeled, woven by specialists for knowledgeable patrons
- **African art reveals belief systems**, a world that is known but not necessarily seen, predictable, or available to everyone. African art is **expressive rather than representational**, concerned with ideas rather than the objects of the natural/physical world. Art is **created for both daily use and ritual purposes**. Art is sung, danced, and presented in holistic experiences **for designated audiences**. It is **created for specific reasons to produce specific results**.
- Artistic expression **connects daily practices to beliefs, systems of power and authority, social networks** linking people to families, communities, shared ancestors. African arts **mark status, identity, and cycles of human experience** delineated by aesthetic choices and artistic expression. **Leader's histories and accomplishments** are entrusted to historians/elders/bards.
- **Outsiders** have grouped African art that is similar in form as work that comes from the same place and was produced by a designated ethnic group. The name of the artist and date of the creation are rarely acknowledged by outsiders collecting the work.

## ARTWORKS

- 167. Great Zimbabwe - conical tower and circular wall
- 169. Wall plaque from Oba's Palace  
-contextual photo: Oba of Benin
- 170. Sika dwa kofi (Golden stool)  
-contextual photo
- 171. Ndop (portrait of King Mishe miShyaang maMbul)  
-contextual photo
- 172. Power figure (Nkisi n'kondi)
- 173. Female (Pwo) mask
- 174. Portrait mask (Mbilo)  
-contextual photo
- 175. Bundu mask  
-contextual photo
- 176. Ikenga (shrine figure)
- 177. Lukasa (memory board)  
-contextual photo
- 178. Aka elephant mask  
-contextual photo
- 179. Reliquary figure (byeri)
- 180. Veranda post of enthroned king and senior wife  
From Prehistoric: Apollo II Stones  
Running Horned Woman

## TIMELINE/MAJOR CIVILIZATIONS

1100 C.E. - 1980 C.E.

- |                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Nok (500 BCE-200 CE)           | Nigeria      |
| Great Zimbabwe (11th- 15th c.) | Zimbabwe     |
| Ife Culture (11th-12th c.)     | Nigeria      |
| Aksum (1200-1527)              | Ethiopia     |
| Benin (13th-19th c.)           | Nigeria      |
| Mende (19th-20th c.)           | Sierra Leone |
| Kongo (19th-20th c.)           | Congo        |

## VOCABULARY

- |          |                |               |
|----------|----------------|---------------|
| courses  | hieratic scale | nkisi         |
| ndop     | Oba            | minkisi       |
| lukasa   | nyim           | nkondi        |
| zimbabwe | ibol           | fetish object |
| daga     | shody          |               |
| regalia  | Sika Dwa Kofi  |               |