FAH 0004

INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTS OF AFRICA

Fall 2015 / Monday & Wednesday / 3:00 – 4:15

Professor Peter Probst
Course Readings

You will find all the course readings as pdf files on Blackboard. Since the readings give the background information necessary to initiate stimulating class discussions, assignments must be read prior to the date they will be discussed in class. You should read the articles with care, highlighting the main points in each chapter or article and making notes as you read. Be sure to write any questions or comments you have and we can discuss them in class.

Course Requirements:

Group Project – Quartet (20%)
Group Project – Virtual Exhibition (20%)
Response Paper (20%)
Midterm Exam (20%)
Final Exam (20%)

1. Group Project I / Card Game - Due October 28

Create an African art collector *quartets* card game. *Quartets* is played with three or more players, with the aim to win all the quarts (sets of four). Each card usually has a number and letter (1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 2A, 2B etc.) in the top right or left corner of the card.

Let’s say you play with four players then you need to identify 8 well-known ethnic groups and select four objects representing characteristic stylistic features of the group. In total you need to have 32 cards each depicting an object of African art making 8 quarts. Each card has two sides. The back which is facing the other players is blank. The front (facing the player) has a picture of the object and a short description underneath (who, what, where, when, how much?, etc.), On the upper right corner is the number of the quart and card (1A or 3B or 4D)

The cards are shuffled and dealt evenly between all the players and the cards get held face up in a players hand. The player to the dealer's left starts by asking another player if they had a certain card (example, card 4C) which would help the player create a quart. If the player does have the card, then they hand it over. If the player doesn't, then it becomes his turn to ask.

When a quart is created, or a complete quart was dealt, then the cards creating the quart are placed in front of the player. The game ends when all the quarts have been created. The winner is the person with the most quarts.
2. Response Paper (three pages) November 25

Choose one and write a response to the argument put forward in the article


3. Group Project / Virtual Exhibition - Due December 7

Team together with two or three fellow students and conceive an exhibition on African art. You need to choose a particular topic or theme and then select objects which illustrate and comment on this theme. You can choose ‘traditional’ objects of African art and/or works of modern and contemporary African art. Depending on the objects and theme you need to organize the exhibition space, you need to write texts introducing / explaining the exhibition as well as object labels.

4. Exams / Midterm and Final

The exam consists of two parts: A) slide identification with questions pertaining to origin, date, material, form, and significance/meaning and B) responses to essay questions.

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism is defined as representing the work of another as your own. This includes copying the answers of another student on an examination or restating the work of another person without citing the appropriate source in a written paper. I am required to report cases of suspected academic misconduct to the Dean’s Office and penalties include suspension of expulsion from the university. If you are in doubt as to whether you are appropriately using research materials, please contact me.
COURSE SCHEDULE

**Introduction: The Fields of African Arts**

W 9/9   Welcome and Introduction to the Course
M 9/14  Perceptions and Receptions of African Art
        Aminatta Forna, Through African Eyes, BBC 1995. 47 mins

**African Art as Form**

W 9/16  Style and Style Provinces
        Wingert (1972)
        http://www.britannica.com/art/African-art#toc220380
M 9/21  Postures and Trans-Saharan Aesthetics
        Vogel (1986)

**African Art as Space**

M 9/28  Akan (Quarcoopome 1997)
W 9/30  Ife (Poyner 2008: 228-238; Blier 1985, 2012)
M 10/5  Benin (Cole 1998: 272-283; Plankensteiner 2007)

W 10/7  Museum or Gallery Visit
        http://www.hamillgallery.com/SITE/contact.html
        http://www.mfa.org/collections/africa-and-oceania

**African Art as Performance**

M 10/12  Determining Destiny (Lawal 1985; 2005)
W 10/14  Producing Gender (McClusky 2002a)
M 10/19  Healing Afflictions (McClusky 2002b)
W 10/21  Preserving Memories (Nooter 1996)
M 10/26  Confronting Death: Fang Reliquaries
W 10/28  Revision
M 11/2   MIDTERM

**Migrations: Africa in the Americas**

W 11/4   Reworking Saints in Cuba and the US (Brown 1993; Ramos 1996)
M 11/9   African Water Spirits in the Dominican Republic (Drewal 2002)
Ghanaian Kente Cloth in the US (McCluskey 2002c) (substitute for 11/11)

**Modernism: From Urban Art to Studio Art**

**M 11/16** Photography and the Celebration of the Urban (Lamuniere 2001)

**W 11/18** Popular Art and After (Kasfir 1999: 18-47; Magnin 2004: 10-34)


**W 11/25** No Classes / Thanksgiving

**Contemporary: Beyond Identity?**

**M 11/30** Yinka Shonibare (Enwezor 2004; Oguibe 2004: 10-17, 33-44)

**M 12/2** El Anatsui (Harney 2011; Enwezor 2011)

*Second Group Project Due*

**W 12/7** Revision

**M 12/9** FINAL

**Bibliography**


