Colonne Figure

Fig. 1

Wood, pigment
Sierra Leone, early to mid-20th century
Height 14”

The western frock coat and pith helmet mark this as a fashionable African man of his time. He wears no shoes, to show that he is open—not hiding something as Europeans did with their enclosed feet. During colonial times, the pith helmet indicated status and power, so this individual may have been an official. The black coloration is typical of masks and figures made in Sierra Leone.

Collection of Rose Ann Scott, Sierra Leone, 1967-69

Sande Society Mask

Fig. 2

Wood
Sierra Leone c. 1960

Sande is a women’s society found in Sierra Leone and Liberia. It is the only women’s group in Africa that owns and dances with its own masks, called *Sowei.* A *Sowei* mask is glossy black, the human color, with an elaborate coiffure and accentuated neck rings, all signs of beauty in a young woman. The snake carved around the head refers to her mythological water origins. The square, flat emblems carved around the headband are replicas of leather packets containing inscriptions from the Koran, included for their protective power.

Collection of Rose Ann Scott, Sierra Leone 1967-69

Mahen Yafe (Head of the Chief) *Fig. 3*

Steatite
Sape Confederation c. 600 AD
Height 9”

Stone figures and heads, sometimes called *nomoli*, were originally created 1400 years ago by a previous civilization in Sierra Leone. They have been found in fields and river beds by farmers who often drill a hole in the head to accommodate new power ingredients, and then use them to guard a field during the agricultural season. Large heads like these were supposed to be taken to the chief for his use.

Collection of Rose Ann Scott, Sierra Leone 1967-69

Gongoli Mask *Fig. 4*

Wood, black dye, raffia
Liberia/Sierra Leone

Gongoli is a character in Mende, Gola and Vai masquerades in Sierra Leone, and also in Liberia where it is called *Ghangei* or *Kokpa*. Its role as social critic is important. The ‘mask’ is allowed to admonish people for improprieties, even chiefs or important politicians. This is done in a joking way or by satire, thereby encouraging correct behavior.

Collection of Rose Ann Scott, Sierra Leone 1967-69

Gongoli Mask, Mende *Fig. 5*

Wood, raffia
Sierra Leone c. 1965
Height 24”

Gongoli appears during village celebrations. His mask is not sacred, and can be carved by anyone who wishes to do so. His dance may be enacted by the same person. The character is at once a clown and a social critic. His features are grossly exaggerated, but he claims to be a handsome fellow with magical powers. In so doing, he parodies those who think well of themselves.

Collection of Rose Ann Scott, Sierra Leone 1967-69

Country Cloth *Fig. 6*

Cotton weave
Sierra Leone, 1960s

Country cloth represents a division of labor, among other things. Locally grown cotton was picked, carded and dyed by village women, then woven on narrow, six-inch strip looms by the men. The resulting strips were stitched together to create this large cloth. Country cloth can be used as a blanket or cut and sewn to make a man’s garment. (Women usually wore more brightly colored cloth.) The light color is the natural cotton. Blue dye was obtained from indigo; brown from plants including tobacco leaves and kola nuts. The process is labor-intensive and the cloth is relatively expensive. It is associated with wealth and prestige.

Collection of Rose Ann Scott, Sierra Leone 1967-69

Letter Opener
Portrait Head

Fig. 7

Wood
Liberia, 1960s

Liberia has long been open to Western countries, and many carvers have turned to the tourist and export trade for a living. In the process, they have assimilated a variety of European styles. Illustrations in books provided them with visual patterns to follow, and feedback from intermediary traders also informed the carvers about which objects were selling, or were desired in the marketplace. These items were created with that trade in mind. Their purchase helped sustain the carver and often augmented family income as well.

Collection of Vince O'Hern, Liberia 1965-67

Stool

Fig. 8

Wood
Asante, Ghana

This miniature is a replica of large stools that were once central to the Asante state because they indicated rank. When the King sat upon his royal stool, he represented all the powers of the ancestors. Nobles and office holders each had a stool, which was often enshrined on the death of the person who owned it. Currently, stools are carved for sale locally, and for the tourist market. Wooden stools are carved from a single piece of wood, with the grain running lengthwise. The central support may refer to cosmology: the circular element refers to the sun and the square corners indicate the four cardinal points.

Collection of Rose Ann Scott, Sierra Leone 1967-69

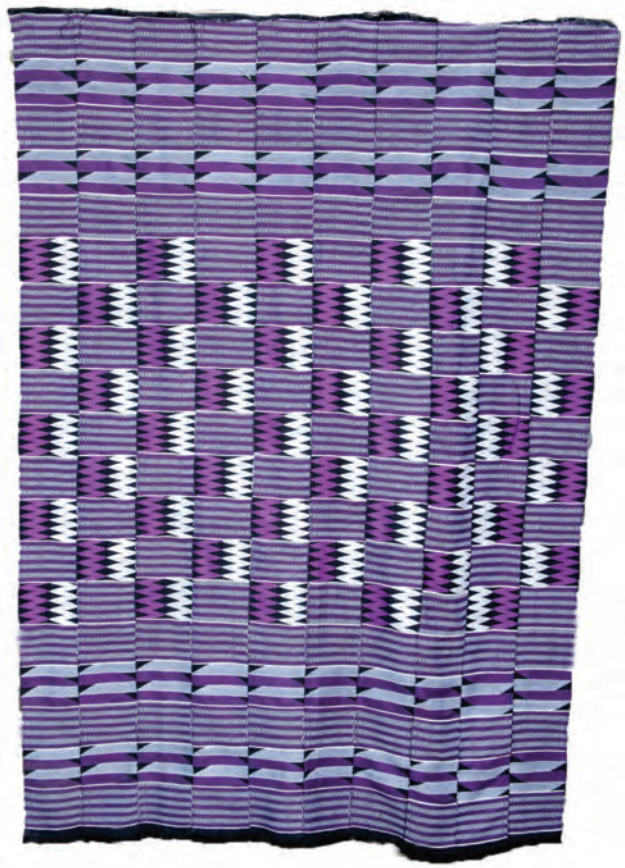
Kente Cloth

Fig. 9

Woven silk, cotton
Asante, Ghana
42½" x 64½"

Once worn only by royalty, Kente cloth is still regarded as a special kind of garment among Akan groups, including the Asante and Fante. During the 18th century, colorful silk cloth was brought to Ghana by European traders. Local weavers took apart the silk, thread by thread and rewove it with local cotton, producing vivid multicolor patterns. Colors and patterns came to have symbolic meaning. Purple is associated with and often worn by women. White symbolizes purity; blue, harmony; and gray, healing. Versions of these weavings became widespread during the 20th century. They were available for purchase by tourists and continue to be exported to Europe and America.

Collection of Greg Straub, The Gambia 1994-96



Many Returned Peace Corps Volunteers have said it, probably because it rings so true, and I will say it too. I believe I benefitted from my service far more than those I served did. I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in The Gambia in West Africa from July 1994 through September 1996 in the areas of agriculture and forestry. I was primarily responsible for assisting subsistence farmers and gardeners with raising trees and vegetables, which sounds simple enough. However, hot dry weather and ravaging hungry ruminants could easily thwart the noblest efforts.

I will admit I was immediately turned off by what seemed incessant begging, yet looking back I realize how generous my host country citizens could be. For instance, as I walked through the villages while people were eating in their compounds, people I knew would always call to me to "come eat!" It seems Gambians always had time to share meals and socialize. Life moves more slowly in developing countries like The Gambia. Life in The Gambia was by no means idyllic, with high infant mortality and difficult living conditions. But I gained an appreciation for the slow life.

Peace Corps Service forces you out of your comfort zone, which allows for personal growth. Over time I became used to everyday discomforts (such as the heat, lack of running water and electricity, being noticed everywhere I went) so that I came to view them as almost normal, almost. When I returned to the United States I left behind the discomforts of life in a developing country, but soon acquired new ones, such as coping with the abject materialism and consumerism so prominent in the U.S. and the faster, busier lifestyle. I was a poor consumer and turned off by material excess before I served in The Gambia, but the Gambia experience really brought home the vast difference in wealth between developing and developed nations.

I realize I learned much about Gambian culture, life in a developing country, and about myself. I came away with a deeper understanding of my strengths and weaknesses, and how to improve upon both. I also learned the value of discomfort, something many of us seem to attempt to avoid at all costs. I learned to be more patient with myself and with others.

– Greg Straub
The Gambia, 1994-96

Gelede Mask *Fig. 10*

Wood, pigments
Yoruba, Nigeria
Height 18”

Gelede masquerades honor women ancestors, depicted generically in the mask face. The figures on top often provided commentary on local social issues. This headpiece shows porters carrying a sling with a figure inside, probably a local dignitary. Printed images using this theme were produced during colonial days, showing European officials carried by African bearers. This image may reflect the power shift in Nigeria after independence, since the porters here are white-faced and the official is dark-skinned. An alternative reading is that the porters are ancestors, as white was also used to signify the spirit world.

Collection of Henry J. Drewal
Nigeria 1964-66

Miniature House Post, Divination Tapper and ***Ibeji***

by Sanusi, master carver *Figs. 11 & 12*

Wood, plant dye
Adugbologe workshop
Abeokuta, Nigeria,1965
House Post height 26”
Tapper height 20”

Sango, the god of thunder and lightning, is a primary deity *(orisa)* in the Yoruba pantheon. The top figure on the house post *(far left)* represents a devotee bearing on her head the double celt that is the sign of Sango. Just under her is a horseman supported by four figures facing the cardinal directions. The stacked figures are a miniature version of large, elaborately carved house posts that supported important buildings in Yoruba towns.

The tapper *(right figure at left)* was made to be used by a diviner. Each stage of a divination process was marked with the tapper in camwood or yam powder. The sum of marks was then ‘read’ by the diviner to determine the destiny of his client. Many are still used in that fashion. Others are sold into the tourist market as souvenirs.

Small figures called *Ibeji (above)* were traditionally used by women to commemorate a child who had died. The wooden figure was cared for by the mother, fed and carried as her child might have been. Sanusi carved *Ibeji* both for that use and for sale into the tourist market.

Collection of Henry J. Drewal
Nigeria 1964-66

Miniature House Post Sango Figure

by Henry Drewal
Apprentice carver *Fig. 13*

Wood, plant dye
Adugbologe workshop
Nigeria, 1965
House Post height 28¼”
Sango height 12”

While in the Peace Corps, Henry Drewal apprenticed himself to the master carver, Sanusi, in Abeokouta, where many young carvers were trained. They carved both for indigenous patrons and for the export or tourist trade. These carvings were created by Drewal during his apprenticeship. The house post is a combination of images usually found on large support posts within important houses in the community. Small versions like this were made by the workshop for the tourist trade, following Sanusi’s pattern.

The carving at the right honors the *orisa* Sango. The female figure kneels in homage to him. Her adornments include a necklace and a patterned shawl. The arc above her head is the sign of Sango, deity of thunder and lightning.

Collection of Henry J. Drewal, Nigeria 1964-66

On being an apprentice carver

“This process of watching, listening, carving, making mistakes, being corrected by example, and trying again was a transformative experience for me. Slowly my ***body*** *learned to carve as my adze-strokes became more precise and effective and the image in my mind took shape through the actions of my body.”*

– *Henry Drewal in* ***African Arts*** *38:2 Summer 2005, p. 1, First Word.*

Table by Henry Drewal *Fig. 14*

Wood
Nigeria 21”x19”x12” h

This table was carved by Drewal during his service in Nigeria, just after the completion of his apprenticeship with the master-carver Sanusi in the Abeokuta workshop. While he was an apprentice, Drewal carved in the manner of his teacher, creating a Sango figure and miniature house post, both of which are in this exhibition. At the end of the apprenticeship, he was able to explore other forms, and this redwood table with incised linear decoration is one result.

Collection of Henry J. Drewal, Nigeria 1964-66

Thorn Carvings *Fig. 15*

Wood
Nigeria 1964–66
Height 3”-8”

Thorn carvings are miniature figures made with thorns from the *‘Ata’* or *‘Egun-Egun’* trees. The craft began in the 1930s and usually depicts individuals engaged in everyday activities—carrying bundles, weaving, operating a bellows, making a basket, pounding *fufu* (yam flour).

Collection of Henry J. Drewal
Nigeria 1964-66

Mother of Oba
(Queen Mother)
(signed) **Ben Aye** *Fig. 16*

Hardwood
Nigeria c. 1965

Working in the ‘contemporary’ style during the 1960s, Ben Aye was a popular carver whose work was shown in Gallery Labac, in Lagos. The gallery was established by the Nigerian Arts Council as an outlet for indigenous art. Aye’s work was featured in *Nigeria Magazine* in 1967. He went on to train many other artists.

Collection of Phyllis Noble
Nigeria 1965-67

Oba Koso by Rufus Bayo Ogundele *Fig. 17*

Linocut
Nigeria c. 1964
c. 13”x15”

Rufus Ogundele was born in Oshugbo, Nigeria, in 1947. In his teens he became a drummer, working in a theater group headed by his uncle, Duro Ladipo. In 1963 he joined a workshop organized by Ulli and Georgina Beier. There he did both linocuts and paintings of subjects rooted in Yoruba culture. This print was one of his first, inspired by a 1964 Yoruba opera, *Oba Koso,* composed by Duro Ladipo. Though Ogundele was raised Christian, he was also a follower of Ogun, Yoruba god of iron. His work was part of a Smithsonian traveling exhibit (1966-68) and this print is reproduced in *The Yoruba Artist,* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994). He trained other artists, and in 1983 was artist in residence at Iwalewa Haus in Bayreuth, Germany. Ogundele died in 1996.

Collection of Phyllis Noble, Nigeria 1965-67

Embroidered Cloth *Fig. 18*

Imported cotton
Indigenous embroidery
Nigeria, 1967

Two crocodiles face off in the center of this textile, framed by the embroidered English words "Oh Brother Lets Live in Peace". This cloth was created at the start of the Biafran war in 1967, as the southeastern provinces of Nigeria seceded in an attempt at self-government. Millions lost their lives during this civil war, to conflict, hunger and disease. The attempted secession was defeated in 1970. This cloth remains as a testimony to that time.

Collection of Phyllis Noble, Nigeria1965-67

I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nigeria, 1965-1967. When I received the invitation to train for Nigeria, I had to look it up on a map, so little did I know then about Africa. It was a humbling moment and the beginning of a lifelong realization that there is so much yet to learn about the world. Only when I set foot in West Africa did I begin to understand something of what life is like in that part of the world—the crushing tropical heat and humidity of the Niger Delta, the subsistence level of poverty that made the inner-city neighborhoods of my hometown, Chicago, look comfortable. I found intricate and beautiful art that no part of my previous education had even suggested might exist in Africa. I discovered literature in Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, John Pepper Clark. I encountered friendly, intelligent students full of questions. I moved to the music of my students and of their parents, vibrant ancient rhythms beat out with spoons on pots and pans in the school dining hall. My corner of the world was throbbing with life and goodwill.

The Biafran War began within a week of my arrival in Nigeria. The country began to tear itself apart, centuries-old animosities enflamed with arms coming in from the profit-motivated West. My awareness of that African war, so near, informed my view of what was happening simultaneously in Vietnam. I read the news magazines from America and I was shaken. My understanding of my own country's involvement in the world had undergone a seismic shift.

"Aren't you afraid?" I hear that question all the time. Ride the subway in Chicago? Walk the streets on the West Side? Go to Mexico? Alone? My experience in the Peace Corps deleted that question of fear based on the unknown. Get your feet in there, find out for yourself, learn another language, talk to people who are not like yourself. Discover a different kind of life, a different kind of beauty. And know, more profoundly, what it is to be human, what it is to be good. There are so many ways!

– Phyllis Noble, July 2010

Drummer *(signed)* Lamidi Fakeye *Fig. 19*

Wood, oil
Nigeria, c. 1965
Height 8” *(right)*

Lamidi Fakeye (1928-2009) was a member of the fifth generation of a famous carving family in Orangun, Nigeria. He trained with his father and with master carver Arowoogun. He later taught at Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife. He served as artist in residence at several universities in the United States, and in 1987 was given a retrospective exhibition at Western Michigan State University. His wood carvings embody the transition of African sculpture from traditional to modern. His work has been exhibited in museums and in private collections including at the Smithsonian in 1999 and New York’s Metropolitan Museum in 1999-2000.

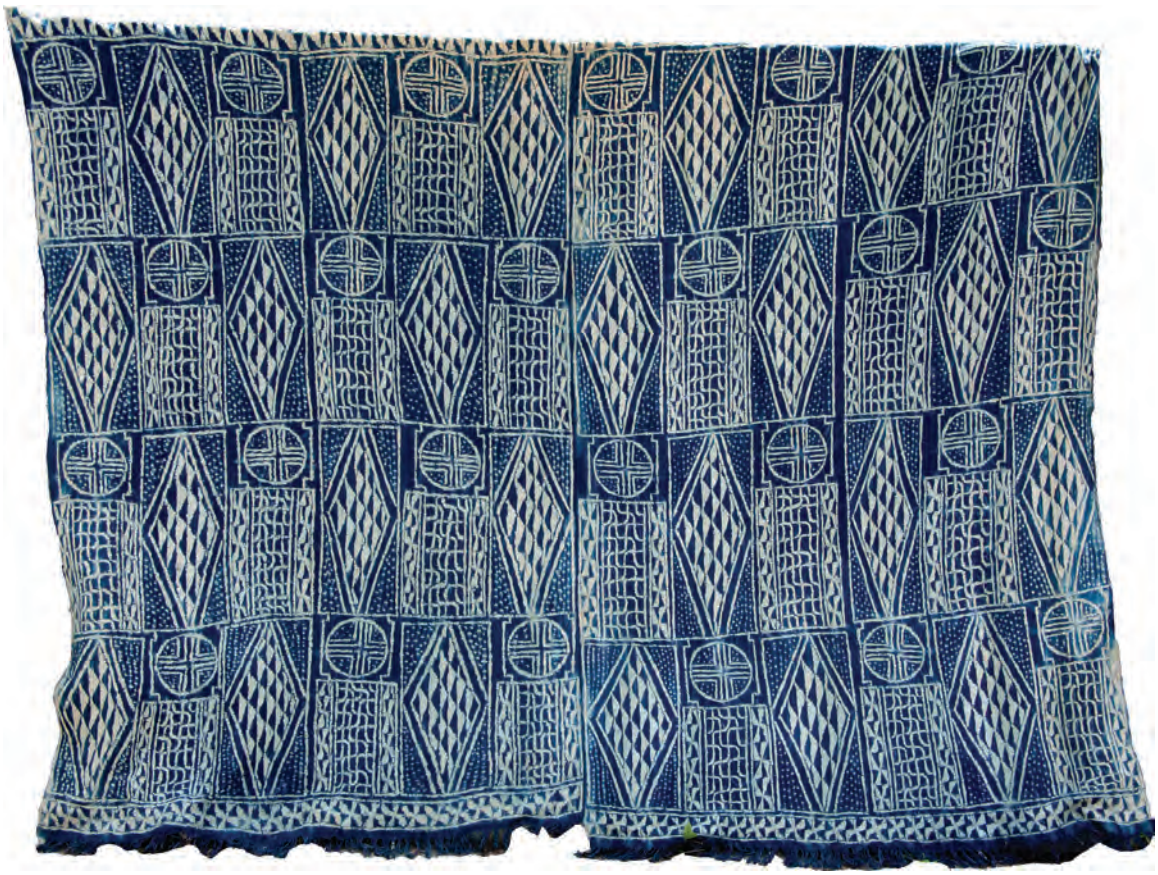
Collection of Phyllis Noble, Nigeria 1965-67

Male Figure *(signed)* Akin Fakeye *Fig. 20*

Wood, oil
Nigeria, c. 1965
Height 10”

Akin Fakeye was born in 1936 and studied carving first with his father Adewuji Fakeye, and then with his brother, Lamidi. In 1968, he set up his own studio and has trained many apprentices, among them his four sons, all of whom are carvers. He founded the Oyo State Woodcarvers Association.

Collection of Phyllis Noble, Nigeria 1965-67



Ceremonial Display Cloth

Fig. 21

Cotton weave, indigo dye
Bafoussam, Cameroon
80” x 96”

Woven in strips that are joined lengthwise, this cotton cloth is dyed with indigo. The design is first stitched into the cloth with raffia, then placed in a dye vat. When it is removed and the stitching is taken out, the pattern is revealed. Display cloth has many uses in Cameroon. It is a backdrop for ceremonies involving the king and court. It could be used as a body wrap during festivals, or cut into garments made to be worn on special occasions by elite participants. This cloth is made of two lengths sewn together.

Collection of Helene Pesche, Cameroon 1979-82

Coffee Table

(signed) **Andre Peukououko** *Fig. 22*

Wood
Bafang, Cameroon
20” x 40”

This table and its images were commissioned by Helene Pesche during her stay in Cameroon. The carver portrayed various local scenes: people tending corn, harvesting bananas, tilling a field and picking fruit. In these scenes, he draws from his own experience and also perhaps an indigenous tradition of storytelling. In a sense, it becomes a post card in relief, meant to provide the tourist with a narrative to remind her of her stay.

Collection of Helene Pesche, Cameroon 1979-82

The Peace Corps experience causes one to walk the earth with different eyes: to seek friendship with those who do not speak English as their first language, break different forms of bread, learn words in another language and body language, take time to greet people. We must strive for empathy and understanding in daily interactions; cherish elders; value community; enjoy dancing! Marvel at how interconnected we all are.

Working in Cameroon or Wisconsin or Kansas, our responsibility is to our children’s children. Education is a means to leave poverty behind, to assist one’s family and community. Our children’s health and education are our future strengths.

I feel immense gratitude that the Madison Peace Corps group has coordinated the International Calendar and We All posters. We hope to touch the lives of others, spreading understanding and peace.

– Helene Pesche, Bafoussam, Cameroon 1979-82

Chair

Fig. 23

Wood
Bafoussam, Cameroon
Height 39”

This chair was made in two pieces so that it can be taken apart and reassembled, making it a good purchase for a Peace Corps volunteer on the move. Before colonial occupation, the form of seating used in Cameroon was a backless stool, carved with different patterns or figures to indicate the status of the person to whom it belonged. Colonials brought chairs with them, and local carvers found that they could sell copies of them. This central image on this chair is a palm tree, framed by a series of male heads, one atop the other.

Collection of Helene Pesche, Cameroon 1979-82

Head Plaque

Fig. 24

Camwood
Cameroon

This carving is patterned after three-dimensional helmet masks that were worn during festivals in central and western Cameroon. The wide eyes are like those on the older masks. The beard and hair in this version are more decorative. Carving a flat-form version of an older mask is recent among Cameroon artists, a means of capitalizing on the tourist and international trade that developed during and after the 1950s. Camwood is another name for any wood with a red hue.

Collection of Bill Dalrymple, Cameroon 1976-78

Brass Warriors

Fig. 25

Cast brass
Bamenda, Cameroon

These miniature warriors were made by artisans in the Bamenda Handicraft Coop, during the 1970s. The process by which they were made is called “lost wax” because each warrior was first created in wax. Then each one was encased in clay, with holes to allow the wax to run off when the mold was heated. After the wax melted, brass was poured into the hot mold, where it took the form of the original wax figure. The process has been known for centuries in many parts of Africa.

Collection of Bill Dalrymple, Cameroon 1976-78

Pendant Head

Fig. 26

Brass
Bamenda, Cameroon

Brass casting is an ancient art form among royal kingdoms in central Cameroon. Metalworkers were formerly employed by royalty, creating items for king and court. During and after colonial days, artists also created for a new audience of tourists and for the export trade. This head is, in form, adapted from older wood ‘leader’ masks that are still worn during festivals and funerals. This metal version is small and flat, but has a beard and headgear like those of the wood masks. Frogs or stylized lizards on top are symbolic of fertility and the ability to move in two worlds, land and water. In 1965, the Bamenda Handicraft Coop was established to preserve brasscasting skills. They now have a website where their crafts may be seen and purchased.

Collection of Bill Dalrymple, Cameroon 1976-78

Ujamaa, Tree of Life

Figs. 27 & 28

Ebony *(mpingo)*
Makonde, Tanzania
Height c. 54” *(left)* **12”** *(below)*

Carvers from the Makonde culture in Mozambique migrated into Tanzania during the 1950s and 1960s, where they set up workshops in Dar es Salaam. Artists worked for the international tourist and export trade, developing a contemporary style that has been widely collected. *Ujamaa* means family, brotherhood, unity. As a tree of life it represents ancestry. The carver portrays people literally standing upon previous generations, implying their mutual interdependence through time.

Collection of Thomas Spear, Tanzania 1963-65, and Sheila Spear

Spirit Figure

Fig. 29

Ebony
Makonde, Tanzania
Height 19” *(right)*

The *shetani* style of abstract, surreal figurative carving was first developed in the 1950s by an artist known as Samaki, a Makonde carver. Others followed, and a distinctive school of contemporary art emerged. This carving is a good example of that style—an openwork figure carved from a single block of hardwood, it has an elongated face and a single horn sprouting from its forehead. According to Thomas Spear, the artists who created the figures thought of them as manifestations of spirits, some of whom appeared in dreams to the carvers.

Collection of Thomas Spear, Tanzania 1963-65, and Sheila Spear

Spirit Figure

Fig. 30

Ebony
Makonde, Tanzania
Height 21” *(left)*

This fractured figure holds its head in its hands and gazes down at a gourd-shaped vessel at its feet. In East Africa, double-bodied gourds were often used to hold medicine. Perhaps this figure expresses a wish for healing. Some images appear to the artist in dreams, and on waking he tries to carve the spirit figure that he saw in his imagination.

Collection of Thomas Spear, Tanzania 1963-65, and Sheila Spear

Teacher and Pupils *Fig. 31*

Hardwood
Makonde, Tanzania
Height 12” *(below)*

A teacher, students and one young kibitzer are shown in an outdoor classroom, as indicated by the textured base. The scene is one that the carver may have observed or participated in during his youth. Though this piece was purchased in Tanzania, the carver was Makonde from Mozambique. He learned his craft through apprenticeship to an older master carver. Traditional Makonde carvers made masks and body costumes for initiation rites, but by mid-twentieth century, those ways were changing, and carvers often made their way to Tanzania, particularly Dar es Salaam, to carve for a new audience of tourists and visitors, adapting their subject matter for a new Western audience. This scene is carved from a single block of dark hardwood.

Collection of Thomas Spear, Tanzania 1963-65, and Sheila Spear

Spirit Figure *(Shetani)* *Fig. 32*

Ebony
Makonde, Tanzania
Height 35” *(above)*

Contemporary Makonde carvings have been widely collected, shown in museums in Europe and the United States, and written about in books that define it as a unique stylistic contribution to world art. Based on the human figure stretched into elastic, surreal configurations, they are identified by their creators as spiritual entities. The term *shetani* is Swahili for spirit or devil, and the carvings sometimes portray a mischievous quality.

Collection of Thomas Spear, Tanzania 1963-65, and Sheila Spear

Tingatinga Painting

(signed) **Mouridy** *Fig. 33*

Lacquer on masonite
Tanzania
13" x 25½"

A young man named Edward Tingatinga invented this kind of painting in the 1960s in Tanzania, using the materials he had at hand. He painted on masonite using house paint or automobile lacquer for pigment. His stylized animals proved popular and he was soon imitated. The paintings are characterized by colorful patterns, sharp outlines, and repeated images. These have become known as Tingatinga paintings, even when done by other artists, as is this one by Mouridy. The birds here may be patterned on the African Hornbill.

Collection of Thomas Spear, Tanzania 1963-65, and Sheila Spear

Tingatinga Painting

(signed) **Mr. Chombo** *Fig. 34*

Lacquer on masonite
Tanzania
13" x 25½"

In the 1960s, the center for artists working in this manner was Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The style has gained popularity worldwide, with many listings for Tingatinga on the internet. Images of owl-like birds and foliage multiply over the entire space of this painting by Mr. Chombo, who created a pile of shapes reminiscent of *Shetani* or *Ujaama* carvings, also from this area.

Collection of Thomas Spear, Tanzania 1963-65, and Sheila Spear

Female Figure

Fig. 35

Painted wood
Malawi, c. 1965

This female figure is an example of the hybrid art that resulted when indigenous African carvers met Western preferences for recognizable form and narrative. All over Africa, lively, spiritual, inventive figurative work was developed by artists catering to the international marketplace. The belly of this imaginative figure swells above tiny legs. The long neck gives a sense of regal poise, and the earrings add a note of whimsy.

Collection of Don and Joan Elliott Gray, Malawi 1965-66, Lesotho 1972-76

The Peace Corps and me

Sometimes dreams do come true. Africa was a dream for us. Both educators, we taught in a Teacher Training College. There the students were in their twenties, all men, and studious to a fault. This was 1965-1966. We were honored to live near a village and a river. Crocodiles sunned themselves on the path to the river, and Black Mambas lived in the hedgerow hear our home and the village. We woke each Saturday to the bustle of the local market and heard the shot ring out when a cow was killed for slaughter. We paid into a commune and received pieces of that cow—still quivering—as our meat quota for the week. Small boys cooked the cow's intestines in hollowed-out tree trunks, dried fish was sold, and sweet dough, fried in grease and then doused in syrup, was there for dessert.

But, beyond the outward differences between Canton, Ohio and Malawi and Lesotho, we learned that there were few differences, really. The people in our schools, and villages, and our neighbors treated us as one of them. We rejoiced with births, mourned with deaths and danced at weddings. They invited us. Accepted us. Treated us as equals, and more than that, as members of their families.

We learned that friendship has no boundaries, help no limits and acceptance no barrier. Peace Corps volunteers are often asked whether they did any good or left any legacy of their being in a Peace Corps nation. Perhaps that isn't the most important question to ask. The more important question is "How were you changed?" How did living for an extended period of time in a country or countries where people speak a different language, eat a different food and have different traditions change you?

The answer: It humbled us. It honored us. And we became citizens of the world. We will never forget them, although they may forget us. We will not forget the students who came to special night classes held by kerosene lantern in the evenings to study extra to pass their A exams. We won't forget our Malawian friend who took us miles into the bush on a night of the full moon to watch the Nyao dances. These dances were sacred and private. They shared them with us. They trusted us. We trusted them.

So, when asked about the difference a Peace Corps experience makes in people's lives, our answer is: We trust people from another culture, respect and honor them, and they do the same for us. It is a truly exceptional experience that makes the world more one, more understandable and more trusting.

– Joan Elliott Gray
Malawi 1965-66
Lesotho 1972-76

Winnowing Basket
Covered Basket

Fig. 36

Local grasses, dye
Ethiopia *(left),* **Malawi** *(right)*

In many cultures, baskets are used to carry crops from the field, and goods from place to place for sale. They are woven from local grasses, most often by women who use the baskets themselves or sell them as a means of income. The flat basket from Ethiopia would have been used for winnowing, separating grain or rice from chaff. The covered basket from Malawi was used for storage of personal items.

Collections of Margot Kennard, Ethiopia 1967-69
Don and Joan Elliott Gray, Malawi 1965-66

Baskets

Fig. 37

Local grasses, dye
Ethiopia

The large storage basket was meant to be utilitarian, while the other two are more decorative, perhaps made in Harar, a center for such basket-weaving. The lidded basket could be used for storage, and the other hung up for wall display. The interior of the lidded basket shows the intensity of the original colors, which have faded over time.

Collection of Margot Kennard, Ethiopia 1967-69

Neckrest *Fig. 38*

Wood
Ethiopia

A carved wooden neckrest served as a pillow in many parts of Africa. Hair arrangements were often elaborate and took a long time to create. For both men and women, it was necessary to keep the head raised while sleeping to preserve the hairdo for as long as possible. Carvers spent time making and decorating neckrests in many beautiful and elaborate ways, knowing that they were both useful and treasured items.

Collection of Margot Kennard, Ethiopia 1967-69

Coptic Cross and **Censor** *Fig. 39*

Brass
Ethiopia 1967-69

Ethiopia has had a sizeable Coptic Christian population since the 4th century, descending from Egypt. Traditional principals within the Coptic Church include priests, monks, nuns, hermits, and *debteras* who lead music and dance within the Mass. The Coptic cross is similar to those of the Catholic Church, but more ornate, often with arms of equal length. The Censor offers smoke, the essence of incense, to God and to the congregation.

Collection of Margot Kennard, Ethiopia 1967-69

Hut *(rondaval)* and **Gourd**

Fig. 40

Wood, calabash
Botswana, c. 1980

Both of these items are decorated by pyroengraving, a technique for creating dark lines and color on wood or calabash forms. A metal knife is heated over fire, and then applied to the object, searing the surface. The flat of the blade produced broad brown-black areas on the wooden hut. The thin edge of a blade was used to create the dark, linear patterns seen on the gourd. This technique has been used for centuries throughout Africa.

Collection of Pat Halpin, Botswana 1978-81

Wall Hanging *Fig. 41*

Wool, dyes
Lesotho, 1970s

Huts, trees, a goat and a bird reflect a village scene woven into this textile. Local wool was carded, spun and treated, probably with commercial dyes, prior to weaving this scene. The images stand out as bold geometrics against the more solid background colors.

Collection of Don and Joan Elliott Gray, Lesotho 1972-76

Decorative Pitcher *Fig. 42*

Glazed earthenware
Morocco, 2005
Height 7¾”

Morocco has a long tradition of ceramic production, with two primary locations, Safi and Fes, producing most of the ware. Bowls, plates and pitchers, like the one shown here, are wheel-thrown and hand painted with decorative, intricate geometric designs. The ware is sold domestically and also exported around the world.

Collection of Teresa Cousins, Morocco 2005-07