

Gabama a Gingungu and the Secret History of Twentieth-Century Art

Z. S. STROTHER

I must be modern: I live now. But like everybody else...I live in a muddle of eras, and some of my ideas belong to today, and some to an ancient past, and some to periods of time that seem more relevant to my parents than to me. If I could sort them and control them I might know better where I stand, but when I most want to be contemporary the Past keeps pushing in, and when I long for the Past...the Present cannot be pushed away.

Robertson Davies
The Rebel Angels

What is the difference between writing, "The Pende people make *Fumu* (chief's) masks" and "The Pende sculptor Gabama a Gingungu made a *Fumu* mask ca. 1930"? By its very specificity the second statement implies that there is a period unaccounted for in

the past: Have the Pende people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo *always* made *Fumu* masks? By naming an individual and fixing a date, the reader is left wondering: Do other Pende make *Fumu* masks? Was this the first time Gabama himself made this mask? Did he make another one? The invocation of a name unleashes speculation about the relationship of the present to both the past and the future. It raises questions on the level of both personal and cultural history. In the first statement, the writer imparts an Olympian knowledge of events; in the second, the text allows room for ignorance. In fact, all of the questions raised are pertinent, because most Pende do not make *Fumu* masks. It seems that they were invented in the 1910s and that their present form has much to do with the work of a sculptor named Gabama.

Since the 1970s the first mode of writing, called the "ethnographic present," has been criticized largely for divorcing the present from an active past. Less fully theorized, however, are the implications of effacing individuals from that history. Drawing on linguistics, anthropologist

Johannes Fabian has argued that verb tense cannot be divorced from person: "[A] good deal of anthropological discourse confronts us with a paradox in the form of an anomalous association of the present tense and the third person" (1983:84). Dominance of the present tense normally signals a literary genre of "discourse" or "commentary." In the context of a dialogue between the writer (an implied "I") and reader (implied "you"), the third-person pronoun signals "a nonparticipant in the dialogue. The 'third person' is not a 'person'; it is really the verbal form whose function is to express the *non-person*....He (or she or it) is not spoken to but posited (predicated) as that which contrasts with the personness of the participants in the dialogue" (Fabian 1983:85 with quotation from E. Benveniste). Rooted in the political reality of colonialism, the ethnographic present functions as a scientific mechanism that distances, and therefore dehumanizes, the people it discusses.

Building on Fabian's analysis, I must clarify that the ethnographic present is primarily associated not with the third-person singular pronouns, "he" and

1. Facepiece for a Central Pende mask representing a chief (*Fumu*), by Gabama a Gingungu (see also Fig. 11). Pende, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Collected ca. 1930. Wood, raffia fiber; 22.9cm (9"). MCB 32.128, ©Africa-Museum, Tervuren, Belgium.

Renowned for his powers of invention, Gabama a Gingungu (ca. 1890–1965) is viewed by many Central Pende as the most celebrated Pende sculptor of the twentieth century. His personal style is characterized by a thick and swelling brow that extends to the ears, wide-spaced eyes, a squared nose, squared ears "closed" by a large semipyramidal tragus, and cicatrices on the cheeks that continue to the edge of the facepiece. In 1989 a photograph of this mask, its maker then unknown, was shown to Pende sculptors, who identified it as Gabama's. The unequivocal attribution undermines the Western assumption that the African artist is anonymous.



Z. S. STROTHER

This is the second of two issues of African Arts that have grown out of a cross-cultural dialogue, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, on the topic of authorship and artistic identity in African art history (see also "Authorship in African Art, Part 1," Autumn 1998). The Metropolitan's colloquium in February 1998 included lectures by specialists on distinctive west and central African cultural traditions. It was enriched by commentary, moderated by Lowery Stokes Sims, from three contemporary artists active in the United States who share a fascination with ideas and imagery that underlie "traditional" African art. In excerpts from their discussion, transcribed for this issue, José Bedía, Arturo Lindsay, and Manuel Vega express a desire to shed their identities as Western

individualistic artists and insert themselves into a broader culturally enriching aesthetic. This attitude reflects the essentially spiritual nature of the inspirations for their creative expression as well as a nostalgia for a communal form of artistic heritage.

Z. S. Strother's extensive dialogue with Pende performers and their audiences reveals a dynamic cultural legacy of individual initiatives. Her contribution uses the career of Gabama a Gingungu to consider the sculptor's role in interpreting dramatic personae generated by dancers and the way that vocation has changed over the course of the twentieth century.

In a study developed subsequent to the Metropolitan colloquium, Elizabeth Bigham traces the ever rising international reputation of the photographer Seydou Keita.

Interestingly, Western exposure to Keita's oeuvre essentially coincided with his retirement and has accelerated the expansion of African art history to embrace photography as a medium of expression practiced by African "artists."

From their perspectives grounded in Yoruba and Baule cultures respectively, Olabiyi Yai and Susan Vogel diverge on the question of the value Africans place on individual talent. This difference suggests that conceiving of African attitudes toward forms of artistic expression as monolithic vastly oversimplifies extreme cultural variations, generational changes in attitudes, and the disparate and eclectic nature of the artifacts that are grouped together under the rubric of "African art."

Alisa LaGamma, Guest Editor

"she," but with the third-person plural: "they." Modernist constructions of personhood are deeply rooted in claims of autonomous individuality. The use of the plural further distances European or American readers from nameless automations of tradition. Ironically, in contrast, the tales of adventurers are replete with vivid portrayals of Africans (in the third-person singular) whose guile, greediness, and impetuosity must be overcome by the writer-hero. Despite regular attempts at distancing through grand pronouncements like "X people are cannibals" or "Y people eat dog meat," the writers engage in a perpetual contest of wills with determined individuals who cannot be fully reduced to cultural stereotypes.¹

The effacement of singular individuals from early anthropological texts and collections has had a formative effect on Africanist art history.² It has played a critical role in creating the "anonymous artist" so familiar to museum visitors. It has created an institutional barrier to the absorption of African art into the discipline of art history, which, despite its title, "has been characterized by a particular kind of historiography...[that] in fact deals with the history of artists" (Belting [1990] 1994:xxi).

At a time when the "death of the author" has been heralded, it can seem romantic to mourn the loss of names in collections of African art (Barthes 1977; Foucault 1979). More is at stake, however, than a list of names. As Michel Foucault points out, attributing a work to an author has served several functions, among others, to "group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others. In addition it establishes a relationship among the texts"

(1979:147). In art history one of the key means by which the artist's name has established relationships among objects has been historical (situating teacher-student, model:copy, early work:late work) or, more recently, social historical. In the shadowy reverse-world of African studies, the removal of the name has precluded the formation of a corpus of works on any grounds other than genre and ethnicity. Similarities overwhelm differences (Blier 1990:96). The anonymous artist is only a pretext for the anonymous object.³ Stripping off the name was a strategy, like the use of the third-person plural, to transform a particular object from the present time into a generic object of all time and no time. What has been lost is the history of twentieth-century African art.

The recent development of one-artist shows (e.g., the 1998 exhibition of the work of Olowe of Ise at the National Museum of African Art), based on identification of a distinctive corpus of works, proves that "the times they are a-changin'." Nonetheless, a vestige of this mindset is preserved in the vocabulary opposing "traditional" and "contemporary" artists, as though masqueraders, sculptors, potters, and weavers were somehow preserved in a never-never land disconnected from the twentieth century, again where individuals make no difference. This article seeks to put a name on an anonymous African mask (Figs. 1, 11) in the Africa-Museum, Tervuren, and to recover some of the hidden history of "modern" Pende art.

Many Central and Kwilu Pende consider Gabama a Gingungu to be the most celebrated Pende sculptor of the twentieth century. They do so in recognition of his powers of invention. In Kipende, one says:

"He [had] a lot of thoughts" (*Muene, matangi avula*). Gabama⁴ is credited with three major achievements: 1) giving the highest expression to a new style of carving, 2) participating in the invention of new mask genres, and 3) founding a unique atelier of sculptors that was still thriving in 1989. His reputation was so great that it attracted the attention of the colonial government and exempted him from forced labor requirements. A visitor in 1951 commented on Gabama's "great fame in Pende territory" (Kochnitzky 1953:13). During my own visit in 1989, three Pende sculptors (Nguedia Gambembo, Mashini Gitshiola, and Zangela Matangua) independently and without solicitation identified one mask from a sheaf of photos as the indisputable work of Gabama a Gingungu (Fig. 1).⁵ This was an unexpected windfall, as I had grouped the photos randomly in Belgium according to iconography. Gabama's career gives some perspective on what modernity entailed for a twentieth-century Pende sculptor. To appropriate the quip of novelist Robertson Davies, Gabama "must be modern": he lived from circa 1890 to 1965.

Prologue: The Precolonial Sculptor

If modernity entails an experience of the present muddled with the past, it is necessary to begin by detailing what we know about that figure of absence and desire, the precolonial sculptor. In the 1870s the overwhelming majority of sculptors were blacksmiths.⁶ Their bread and butter lay in working iron—making and repairing knives, machetes, and hoes—but they all did other things as well. The elite smelted iron. Some filed teeth. Many also served as circumcisers (*nganga mukanda*) and, in



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2. Blacksmith Ngoma Kandaku Mbuya has taken off his shirt to work more freely on a mask for the boys' initiation. He is working with such quick assurance that his adze has blurred out of sight (see Figure 3 for a similar work). Chief Kende, who commissioned the mask, hovers in the background. Note the pot of food between the two men. Ngoma would not begin until the chief had offered food and palm wine to "encourage" him in his work. Circa 1870, most sculptors were also blacksmiths, but this pattern is rare today. Ndjindji, DRC; July 6, 1987. Photo: Z. S. Strother.

Opposite page:

3. *Thengu ya lukumbi* mask commissioned from Ngoma Kandaku Mbuya by Chief Mukunzu for his initiation camp. Ndjindji, DRC; August 1987. Photo: Z. S. Strother.

The mask's name means "roan antelope [with the sting of] the *lukumbi* insect." During the initiation, boys live in the bush and are exhorted to display some of the characteristics of certain creatures of the grasslands. Hunters fear the horns of the roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*); the *lukumbi* insect has a sting so powerful that it can cause pregnant women to abort. The message is similar to the warning of the snake on the flag of South Carolina: Don't step on me!





Left: 4. Ritual house (*kibulu*) of Chief Kombo-Kiboto (Mukanzo Kilumbu), with rooftop and doorway sculptures by Kaseya Tambwe. Ndjindji, DRC, 1952. Photo: L. de Sousberghe.

Only chiefs of the highest rank may mount anthropomorphic architectural sculpture. Therefore, commissions were few, especially before 1960, and the carving of masks was the primary sculptural activity.

that position, supervised the initiations into the men's fraternity. Some with the talent and desire became notable sculptors in wood and ivory.

Blacksmiths enjoyed enormous prestige, vestiges of which are still alive today. During the early colonial period, smelting quickly disappeared in Pende country. Smithing was first banned and then reduced by the sale of imported goods (Sikitele 1986:1215). Nonetheless, blacksmiths and chiefs are considered of equivalent social status.⁷ When one or the other visits a village (or returns to his own after a journey), his arrival must be honored by a day of rest for the entire population. During the boys' initiation, women or children who are being harried by masqueraders may find refuge in the presence of either a blacksmith or a chief.

This status is derived from the blacksmith's essential contribution to every facet of life. First of all, through his daily work with machetes and hoes, he made agriculture possible, in particular the farming of the staple crop, millet. No chief may be invested without the presence of a blacksmith, for it is the latter who forged the chief's badge of office, a twisted iron bracelet (*kijingo*). The blacksmith had rare hands-on experience of the other chiefly insignnia, as he made or maintained the chief's axe (*kuba*), sword (*phoko ya khusa*), and adze (*kasau* or *kandu*). Those who

Right: 5. Doorway sculpture (*khenene*) for the ritual house of Chief Kombo-Kiboto, by Kaseya Tambwe. Ndjindji, DRC, 1952. Photo: L. de Sousberghe.

During the 1950s-60s, Kaseya was by far the most sought-after carver of architectural sculpture. While such commissions were lucrative, their rarity made it difficult for even well-known sculptors to prosper.

carved ritual sculpture had knowledge of the world of the dead. A few made sculptures that secured ghostly bodyguards for the chief. Some carved coffins used to bury high chiefs. As circumciser and sculptor of fraternity masks, the blacksmith made men. Blacksmiths who excelled in one of these realms (smelting, circumcising, chiefly sculpture) were deemed potentially dangerous as individuals who might be tempted to misuse their knowledge if they were not treated with appropriate respect.

There are still a few multipurpose blacksmiths working among the Eastern Pende. For example, from 1987 to 1989 Ngoma Kandaku Mbuya from Ndjindji made and repaired a host of tools and at least one shotgun. During the initiation season in 1987, he made six masks for three different chiefs (Figs. 2, 3).⁸ Therefore, in 1987, he worked intensely on wood sculptures for ten to eleven days out of the year. In 1988 he carved fewer masks but received a commission for a small stool and a statuette for the front of a chief's house.

Not all sculptors work in every genre. Among the Eastern Pende most initiation masks (*mbuya jia mukanda*) are considered simpler to make than the masks used for village masquerades (*mbuya jia kifutshi*) (Figs. 3, 7). Commissions for the former come in a rush because chiefs order sev-



eral of the more striking masks to launch the camp at the beginning of the dry season. Sculptors frequently make three to six different masks at this time, and variety is highly desired by the boys. The boys or their camp counselors eventually make the rest themselves. In the past, Ngoma also received two commissions for a chief's coffin, and he has made an occasional *Pota* mask (the simplest of the village masks). While many men feel competent to shape rudimentary ritual statuary, only a select few were allowed to carve the rooftop and door statuary decorating the chief's ritual house. Ngoma has never received such a commission. Staffs are almost exclusively the preserve of sculptors among the Kwilu Pende, who now travel to sell them to chiefs in other regions.

A history of commission patterns suggests that Ngoma's schedule was typical of that of a blacksmith-sculptor working circa 1870 for approximately two weeks to a month each year on his wood-carving. Although sculptors did make ornamental ivory pendants and whistles, the bulk of their production was connected with ritual and chiefly sculpture. Everyone interviewed agrees that before 1960 very few chiefs were permitted to mount anthropomorphic architectural sculpture, and the commissions were rare. For example, Chief Kombo-Kiboto



(Mukanzo Kilumbu), who reigned from 1942 to 1987, only commissioned two sets of architectural sculpture (rooftop statuette, door lintel and panels) and three sculpted coffins (used to bury his wives). In 1952 anthropologist Léon de Souseberghe photographed the second set of sculptures, newly made by the celebrated artist Kaseya Tambwe (Figs. 4, 5). Chief Kingange invited the same Kaseya to make his own architectural program when he was invested in 1960. Although he reigned until about 1990, he never ordered another set. In the 1980s, following a boom after independence in 1960, architectural sculpture became rare and controversial. Nevertheless, commissions could never have been numerous. The average ritual house (*kibulu*), made of straw or bark, begins to deteriorate after ten years; even an unusually punctilious chief would place a commission only about once every decade. The smaller statuary connected with the chief's ritual duties follows a similar schedule.⁹

Therefore, the creation of masks definitely constituted the sculptor's principal preoccupation. Here again, certain masks (e.g., *Pumbu* and *Panya Ngombe*) were restricted to chiefs of very high rank. Others were open to everyone. On this subject there is a strong difference between the Eastern and Central Pende, the primary mask-making groups. The Eastern Pende have a relatively small corpus of village masks (Fig. 7). Chiefs typically own two or three facepieces and borrow others from their neighbors.¹⁰ This exchange cements ties of friendship among villages.

The Central Pende have a much larger corpus of masks; some villages, however, were much more oriented to these dances than others. The Lake Matshi area be-

came renowned for its masquerading after the Chokwe war, around 1885. Facepieces and costumes were commissioned by dancers but stored in village treasuries. Enthusiastic villages might hold a chest with twenty or more masks, some to be worn by dancers invited from elsewhere. I have seen prized pieces lovingly tended that looked brand new after ten years of use. Most today last only two to three years, but this may be due to the incentive to sell them once they acquire a little patina. Only acclaimed sculptors, like Gizeza of Kasele, working in areas of intense masquerading activity, could have spent more than a month per year on wood-carving.

Few blacksmiths profited substantially from their carving. In 1987 Chief Mukomba paid Ngoma 150Z (less than \$1.50) and a quantity of spirits for one of his initiation masks. That same year Chief Kende paid an itinerant sculptor 500Z for two village masks. At the time a family's dinner of salted fish cost about 150Z, a new men's shirt cost 500Z, and the very cheapest of women's wrappers sold for 1150Z. The precolonial rule continues that if someone in the village (or extended family) commissions a mask, it serves as a gift to the community. The patron will usually provide the wood and any necessary raffia thread or cloth, and as a gesture of thanks, make a gift of palm wine to the sculptor. Until very recently, someone *outside* of the village was generally asked to provide palm wine and a chicken in exchange for a village mask. Although the chicken might be kept as an investment instead of being consumed immediately, the symbolism was that of nourishment, of concern for the well-being of someone rendering a service. Ngoma worked around the clock for five days to make three initiation masks for

6. Celebrated sculptor Gabama a Gingungu. Nyoka-Munene, DRC, 1952. Photo: J. Mulders. Courtesy of the Photothèque, Voix du Zaïre, Kinshasa, DRC, no. 21.170/2.

The photojournalist has posed the scene according to European notions of a family dinner, even though Pende men do not eat with women and children.

Chief Kende in 1987, but complained bitterly that his work was not being sufficiently "honored" or "encouraged" with food and wine. Eventually he even threatened to repossess the masks. Kende argued that since he was married to a "niece" of Ngoma's village, he had been generous in providing even a few meals (Fig. 2).

Because the sculptors of the architectural programs sometimes traveled 100 kilometers or more, and their work entailed felling large trees, they were paid on an entirely different scale.¹¹ These sculptors would be supported during their visit and receive a fee of a goat. Chief Kashiji (Ndongo) reports that his father Kihembe, who specialized in architectural sculpture, also received quantities of salt, palm oil, wine, and *miseke* (cosmetic redwood powder). Short of the addition of a person to the lineage (sometimes exacted in cases of murder or gross breaches of ritual conduct), a goat was the greatest fee that could be levied for anything. Again, this fee was paid not in routine trade goods (raffia cloth, copper, iron) but in a symbol of concern for the physical well-being of the man. It is interesting that Kashiji's list even includes the powder used to make skin lotion.

Since lucrative architectural commissions were rare, no one got rich from sculpting, and few could practice as often as they would have liked. Although a greater range of objects was produced in the 1870s than today (chairs, stools, tobacco mortars, etc.), the fact that all figural sculpture was tied to the chief meant that it was only in periods of frequent masquerading activity that a well-known sculptor like Gizeza could rely on a significant number of commissions. Commissions could be quite diverse, and sculptors might go for long periods before being asked to carve two objects from the same genre. In sum, sculptors worked out of love for what they were doing and often as a gift to the community. They also sought fame (*lutumbu*). A reputation that lured clients or apprentices from miles away, such as that enjoyed by Gizeza and Kihembe, enhanced the sculptor's stature at home and abroad.

Gabama a Gingungu

Gabama a Gingungu emerged from this background at a time when renowned sculptors were rare. He himself did not meet a carver of note until he moved to Nyoka-Munene, his "home" village (i.e.,



his mother's village), as a mature man, a divorcé, in the 1910s (Fig. 6). He had grown up in Ngunda, his stepfather's village, where he supplemented his income through fishing and basket weaving. During these years, masquerading enjoyed an extraordinary efflorescence among the Central Pende (see Strother 1998: chap. 8), perhaps because so many other routes to male prestige had been blocked. Gabama is universally remembered as an enthusiast

Above: 7. Kilembe Mukanyi with eight Eastern Pende masks. Name of site withheld, 1987. Photo: Z. S. Strother.

As the chief's minister, Kilembe (right) acts as guardian of the masks. Most chiefs own only two or three; however, because Kilembe is also a sculptor, he was inspired to make an unusually large number for the village treasury. The *Panya Ngombe* mask (second from left and far right) is rare, the privilege of chiefs of very high rank.

Right: 8. Mask representing a chief (*Fumu*), nicknamed *Mazaluzalu* ("The one who floats"), in performance. Nyoka-Munene, DRC, 1989. Photo: Z. S. Strother.

At the crescendo of the dance, *Mazaluzalu's* footwork sends the pleats of the chief's wrapper flying. The lead drummer steps out to incite the dancer to continue his bravura performance and to lead him, with pulsing cries, through the barrage of rhythms. This mask is of the type seen in Figure 1.

who was an active participant in and organizer of masquerades.

When he arrived back home, Gabama discovered that one of his "uncles" was making a name for himself as a sculptor.

This uncle, Maluba, had traveled to Lake Matshi to visit a relative and had seen Gizeza of Kasele at work. The most famous sculptor of the north, Gizeza is associated with a stylistic revolution that



9. Female facepiece, collected in 1934 by Territorial Administrator Maurice Matton. Wood, raffia fiber; 25cm (9.8"). Private collection.

The smooth, flat brow, plump cheeks, and eyes with lowered lids define the feminine physiognomy.

was moving toward naturalism in the three-dimensional modeling of the face and the fleshing out of facial features. Maluba fell in love with Gizeza's work, but he did not wish to pay for room and board and the fee required to become his apprentice. Instead, he observed all that he could in order to pirate Gizeza's style. He probably bought a few pieces and took them home to learn how to carve by trial and error. Maluba became the first sculptor of the Kisenzele clan.

Gabama quickly surpassed his uncle-teacher. Gabama's nephew Nguedia Gambembo, who was also a sculptor, recounted that when all the masks in the village treasury were laid out, dancers snatched up all of Gabama's before they started on those made by Maluba or anyone else. By the 1920s Gabama had developed a reputation throughout Pendeland west of the Loange River, and some of his clients had to walk for several days in order to commission works from him.

Gabama died in 1965, during the period of severe reprisals by the state against the Pende because some had participated in the Mulele Rebellion. Because of the looting and burning of villages, none of his works are known to have survived in Pendeland. It is certain, however, that some are held abroad.¹² The chief's mask identified at Nyoka-Munene (Fig. 1) was collected around 1930 and therefore represents Gabama's mature style.

It appears that the chief's mask was invented in the "dance-crazy north," probably in the 1910s, as a comedic mask. It is a favorite vehicle for older performers, who are loath to abandon the limelight despite a loss of flexibility. Its "dance" is composed of a mincing, highly stylized walk that kicks out the pleats of the chief's voluminous raffia skirt (Fig. 8). For this reason, in one region the mask is nicknamed *Mazaluzalu*, "The one who floats." Performers flick the chief's fat flywhisks back and forth. The masquerader heads for a chair that has been set up in the arena, but is obliged to keep changing directions because helpers weave in and out, moving the chair in time to the drum rhythms. The performance gently parodies men who let the office go to their heads.

Gabama's chief's mask is a good subject for a discussion of the main grounds on which the sculptor's reputation rested: his mastery of physiognomy, that is, the ability to express inner character in the face. He is credited with expressing the full maturity of a stylistic revolution that took place in the north of Pendeland. The appearance of the chief's mask stabi-



FRANÇO KHOURY, COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

lized with Gabama because he offered such a perfect crystallization of what a chief *should* look like.

Many Pende believe that women by nature (not by culture, as some in the U.S. argue) show more self-control than men. While the Pende are famous for rebellions against the colonial (1931) and postcolonial governments (1964–65), and for battling the Chokwe (ca. 1885), they do not see themselves as militaristic. Their oral history is one of migration rather than conquest. As one man put it, "We vote with our feet." In Pende traditional culture, self-control and the benign release of anger are qualities highly prized. The ideal man is described as "gentle" (*doux* in Franco-Kipende slang), soft-voiced, considerate—someone who thinks before he speaks, who does not resolve his problems through physical means.

Most believe that this ideal man, this feminized man, is rare. The topic came to the fore in the late 1980s during the election of new chiefs. Many people were

concerned about finding a candidate who qualified as a peacemaker (*mukandji wa athu*), and consequently they would analyze the candidates' characters at length, discussing whether or not they fit the bill. Often there is a sense that one must make do, because so few men live up to this ideal.

Pende frequently say that the chief should have "the face of a woman." Many believe that character is legible in the permanent features of the face. Central Pende sculptors are judged by the degree to which they can express the subtleties of gendered ontologies. Consider the contrast in representation in the face of the perfectly socialized woman (Fig. 9) and that of *Pumbu*, the executioner (Fig. 10). Murder mysteries claim that anyone of us can kill, given the proper motivation. Most Pende are dubious, because killing a person (even if it is socially sanctioned) necessitates dealing with the vengeful spirit of the dead for the rest of one's life. Who can forget killing someone face to



10a, b. Facepiece for *Pumbu*, the executioner. Wood, raffia fiber; 43.2cm (17"). Acquired in 1913. MRCB 15424, ©Africa-Museum, Tervuren, Belgium.

In this artist's hands, the protruding forehead, gaping eyes, and razored points of the coiffure, nose, and brow express the character *Pumbu's* capacity for extremes of psychic and physical violence.

tors. Masculine eyes are rendered proportionately larger in the face, usually with a larger eye opening. The upper eyelid projects farther into space, thereby creating the impression of a more "open" and aggressive gaze (Fig. 10). The feminine eye is smaller in scale and has lowered lids, characterized as "bedroom eyes" (*zante*). Again, there is a parallel with the dance. The performer must be able to see in order to be able to move forward confidently into space. Many Pende argue that male, "open" eyes convey intelligence and daring. The woman who relinquishes an active gaze is displaying generosity by giving rather than taking.

Stylistically, greater aggression is marked on the male representation by acute articulations in the facial features. The sculptor of the *Pumbu* facepiece illustrated in Figure 10b used his knife to excavate deeply the brow and the chin. He has brought the nose, the projections of the coiffure, and even the receding hairline to razor-sharp points. The combination of bulging forehead, sunken cheeks, and long chin creates a peanut-shaped silhouette that contrasts with the smooth, oval, feminine form. The artist of this masculine facepiece handled the decorative cicatrice roughly, almost as a gash, thereby conveying the impetuous nature of *Pumbu*, who loses control at one point of the performance. In contrast, the smooth, curving bands of the cicatrice in the feminine version enhance the sense of soft plumpness in the cheeks (Fig. 9).¹³

In this formal vocabulary, Gabama's chief's mask is also recognizably masculine when compared with the female mask. The bulging forehead and cheeks create a distinctly peanut-shaped silhouette (Fig. 11a). The eyes are proportionately larger (Fig. 11b). The brow is far more emphatic. There is a distinctly more acute transition in the cheekbones (underscored visually through the placement of the decorative cicatrice).

However, if the chief's mask is contrasted with that of *Pumbu*, the killer, one can easily perceive the degree to which Gabama modulated its form. Its surface is burnished and smooth, whereas the *Pumbu* mask shows the faceting of the adze. The chief's brow is broader and shallower in relief. The eyes are smaller in size and the eyelids "drop"; they do not protrude out to the side as they do in the *Pumbu* facepiece. In profile, the horns of the coiffure are blunter (Fig. 1), and the nose and chin are rounded. The sculptor Zangela Matangua particularly admired



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face, when you have smelled the fear and felt the warmth from the body? Only the reckless choose to live with such a burden.

Gendered physiognomy is most easily read in the treatment of the forehead. The feminine forehead is smooth and flat (Fig. 9). The masculine forehead, especially that of the hypermasculine killer, is described as "bulging" and "lumpy" (Fig. 10). There

is a parallel drawn between the volumes of the face and the body language of the dance. Feminine masks perform on one spot with relatively contained gestures. Male masks usually keep moving and periodically burst forth in displays of propulsive energy.

Differences in the eyes distinguish the work of the most highly acclaimed sculp-

the subtlety of Gabama's handling of the mouth with its relatively flattened upper lip (Fig. 11b): "A man's mouth rises up, but his is lowered a little, because his face shows coolness like the face of a woman."¹⁴ In Pende physiognomy, the quieter the emotions, the more level the upper lip. A smile flattens it entirely.

Pumbu is not the only representation of a hypermasculine personality. Now let us compare Gabama's chief's face with that of *Matala*, a beautiful young man, as sculpted by Mashini Gitshiola (Fig. 12). Again, the chief's face appears relatively feminine. Although Mashini has also burnished the surface of his facepiece to render the beauty of smooth and well-toned skin, the forehead bulges out forcefully. The eyes are disproportionately large and open below projecting lids. Mashini has pulled out the nose as though it were made of putty in order to

indicate the hot energy and acrobatic flair of the young man's dance. The cheekbones are acutely angled and the chin pointed, not rounded.

In sum, what Pende connoisseurs so admire in Gabama's chief's mask is his ability to render concrete the abstraction of the chief "with the female face." He portrays the chief as a man who is unquestionably male, potent, the father of many children, who nonetheless has a command of feminine social skills. This is the face of a man equipped to act as a "granary" for his people; women's granaries hold thousands of small seeds of millet and protect them from scavengers.

Gabama's second and related achievement was in the way he harnessed the language of physiognomy to create new forms expressive of new dance personae. The impetus for new mask genres originates in dancers, who enjoy the stature of rock stars among the Central Pende. Once they have the dance and persona refined, they seek out a sculptor of Gabama's stature to design a facepiece that expresses the gender, inner personality, and dance of the masked character. Gabama often did this. (Performers who wished to dance a familiar mask form

might place a commission with any competent carver.)

One further example underscores the close relationship of Pende sculptors with the international art market in the twentieth century. At the turn of the century the Central Pende clown mask (*Tundu*) was performed with a raffia sack pulled over the head, with crude holes torn for the eyes. This form embodied the ultimate antiaesthetic; it expressed how the clowns represented extremists who gave no thought to personal grooming or to public opinion, who were crude and bawdy. Nguedia Gambembo, Gabama's nephew and heir, recounted that it was one of the sculptor's regular Belgian clients who asked the sculptor why he did not carve a facepiece for *Tundu*.

Gabama thought this was a charming idea, and he invented the facepiece reproduced here by Nguedia (Fig. 13).¹⁵ Gabama chose to personify *Tundu* with a blend of spite and wit. The protruding eyes are appropriated from the whiptoting masks of the boys' initiation. They refer to *Tundu*'s crowd-control function; how he surveys the perimeters of the dance arena and stampedes the crowding children backward. A cigarette dan-

11a, b. Central Pende facepiece representing a chief (*Fumu*), by Gabama a Gingungu (see also Fig. 1). Wood, raffia fiber; 22.9cm (9"). MCB 32.128, ©Africa-Museum, Tervuren.

Gabama softened the conventions of the male physiognomy (cf. Fig. 10) to depict the chief as one who draws on "feminine" social skills.



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gling from the tubular, off-center mouth alludes to the character's ridiculous quest to be hip. The smallpox scars on the nose and the poorly executed cicatrices mock his attempts to seduce the masks of the beautiful young woman. Audiences greet *Tundu* with delighted cries of "You're ugly!" (*Wabola!*).

Both the hoods and the carved facepieces for *Tundu* were used until the late 1950s, when dancers definitively abandoned the hoods, despite the added expense. In the 1980s many sculptors enjoyed vying with each other (and themselves) to produce the ugliest face imaginable. At one performance I witnessed in 1989, the dancer captured the smirky self-confidence of *Tundu*, oblivious of his pot belly and ratty costume (Fig. 14). The sculptor Zangela Matangua caricatured the features of the hypermale in his mask with its bulging forehead, nose, and cheekbones. The mouth balloons to the point where it subsumes the chin, and is pulled up on the right side. There is far less articulation with the knife so that transitions between features seem blunted. In the hyperbolic protrusion of the brow, nose, and mouth (usually so dainty on Pende masks), the

sculptor conveyed *Tundu's* willingness to breach all codes of decorum through innate aggressiveness and lack of concern for others. It is no surprise that *Tundu* mimics everything from masturbation to coitus to the joys of enemas.

The Professionalization of Pende Sculptors

Gabama's third achievement lay in professionalizing sculptors and in creating a unique atelier that was still thriving in the late 1980s.

There had been no sculptors in Gabama's childhood neighborhood. By all accounts, when he arrived in Nyoka-Munene and saw what his uncle was carving, he was enchanted. There was no turning back. He is described as obsessive. Gabama resolved to make a living from sculpting. He worked around the clock and did not want to be distracted by other duties. Both he and his uncle were breaking established social precedents because they were not blacksmiths.

Despite a large number of commissions, Gabama could not earn enough to live. The Belgians had introduced a money economy and exacted what they

Left: 12. Central Pende facepiece for Matala, by Mashini Gitshiola. Wood, raffia fiber, 22.5cm (8.9"). Private collection.

The sculptor Mashini represents Matala as personifying the physiognomy of a beautiful young man. He shows many of the same characteristics as *Pumbu* (Fig. 10) with bulging forehead, large eye-holes, acutely rendered cheekbones, and extended nose; however, the forms are smoothed and rounded to convey the beauty of firm and unblemished skin.

Right: 13. Facepiece for the clown *Tundu*, by Nguedia Gambembo. Nyoka-Munene, DRC, 1989. Photo: Z. S. Strother.

This is a reproduction of Gabama a Gingungu's invention for this dance persona, which had formerly been represented by a sack worn over the head, with holes torn for eyes. The scars on the nose and the poorly executed cicatrices subvert *Tundu's* attempts to be seductive. Dancers sought out Gabama for his ability to create masks for the new characters they had conceived.

called "taxes," what the Pende called "tribute." In 1931 Gabama adapted the Pende model of the itinerant dancer, who travels with a lead drummer, sometimes a singer, to give performances and to earn praise gifts. Gabama is the first documented case of a sculptor who took to the



14. Gabama's grandson, Mungongo Mukishi, impersonates Tundu. Nyoka-Munene, DRC. 1989. Photo: Z. S. Strother.

Wearing this facepiece sculpted by Zangela Matangua, Mungongo caricatures the smart aleck who primps to attract women, oblivious of his own ugliness.

Munene is near a major road crossing the province and connecting Kikwit to the diamond center of Tshikapa. Gabama had already attracted a fair number of Belgian clients. In fact, his daughter Ngombe, who usually played hostess for them because she spoke a little French, was nicknamed "Matamu," after "Madame." Gabama began seriously to court this trade as a means of supplementing his income.

He began regularly to take his masks to the Jesuit mission at Kilembe and sold them at the ferry where cars crossed between the provinces. Gabama discovered that he was much more likely to sell if he sent a team to the ferry—one man would pound out the dance rhythm of the masked character on his chest while the other performed. And they always claimed to have whatever *recherché* piece the client was seeking, whether or not this was true.

Gabama also expanded his jewelry production because he could send a nephew to sell these items easily across the Pende heartland. The number of guns flooding the colony resulted in an unprecedented supply of elephant and hippo ivory. The Central Pende made decorative ivory pendants in the form of their most beautiful art objects: the masks. Gabama developed quite a reputation in this line. In fact, in the colonial press of 1953, Gabama (who was then around sixty) was described primarily as a "carver of amulets" who had a huge local clientele (Kochritzky 1953:13).¹⁶ The jewelry business became increasingly important for older sculptors, who found it difficult to fell the big trees.¹⁷ Because elephant ivory is rare today, sculptors are mainly working with hippo thighbones and are experimenting with ox bone.

Gabama's life story illustrates a process of professionalization. Delores Richter has outlined the attributes of professionalism:

Professionals consider themselves, and are considered by others, primarily as being craftsmen who realize a large part, or all, of their livelihood from their craftsmanship. They are paid for their work and are often accustomed to working for a wide variety of customers, many of whom may not be members of the craftsman's own ethnic group and may not share a religious iconography or belief system. (Richter 1980:2)

Gabama used the new cash economy of the Belgian Congo to advantage: he wanted

to become a full-time sculptor. Most important, as Richter underscores, is the change in self-definition. Gabama regarded himself, and is described by other Pende, as a *musongi* (sculptor) exclusively in a way that did not exist before.

By all accounts, Gabama was a character. Those who knew him testify to his love of masquerade. In his daughter Matamu's words, when the masks began to dance, "joy seized him" (*kiese kiamukuta*). He would dab red clay at the corner of his eyes, take up his thick flywhisk, and share that joy by dancing alongside the performers. The artist was strict about the conventions of the masks. He never allowed a woman to see him working; he kept chaste and honored fasts when working on a new and stringent category of masks, the *mbuya jia mafuzo* (Strother 1998:83; chap. 8). When one of his wives was expecting, Gabama would hang up an unfinished *Muyombo* headpiece in the bedroom to prevent the baby from being harmed by proximity to the materials of the men's fraternity. Although he never worked as a blacksmith, he shared some of their titles. He became a circumciser, therefore a leader in the male fraternity, and was elected "chief of the dance arena" (*fumu ya bwadi*). As such, he personally sewed performers into their costumes and pooled their praise gifts to buy wine and meat for a feast after the masquerade. Gabama derived his reputation from his work for Pende dancers, but he supported his family by selling to the international art market.

Modernity Pende-style

Gabama's biography illustrates the fact that the twentieth-century Pende sculptor has always been fully integrated into the world market. His production has always belonged to a mixed economy, with works destined both for Pende connoisseurs and for anonymous foreign dealers. In this regard, Gabama was by no means unique. The very same Kaseya Tambwe whose mother-and-child rooftop statuettes dotted the Eastern Pende countryside (Fig. 4) was associated with Robert Verly's *Ateliers sociaux d'Art indigène du Sud-Kasaï* in Tshikapa (1959; de Sousberghe 1959:163, fig. 238).

Pende sculptors responded immediately, on contact, to an expanded market for their works. Anthropologist Enid Schildkrout observes that the collection of (Eastern) Pende masks made by Samuel P. Verner for Frederick Starr in December 1905–May 1906 "shows that by 1905 a European-dominated and defined commerce in 'traditional' art was flourishing in southern Congo" (1998:184). Some of these pieces (now in the American Museum of Natural History) show no wear, are too small to be used, are not pierced for costume attachments, and are made

road for an extended period in order to find clients. (It had never been cost effective for a blacksmith to leave his forge.)

First he went north to the area around Lake Matshi, renowned for its dancers and singers. There he capitalized on the fact that the Mbuun, the Pende's northern neighbors, were adopting the men's fraternity but had no sculptors to make masks for them. Gabama established himself on the frontier and did very well by charging one chicken per mask. He took his nephew Nguedia Gambembo with him. In exchange for his training, as in Rubens's atelier, the nephew would grind colors, dye the raffia thread used for the coiffures, paint the masks, and do the initial shaping of the wood block. Villagers at Nyoka-Munene love to tell how Gabama returned with baskets and baskets of chickens and how the nephew who had left as a thin, gangling boy came back a big, strapping man, having profited from the abundance of chicken dinners.

Gabama returned in 1933, when his daughter fell ill. Stinging local criticism made clear to him that his absence was taking a toll on his family, so he decided that he had to find a way to make more money from his home base. Nyoka-



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from the wrong kind of wood. It appears that Verner asked for a survey of Eastern Pende material culture, and carvers responded with a selection of the smaller (packable?) objects that could be made in a hurry.

While Leo Frobenius (1905) and Emil Torday (1909) collected objects similar to Verner's (although not in the same quantity), it is striking that both acquired Pende objects *before* they entered Pende territory. Frobenius sold a fine *Pota* (or *Ginjinga*) mask to the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin in 1904 in order to help fund his first trip to Africa (Fig. 15).¹⁸ Torday acquired a number of Eastern Pende pieces on his arrival in Dima in 1905 (Mack 1990:34), including a helmet mask (*Kipoko*) with an unbored inte-

rior. Dima was the headquarters for the Compagnie du Kasai, which was just beginning to open trading posts in Pende territory, at least 575 kilometers upstream. In 1906 the Dutch commercial agent Adriaance advised Starr that "the Bampende are famous for masks; the regular prices for which have been from one fathom of cloth for smaller ones to one piece for the larger and finer ones" (in Schildkrot 1998:184). Within only a couple of years of systematized commercial exploitation, Pende masks were circulating as trade goods with standardized prices.

As Fabian observes, commodification is the prerequisite of collecting rather than its consequence (1998:88). Why did sculptors and the owners of art objects

15. *Pota* or *Ginjinga* facepiece. Wood, raffia fiber; 22cm (8.7"). Staatliche Museen zu Berlin—Preussischer Kulturbesitz. Museum für Völkerkunde, III C 19538.

Probably originating in North-central Pendeland, this is one of the oldest documented Pende works. Because Frobenius sold this mask in 1904, before he ever traveled to Africa, it testifies to the early circulation of Pende art objects. Its identification "Djuma" refers to an obsolete name for the Kwilu River (Hilton-Simpson 1911:240).

respond so readily? The racist adventurer Frobenius knew only too well:

Trading for ethnographic objects, furthermore, causes for the Negro a pleasant sensation. The Negro definitely does not like the rubber trader because rubber first has to be tapped, and tapping it means work, [357] a lot of work, and work is for him always something he detests. On the other hand,.... [e]thnographic stuff is there, it does not have to be made.

(in Fabian 1998:101-2)

The trading policies of the Congo Free State made little impact on the Pende before 1903, when the Compagnie du Kasai opened posts in the Pende heartland. To "encourage" trade, the state demanded a tax to be paid in rubber; supposedly the quota could be met by forty hours of collecting per month. In fact, a report compiled in 1904-5 admitted that in fact the quantities required demanded considerably more than forty hours' labor. Whole families were obliged to go camping in the bush several times per month to seek rubber supplies far from home (Sikitele 1986:502). The historian Sikitele reports that by 1908-9, every trading post west of the Loange was equipped with an arsenal of forty to sixty Albin rifles and exacted the rubber quota by flogging resisters and by holding women as hostages (pp. 506-8). Despite his sneer, Frobenius hit the nail on the head: carving was more "pleasant" than rubber collecting and other forms of forced labor.¹⁹ A man with means could purchase rubber or, later, pay his tax directly with money. Carving allowed the sculptor much more independence and intellectual satisfaction.

What have been the repercussions of a mixed economy for twentieth-century Pende art? On the positive side, accomplished sculptors like Gabama have been able to fulfill their desires of working full-time at carving and maintaining their prestige at home while meeting the needs of their families and the demands of the state.²⁰

Pende sculpture has been as fully integrated into the global market in the twentieth century as the work of any painter in Greenwich Village; however, the economic hegemony of Europe and the United States has assigned very different

16. Central Pende miniature "head" attached to *galukoshi* divination instrument. Wood, 8.7cm (3.4"). Private collection.

This piece was given to L. de Sousberghe in 1953 from a resident of Ngashi after the death of the diviner who commissioned it. This beautiful and original work exemplifies the continuing inventiveness of individual African artists despite their full participation in the international art market.

positions to their products. In SoHo or Greenwich Village, value is ascribed to the painting or sculpture as an index of personal expression, secured by a signature. In contrast, value may be assigned to the Pende work *only to the degree to which the artist can be made to disappear.*

In 1989 the work of seven independent sculptors at Nyoka-Munene sold to middlemen for an average price of \$0.25 per mask. Depending on the quality of middlemen's artificial aging process, these same masks resold in Kinshasa for \$10-\$20, and on the rare occasion as high as \$100. Of these, I have seen numerous works identifiably by Nguedia Gambembo, Khoshi Mahumbu, Mashini Gitshiola, and Gitshiola Léon in the collections of half a dozen museums in Europe and the United States. Not a single piece bore the name of its maker. In one case, I caught a glimpse of the insurance appraisal for a collection, which averaged \$5,000 per mask. What was being insured here was precisely *not* the work of Nguedia, Khoshi, or Zangela. In fact, an attribution to Nguedia or Khoshi would remove any need for insurance, because it would irrevocably place the work in the twentieth century.²¹ What was insured instead was the work of "Anonymous," who is presumed to have worked in the precolonial period out of a sense of collective self.²² In the African art market, it is *the buyer* who replaces the artist as visionary, who is able (like Marcel Duchamp) to recognize aesthetic value in the unassuming artifact.

In this climate, Gabama, Nguedia, and the rest all become "forgers" charged with the obsessive reproduction of the moment just before the Compagnie du Kasai opened its trading posts in 1903. To this degree, the Euro-American market has turned the Pende sculptor into what it presumed him to be: a carver mindlessly reproducing genre models. Whereas a noted sculptor circa 1870 would have created a varied corpus of maybe sixty works in a lifetime, Gitshiola Léon (derisively nicknamed "The Factory") seems to have set an all-time record in 1989 for fabricating twenty precolonial masks per week.

And yet by no means does this story represent anything as simple as the "deterioration" model championed by so many travelers to Africa. The present continues to be muddled with the past. When I visited Chief Kidianga in October 1988, he was working on two sets



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of commissions. The first came from a merchant who had ordered four *Panya Ngombe* masks, four *Pumbu* masks, and four statues. The second came from Chief Kingumbu, who had sought out Kidianga because he was the most acclaimed living Eastern Pende sculptor. The chief ordered a *Pumbu* mask because he had sold his previous piece; as a consequence he himself was ill and his village was now suffering from high infant mortality. Contrary to expectations, many of the most admired Pende works in European and American collections emerged at mid-century (Cover, Fig. 16). Far from being timeless products of Pende culture, these pieces reflect the tastes of mid-century in their emphasis on physiognomic subtleties. Gabama's

Fumu mask represents the culmination of a direction in Central Pende art begun shortly before the colonial period.

At the end of the century, one is left wondering why there has been such a compulsive need to render twentieth-century African experience invisible. European and American fantasies about a "primitive" world free from the stresses of modern life are well known. Is it also possible that the image of Kidianga driving hard bargains in sales to New York while aiding men concerned about lowering infant mortality at home is unsettling because it challenges the perception of a universal, unidirectional path to modernity? Will the "modern" always look like "me"? □

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Two very useful tools afford an opportunity to customize the CD: "bookmarks" and "slide show." Navigating through the CD, one may flag (bookmark) specific screens to make them readily accessible in the future. Users also may select and order images of objects, field photographs, text, and media to build a "slide show." This feature might be used in the classroom in any number of ways: for instance, a teacher might create customized presentations for students, or students can create their own reports on specific subjects.

Finally, there are two print options available. At most locations in the CD one can either print the screen—that is, create a hard-copy image of exactly what is on the screen—or print a text-only version.

I had the opportunity to use *ALA* last year in an upper-level west African art history class. Meeting with my students in a university computer lab, I introduced them to the various modules, tools, and resources, and suggested some ways in which they might use the CD during the term. I also assigned specific field research essays from *ALA* to complement lectures and reading assignments. Admittedly I came nowhere near exploiting the full potential of this tool. The course evaluations administered at the end of the term revealed that the students really appreciated the CD. In fact, a number of them commented that it was far more valuable than the textbook. They also used the field research essays, bibliography, and image database as a point of departure for their research papers. Some students noted that it would be useful if one could print an entire multipage essay with a single command—a good suggestion.³ At present one has to print one screen at a time.

A teacher might, in an advanced-technology-equipped classroom, utilize the CD to augment lectures. As mentioned earlier, one possibility might be a "slide show" presentation of specific images and text. But I see *ALA* as being most effective when used by the individual student. One of the exciting things about a program like this one is that there is room for creativity on the part of both teacher and student in using it to enhance the understanding of African art and society.

McIntyre and Roy obtained a good deal of feedback while testing prototypes of the CD. As a result *ALA* does not have many of the problems one often encounters with a first-generation program, and its quality is impressive. However, I do have a few observations that the developers might think about for the next version.

Although *ALA* is quite remarkable in the breadth of its coverage of many of Africa's aesthetic traditions, it is not comprehensive. As with most survey texts dealing with the visual arts of Africa, emphasis is placed on the peoples and cultures of the western and central parts of the continent. There are essays and images concerning a number of southern and east African traditions, but the CD provides very little information about northeast Africa, and nothing about ancient Egypt or north Africa.

ALA also fails to address twentieth-century academic art. Basically ignored by Western

students of African art until recently, it is now recognized as an important dimension of African expressive culture. One of the top priorities for the next version of the program might be a thematic chapter and a couple of essays on this topic.

The program's most significant shortcoming is the absence of dates for all but a few of the hundreds of objects presented, even for the historical pieces. Dates are offered neither in the captions to images in the thematic chapters and field research essays nor in the information that accompanies the reproductions in the image database. I was unable to find any rationale for this omission.

ALA is very easy to use and does not require a great deal of direction. Nevertheless, the developers could have been more generous with online help—the program offers only three screens of "tips." A bit more information is offered in the jewel-box liner notes, but even this may not be sufficient for some users. A complementary website developed for the project provides more information, but disappointingly, the CD itself does not adequately emphasize it. The only references are in the liner notes and in the credits screen. The website is extremely important, because, unlike the CD, it is a dynamic resource. For example, it is being used to provide additional information about the CD, especially to secondary school teachers. Of special interest is an online guide that offers suggestions about using it in the classroom.⁴ The site also serves as a forum for those teaching with *ALA*. The address is <http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/>. A hotlink to the site, prominently positioned in the CD, would be ideal.

Another aspect of the relationship between the CD and its website concerns the ability to integrate the two. It is now possible to set "hooks" in a CD that can be accessed from the Internet. Students, in effect, could use a web-based application created by an instructor that would reference the resources available on the CD. Again, this is something that might be built into a future version of *ALA*.

The glossary mentioned earlier seems to be directed to a secondary-school audience. Though a good idea, its implementation leaves a bit to be desired. I found the selection of terms rather haphazard. The rationale for inclusion was not clear. For instance, in the cultural-exchange chapter of the essay dealing with recycling, basic words like "dire" and "prominent" are highlighted (included in the glossary), while a term like "syncretism" is not. This problem is found throughout the thematic chapters and field research essays.

Finally, the program does not have a built-in note-taking feature. This shortcoming is not a serious one, since it is simple enough to launch a program like Windows Notebook or Wordpad, or one's favorite word-processing application, before beginning to use *ALA*, and then simply toggle back and forth between the two. However, since the simultaneous use of two or more programs (multitasking) exceeds the skills of many computer users, it would be useful to build a note-taking feature into the program.

These criticisms are insignificant when weighed against the groundbreaking pedagogical contribution the *ALA* CD represents. The success of any multimedia program is based on the effective integration of content and design. *Art and Life in Africa* has managed to accomplish this, offering teacher and student the first viable multimedia resource for learning about the visual arts of Africa. It delivers a tremendous amount of accurate, up-to-date textual and visual information by means of a well-conceived, intuitive user interface. Presenting the student with a marvelous interactive environment, this CD has succeeded in exploiting the potential of new computer-based technologies and has taken the teaching of African art into the Information Age. □

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Dedicated to the memory of Malege-Mandagu-Makukko, Ngandjo Gombembo, Zangela Matanga, and to all those who died needlessly in Nyoka-Monene in the waning years of the Republic of Zaïre.

This essay draws on thirty-two months of field research supported by three Fulbright predoctoral grants, 1986-89, issued by the U.S. Information Agency. In addition, the Belgian-American Educational Foundation (1986) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1996) provided funds for museum and archival work in Europe.

The paper grows out of a talk given at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's colloquium "Perspectives on African Art: A Dialogue with Tradition," organized by Alisa LaGamma. I am grateful to the University of Chicago Press for permission to include information on Gabama a Ganguu drawn from chapter four of my book, *Inventing Masks*. I also thankfully acknowledge suggestions made by Alisa LaGamma and Jonathan M. Reynolds that substantially improved the quality of this essay.

1. A nice example of the different role for individuals (and individuality) in the texts of travelers and ethnographers is found in a comparison of M.W. Hilton-Simpson's *Land and Peoples of the Kasai* (1911) with Emil Torday's *Camp and Tramp in African Wilds* (1913). Both recount some of the same events; however, Hilton-Simpson knits together a story of meeting one eccentric after another, whereas Torday aspires to ethnography through cultural generalizations.

2. Until the quite recent rise to public consciousness of artists like Clowé de Ise and Seydou Keita, the two most renowned individuals in African art circles were unquestionably Dogon Ogotemlé (Graule [1948] 1965) and Ndenbu Muchona the Hornet (Turner 1967, chap. 6). Both were famous, not for creating art but for initiating anthropologists into its timeless meanings.

3. Already in 1927, the influential anthropologist F. Boas was urging: "[W]e have to turn our attention first of all to the artist himself" (p. 155). Since that time a great number of anthropologists and art historians have collected information on African artists (Drewal 1990:36). However, until recently their interest has most often focussed on the position of the artist as a social identity (does he enjoy the status of European artists since the Renaissance?) and has rarely been combined with extended analysis of a given individual's work over time, or even adequate illustrations (Gerboards 1969:64-65). In these regards, R. F. Thompson's famous article (1969) on the potter Abdtin is as anomalous for its focus on personal history and individual works as it is for gender and medium. The historiography of African art nicely illustrates Foucault's argument in reverse (1979). The names collected have failed to associate objects together and to "explain" them. The "artist" (as a category of interpretation) cannot be dissociated from the object any more than the "author" can be separated from a text.

4. The polite form of address in the Pende language (Kipende) is by the first name.

5. For the grounds on which the sculptors made their identification, see Strother 1998:95-96.

6. De Sausbergh reported that the word *nivembo* signified both "sculptor" and "blacksmith" among the Central and Kwilu Pende (de Sausbergh 1959:11). In the 1980s, however, I found that the word *masongi* (pl. *asongi*) was more fashionable among the Central Pende. It signifies "sculptor" and derives from the verb *gusonga* ("to carve with an adze"). The Eastern Pende equivalent is *hile*.

7. For analysis of the common Central African association of blacksmiths and chiefs, see Herbert 1993, chap. 6.

8. These masks were: *Phoko ya Kinza*, *Thengo ya Ikaishi*, and *Kimwa* for Chief Kende; *Thengo ya Ikaishi* for Chief Mukanza; *Katjia* for Chief Mukamba. In addition, he lent a *Katjia* to Chief

Makomba, with the understanding that the facepiece would be returned to him at the end of the camp.

9. For example, Chief Korde, inaugurated into office in 1979, rebuilt his house and replaced the associated statuery in 1988; Chief Nzambi was inaugurated in 1980 and replaced his house in 1988. Chief Kindamba is unusually punctilious. Invested in 1960, he claims to have built his seventh klabu in 1987. (He is also known to exaggerate.) His last was abandoned owing to accusations of sorcery. He alone of any chief had lintel and door panels mounted in 1988 (Strother 1993: figs. 3, 21), although Nestor Seeuws photographed many *in situ* in 1974 for the Institut des Musées Nationaux in Kinshasa.

10. This was the pattern in the 1980s, and some historical depth is suggested for the practice through the photographs of Frank J. Enns, 1920s-40s; Erma Berkeley, 1920s-30s; and L. de Sausberghe, 1950s.

11. The Pende have a long history of traveling considerable distances to place commissions for masks. Among the Eastern Pende in the twentieth century, the Bakwa Nzumba (north-central) are reputed to have the best sculptors and often receive commissions from chiefs in the east and south. Among Pende west of the Loange at the turn of the century, the best sculptors were reputed to be found in the Lake Matshi area, but this preference switched to the heartland of the Central Pende in the 1920s.

Because of the weight of the objects, sculptors of rooftop statues had to do their work on site. Eastern Pende Kashiji (Ndongo) recounts that his father, Kahembe, traveled a good deal to clients ranging from the nearby Chief Kotshi to Chief Samba in the Bandundu province.

12. Gabama's heirs (nephews) confirm that he sold pieces to foreigners, as does Maquet-Tombu (1953:17). Moreover, I've talked to masqueraders who regret having sold their Gabama headpieces when they could not resist the price or when the works cracked and were no longer serviceable to dance.

The Institut des Musées Nationaux du Zaïre in Kinshasa owned a number of masks identified as Gabama's in 1989 (e.g., 71.1.41, 71.1.42, 71.1.64). Collected on December 12, 1970, by P. Timmermans in Munzombo, the masks date after the sculptor's death and the devastating Mulele Rebellion. It is likely that the men selling the masks were using Gabama's name as a reference to the atelier at Nyoka-Munene. The practice of using the senior artist's name for the work of an entire atelier accounts for the unlikely attribution of a peculiar mask to Gabama (as "Kabama sha Mupese") by a source of de Sausberghe's (1959:51, n. 1, fig. 90). In the citation, Gabama's name is merged with "Sha Mupese," an alternative name for his nephew, Githiöla Shimuna. The latter is a more likely attribution, as the work shows some of the fantasy for which Githiöla is known.

13. The cicatrices depicted on the facepieces of masks only vaguely approximate the actual scarification once practiced by Pende men and women. Because of the distance between masquerader and audience, fine naturalistic forms would be illegible. Sculptors have great discretion in creating styles that enhance the reading of physiognomy at a distance.

14. My translation: "Kano gas yala guma ihala gwa gulundaga azi ga enji gubho ndambo ndaga pula y enji idi mudinga gubhaga gifa pulu ya mabheba."

15. Although field associates hesitate about whether it was Gabama or his "nephew" Githiöla Shimuna who invented the first Tenda facepiece, the evidence from historical photos indicates a date too early for the career of Githiöla. For example, a photo showing an early Tenda facepiece with tubular eyes, taken by Joyce or Donald Doyle (Brett-Smith 1983: fig. 17), was probably made 1919-23. Another photo taken the same day was published by Norden in 1924. Other Central Pende sculptors quickly adopted the form with tubular eyes that was Gabama's innovation.

16. The literature persistently confuses the decorative pendants made of ivory (or sometimes metal) with the "amulets" used in healing rituals. The latter were made by specialists or members of the patient's family from wood or nuts, and their form could be rudimentary.

17. Jeanne Maquet-Tombu noted the pattern of older sculptors mixing wood and ivory in their trade by comparing Gabama to another old sculptor at Musanga Lubue (1953:16).

18. H.-J. Kolos reports that Frobenius sold the Berlin museum 728 objects in 1904 to finance his first expedition to Africa. Many of the works in the collection passed through the Hamburg dealer J. F. G. Umlauf (1990:21-22).

19. Hilton-Simpson, who traveled with Torday, echoes a similar sentiment. He reports that it was nearly impossible to procure voluntary porters for their expedition equipment among the Bushongo, because the men preferred to weave cloth to earn "money" (1956:113).

20. Nonetheless, I cannot agree with anthropologist Delores Richter that the "opportunity to carve full-time...has generally allowed carvers to become more adept at their craft" (1980:71-72). The commodification of artworks has resulted in deforestation and increased pressure to cut corners in materials and time-consuming techniques. To give one example, sculptors are increasingly replacing incised decorations on headpieces with painted versions.

21. It is at this point that the Pende evidence diverges from the argument that Mary Nooter Roberts made in the last issue (1998) about the market value of assigning names in Luba art history, where there is a corpus of works presumed to be safely precolonial in age.

22. Anthropologists J. I. Guyer and S. M. Eno Belinga have argued that "[e]nlightenment thinking about individuality and change emphasized the modern rupture from the collective embeddedness of identity in traditional societies" (1995:104).

As a consequence, concepts of "personal realization" and cultural values of "social multiplicity" have been seriously misrepresented in studies of Equatorial African societies (pp. 104-5).

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SIDES: Notes, from page 39

- Arturo Lindsay, "Orishas: Living Gods in Contemporary Latino Art," in *Sisteria Aesthetics in Contemporary Latin American Art*, ed. Arturo Lindsay. Washington, DC, and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Arturo Lindsay is as well known a scholar as he is an installation and performance artist. He is Associate Professor of Art and Art History at Spelman College in Atlanta. In addition to his study of the Congos of PortoBelo, he runs a summer program for Spelman students to live and make art with the local inhabitants. He is also in the process of establishing a center where he can bring together the traditions of the village with related ones from the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Africa. Lindsay developed and coordinated the first African Diaspora Program at the National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C.
- Lindsay has had solo exhibitions at the Nexus Contemporary Art Center in Atlanta, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Panama City, and Franklin Furnace in New York City, and has participated in group exhibitions at the Palazzo del Esposizioni in Rome and El Museo del Barrio in New York. In 1997 he was included in "In Search of Balance: The Artist Scholar" at the Center for African American Culture, Smithsonian Institution. He organized "Ceremony of Spirit: Nature and Memory in Contemporary Latino Art" for the Mexican Museum, San Francisco.
- Joé Boda was born in Havana, where he studied at the Superior Institute of Art and the School of Art of San Alejandro. He was a prizewinner at the second Havana Biennial in 1986, and in 1994 was awarded a Guggenheim Memorial Foundation International Fellowship. That same year he had a retrospective exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and was also invited to do an installation at the São Paulo Biennial. In 1997 Boda had a retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Monterrey, Mexico. Among his group exhibitions are "Caribbean Visions: Contemporary Painting and Sculpture," which traveled throughout the United States in 1995-97; "Face of the Gods: Art and Altars of Africa and the African Americas" (Museum for African Art, New York, toured 1993-94); the 1990 Venice Biennale; and "Art of the Fantastic, Latin American Art, 1929-1987" (Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1987).
- Manuel Vega has been Artist in Residence for the Guggenheim Museum's "Learning Through Art" program since 1993. He has also served as Artist in Residence at El Museo del Barrio and as set and costume designer for the Dance Brazil Company. Vega has had extensive experience in art education, and has exhibited at the Bronx Museum, the Caribbean Cultural Center, El Museo del Barrio, Kenkeleba House, and the Hood Museum at Dartmouth College. In 1998 his work was included in "Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Light in the Yorùbá Universe" (UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History). Vega was also featured in the program *New York—the Secret African City* by Robert Farris Thompson. Most recently he executed a mural for the Broadway production *The Capeman* by Paul Simon.

VOGEL: Notes, from page 55

This paper takes up issues originally intended for a chapter on the Boule artist in *Boule: African Art/Western Eyes* (Vogel 1997), the book accompanying the exhibition currently on view at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution.

- The artists discussed here are those visual artists, mainly sculptors, working in local traditions roughly before the middle of the twentieth century, when changing attitudes toward individualism began to make a difference. In general the issue of anonymity differs for weavers and potters and for many performing artists. African artists working in international media and styles have signed their works and asserted their individuality since the dawn of the twentieth century. In Nigeria, for example, Aina Oribolu was a full-time easel painter by 1906.
- Frans Olbrechts and William Fagg were among the first Africanists to work this way.
- As Mary Nooter Roberts's paper "The Naming Game: Ideologies of Luba Artistic Identity" suggests (1998:61-62), assigned names in African art have become issues of contention rather than tools of convenience. Perhaps the use of neutral numbers or letters would advance the discipline of African art history more effectively.
- See Smith 1961; Museum of Primitive Art 1963; Biebuyck 1969; Jopling 1971; d'Azavedo 1973.
- Among recent anthologies, we find much emphasis on the individual artist: Robin Poyner's 1995 survey does not have an index listing for artist; the section "The Artist" in Judith Perani and Fred T. Smith's comprehensive 1998 survey is only three paragraphs long, and places him right behind a somewhat longer section on "Art Patrons."
- The history recounted here refers primarily to African art in large, well-established, white institutions. The history in African American institutions is quite different. Though the story of Oaxacan and Native American art in many cases was the same, there were nonetheless enough dissimilarities to make the inclusion of the others awkward in this brief sketch. I refer only to the United States, for it was quite another situation in Europe. For a brilliant analysis of this history see MacGaffey 1998.
- Anthropology departments and natural history museums had been dealing with African objects all along, of course, and less conservative art museums and art history departments in universities in a sense blazed the path. But the power to legitimize African art as art most broadly lay with the large, old, conserva-