

Les Makondé occupent une position unique dans l'Afrique de l'Est par leur création de nombreux styles et formes sculpturales. Leurs masques faisaient partie intégrale des rites d'initiation pour les garçons aussi bien que pour les filles. Jusqu'à récemment les figurines des Makondé étaient représentées en général par des figures de femmes en pieds. Par tradition, on utilisait ces figures à des buts d'éducation dans les rites d'initiation et pour protéger une personne chez elle et pendant ses voyages.

Traditional Masks and Figures of the Makonde

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ATYPICAL EARLESS FACE MASK WITH HEART-SHAPED FACE. BLACK. HEIGHT 6.3 IN. ROEMER-PELIZAEUS MUSEUM, HILDESHEIM.

The Makonde inhabit portions of the high plateau area to the north and south of the Rovuma River which forms the boundary between southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique. Historically, theirs has been a matriarchal Bantu society of farmers. Cultural and linguistic considerations point not only to a relationship between the Makonde of southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique but possibly to a relatively long period of geographic separation as well.

The most complete investigation was carried out among the Makonde of Tanzania by Dr. Karl Weule in 1906. More recently, Dr. A. Jorge Dias and Margot Dias have done extensive research among the Makonde of northern Mozambique.

The Makonde are unique in East Africa in their proliferation of mask forms and styles. According to Dr. Weule, masks were used at the culmination of initiation rites (*Unyago*) of both boys and girls but were worn only by young men. Some of these



DETAIL OF A STAFF. STYLE SIMILAR TO THAT OF HELMET MASKS, TYPICAL OF THE MAKONDE OF NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE. SCARIFICATION SHOWN BY RAISED CARVED SURFACES. HEIGHT 2.5 IN. MUSEUM FÜR VÖLKERKUNDE, FRANKFURT/MAIN.

masked dances were performed on stilts. Two-piece masks were worn by men at girls' *Unyago* to represent women. With a partner, they performed a dance that was sexual in nature¹. The second part of the mask covers the chest and stomach and has prominent breasts and navel.

Makonde masks are carved of both hard and soft wood, and hair or fiber is often attached where hair is to be depicted. Scarification patterns are virtually always represented by strips of beeswax. Outer surfaces may be colored. Masks are usually perforated for attachment to costumes.

Makonde masks may represent humans or animals or humans with incorporated animal attributes. Generally, female masks are distinguished by a lip plug and/or ear spoons; males by a moustache and/or a beard. The so-called devil masks are human faces with vertical horns which are normally carved of



DANCING FEMALE FIGURE EMBELLISHED WITH HUMAN HAIR AND INLAID EYES. HEIGHT 17 IN. LINDEN-MUSEUM, STUTTGART/IDDON.



MALE FACE MASK OF TYPE USUALLY REFERRED TO AS "DEVIL MASK", EMBELLISHED WITH HORNS AND A FIBER BEARD. HEIGHT 21.5 IN. MUSEUM FÜR VÖLKERKUNDE, BERLIN



MALE FACE MASK. HAIR, EYEBROWS, AND MOUSTACHE REPRESENTED BY HIDE FROM WHICH HAIR HAS DISAPPEARED. PAINTED YELLOW. HEIGHT 7 IN. STÄDTISCHES MUSEUM, BRAUNSCHWEIG.

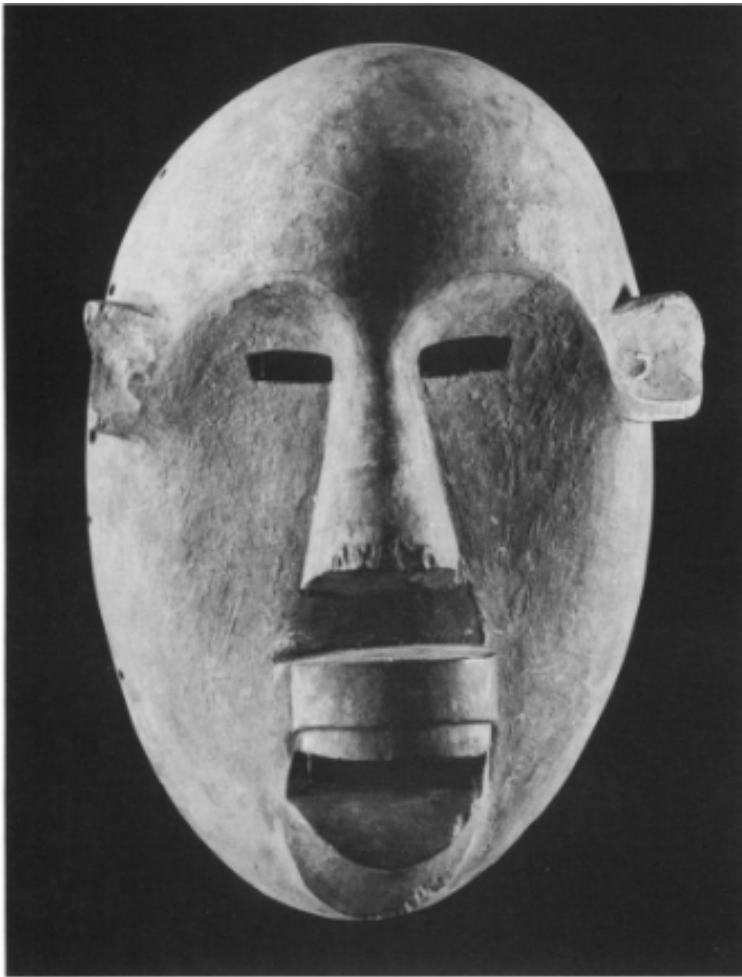
wood. Helmet masks, usually attributed to the Makonde of northern Mozambique, are worn at an angle, so that the wearer looks out the mouth or from beneath the neck.

Until fairly recently, Makonde figural sculpture has been represented mainly by standing female figures who are generally considered, because of a tribal myth, to represent the matriarch founder of the tribe. Dr. A. Jorge Dias reports that the Makonde of northern Mozambique kept these figures in their huts or travelled with them for protection. He further states that some seem to have been used, together with male figures, during initiation rites for educational purposes².

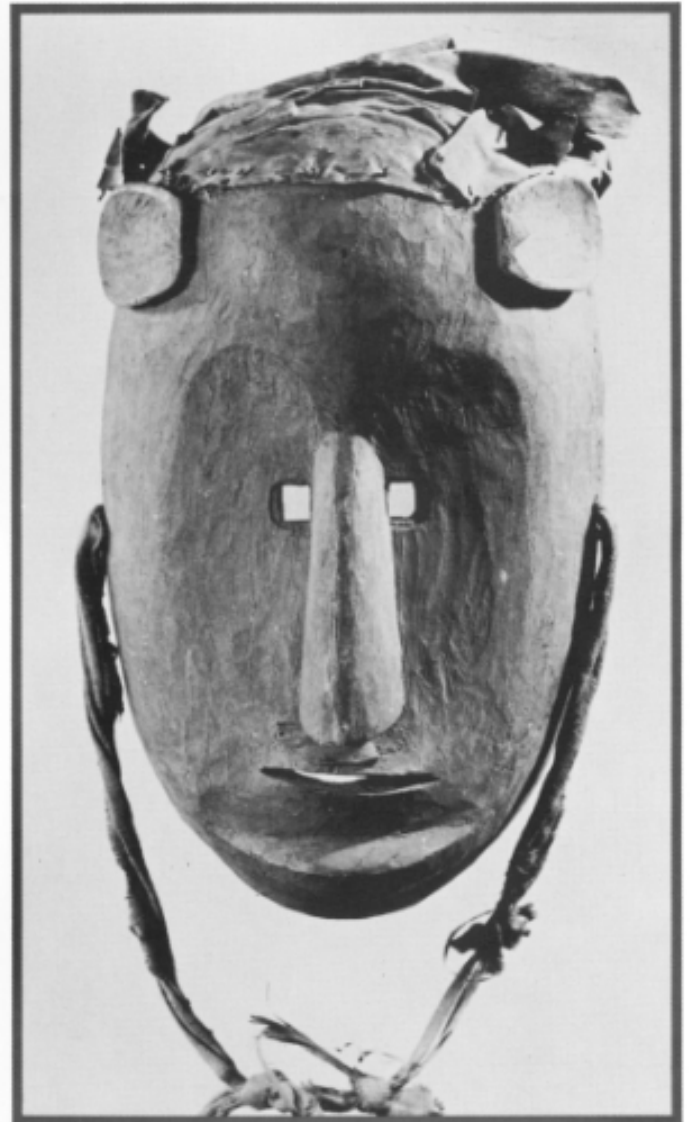
Finely carved human and animal heads and partial figures also often form the lids on small cylindrical containers (*mitete*). According to Dr. Weule³, they were made by the Makonde of northern Mozambique to hold medicine and tobacco.

Stylistic similarities have been noted between the art of the Makonde and that of various peoples of the eastern Congo.

Bibliography, page 88



FACE MASK. LIP-PLUG INDICATES THAT IT IS FEMALE. RED WITH WHITE LIP-PLUG. HEIGHT 8 IN. ROEMER-PELIZAEUS MUSEUM, HILDESHEIM.



MALE FACE MASK WITH PROMINENT NOSE. PLACEMENT OF THE EARS MAY SUGGEST AN ANIMAL. HAIR AND BEARD REPRESENTED BY HIDE FROM WHICH HAIR HAS DISAPPEARED. RED-ORANGE. HEIGHT 8.5 IN. ROEMER-PELIZAEUS MUSEUM, HILDESHEIM.



PROGNATHIC MALE FACE MASK. THE EARS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN CARVED SEPARATELY AND ATTACHED. RED-BROWN. HEIGHT 9 IN. MUSEUM FÜR VÖLKERKUNDE, BERLIN.

NNAGGENDA

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of the Sudan (*African Arts/Arts d'Afrique*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Autumn 1967), he studied art abroad, then began to discover his own continent's riches in the museums of Europe, and returned home to turn that heritage into a viable means of personal expression. This meant employing European techniques and receptive attitude toward experimentation. It is this fundamentally experimental approach to art which makes his work so different from that of most of his Ugandan fellow-artists.

The theme of man's fragility in the face of his own technology is touched with humor in the artist's more recent work. A human figure sprouts wings and is not a passenger but a part of the airplane upon which he is borne aloft. No one can say where the man ends and the machine begins. One has become part of the other, inextricably bound by a common fate.

Nnaggenda's sketches and paintings, as well as his combinations of painting and sculpture, vary a great deal in scale, medium and intention. They range from the tiny, quick jottings which he calls "poems" to conventional-size oils and gouaches in which he sometimes incorporates such materials as flour or coffee for textural effect. As in his sculpture, he is extremely sensitive to the effects of size upon the viewer.

The imagery again focusses upon dehumanization, or occasionally, as in the welded metal *Inner Trainer*, upon ghosts which haunt every man in the guise of memory or conscience. In painting *no. 1*, ghost and victim are brought together, the latter reduced to a frozen mask of fear while the ghost, half-hidden, rises up behind. What does this



PAINTING. GOUACHE. HEIGHT 2 FEET

recurrent ghost image symbolize for Nnaggenda? Or is it not a ghost or demon, but the shaman meant to exorcise that demon? The same question can be asked of *My Inner Trainer*. The artist, a Catholic, is deeply interested in "idols behind altars," as they have been called by one anthropologist. Widespread belief in witchcraft, in what is now supposedly a Christianized country, poses endless riddles and ambiguities for the sensitive artist responsive to his environment.

Yet, there is no anthropological self-consciousness in Nnaggenda's work. These preoccupations are emotional rather than intellectual and they are arrived at rather than preconceived. To Nnaggenda, thematic content is inseparable from plastic form. In his mastery of formal values lies his strength of expression: the ability to combine the strength of traditional African carving with the ephemeral quality of Modigliani (as in *Blood Rain Dust*), or with today's hammered-out petrol can (in *My Inner Trainer*); and an inventiveness of spirit which leaves no idea unexplored for lack of convenience or experience.

Finally, one must ask what significance he has for contemporary African art. It is just this: almost alone among East African artists he leads us over the tortuous routes of a transitional society—a society in which, at the moment, there is no one to receive him.⁴ ■

1. The Uganda Government has followed an enlightened policy toward promoting the arts and crafts with the limited financial resources it has available. But it has concentrated its efforts on the urgent problem of preserving the products of traditional culture—in particular, music and dance, through the national dance troupe, Heart Beat of Africa, and handicrafts, through the community development schemes. The newer art forms have been left to develop largely on their own initiative.

2. This tool, which can be used in several different ways, is far more versatile than the standard Western counterparts, which he also uses, though less often.

3. A recent example of successful adaptation was the first Ugandan opera, *The Marriage of Nyakato* by Mbari Katana, which used operatic techniques with music and dances based in Ugandan tradition, and songs in several local dialects.

4. After finding secondary school teaching so demanding of his time that he could not work on his own projects, Nnaggenda left in July, 1968 for neighboring Kenya, where he holds a teaching position in the Art Department at University College, Nairobi.

Yoruba Doors, Bibliography; from page 19.

Kevin Carroll. *Yoruba Religious Carving*. New York, Praeger, 1966. Biographic data on Areogun. Specific information on materials and techniques used by Ekiti carvers. Illustration of doors by Areogun and his school.

William Fagg and Margaret Flass. *African Sculpture*. London, Studio Vista, 1964. Illustrations of doors by Areogun in the British Museum.

C. J. Afolabi Ojo. "Traditional Yoruba Architecture," in *African Arts/Arts d'Afrique* Vol. 1, no. 3 (Spring, 1968), pp. 14-17. Good descriptive material. Arnold Rubin. *Yoruba Sculpture*. Los Angeles, 1969. Summary, more theoretical approach.

Art is a Verb in Iboland, Footnotes; from page 41.

1. Although complete in itself, this paper follows upon (and refers to) the two which appeared in these pages specifically on Ibo *mbari* houses.

An early version of the paper was given at a Seminar entitled "Frontiers in Art History: The African Area" organized and chaired by Professor Arnold Rubin at UCLA. I would like to thank Prof. Rubin for enabling me to work up this subject. Thanks are due also to Professor Mino Badner and Tove Hall for helpful criticisms and suggestions for the paper's improvement.

2. Leroi Jones, "Hunting is Not Those Heads on the Wall," *Home*, pp. 173-8.

3. Edmund Carpenter, "We Wed Ourselves to the Mystery," *Explorations*, 22, June 1968, p. 68.

and

Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art* (Dover, N.Y., 1956), pp. 8-9.

Traditional Makonde, Footnotes; from page 45.

1. Dr. Karl Weule. *Wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse meiner ethnographischen Forschungsreise in den Südosten Deutsch-Ostafrikas*. Berlin, 1908.

2. Dr. A. Jorge Dias. *Portuguese Contribution to Cultural Anthropology*. Johannesburg, 1961.

3. Dr. Karl Weule. *op. cit.*