African Ritual Masks: “Value” or “Values”?

Over the last 2 years I have watched and read with fascination (and I must admit, moments of both amusement and annoyance) as debate has ebbed and flowed around African art in the West. Everywhere I turn antique hunters, individuals and auction houses have been crying “real or not?” or probably more realistically “valuable or not?”

My annoyance comes from a feeling that this type of commercial “one-up-manship” has been trivializing objects based on their dollar value, the previous owner or the objects documented age, and diverting from ritual and/or aesthetic appreciation.

I say that I have watched in mild amusement because the juxtaposition of Western and African realities (which are literally poles apart) mean that any Western attempts to reconcile African values and associate them with the Western value of an object are almost wholly redundant. Each time I hear dealers or collectors espousing the virtues of provenance, criticizing newer ritual objects from the continent on the basis of “age”, arguing “copyist art isn’t real art” or stating that European paint on objects means that they are not authentic, I picture them seated in a leather arm chair, surrounded by books in a wood paneled room reeking of bees wax and think how far that is from the dust and grit carried on the Hartmann wind that sweeps Djiguibombo on the Dogon Plateau (**Fig.1**).

Fig 1 - The village of Djiguibombo south of Bandiagara on the Dogon Plateau, Mali 2007.

An “s” on the end of “value” makes all the difference in the world to how objects are considered.

As John Russell said, in the New York Times, “African art was not meant for collectors and dealers or even for disinterested enjoyment”. It was meant as Susan Vogel said, to express and support fundamental spiritual values that are essential to the survival of the community”.

Don’t get me wrong. I don’t pretend to be any kind of expert. I have only been to Africa a few times over the years- the two most recent trips were to central and eastern Africa for 3 months, and this year to Mali for 3 weeks. Each time I have tried to explore as an individual, outside the tourist routes, and have taken an unplanned approach via local transport.

In my limited experience there are still some wonderful ritual masks and objects to be collected on the continent. Some old. Some new. Two pieces I recently acquired in Mali are shown in **Fig. 2.** I have managed to see thousands of masks but have never brought home more than ½ dozen pieces.

Fig 2 – A pair of masks I collected from Mali in 2007. On the left a Baule Mblo mask of wood, fabric and nails Coll. Moulaye Lebass Sanogo, Bamako Mali. On the right a Bamana Kore mask of wood, fabric, nails, rubber and paint coll. Shiaro, Segou Region, Mali.

Old masks aren’t necessarily “good”, it is just a historical reference point, the promise of which is too often used for commerce and to drive up the dollar value (both in Africa and the West). Quality now seems to be defined by age (“its old!”), rather than by “quality” itself.

On the other hand, new isn't bad. But the "character" of new African ritual art has been influenced by tourist art, faux carvings with simulated age and workshop replicas – funnily enough these are art forms in their own right, to be knowledgably embraced for what they are: tourist art, faux carvings with simulated age and workshop replicas.

What I have come to believe is that the African art collector/seller recognizes an item's construction and the ritual/historical data connected directly with it - their reference point is isolated aesthetic and commercial value. The African art lover binds the item and the history with a broader social understanding - the motivations and lives of the villages, sellers and traders as much as the work itself – and makes a deeper personal connection.

Veronique Martelliere captured some the sentiment in 2006 when she wrote "….I always think about the person who made these objects. Behind the object, there is always one person. 'Before drinking from a well, always have a thought for the man who dug it'".

"An object can start its life being a religious symbol. When it is taken out of its religious context, it can start a new career by becoming a piece of art. It gets another type of respect…"

In recent research I have come across passages from various authors that have added another dimension to the ethnographic data I was seeking or highlighted aspects of my own experience. So, for my own interest, I have unashamedly borrowed from these passages (sometimes word-for-word), tried to expand on some and weld others together. With abject apologies to the original authors, what follows is a collage of opinion that may (or may not) add another dimension to the value(s) you attribute to that next mask you find or buy.

Looking Back to Look Forward

The written passage that triggered this exercise was from African Art in the Cycle of Life by Roy Sieber and Roslyn Adele Walker. It proposed that 'where a ritual piece of African art is "born", the creators of the piece do not create it by living a life looking forward, only back over an endless rhythm of days, seasons and years'.

"It is the rhythm of nature which nothing can destroy. On the level of the individual this rhythm includes birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, procreation, old age, death and entry into the community of the departed (all of these are ritual markers)…the key moments in the life of an individual. On the community or national level, there is the cycle of the seasons with their different activities such as sowing cultivating, harvesting and hunting"

It made me realize that in the western world our markers are social and always considered from a forward looking perspective, "When will I make more money? When will I buy that house? How old will I be when I retire? When will I buy my next piece of African art?" Generally they are about personal gratification rather than celebrating a rhythm of life. This is an indication as to why western consideration is often one dimensional (dollar value and the linear nature of provenance). But the objects being considered are multi-dimensional. Their form and construction is based on both breadth and depth. Their depth (or the time vertical) is the ritual marker they represent, the "rhythm of days, seasons, years" benchmarked by social and ritual elements of lives. Their width is their multiplicity of meaning.

"African art and most especially their ritual masks are characterized by a multiplicity of meanings and intellectual complexity. These different meanings exist concurrently and harmoniously within the same work at any given point and sometimes even extend or change its meaning over time. They give the piece an even larger (broader) sense of symbolic or intellectual grounding than it otherwise might have (in contrast to western Christian art traditions of iconography where forms generally convey a single meaning or representation). In African art a single form is often intended to mean many things (literally and figuratively), eliciting different levels of response from different members of society, depending on age, level of knowledge and level of initiation".

To add to this complexity it is also important to understand that most often the art or artifact is not the spirit of the representation, merely a reflection and holding point for it. When the "vessel" is damaged, outdated, worn or simply no longer aesthetically pleasing in line with changing tastes it becomes an empty utilitarian object no longer of need or use. So it is discarded or more commonly sold.

From Ritual Vehicle to Utilitarian Object

The mask at **Fig. 3** is an excellent example of a ritual vehicle with incredible breadth and depth of representation. This Ntomo mask was collected in the Segou region in 2007, it is typically carved of wood, covered with cowrie shells (a form of currency formerly used throughout the Sudan) and the remnants of blood red abrus precatorius seeds.

Ntomo gathers pre-pubescent boys, separates them from their families, organizes them into age grades, and conducts training that culminates with their ritual circumcision.

Fig 3 – Bamana Ntomo mask of wood, nails, cowrie shells, resin and abrucus seeds coll. Bakarijana Village, Segou Region, Mali.

French researchers in the 20th century were fascinated by the complexity of Ntomo. Under this mask boys in training re-enacted the creation of the world, the figures and the number of horns are intended to "reveal the inner life of the human being" and symbolized important principles; four referred to femininity, three was a male number and seven was the number of the couple. The female figure was also described as a reference to sacred history, primordial man in his androgynous state and a reminder to boys of the training they had received concerning the opposite sex.

In an auctioneers catalogue this complexity is reduced to a dollar sign, a short stab at creating a provenance trail and brief descriptive text describing a utilitarian object rather than a spiritual vessel. To be fair, the utilitarian sales process is as prevalent in Africa as it is in the West, and is also well represented by **Fig. 3.**

The Deputy Director of the National Museum in Bamako viewed the mask in on behalf of the Director Samuel Sidibe, to approve it for export out of Mali. He agreed that the mask was genuine, had good age and showed significant signs of use. But the process of purchasing the mask had been straightforward involving confirming a price (dollar sign) followed by a quick sales pitch on the village and style of the carving (provenance and descriptive text). It then involved 3 telephone calls by an intermediary to the senior village representative, a much longer discussion on its merits and an exchange of money after a hard bargaining process. An auction without the catalogue!

However, collecting in the field I have occasionally seen the residual effect of an object's ritual power. In Begnimato on the Bandiagara escarpment in Mali I was taken through the holding area for the "in use" village masks – the children trailing us could not follow and photos could not be taken. Later that afternoon, after several cups of tea and several hours of discussion about the mask styles and rituals, the Kanaga mask in **Fig. 4&4a** was revealed. Women and children (who were not allowed in the mask holding area) were allowed to stay and our discussions continued. Suddenly a stream of Dogon invective was fired over my right shoulder in staccato bursts at the group of children that had silently crept closer and closer to get a better look at the mask (not the white guy on the steps of the hut). They fled without looking over their shoulders. When I asked questions later that afternoon, I was told that although the mask had been decommissioned, it had still been one of the village masks and they should still have shown respect for the custom of the ritual.

Fig 4&4a This mask was acquired in 2007 from Amaneou Togo in Begnimato on the Bandiagara escarpment whose father was the "guardian" of the masks. Amaneou's grandfather Amafongorou carved the mask circa 1965 and I was told it was decommissioned in 2006.

Innovation and Abstraction

I also hear these leather-arm-chair-collectors and sellers say "a new style is not a true style". Yet in Africa there is a preference for varied forms of abstraction. I'm sure this has occurred through the continent wide concern with creativity and this has driven artworks that are bold in either style or colour. Across geographic areas and across history most masks are forceful in their visual impact (colour pallet) while others are inventive departures from human or animal form. These innovations were often promoted by local art patrons and cultural institutions such as the imperative that kings coming to the throne must create a new palace and capital along with a new range of art forms to distinguish their reign.

The innovation and abstraction of colour (with the use of European paints and beads) has, by necessity, focused some of the artists' attention on balanced composition, the power of negative space and symmetry versus asymmetry.

So as the physical environment has changed (and this isn't a debate for whether it is better or worse) it has evolved first the social landscape and then the criteria for artistic and/or aesthetic acceptance as a subset. We can see a direct reflection of this thought in one of the more recent masks I collected: **Fig. 5&5a**.

In his 1976 book Masks of Black Africa, Ladislas Segy wrote about the fourth trip he undertook to Africa, and noted that "one important change is the newer, generally more vivid, colouration of the face masks (in the villages). In the market places where dealers currently still sell decorative modern carvings and copies of old statues and masks for the tourist trade, no vividly coloured new masks are offered, probably because they would not sell. But the motivation for the new coloured face mask is not commercial. What is paid for by the visitor is not the art work but the dance itself, which is not new but traditionally unaltered. Thus the added colour is part of the new standard of "beauty", no doubt introduced under the strong influence of the bright printed cottons and commercial colours now widely used in Africa".

Fig 5&5a The mask originated with Bozo fishermen, and was probably used in combined masquerades put on by young mens age-grade associations (kamalen-ton) especially in the region around Segou. It reflects the strong regional colour and identity of the Bozo Niger River communities within south and central Mali. The colours were introduced under the influence of bright printed cottons and commercial enamel paint and are now widely used. The teeth and patterns are an unusual feature. Holes have been drilled in the jaw and sharpened wooden spikes inserted. This is a recent but interesting example with an estimated age circa 2000. Mask coll. Moulaye Lebass Sanogo Segou region Mali 2006. Andrew Turley, Bamako Mali, 2007. Image taken Central Mali 2007.

Traditions change over time for many reasons. Because memory is selective and fallible or they may be consciously re-interpreted for reasons of aesthetic, political gain or commerce. The same occurs with the African ritual art forms. Each minor change is absorbed and forgotten but contributes to the over all story. This is much like a visual variant of the African oral tradition.

Ritual Art as an Echo of the Oral Tradition

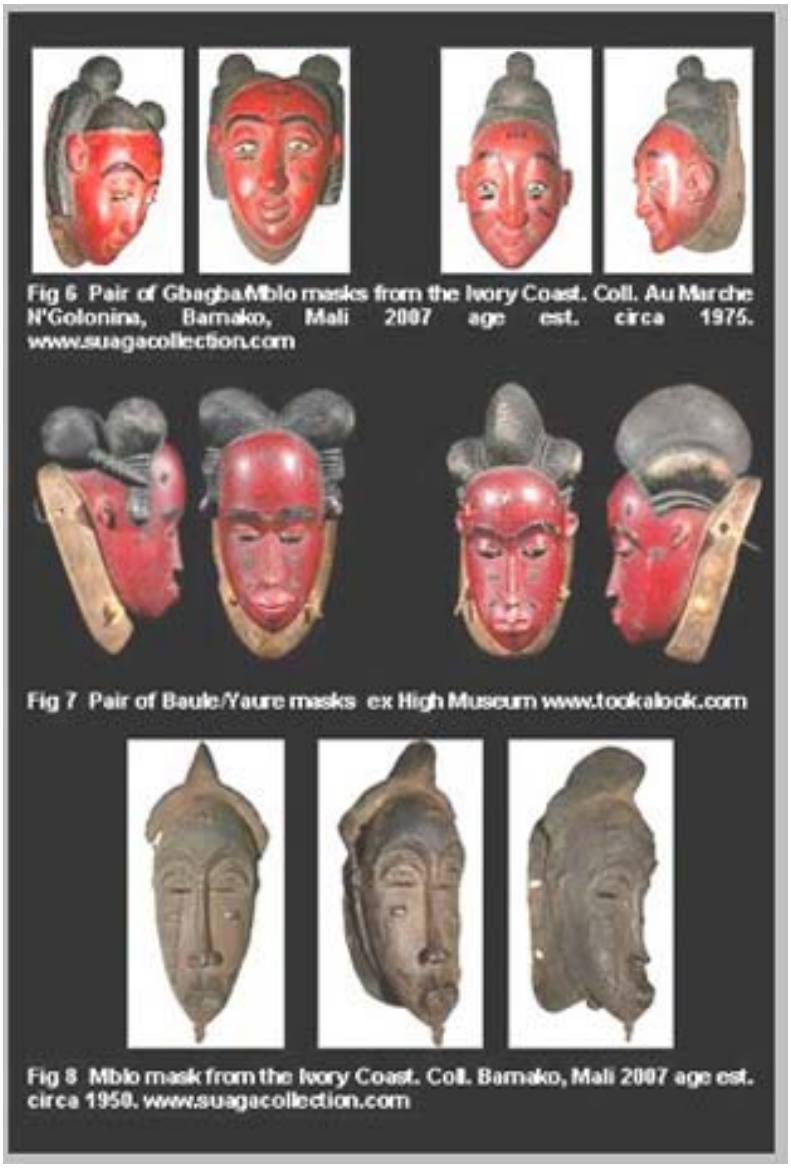
Every mask in a collection has had its life cycle interrupted, but the masks were made to be replaced. Like its own Chinese whisper, the replacement took the place of a lost piece, which itself has been a replacement.

The ritual artist is not a passive copyist even though one of his responsibilities is to replace lost works. Different styles and preferences evolve. This evolution can be seen in the images referenced in some of the definitive books written on African art from the 70's through to the 90's. And from what I have seen I believe that the range of construction styles and carving traits have expanded rather than one form evolving directly into another. Outside Sakassou in Baule country, Ladislas Segy noted that "two dancers wore reddish brown masks with a black coiffure, probably carved by the same hand. The traditional masks of this type are light black and have a more abstract expression".

From his own observation Ladislas confirmed a new variant of a traditional form.

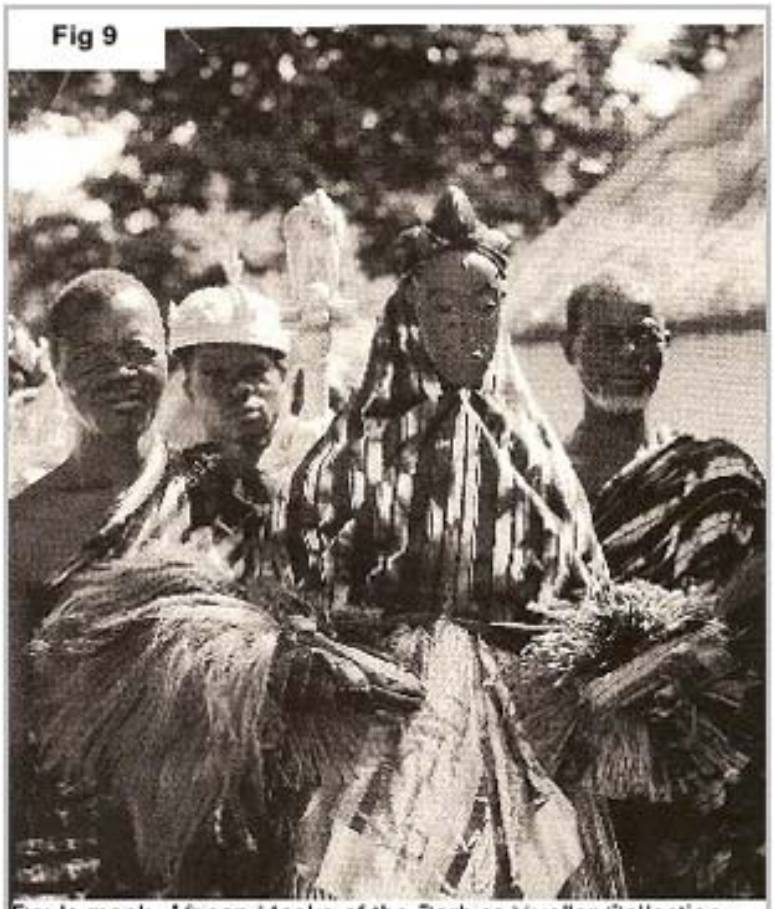
The masks that Ladislas identified and photographed in his 1976 book bore distinct similarities in the facial plane, construct of the coiffures, positioning and style of the decorative markings to those in **Fig. 6**. It is fair to assume that they could be a continuation of the same style and construction type identified in 1976.

The masks in **Fig. 7** from the High Museum and now residing in the Tookalook Gallery (www.tookalook.com) are very similar to a mask shown in African Masks of the Barbier Mueller collection (**Fig. 9**) and similar in style to those purported to be from 1950-1960's.



Whereas **Fig. 8** has been carved in a style most similar to that of the 1930–1950's and a style reflected in a well photographed Kpan mask in the Indianna University Art Museum (although I have no concrete evidence – provenance - to support the age). The styles represented by Fig. 6, 7 & 8 are easy to reference to sub-groups, but all must have started with a "common ancestor" mask.

"In this fashion the carver is the generations link with the past. Carvers are not producers of passive copies but are the creators of works whose requirement of familiarity of style and form can be inventively modified by particularly talented artists.



Baule mask. African Masks of the Barbier Mueller Collection. Prestel Verlag Munich. 1998.

The carvers are also advocates of religious doctrine, theory, or practice and attempt to re-evaluate and restate the past based on newly acquired standards. This reflects revisionist art rather than objective copies of the western sense"

New constructs arise and exist in parallel, in some groups replacing, the older styles.

On 12 Jan 07 Alexander Bortolot looked at this from a different perspective. He made reference to the Makonde when he wrote:

"Novelty and invention are clearly appreciated by both sculptors and masquerade audiences, and Makonde artists find creative freedom when they carve masks for themselves, or for dance groups of which they are members. However, they also must satisfy their clients, who typically determine the style and subject matter of the masks they commission; sometimes patrons ask artists to carve masks in another artist's style. Thus you have a conflict between an artist's vision of himself as wholly original, and indigenous market forces that at times require him to conform to popular tastes".

What he did correctly assess is that this revisionist change is driving the western age hunt.

”In the West we have a similar tension between originality and conformity, but for somewhat different reasons: most dealers and collectors value conformity over originality, since in the absence of the artist's voice or identity they are forced to fall back upon connoisseurship and precedent to prove "authenticity" and determine value. This makes for a very conservative market that constantly reaffirms the same tired canon of African ‘masterpieces’”.

The Qualities of a “Saleable” Piece

In her book Four Dan Sculptures Continuity and Change, from the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, Barbara C. Johnson notes differences in the quality of the sculptures of three carvers of three generations. Her opinion is that the work of Zlan (two generations back) is amongst the finest the Dan have ever produced.

The carving of Zon (one generation back) is well executed, although it tends to be a little less fluid and somewhat repetitive. Dro’s work (the current generation) seems to be carved with less confidence and care, and his attention to detail is not as great.

“It seems that the main reason for the decline in quality relates to the changes in the system of patronage and prestige. Zlan carved what he considered to be “important” pieces for discerning, powerful chiefs or individuals in his culture who knew the traditional forms and their meanings, insisting upon the best. Zon, to some extent, and Dro, largely, carved for a new, external market. Many pieces were bought by traders to be resold to outsiders, or were sold directly to missionaries, Peace Corp volunteers, rubber plantation workers, or other foreigners. These people, who did not know the artistic tradition, were less demanding; they merely wanted souvenirs, not objects important to their station in life, as was true for the chiefs. Less work was required to produce a saleable piece for good money”.

Her text points out that ‘as the world changes, so changes much of the context, opportunities and motivations of artisans, craftspeople and traders’.

Lee Rubinstein in the African Art & Culture discussion group on 7th November 2007 carried this thought on in a modern social and commercial context…"the products of contemporary manufacture (ritual and commercial) do have a quite specific value and meaning. Many are primarily objects of/for trade and are intended to be revenue producing for the individuals trading them. They are created in response to those who purchase them and as such, their market value is directly linked to the system of value (monetary) that dominates the discourse of exchange now driving the traffic of cultural and artistic objects".

He went on to say "collectors and tourists who help drive the art and crafts industries and markets have precipitated these shifts of value from the ritual/religious/internal toward the commercial/monetary/external, reflecting changes in the economic, social and cultural geographies from which the objects arise and the increasingly necessary reliance on an external market for the objects produced. In regions where agricultural production and community structure have been de-stabilized and transformed by modern historical, political and environmental change, carvers and traders are simply participating in the market economy linked to the broader global economy which has displaced previously dominant systems of value. This is true also in more industrialized societies where populations who were previously artisans and craftspeople producing furniture, pottery, cloth, metal objects, glassware, etc., no longer find those economic opportunities as viable occupational or economic choices. We now more frequently buy [through individuals working for large conglomerate employers rather than local small businesses] globally produced and traded, mass-produced objects rather than locally produced, artisan-made objects".

Good examples of quality affected by patronage and prestige as well as the impact of tourists and collectors driving modern artistic traditions, can be seen in the two Dan masks in **Fig.10&10a**.

Fig.10 is a Dan Go Ge mask made of wood, horse hair, rope, nails, cowrie shells, burlap, cloth and kaolin. Its Western history started with Primal Art Source (Amitin and Attia Zouhir) in 1981, then involved a stint with the Ralph Proctor Gallery, Pittsburgh 1981-2002 and now resides in my collection.

The form, age and patination of the mask in **Fig. 10** suggests that it has gained status over the years as its owner has (or as it has been passed on from one owner to another). The quality of carving can be seen in the details - a patterned ridge in the middle of the forehead and the same patterns in a 'V' shaped formation at the outside of the eyes (both are well worn and smooth). The slit eyes show ancient remnants of kaolin. Many of these features are indicative of the Deangle mask but an elaborate plaited coiffure has been added to this piece – over the top of the already worn forehead and eye ridges – made of plaited horse or human hair and edged by tightly plaited rope that closely resembles the pattern of the carving.

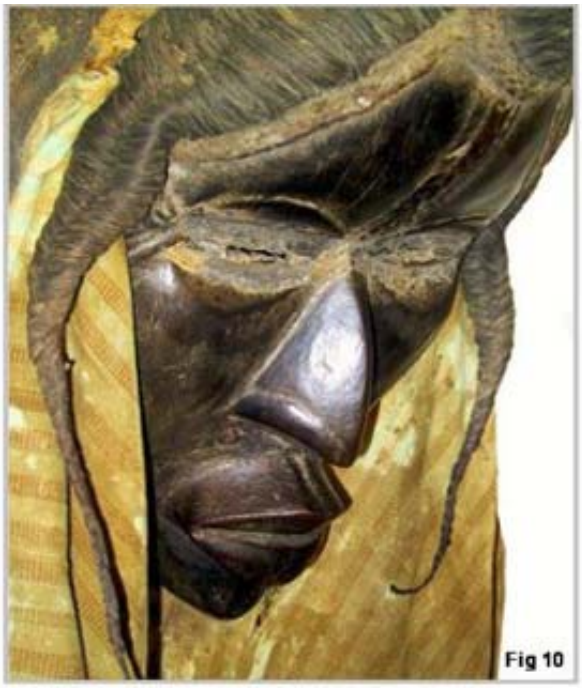


Fig.10&10a These two masks are good examples of quality and its relationship to changes in the system of patronage and prestige. The Dan GoGe mask from the Ivory Coast in **Fig.10** is an older ritual piece with a fine depth of character and well balanced execution, even though it has some interesting features, one of which is an Arabic nose, large and downward sweeping. The Dan Dea style mask in **Fig.10a** is a basic shape of contemporary manufacture, made for the tourist/collector market, and took little work to produce a saleable piece for good money. Both were purchased at similar times, both cost similar amounts to acquire, both were an important part of my African art education and both still reside in my collection.

On the other hand **Fig.10a** has been based on a Dea or simple entertainment mask. The mask is a basic shape of contemporary manufacture – the forehead still bears the scratch patterns of scouring by the carver, highlighted where the stain has infilled the scratches; softened cut marks are visible below the nose and lips; the forehead is lightened to a middle shade of brown, where the stain has not been deeply ingrained in the wood; the eyebrows above the eyes are simple cuts into the mask rather than being in relief; the bells on the chin are not very functional and make little noise – indicative of a revenue producing object made for sale and requiring less work.

As individual collectors and lovers of the African arts we cannot change the economic, cultural and social environments. But we can be informed and accountable for our own acquisitions. Or, alternately, uninformed and accountable for our own acquisitions.

Trading

Western collectors seem to have a habit of associating the values of traders they acquire from directly with the art itself - I loosely use the term “traders” as anyone acting as an intermediary, on-selling African art to a collector (final resting place of a collection). Sometimes there are few but often there are many in the chain linking the village to the collector’s home. It is interesting to briefly explore the difference, in western and African emphasis, between the “values” of an exchange.

There is a broad spectrum of trade in African art. At one end there are African traders in location (Africa) always carrying everything from poor tourist replicas through to beautifully recent ritual pieces mixed up together. The difference between them is the balance in numbers between craft, replica and ritual.

In my African experience the traders objective is unashamedly and openly “to make a sale”.

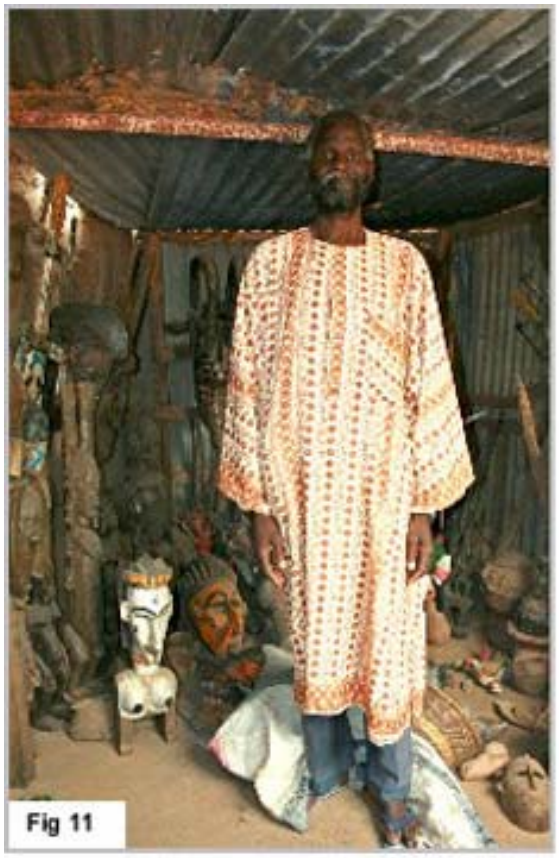


Fig.11 Kassim is a trader in Segou, Mali opposite the L'Auberge Hotel - a good area for bright Bambara pieces. Both ritual and craft items are mixed in together and given equal value by the vendors. I acquired this Bambara piece from him.

At the other end of the spectrum are the western traders – dealers, auction houses and galleries – that on the whole also seem to have faux works and ritual pieces mixed up together. The difference between these entities is once again the balance in numbers between craft, replica and ritual.

In my commercial experience the primary objective of these businesses is also to "make sales and drive revenue".

An African trader invites a buyer into an openly commercial environment ("I want to sell you something") and then, if the time is taken by both parties (even within a short timeframe), a level of social trust is borne whereby there can be open discussion about ritual and faux works (but ultimately the exchange is still driven by the dollar).

One of my favourite experiences was two days before I left Mali in 2007. I was doing the rounds of the Ngolonina markets in Bamako where I had identified one or two ritual pieces that I was interested in. I sat and spoke with many of the traders and after much conversation one was insistent that he showed me his stock at his house. After a quick assessment I thought I might as well add to my Mali experience, so I jumped on the back of his motorbike and held on while he zigzagged through the back streets of Bamako.

Now, I am an ex-army officer, 38 years old, 6ft 2, 190lbs, I have led mine clearance teams in Cambodia and I feel reasonably comfortable in unusual situations…but I realized I had no idea where I was, in streets that looked like the back-alleys of Baghdad.

Instead of nervousness I felt a sense of exhilaration as we reached his house and I made amazing discoveries over 5 rooms and 2 levels stacked to the roof beams with a huge variety of ritual and non-ritual pieces. I departed 3 hours later (on the back of the bike) with a hesian sack slung over my shoulder, ½ dozen pieces and a grin a mile wide.

From the beginning of the experience I'd had no expectation of social trust. But Westerners acquiring in a western environment expect a level of social trust, which is taken for granted in every-day transactions. That level of trust being that "I won't be ripped off or mislead in a consumer purchase". So the real difference is that when western traders misrepresent items, they do it in a social environment of commercial trust, and when it occurs it is often on a much grander scale – traders that buy faux works in wholesale lots, bulk ship them and represent them as authentic ritual works.

It is worthwhile to note that for every "backstreet Bamako" experience I had 20 others that turned out differently. It simply reinforced my own collecting philosophy of "don't have a level of expectation (in the West or in Africa), make informed judgments and accept the outcomes - good or bad".

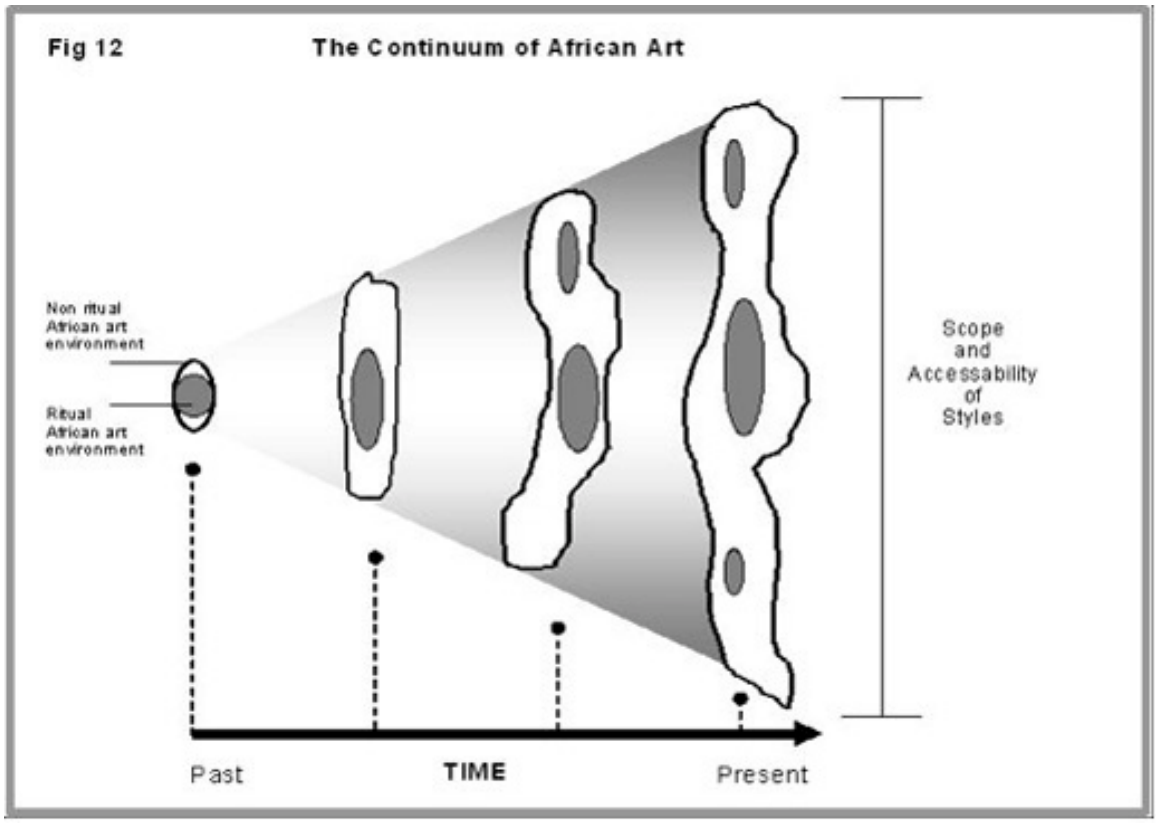
African Art As A Continuous Phenomenon

Lee Rubinstein summed up the issues of provenance, judgment of newer ritual objects from the continent on the basis of "age", "copyist and faux art and European paint on objects, in one of his final paragraphs from the African Art & Culture discussion group on 7th November 2007.

"We have the evolving conundrum (for many) of African art broadly defined, and the conceptual struggle for the world to understand Africa and her arts as a continuous phenomenon and as a sub-field of broader social, cultural and historical evolution".

I have tried to capture this “continuous phenomenon” diagrammatically in **Fig.12**.

At a time in the past, almost all African art was produced for ritual purpose. From the first point of contact with outside groups the scope (amount) of non-ritual art has increased, most significantly in the post colonization era. In recent times (especially in the last 50 years) the amount of both “faux tourist” and contemporary non-ritual art has expanded at an exponential rate as it has become more fashionable and available. This has driven production which in turn has driven demand.



Remember Lee’s previous comments? “Collectors and tourists who help drive the art and crafts industries and markets have precipitated these shifts of value from the ritual/religious/internal toward the commercial/monetary/external”

Fig.13 Chokwe Katoyo mask invented in the first decades of the XXth Century as a depiction of settlers and colonial administrators. Of course portraits are not flattering. In any case, such masks are linked to ancestral spirits and perform in the village. Wood, bark cloth, resin, leather, seed pods, buttons. Paul Rabut Collection via the Fernandez Leventhal Gallery Ltd NY to the SuagaCollection in 2001.

The "true" ritual art environment (styles, volume production and the rituals themselves) have remained fairly static comparative to non-ritual art, but there have been constant evolutions and innovations. For example the Chokwe Katoyo mask in **Fig.13** is a good example of the historical existence of non-ritual art that has entrenched itself over time and become ritualized. I acquired the Katoyo mask from the Paul Rabut collection. It was invented in the early 20th century ridiculing the "awkward" features and behaviours of Westerners, and represents a European. It is a caricature of "the other" and now falls into a ritual context.

As this discussion paper set out to compare differences in the way African art is valued, the place where a "caricature of awkward behaviours by Westerners" is manifest in the art itself seems a highly appropriate place to finish the discourse.

What this exercise has taught me is that the difference between "value" and "values" is only valid to the extent that any individual collector applies it.

The African art collector that applies "value" will forever be wasting energy espousing the virtues of provenance, criticizing newer ritual objects from the continent on the basis of "age", arguing "copyist art isn't real art" or stating that European paint on objects means that they are not authentic.

On the other hand, the African art lover that explores "values" will always be fueling their passion.

People that have contributed directly and/or indirectly to this discussion paper:

1. Lee Rubinstein: African Art internet discussion group
2. Veronique Martelliere: African Art internet discussion group
3. Rand: African Art internet discussion group www.randafricanart.com
4. Ann Porteous, Sidewalk Gallery. Tasmania: African Art internet discussion group www.sidewalkgallery.com.au
5. Alexander Bortolot: African Art internet discussion group
6. Boris Wastiau, Assoc Curator, Division of Ethnography. Royal Museum for Central African Art. Tervuren. Belgium.
7. Dr. William A. Emboden, F.L.S. “What is Provenance?”
8. John Russell, New York Times

Texts:

1. A History of African Art, Harry. N. Abrams Inc Publisher NY 2001.
2. African Masks of the Barbier Mueller Collection. Prestel Verlag Munich. 1998.
3. Four Dan Sculptures: Continuity & Change, Barbara C Johnson. The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco 1986.
4. Expressions of Cameroon Art, The Franklin Collection, Tamara Northern. Rembrandt Press. 1986.
5. University of Iowa, Art and Life in Africa Project and UIMA. Stanley Collection Database.
6. African Art, Western Eyes. Susan Vogel. Yale University Art Gallery. 1997.
7. The Tribal Arts of Africa, J.B. Bacquart. 1998.
8. African Sculpture Speaks. Ladislas Segy.1975.
9. African Art in the Cycle of Life. Roy Sieber and Roslyn Adele Walker. National Museum of African Art 1988.
10. Masks of Black Africa. Ladislas Segy. 1976