

Beyond Borders: Global Africa

UMMA -- August 11, 2018 - November 25, 2018

Cultural Exchange, Appropriation, and Hybridity

This unit considers the material, stylistic, and symbolic ‘appropriations’ evident in a number of the objects in *Beyond Borders: Global Africa*. Many of these objects invite viewers to consider the myriad frameworks within which practices of adopting and adapting occur and their place within debates concerning culture and identity. The *Chokwe chair* is modeled after a type of chair European explorers brought with them on their travels, while objects such as the *Prestige Stool*, *Oba’s Slippers* and *Timùtimù* (beaded foot cushion) display a mixture of materials and styles imported from outside the African continent (seed beads and brass tacks) and those found within.

At a symbolic level, the *Tabwa Twin Figure*, *Figure* from Northern Cameroon, *Kuba Box* and *Oba’s Slippers* all display symbols of colonial power and authority with the intent of appropriating such symbols as a means of subverting or resisting those power structures. The first three objects mentioned all make use of colonial coins, a monetary system that is inextricably linked to extractive agendas of imperial powers. However, within all of these objects, the coins are put to a very different purpose.

The *Oba’s Slippers* are adorned with a British crown; thus a symbol of British monarchical authority was successfully co-opted by a Yoruba ruler (yet also subversive because they were placed on his feet). The use of European clothing in the *Yombe Figure* functions in a similar way. The *Paket Kongo* is a manifestation of



Artist unrecorded, *Chokwe Chair* (1992/1.136)



Artist Unrecorded, *Oba’s slippers* (1997/1.307.1-2)



Artist Unrecorded Northern Cameroon *Figure* (1997/1.342)



Artist Unrecorded, *Yombe Seated Figure* (2005/1.186)



Artist unrecorded, *Chokwe Prestige Stool* (2005/1.204)



Possibly the Workshop of the Adesina family, *Beaded Foot Cushion* (1997/1.308)



Artist Unrecorded, *Tabwa Twin Figure* (1985/2.58)



Artist Unrecorded, *Paket Kongo* (Loan)



Houston Maludi, *La vie à Kinshasa II* (loan)



Serge Alain Nitegeka, *Colour & Form XVIII* (Loan)

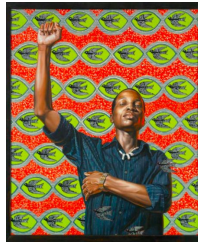


Chéri Samba, *Hommage aux Anciens Créateurs (A Tribute to Earlier Artists)* (loan)



Seydou Keita, *Untitled* 1952/1955 (Loan)

the material and religious adaptations that took place in North and South America as a result of the Transatlantic slave trade. Artworks like *Hommage aux Anciens Créateurs (A Tribute to Earlier Artists)* and *La Vie à Kinshasa II* consider the prior appropriations of African art by European artists like Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. This cycle of influence continues as Chéri Samba, Houston Maludi, Serge Alain Nitegeka, Kehinde Wiley and others, are also clearly referencing Western art traditions. Together, this selection highlights the hybrid qualities of artworks and how they act as records of moments of exchange, influence and encounter.



Kehinde Wiley, *On Top of the World* (Loan)



Artist Unrecorded, *Kuba Box* (1984/2.29)



Seydou Keita, *Untitled* 1958 (Loan)



Seydou Keita, *Untitled* 1956/57 (Loan)



Seydou Keita, *Untitled* 1949/51 (Loan)