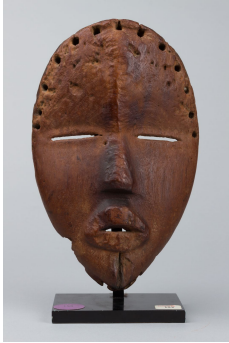


Beyond Borders: Global Africa

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

Gender

This unit focuses on gender with a particular emphasis on the experiences and representation of women from several African societies from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Many of these works consider the social and cultural boundaries that often get drawn around gender identity and how those boundaries can be at odds with a person's lived experience of that identity. The Dan, Chokwe, and Mende masks explore notions of ideal feminine beauty. The Chokwe mask was likely modeled after a particular woman and thus serves as a kind of portrait commemorating her beauty. The Mende mask is of further note as it is associated with one of the only female masking societies within Africa. Alison Saar's *Janus* draws inspiration from such masking traditions. The sculpture depicts a two-sided bust with the face of a woman on either side, suggesting themes of duality and fluidity as they relate to gender. Nandipha Mntambo's *Ukugenisa* considers the often restrictive roles societies prescribe to people despite the fluid nature of identity itself. In a similar vein, Wangechi Mutu's *A Bend in Her River* depicts a fantastical female body and considers notions of gender construction and their relationship to cultural and historical trauma, while ultimately seeking a transformation through new forms and narratives. Fabrice Monteiro's series explores the way a particular group of women, called *signares* (meaning married woman in Portuguese), successfully



Artist Unrecorded, Dan Mask (1995/2.22)



Artist Unrecorded, Mende Helmet Mask (Loan)



Nandipha Mntambo, *Ukugenisa* (Loan)



Artist Unrecorded, Chokwe Mask (2005/1.201)



Alison Saar, *Janus* (Loan)



Wangechi Mutu, *A Bend in her River* (Loan)



Fabrice Monteiro, *Signare ile de Goree 1* (Loan)

navigated Senegal's colonial system by forming marriage alliances with sailors, merchants, and soldiers. These women ultimately amassed a great deal of wealth, power, and independence which in some circumstances outlasted the marriages themselves. At the same time, these unions implicated the *signares* in the Transatlantic slave trade and the active stripping of agency and independence from those sold into it.



Fabrice Monteiro, *Signare ile de Goree 10* (Loan)