FOWLER AT FIFTY

Curriculum Resource Unit
for K-12 Teachers
Table of Content

**Fowler at Fifty Curriculum Resource Unit** ................................................................. 4

**From the Sepik River to Los Angeles: Art in Migration** .................................................. 6

**Double Fortune, Double Trouble: Art for Twins among the Yorùbá** ......................... 13

**Powerful Bodies: Zulu Arts of Personal Adornment** .................................................. 21

**Māori Cloaks, Māori Voices** ...................................................................................... 29

**The Peruvian 4-Selvaged Cloth: Ancient Threads/New Directions** ......................... 37

**New World Wunderkammer: A Project by Amalia Mesa-Bains** ................................. 44

**Chupícuar: The Natalie Wood Gift of Ancient Mexican Ceramics** ............................ 52

**From X to Why: A Museum Takes Shape** .................................................................... 60
Fowler at Fifty Curriculum Resource Unit

This curriculum resource unit is designed to accompany the suite of eight exhibitions, Fowler at Fifty, which celebrates the Museum's fiftieth anniversary. A lesson has been developed for each small exhibition, with emphasis on the background of the material, importance of the collection in the Fowler's vast holdings and its relationship to the Museum's history, and suggested activities to extend content to the classroom. Materials may be easily adapted to younger and/or older students. A page of images follows each lesson.

Fowler at Fifty
Fowler at Fifty celebrates the remarkable trajectory of the Fowler Museum’s growth over the last five decades. Conceived as a suite of eight unique exhibitions—presented in both the Getty Trust and Lucas Family Galleries—it honors the stunning achievements of the Museum, which was founded in 1963 by former UCLA chancellor Franklin D. Murphy. Each exhibition features a particular strength of the Museum’s now-vast holdings, and each takes a distinctive curatorial approach or engages an artist’s perspective. Close to a thousand works of art are presented, many exhibited here for the first time.

Since its inception—when it housed only about three thousand works that had been formerly dispersed across the UCLA campus—the Fowler has actively increased its holdings through gifts, purchases, and a vigorous program of field collecting associated with research and exhibition development. Today, the Fowler’s global collections, emphasizing the arts of Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the indigenous Americas, number over 120,000 objects. The largest addition came in the form of a transformational gift from the Wellcome Trust in London in 1964.

Approximately thirty thousand objects amassed by pharmaceutical entrepreneur and art collector Sir Henry Wellcome (1853–1936) were donated to the new Museum. This early gift included stunning works from Africa, Melanesia, Polynesia, Indonesia, the Northwest Coast of North America, and South America, all areas of strength in the Fowler’s current collections. Four of the five exhibitions in the Getty Gallery highlight key subcollections from these regions, and the fifth looks at how the Fowler’s earliest acquisitions prefigured the directions the Museum has taken in building its holdings. Two of the three exhibitions in the Lucas Family Gallery highlight notable holdings of ancient art from Mexico and Peru, and the third is an artist’s rendition of the dramatic mixing and collision of cultures in the history of the Americas, drawing on the Fowler’s diverse collections from the indigenous Americas, Africa, and Europe.
Together the eight anniversary exhibitions reveal the depth, breadth, range, and quality of the Museum’s collections. The ideas and approaches engaged in each communicate just what an institution can do with such expansive resources. *Fowler at Fifty* contributes to global knowledge and cross-cultural understanding at the same time that it attests to the power of multiple voices and viewpoints and engenders an appreciation of local artistry and ingenuity—extending from the deep past to the present moment. On the occasion of this milestone, the Fowler underscores its long-held conviction that artworks are never static in meaning or in value but are instead dynamic resources, subject to reevaluation, reinterpretation, and reconsideration over time.

Credit for the rich textures of this unit of study must be given to Lyn Avins, curriculum consultant for the Fowler Museum. Over many years Lyn has been instrumental in the development of over ten curricula, each presented to expand teachers' and students' access to Fowler exhibitions. The Museum is especially grateful to her for her long engagement with the Museum's educational offerings. Thanks to Agnes Stauber for her assistance in the preparation of these materials for the Web and to the UCLA Dream Fund for its generous support of K-12 and family programs and resources.
Of the 4,500 items from the island of New Guinea in the Fowler Museum collections today, three-quarters were acquired between 1963 and 1969. Most came not from the huge Wellcome gift but instead from a large number of individual donors who had become collectors of art of the Pacific.

The works—masks, figures, shields, architectural elements, domestic and ritual objects—represent the output of the best carvers in New Guinea, where some works of art served the complex ceremonies basic to village life and each village had its own distinctive style.

The people in the villages along the Sepik River and its tributaries were the most active carvers in New Guinea. They carved for ritual use and for sale. Some works of art served dual purposes—used in rituals, they were also later sold when replacements are made.

The Sepik River itself is one of the world’s great meandering rivers, spreading over seven hundred miles of the island. For many people of New Guinea it was the source of food, their avenue of transport, and the center of their daily and ceremonial life. There were villages all along the Sepik and its tributaries, some more isolated than others.

Several factors, both here and in distant New Guinea, contributed to the surge of so-called “primitive” art to Southern California. Since the 1960s the production of ritual art has gone through major changes. The western world discovered the beauty of New Guinea art, declared by some to be "exotic." Art production, which for villagers was an integral part of daily and ritual art, became the source of village income and commercialism.

Before World War II, early arrivals to New Guinea were mainly missionaries and labor recruiters. In the 1950s traders began exporting Sepik art on a commercial scale. Production at first remained largely in the hands of the most skilled artists—men who often continued to make objects for ritual use as well as for sale. By the 1960s, with an increasing number of tour boats with their ever-increasing numbers of foreign visitors,
there followed greater production of works of art solely for the market. Some buyers brought works home in great quantity.

As skilled island artists continued to make pieces for community use, at the same time they made very similar items intended for sale. Although it is difficult to be sure of the initial or intended use of the works, it is thought that the function of most of the exhibited works was ritual or ceremonial. Works on view include figures of clan ancestor spirits such as Ngwaalndu who is revered as founder of a clan and also the receptacle of the spirits of the clan’s deceased. Other figures represent spirits who assure success in farming, hunting, and warfare. Large masquerade costumes with their spirit masks are thought to have been used primarily at male initiation ceremonies or at ceremonies designed to address a perceived imbalance with the spiritual world—for example, when crops have failed or people have died unexpectedly. In these cases, the spirits are honored in order to regain their favor. Sharks, crocodiles, and other animal images and figures represent totemic spirits.

Some works in the exhibition were components of architecture. The door panel is from the Telefolmin peoples who live in the highlands near the headwaters of the Sepik, about 800 miles from the coast. Due to the remoteness of the location, the art trade came somewhat later to this region compared to the middle and lower Sepik. Other objects such as bowls, pigment containers, and suspension hooks (which are hung from rafters to hold items in the almost furniture-less houses) were among more basic household items. Sepik shields became stock items in the art trade by the late 1960s. In some villages almost every adult male was engaged in making them, and dealers bought them in quantity. The shield in the exhibition, however, predates those developments and is an older work made with traditional tools. While skill in carving was appreciated, local people regarded the painting of the design as the more important act.

During the important yam-harvest festival large yams, specially grown by the men of the community, are decorated with feathers, shell ornaments, and cloaks of cassowary skins. Each one is further anthropomorphized with masks and they are displayed around large bins of yams constructed in the ceremonial house. Each figure or yina bears a name and thus represents an individual named spirit. Initiated adult men sing, dance, and play musical instruments throughout the night until dawn. At the conclusion, the yina are returned to secreted locations in the bush.
In most of the ritual works, architectural elements, and utilitarian objects, the human form predominates. Faces are shown with exaggerated noses and flowing lines in the form of spirals, and interlocking scrolls meander as does the Sepik River itself.

**New Guinea Collections in the West**

Today the Fowler Museum frequently receives calls from owners of objects brought home from New Guinea. Rarely are these accepted because the Museum already has many similar items, usually of higher quality. The finest art from the Sepik continues to bring high prices at international art sales, but most of these pieces have long been out of their homeland. New Guinea artists continue to invest their own ritual arts with great creativity, but at the same time many artists are successfully entering the world of international contemporary art.

Making art, once a part-time activity of only the most skilled, has become a means of livelihood for the many. Choices in style and motif are often based on assumptions about what will appeal to foreign buyers.

Of course, this was not always the case. Early collectors of New Guinea art found themselves on the island typically involved in missionary work to bring the native population to Christianity, as plantation owners, or on business ventures taking advantage of the local natural/mineral and human resources. They collected the works as examples of “primitive” art of the “primitive” people who produced it.

By the 1950s traders began exporting art goods on a commercial scale and some of the work came to the Museum. One of those who added to the Fowler Museum Sepik collection were UCLA Professor George Kennedy who made annual trips in the sixties. Among the many works he gave to the Fowler, some are part of this exhibition: the painting on sago palm spathe (X63.642), the nineteenth-century figures (X64.599) and (X64.715), and others including clan ancestor figures, dance ornaments and wands, and architectural elements, have been seen in previous exhibitions.

By 1960 more of the output of New Guinea artists was produced for tourists, willing and eager to buy. One tourist/collector in the sixties was Morton “Buster” May, head of the May Company Department Stores. He bought objects of high quality, and also set up a special boutique at its Wilshire Boulevard location to sell inexpensive tourist art from
New Guinea. The Museum received donated pieces from May’s personal collection, but at one point also purchased materials that bore May Company price tags from the store.

Nearly a half-century after the first wave of popularity of the art in Los Angeles, high quality items continue to be sold and resold among dealers and their clients in America, Europe, and Australia.

Of course many fine works of art never left New Guinea. In the mostly tropical areas, storage and preservation is extremely difficult with humidity, fire, floods and termites taking their toll. Some of the works the Museum does have had been stored between usages in the ceremonial houses and in caves. In the case of the Ewa peoples of the Upper Karawari River who do not have ceremonial houses, carvings are hidden in recesses high in the face of limestone cliffs.

**Suggested Activities**

1a. Ask students if they have ever brought back from a vacation something that later they displayed, wore, or even just kept in a drawer. Does it suggest memories of that visit? Was the item made and sold for that purpose? Under what circumstances was the item obtained? Was it found on a beach, was it a gift to the student, did he or she purchase it? If the student selected it, what reasons played in his or her selection? Discuss souvenirs and memories, and make it the subject of a writing activity. If students can, have them bring their souvenirs in to show the class.

b. Do some of the personal or family items that the students display in their homes come from places other than the United States? Do some evoke the former homes of the student or his or her family? Again, honor these with a discussion of memories and meanings and have students write about them. A map study would be appropriate here also.

2. Let the class know that they will be learning about the significance of items that people brought back from Papua New Guinea. Perhaps you have already visited the exhibition and they have seen these items first hand. Among the many souvenirs and gifts brought by travelers, traders, and dealers are objects that had been used in daily living and in rituals that call upon the spirits. There are shields, architectural fragments, musical instruments, containers, hooks, bridewealth objects, masquerade components,

*From the Sepik River to Los Angeles: Art in Migration*
and headrests. Many paintings, masks, figures, and images on pieces represent ancestor spirit figures who, if pleased, insure successful farming, hunting, and warfare. Why did they become so popular with people who don’t live near the Sepik River?

3a. Ask students how the geography of a region might be reflected in its art? Surely the resources available would influence what is created. What do they know of the materials available in Papua New Guinea? (shell, wood, fiber, clay)

b. The presence of animals certainly is determined by geographic circumstance. Have students notice the representation of animals in Sepik River art where sharks, crocodiles, and other animal images and figures represent powerful spirits. Students can investigate animals as totemic figures in many cultures. Let them each choose an animal whose characteristics make a specific meaningful connection in their own lives. Written, oral, or art assignments can be components.

c. The primary geographic element is the river itself. Its meandering may be reflected in Sepik River art in the swirling lines that outline figures (often in multiple) and fill in spaces. Students can create a meandering line themselves with a writing or drawing tool, or with malleable wire. You might first have them draw as many kinds of lines they can think of (i.e., thick, thin, dotted, straight, curved, jagged, etc.) Did they come up with meandering on their own?

d. At the Museum, notice the textile works of Peruvian weavers who, it is thought, depicted their surrounding mountains in stepped patterns in their cloth. Compare those works to Sepik works whose incised and painted lines may have referenced the flowing, curving river about them. As students notice their surroundings, what outlines and patterns would they draw in their own works?

e. The remote living situation, again a factor of geography, plays a role in Sepik art. Before Europeans settled in their homeland the people living in the Sepik region had developed artistic traditions distinctively their own. There was, in addition, a variance in styles and forms among the different groups of this region who were also isolated from each other. Ask the students, who today have virtual and vast global connections, how these global contacts might affect their own sense of style in dress and other ways.
f. Give students a written assignment responding to the question, “In what ways does our environment shape the way we live?” Have them share responses in class discussions.

4. Yams are a basic food for the people of Papua New Guinea and they are the focus of elaborate yam harvest ceremonies. There are many rituals associated with the planting, growing, and harvesting of yams. These culminate at harvest festivals with a ritual display in ceremonial houses of the enormous yams that men have nurtured through their growth. (Women grow ordinary yams for food.) The yams are given “faces” by placing masks on them and they are decorated with additional costume items. Students can think about the practice and consider harvest rituals in cultures with which they have familiarity.

5. When the May Company department store offered New Guinea art for sale, they may have placed advertisements to announce the offering. Have students produce an advertisement about the sale for print media with a descriptive newspaper or a poster, a dramatic radio commercial, or a television web site.

6. Trace the route of a yam mask or other object in the exhibition from a Sepik village maker to the Fowler Museum.
From the Sepik River to Los Angeles: Art in Migration

For more information, please contact: Stacey Ravel Abarbanel, Director of External Affairs, 310/825-4288, staceyra@arts.ucla.edu

Figure. Abelam peoples, Maprik District, East Sepik Province; late 19th century; wood; H: 165 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X64.599, gift of Dr. and Mrs. George Kennedy.

Female figure. Murik Lakes, Coastal Sepik region, East Sepik Province; 19th century or earlier; wood; H: 70 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X64.715, gift of Dr. and Mrs. George Kennedy.

Figure for yam-harvest ritual (yina). Kwoma peoples, Ambunti Mountains, Middle Sepik, East Sepik Province; circa 1920s; wood, pigment; H: 115.5 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X64.843, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hursley.

Painting. Iatmul peoples, Tambanum village, Middle Sepik River, East Sepik Province; early or mid 20th century; sago palm (Metroxylon sagu) spathe, pigment, wood, bamboo, plant fiber; early or mid-20th century; l: 242.5 cm. Fowler Museum X63.642, gift of Dr. and Mrs. George Kennedy.
Twins (*ibeji*) born to the Yorùbá peoples in Nigeria, are considered special and in possession of extraordinary powers. It is believed they are born with an ability to bring good fortune to those who honor them properly and therefore twins command special respect throughout their lives and after. Sadly in this country where the incidence of twin births is one of the highest in the world the early departure of one or both twins is not uncommon.

The Yorùbá see a twin’s passing as resulting from one of various forces that threaten social equilibrium, a concern not only to the living, but also to the ancestors who are invoked to prevent such circumstances in the future. Upon the passing of one or both twins, grieving parents consult an Ifá diviner to learn how to prevent further tragedy. The diviner, in turn may prescribe that a memorial figure (*ère ibeji*) be carved to represent the departed twin and he or she, together with the parents, selects a sculptor to carve the figure.

When the *ère ibeji* is finished, the family lavishes attention on it. Faithful care is given by the mother and later by the surviving twin. It is dyed, oiled, rubbed, and bathed. The face of the figure is washed with water or sugarcane fiber, and may be rubbed with a cloth and indigo or laundry bluing. It is dressed, offered favorite foods, danced, serenaded, rocked to sleep, and awakened in the morning. The memorial is wrapped in the mother’s garment and decorated with expensive jewelry, money, and beads. Its elaborate hairstyle and beaded jewelry are marks of the *ibeji’s* honored status. Such acts affirm the family’s devotion, respect, and love for the spirit of the departed sacred child and help to ensure that subsequent children may be born and live long, productive lives.

Many factors enter into the selection of the artist chosen to carve the *ibeji*. Ideally he (traditionally, Yorùbá carvers are male) will present himself with the desired qualities of patience, composure, sociability, keen observation, good visual memory and focus. Young artists training to become master-carvers are expected to cultivate these traits at the same time that they develop the “body-knowledge” necessary to carve evocative forms that capture the essence of a subject.
The training process, or apprenticeship, lasts from five to ten years. The “body-knowledge” comes from doing, that is sensing and effectively using the weight and balance of tools (ax, adze, and knife) in order to carve effortlessly and precisely. The four main stages of the carving process are

- Establishing the major volumes, proportions, or divisions of the work (head, torso, legs, base)
- Defining subdivisions (coiffure, face, arms, feet, etc.)
- Refining surfaces (rounding and generally smoothing)
- Incising linear surface details (facial features, coiffure, etc.) with precise knifework.

The beginning work of an apprentice would include simple half-figure dolls without limbs called *ọmọlángidi* (children of wood). These are playthings (and training objects) for young girls, who carry them on their backs secured by a baby wrapper. Their flat torsos allow them to rest comfortably against the child’s back. Grieving parents without enough resources to employ a master carver to produce an *ère ibejì* may commission an *ọmọlángidi* as a substitute. It, as well as more contemporary substitutes such as plastic dolls, or even photographs, receives the same amount and level of care as do the more refined *ère ibejì* produced by master carvers.

After a long apprenticeship and years of increasingly challenging work, some sculptors earn widespread reputations for excellence that lead to major commissions: verandah posts for palace courtyards, massive palace doors, monumental headdresses and masks, and exquisite dolls and *ibejì*. Their work is easily discernible from that of apprentices, and among these masterworks can be seen regional differences with each region exhibiting certain style preferences. Furthermore, within a region there is enormous variety and creativity. The large collection held by the Fowler Museum at UCLA displays these regional distinctions along with individual artists’ style and innovative divergences.

One distinction is found in the southern part of Yorùbá homeland where the arms of an *ibejì* are positioned away from torsos or flare outward and attach at the hips. This allows for the addition of beads and other ornaments. Probably in response to colonial and Christian influence, figures may be carved wearing clothing including shorts, jackets, trousers, and shoes.
In the twentieth century, in response to false accusations of “idolatry” and growing pressures from followers of Christianity and Islam, families of departed twins began to alter their religious practices and no longer had figures carved to represent the lost twins. They substituted for the sculptures diptych photographs, minimally carved cylinders, or plastic dolls. Many families sold their carved ère íbejì, which then entered the art markets of Africa, Europe, and the United States. Many of the Fowler Museum holdings were obtained by collectors as part of this change.

Yorùbá devotions to twins did not cease, however. Material forms representing immaterial spirits, memorial figures can be used, repaired, discarded, sold, or replaced by something else. The outer, visible forms of faith may have changed but not the enduring, deeply held belief in the sacredness of twins.

**Yorùbá Collections at the Fowler Museum**

The powerful concept of “twoness” in Yorùbá art and thought reflects philosophies concerning the cosmos and society: world/otherworld, exterior visibility/interior visibility, social/spiritual matters, and male/female, according to Henry John Drewal, curator of the exhibition, *Double Fortune, Double Trouble: Art for Twins among the Yorùbá*.

Here are showcased over 250 íbejì, special and sacred twin memorial figures. Also shown are other Yorùbá art forms that embody the notion of “twoness:” including staffs of Yorùbá orisa or deities Èṣù/Elègbárá, orisa of the crossroads and duality, and Sàngó, orisa of thunder and lightning who is closely associated with the reverence for twins. Duality is the essence of Gèlèdè masqueraders who wear masks and headdresses often composed of two basic units: idealized, calm, female faces and superstructures depicting events and comical situations. It is men who dance the masquerade wearing these figurative forms.

Dr. Drewal continues, “The themes of doubling, duality, and complementarity are perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the Yorùbá regard for twins.” This exhibition of íbejì demonstrates this duality as it also introduces ideas of regional style differences and apprenticeship and mastery of the carvers. The large number of íbejì in the Fowler collection gives to students rare opportunities for first-hand comparisons, wide-reaching research, and welcomed inspiration.
As the Fowler Museum at UCLA was established on a university campus, one of its stated goals addressed its importance as an educational resource. The Museum continues to meet this goal, acting as a teaching tool for students from K-12 schools, universities, and post-graduate endeavors, along with the general public interested in global arts.

The early acquisition of large numbers of Yorùbá materials from the Ralph B. Lloyd Foundations, from Mr. and Mrs. W. Thomas Davis, and from the Wellcome Collection provided the Museum with one of the major Yorùbá collections in this hemisphere. The current exhibition is not the first to present facets of the Yorùbá culture to Los Angeles. It was an early exhibition (1971), *Black Gods and Kings: Yorùbá Art at UCLA*, that helped donor Mary Ruiz decide to donate her collection of 226 ọ̀rọ̀-lẹ́ẹ̀ to the Fowler. About 20,000 school children came to the campus to see the exhibition and participate in the activities.

Art of the Yorùbá peoples is also represented in *Intersections: World Arts, Local Lives*, the Fowler’s long-term exhibition; has been featured in the Fowler in Focus gallery, a rotating exhibition space within *Intersections*; and as a component of several other Africa-oriented exhibitions.

For some of the exhibitions, the Fowler Museum produced Curricular Resource Units for K-12 teachers, including one on the use of what the West might call “dolls,” *Isn’t S/He a Doll? Ritual and Play in African Sculpture*, 1997, and for the Yorùbá centered exhibition *Beads, Body, and Soul: Art and Light in the Yorùbá Universe*, 1998. Public and professional programs, seminars, lectures, hands-on workshops, school visits, publications, music, and film screenings—generally from the perspectives of the cultures and communities being represented—enhance understanding and enrich attendees with a wide spectrum of goals.

*Double Fortune, Double Trouble: Art for Twins among the Yorùbá*
Suggested Activities

Twins in Yorùbáland are connected to powerful deities in the Yorùbá pantheon and to rituals related to them.

1a. Èṣù/Èlégbárá
Students should investigate Èṣù/Èlégbárá, the orisa who has two names and is the deity of the crossroads where decisions are made. He is involved with dualities, beginnings, travelers, fertility, and death. He is said to be everywhere, opens and closes all doors, and shows multiple possibilities for our journey.

Pose the following question to your students: If you were looking for a guide to help you make decisions, what attributes would you want him or her to have? Give them opportunities to consider the above before adding the following:

If you were relying on Èṣù/Èlégbárá it might be important for you to know that he is also known as a trickster. How might that affect your decision-making? Write a short story about coming to a crossroads, calling upon a guide, and discovering him or her to be a trickster.

Students can recall or research other tricksters they have encountered in their reading. Tricksters appear in the stories of many, or most, cultures.

1b. Gẹlẹdẹ
The Yorùbá Gẹlẹdẹ masquerade is connected to twins and twoness. Pairs of men dance together, masqueraded as women. They aim to amuse and placate the “Mothers,” who include elder women, female ancestors, and deities. Their costume includes a headdress sometimes composed of two parts. The base takes the form of a human head with a serene face, typically female and brightly painted. The upper half of the headdress is seemingly unrelated to the lower and expresses motifs of chaos and turmoil, making a comment on social concerns and ills of the community or the world.

Students can make a drawing of a Gẹlẹdẹ headdress. After drawing a placid, calm woman’s face as the base of a mask, each student should design its superstructure around a social issue or current event pertinent to the student’s world. These may include issues of ecology, education, politics, or personal relations. How will the composed, cool, simply drawn face contrast with the busy, chaotic upper part of the mask? What message does the duality convey?

_Double Fortune, Double Trouble: Art for Twins among the Yorùbá_
2. Twins in other parts of the world also command attention. As students look for the significance of twins in other traditions, they will encounter, among others, works in Greek mythology, in Shakespeare’s drama, and in the Maya creation myth, the Popol Vuh.

3. Ōmolángidi ("child[ren] of wood" dolls) become teaching tools when Yorùbá children care for them. (The ère ībejì are not dolls and not played with by children.) Dolls across culture promote socialization and perpetuate the history and teachings of many cultures. Japanese children display a miniature court of dolls for exhibition on Girls’ Day, play with Daruma dolls for good luck, and set paper dolls afloat to carry away bad fortune as reminders of Shinto cleansing practices. Christians in many parts of the world honor the Holy Family with crèches and doll figures in observance of Christmas. Katsina dolls instruct children in the ways of Hopi tradition and belief. And as children everywhere play with dolls and their counterpart action figures, they are learning and imitating actions of older people in their own world. Many books celebrate this widespread presence of dolls. You can ask for students to collect these, to compare two or three, or to write a fictional or true account of their own.

   a. Let students recall the importance or significance of dolls and action figures in their own lives. They can bring to class the dolls that are or were important to them. It may be that the dolls are traditional in their own families, or they may play roles in, or be reminders of, their religious traditions.

   b. Students might create a doll (female, male, as baby or adult) using available materials and lots of creativity. Clay, fabric, paper, metal, found objects, wire, boxes, soap, discarded kitchen objects—any material can be transformed into a doll.

4. As students consider the plastic dolls replacing the carved ībejì, you can introduce the subject of loss of the individually created works of arts, a present-day reality. It is important, though, that this discussion not be presented through a negative lens. Change is an essential and ever present aspect of the ongoing art traditions. Among the issues that may arise are reasons for loss of a traditional art: the availability and appeal of commercially made goods, the life and death of fads and trends, desires to have possessions like those of friends, religious or civic influences, always-present advertising
to influence buying, artists not paid enough to practice their art, ready availability and choices in mass-produced substitutes. Another issue to address are the feelings of young people in continuing the work of their elders.
Double Fortune, Double Trouble: Art for Twins Among the Yoruba

For more information, please contact: Stacey Ravel Abarbanel, Director of External Affairs, 310/825-4288, staceyra@arts.ucla.edu


The manner in which a person adorns himself or herself reflects the feelings, interests, affiliations, and resources of the wearer. This has been true over time and this is true throughout the world. The means and modes of adornment, however, differ widely. In nineteenth-century southern Africa, highly individualized arts of personal adornment were given increased attention by isi-Zulu-speakers, people now called “the Zulu.”

Reviewing history of the area helps explain the increased attention given in the nineteenth century by the Zulu to their personal adornment.

Traditionally the Zulu had been organized in small chieftaincies. Through a combination of cooperative and violent actions, warrior-chief Shaka Zulu (circa 1787–1828) consolidated many of these groups into the Zulu Kingdom in the early nineteenth century. By this time there was a sizeable European population in southern Africa with British, Portuguese, and Dutch settlements throughout. There were frequent confrontations—particularly between the Dutch and the British—over issues of land, sovereignty and commercial rights, and slavery. As the British colonial presence increased, so did their desire to control the entire southern part of Africa. When the British proclaimed areas of the Zulu Kingdom to be a British colony in 1843, the Zulu kingdom resisted. Among the consequences was restricted importation and circulation of foreign goods.

At the same time, in the newly formed British Colony of Natal, people had freer access to imported materials and ideas and more readily incorporated these influences into their art. KwaZulu (or Zululand) remained independent until 1879 with the cessation of the Anglo-Zulu War. The annexation of the Zulu Kingdom to Natal Colony took place eighteen years later.

With the nineteenth century’s expanded cross-cultural exchanges and the exposure and access to new materials, arts of the Zulu people flowered. Continuing long traditions, men and women, women excelled at beadwork and basket making, and Zulu men were known for their artistry as wood carvers and for the objects they made out of animal skins.
Personal objects worn on or carried around the body were made with considerable aesthetic investment and they served to announce the wearer’s status and identity. As is true in almost every culture throughout the world, the personal objects associated with an individual are enhancements—both of a physical and metaphorical nature. Zulu men might have carried two or three exquisitely carved staffs and clubs at a time. Staffs, longer than clubs, have a greater variety of design elements. These prized possessions might also have been carried by women on ceremonial occasions. Both staffs and clubs required great technical skill and aesthetic sensibility on the part of artists, who worked with both indigenous and foreign materials.

Intimate objects like ivory hairpins and snuff spoons were worn in elaborate hairstyles; beautifully crafted snuff bottles were worn against the body; and they and other intimate objects were often attached to belts, necklaces, aprons, ears, and hair. These small treasures were intricately made of horn, bone, ivory, metal, wood, beads, wire, gourds, and shells.

Snuff, a smokeless tobacco, was widely used by isiZulu speakers, and was used as an offering to contact one’s ancestors. Artists carved small vessels to contain the snuff, and incorporated spaces in the heads of carved clubs to store the product.

Beadwork was quickly adopted by isi-Zulu speakers and both children and adults wore as much beadwork as they could make or afford with a wealthy woman sometimes wearing ten pounds of beadwork at a time. Women made items for themselves and their beaux: the more beads a young man had, the greater his prestige as a potential marriage partner.

The intricately sewn, jewel-colored beadwork accentuated bodily “zones of power” so that necklaces drew attention to the head, beaded fringes and belts highlighted the reproductive organs, and bracelets and anklets emphasized the hands and feet. Powerful Bodies: Zulu Arts of Personal Adornment includes seventy-nine fine examples of such objects, often imbued with the physical traces of their former users.
African Art at the Fowler Museum

The fluorescence of arts of personal adornment among isi-Zulu-speakers, now called “the Zulu,” took place in southern Africa in the late nineteenth century. At the same time objects from Africa were entering the collections of individuals and families, and via those, into the collections of United States museums—both natural history museums and art museums.

In the art museums, objects were displayed with aesthetic purposes in mind. Pieces were usually placed out of context so that intricately carved masks were seen without their essential co-components of ritual: costumes and perhaps musical instruments. They were placed to be seen and visually admired as works of art. Museums of natural history, in the same time frame, were displaying African objects as artifacts, the study of anthropologists and archaeologists. Ethnographic museums continued the process with displays of the material culture of non-Western peoples, often labeled as “primitive” or “tribal.”

The Fowler Museum served as a bridge, no longer dwelling on the differences that placed some categories of artistic production over others. The Fowler created a niche for itself, positioned between the usual territories of “art museums” and “ethnographic museums.” With a goal of consolidating the various collections of non-Western art and artifacts on UCLA’s campus, it has grown into a leading national institution as anthropologists have renewed their interest in visual culture and metropolitan art museums have increased their presentation of non-Western arts. By focusing on “cultural history” the Fowler does not segment into specific disciplines such as art history, archaeology, and ethnography.

In the United States early museum collections of African art (from about the 1880s) demonstrated the interest of explorers and artists. Since its beginning the Fowler Museum has presented its African holdings within their broader social and cultural contexts, and demonstrated that a key mandate of its mission is to educate diverse audiences about the scope, depth, and dynamism of African expressive culture. These goals were reiterated by Marla C. Berns, Mary Nooter Roberts, and Doran H. Ross in their chapter in the volume, Representing Africa in American Art Museums, edited by Berzock and Clarke (2011, University of Washington Press). Its African collections now number approximately thirty thousand objects and are among the largest and most diverse in the United States. Among these are works from most regions of the continent; the most extensive collections of African textiles, utilitarian arts, and popular urban arts,
and the masks and figurative sculptures that often define African art in the public and academic worlds.

Noteworthy exhibitions devoted to African art and culture include the first one in 1963 on Balega and Other Tribal Arts from the Congo. Subsequent exhibitions include Black Gods and Kings, 1971; The Arts of Ghana, 1977; Igbo Arts: Community and Cosmos, 1984; The Essential Gourd: Art and History in Northeastern Nigeria, 1986; Wrapped in Pride; Ghanaian Kente and African American Identity, 1998; Isn’t S/He a Doll? Play and Ritual in African Sculpture, 1996; Ways of the Rivers: Arts and Environment of the Niger Delta, 2002; A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal, 2003; Art of Being Tuareg: Sahara Nomads in a Modern World, 2006; and Central Nigeria Unmasked: Arts of the Benue River Valley, 2012. Most were accompanied by major publications based on original field research by UCLA scholars and students and by leading scholars from other institutions. Long-time Fowler supporters and patrons, Jay and Deborah Last, have been instrumental in building the Museum's collection of arts of the Zulu, as well as the arts of the Lega peoples of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The current exhibition, Powerful Bodies: Zulu Arts of Personal Adornment deals with articles of clothing and accessories and their roles in displaying personal prestige and power. An extension of this topic comprises part of Intersections: World Arts, Local Lives, Fowler’s exhibition from the permanent collection, Lesson 16: Status and Prestige: A Wall of Status and Prestige, Africa, Asia, and the Americas can be accessed online.
Suggested Activities

1. This exhibition has introduced the personal adornments favored by Isi-Zulu speakers of southern Africa in the nineteenth century. Let’s now consider the personal adornment practices of young people in the twenty-first century United States. Present the following questions: How do we adorn ourselves? Do the accessories we use convey any message? How can they reflect feelings? Display interests? Announce affiliations? What part do “resources” play—financial and personal?

What influences whether a “trend” in adornment takes hold among a group? What (or who) determines if a trend is no longer popular?

Name some possible problems that can arise because of adornment choices. Consider pertinent environments and conditions such as financial, parental, school authority, and peer group dynamics.

2. The Zulu often carried items of personal use on their person in containers that then became part of their personal adornment. The containers made use of gourds, horns, reed, carved bone, and wood and were often decorated with beads and woven wire. Often they were attached to elaborate belts, woven or constructed of beads. They were also incorporated into the carved staffs that extended the wearer both physically and metaphorically.

We are apt to carry such items in pockets, purses, and backpacks. Students can design and make a container for something they wish to keep close, wearing that container as a part of clothing embellishment. Likely objects to go into those containers are cosmetics, cell phones, notebooks, etc.

3. Staffs, sticks, and clubs—there are over seventy-five Zulu terms for these specially shaped pieces of wood that were used for walking, dancing, hunting, combat, and defense against people, wild animals, and snakes. Not only utilitarian, these pieces denoted status, power, and group identities. Read the fifth paragraph in the introductory statement above and then give the class opportunities to research the subject via books or Internet. Before their Museum visit, tell the students that clubs are shorter than staffs, might have elaborately carved heads or metal studs, and could be used for striking enemies or thrown at animals during hunting. Long staffs were associated
with status and were made to visibly add to the height of the carrier. They were probably too long to be a good stick to enable walking. Women and younger men carried short staffs with heads carved in a large variety of shapes and often with incorporated snuffboxes. Staffs with figures in Zulu garb were carved in response to the interests of European colonists. Students should select two of the pieces to look at closely when they are at the Museum, read the accompanying label copy, and answer the pertinent questions below for each object. An alternative procedure, if not on a museum visit, is to select one of the staffs included in the page of images.

   a. What can you find out by looking closely at the object?
   b. What is it and what was it used for?
   c. Can you describe it?
   d. How big is it?
   e. What is it made of?
   f. How was it made?
   g. How is it decorated?
   h. Does the design suit its purpose?
   i. What does it tell you about the maker’s technical skill?
   j. What does the object tell you about the Zulu people who made and used it?

4. Children and adults in the Natal Colony, and later throughout the Zulu Kingdom as well, wore as much beadwork as they could make or afford. Originally beads were strung to make fringe, but more elaborate uses were soon developed. There is much good information in books and on the Internet about working with beads, with ideas, illustrations, and instructions. After your Museum visit serves as inspiration, let students design, make, and wear their own beaded creations. Several websites detail beading techniques, including the brickstitch method used a lot in Zulu beading. Also see the pdf, *Africa meets Africa Lesson pack 1*, for Zulu beading ideas combined with student mathematics lessons.

   Early Zulu beadwork was done with round glass beads from Europe (Venice was the earliest source). Today beaders are more apt to use plastic. Your students might expand on an interest in beads to make their own of clay, paper, cloth, papier mâché, bread dough, or any number of recycled materials. Easily made paper beads are based on a long triangle shape (about 12” by ½” at the base to about 13” by 1½” at the base). After the shape is cut, students should roll it carefully and tightly around a nail or a knitting needle, maintaining an even tension, and then glue the last half-inch. The beads can be
left to dry on a rack of accordion pleated paper or in egg cartons. When dry, they should be sprayed with two or three coats of acrylic spray or have several coats of shellac applied. The completely dried bead can be decorated with markers, wound thread or with string, seeds, or collaged paper, among other embellishments. Students should string them with other beads or found objects, and wear with pride their own art of personal adornment.
Snuff container (*idlelo*). Zulu peoples, Natal Colony or the Zulu Kingdom, South Africa; late 19th century; horn, wood; h: 11 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X2002.2.54, gift of Jay T. Last.

Belt (*ingusha/umutsha*). Zulu peoples, Natal Colony or the Zulu Kingdom, South Africa; mid-20th century; beads, grass, woven fiber, copper; 81.5 x 15.2 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X65.4547, gift of the Wellcome Trust.

Array of staffs, left to right:

1. Staff (*intonga*). Zulu peoples, Natal Colony or the Zulu Kingdom, South Africa; late 19th century; wood. Fowler Museum at UCLA X2002.13.10, gift of Jay T. Last.

2. Club (*isagila*) or staff (*intonga*). Zulu peoples, Natal Colony or the Zulu Kingdom, South Africa; late 19th century; wood. Fowler Museum at UCLA X2000.16.15, museum purchase.

3. Staff (*intonga*). Zulu peoples, Natal Colony or the Zulu Kingdom, South Africa; late 19th century; wood. Fowler Museum at UCLA X2002.13.24, gift of Jay T. Last.

4. Staff (*intonga*). Zulu peoples, Natal Colony or the Zulu Kingdom, South Africa; late 19th century; wood. Fowler Museum at UCLA X2002.13.8, gift of Jay T. Last.

5. Staff (*intonga*). Zulu peoples, Natal Colony or the Zulu Kingdom, South Africa; late 19th century; wood. Fowler Museum at UCLA X2002.13.4, gift of Jay T. Last.

6. Staff (*intonga*). Zulu peoples, Natal Colony or the Zulu Kingdom, South Africa; late 19th century; wood. Fowler Museum at UCLA X2000.16.11, museum purchase.

Snuff container (*idlelo*). Zulu peoples, Natal Colony or the Zulu Kingdom, South Africa; late 19th century; horn, wood; L: 19 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X2002.2.55, gift of Jay T. Last.
At auctions held between 1906 and 1934, Sir Henry Wellcome purchased cloaks made by
the Māori, aboriginal peoples of New Zealand. Most of the cloaks in the exhibition,
_Māori Cloaks, Māori Voices_, are part of those auction purchases. Made in the
nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were part of the generous gift made by
the Wellcome Trust to the Fowler Museum in 1965. With Māori advisors participating in
the development of the exhibition, these garments are on public view for the first time.
Some responses of the Māori artists and scholars to the garments of their ancestors
accompany the display and the quotations below are from the same Māori advisors.

As they first viewed the cloaks laid out on a table, initial reactions were strong: “The
cloaks embody everything about us: our language, our values, our worldview. The DNA
of our ancestors is on them. We touch and view them as living.” “Through these cloaks
on the table, the ancestors are speaking and shouting and singing.” “We are not just
viewing an object that has been worn, we are actually greeting people.” “The cloaks’
trajectories from their homes to an auction site in London to...this building...(is) a really
interesting story. A sad story, but also a story of connections....” “For Māori people,
everything is intertwined—weaving, carving, language, performing arts, marriage....”

About nine centuries ago Polynesian ancestors of the Māori people settled in the land
we now know as New Zealand. Their long stay in Polynesia followed waves of migration,
beginning in what is now China and traveling via Southern Asia, Taiwan, and the
Philippines to Indonesia. On subsequent journeys they sailed in their large ocean-going
canoes to Fiji. Centuries later they made it to Samoa and the Marquesa Islands, and still
later to Tahiti and the Cook Islands before reaching Aotearoa (the Māori name for the
island) or New Zealand.

These successive voyages of exploration were made with increasing and extraordinary
knowledge of navigation based on close observation of ocean currents, the winds, stars,
the sun, sea creatures and the birds flying above the seas.
Newcomers to the island previously had little need for clothing but they were now, as the first Polynesians to settle a land outside the tropics, in need of coverings to provide warmth. They already had knowledge of weaving, but their thin beaten barkcloths had been made more for ceremonial purposes than for warmth. In Aotearoa they turned to the native plant, the *harakeke* plant, New Zealand flax. Scraping the inside of the leaves with a mussel shell produced strong silky fiber to be spun and prepared, dyed or bleached, and dried. According to one of the Māori advisors to this exhibition, “The dyeing is not so difficult, but there is at least a good three to four months work of preparation just getting the fibers ready.”

Māori women developed new twining techniques to fashion these fibers into warm cloaks by hand without using a loom. They adapted a twining technique originally used to make fishing nets and traps and they experimented with a variety of plant fibers.

The final cloths provided the necessary warmth, but also became treasured markers of prestige. They were created using methods that often incorporated prayer and tradition. The garment is only the end result. New styles and techniques were developed and new materials were introduced in addition to plant fibers. The materials depended, of course, on availability, with people recently arrived on the island introducing new ones, and with environmental and other factors determining when materials were no longer used. Dog hair was used before the Kuri breed of dog—whose hair and hide were used for chiefs’ cloaks—became extinct.

When red woolen trade cloth from Britain became widely available in the nineteenth century, it was quickly put to use in decorating cloaks. According to Māori advisor Karl Rangikawhiti Leonard, “When Māori weavers first saw colored trade wool, they were like kids in a candy store. They went wild because of the range of colors they could introduce.” Pompoms made from unraveled woolen cloth was particularly popular as cloak thrums, or fringes, sometimes combined with dyed, rolled *harakeke* leaves. Cloaks often are bordered in intricate geometric patterns called *taniko*.

With the increased numbers of Europeans in the 1800s, weaving traditions changed. Māori weavers began experimenting more with European materials, they adopted European sewing techniques, and gradually many Māori customary practices disappeared. By the end of the century, most Māori wore European dress and there were fewer practitioners of the traditional weaving art. Since the 1950s many Māori, both men and women, have worked to revive the art. Contemporary weavers blend
traditional and contemporary materials and techniques, and woven cloaks continue to be highly valued.

Feathered cloaks were reported over 250 years ago, and became more popular in the late nineteenth century. They remain highly valued for both their warmth and appearance, and they came to be associated in particular with women of high status. During the last century, as habitat diminished because of predation, agriculture, and loss of native forest, protection of native birds was deemed necessary. Included among the protected birds are the *kererū*, whose feathers adorn the cloak. Even the population of the kiwi, a national symbol of New Zealand, whose feathers are woven into flax cloaks, is diminishing. The birds and their feathers are now considered property of the New Zealand Government. Feathers collected from dead protected birds are placed in a feather bank, allocated for indigenous cultural purposes, and granted to weavers who apply.

**Community Voices in the Development of Fowler Exhibitions**

This exhibition, *Māori Cloaks, Māori Voices*, features thirteen rare and beautiful nineteenth- and early-twentieth century cloaks, shown publicly for the first time. Constructed primarily of flax, but also of other plants, feathers, and wool, the cloaks are extremely fragile. Because of this fragility they have not been shown since their acquisition in 1965. A more important factor contributed to their absence from an exhibition until now. Māori people regard the cloaks with reverence and see the cloaks as representatives of their ancestors. In respect for this belief, Fowler personnel deemed it important for Māori people to interpret and help guide their display.

This past year a team of four Māori advisors has participated in the development of this exhibition. The comments of the Māori artists and scholars on the cloaks and on their ongoing meaning and relevance helped inform the presentation.

Most of the cloaks were given to UCLA’s Laboratory of Ethnic Arts and Technology (the beginning of today’s Fowler Museum at UCLA) as part of the fortuitous and generous gift of the Wellcome Trust. This part of the gift comprised the most important collection of Māori cloaks in North America. It was accompanied by objects from Melanesia, Polynesia, and Indonesia. Closer to the Māori home in Aotearoa (what we call New Zealand), came works from the Papuan Gulf, the Sepik River region, New Ireland, and New Caledonia.

*Māori Cloaks, Māori Voices*
The current exhibition is one of many at the Fowler Museum to call upon diverse voices to extend meaning and context to the objects collected and displayed. The Museum collaborates with communities across the world with the goal of cultivating accuracy and respect for tradition. When *Wrapped in Pride: Ghanian Kente and African American Identity* (organized in conjunction with the Newark Museum) opened in 1999, the contributions of high school students in Los Angeles and Newark provided an important aspect of the exhibition and their voices were clearly heard.

The fragile Māori cloaks are given special care and conservation in the large collections of textiles at the Fowler. The range of the collections is worldwide, with especially strong holdings from Africa, Mexico, and Guatemala. The Museum is an international leader in publishing and exhibiting the woven heritage of Southeast Asia. Exhibitions have been mounted featuring textiles from many parts of the world, including *From the Rainbow’s Varied Hue: Textiles of the Southern Philippines*, 1988; *Bast and Leaf Fiber Textiles*, 2006; and *Resplendent Dress from Southeastern Europe: A History in Layers*, 2013. The exhibition of beautifully stitched Japanese fishermen’s coats from the island of Awaji (with the University Art Museum, UCSB, 2001–2001, also featured revolutionary contemporary textiles from the NUNO Studies in Tokyo. The ensuing dialogue between tradition and innovation demonstrated a continuing focus of the Museum.

The Fowler Textile Council, a Museum interest-specific member group; publication of the Fowler Museum Textile Series (twelve titles to date); The Center for the Study of Regional Dress, a research and teaching center within the Museum; the Center’s undergraduate course for World Arts and Cultures on “Textiles of the World” are all manifestations of Fowler interest and involvement in that world of textiles.

*Māori Cloaks, Māori Voices*
### Suggested Activities

1. Māori oral history says that their people were born out of their land, Aotearoa, and have lived there since the beginning of time. They say that Māori women have been the guardians of twining ever since they tricked a patupaiarehe (fairy) woman named Hinerehia who had married a human man. Hinerehia was an expert weaver who only worked at night and on foggy days because the sun would undo her work and she would lose her weaving skills. But the local women were jealous, so they confused her, and one night she wove past sunrise. The women were able to see Hinerehia’s techniques, and the art of weaving now belongs to Māori women.

Origin stories are handed down in many diverse cultures. Students may research and retell some to their classmates. They will appreciate the diversity as they research creation stories of a wide variety of peoples. Although most were communicated orally, they are now also in written form. Compare stories of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas and the Austronesia region. In their readings students also should look for different explanations for the origin of specific animals and/or natural phenomena. You might have them create an original myth to explain some natural phenomena, or a ritual. Perhaps they can include themselves as characters.

2. Historians assert that the ancestors of the Māori people sailed to Aotearoa (New Zealand) roughly nine hundred years ago, and they became the first Polynesians to settle outside the tropics. The waves of these early migrations were made using extraordinary navigational skills.

On a map have students trace the routes as introduced in the background statement at the beginning of this unit. Let them conjecture how sailors were able to travel in their ocean-going canoes for such long distances. What did they rely on to steer their course? Learn more about their observation of ocean currents, the winds, stars, the sun, sea creatures and the birds flying above the seas.

3. On Aotearoa with its much cooler environment than their original homeland, the new inhabitants needed warmer coverings than their light garments of tapa cloth (a paper-like fabric made of bark). They soon discovered that the native flax plant provided a warmer, more durable material. By adapting and modifying their skills of textile production, they developed a number of uses for the flax leaves and its fibers. As
students investigate this plant, and its usefulness, they could expand their studies to other parts of the world where the people also depended (and still depend) on a specific plant and its products. Consider the importance of wheat, corn, rice, bamboo and other plants in the lives of people in different parts of the globe.

4. Other materials have been used to make cloaks. Some conform to tradition, others offer innovation. Have students pay attention to the materials of the cloaks in the exhibition. What might be the factors in starting and then discontinuing the use of any one material? Feathers and dog hair might have been relied upon for beauty or warmth and then no longer used because of overuse and the dwindling population of both the specific dogs and birds. At this point the class can discuss issues of conservation and cultural resources in relation to the Māori and other indigenous peoples.

European contact in the 1800s brought about rapid changes. Colored wool and goat hair came into favor and the Māori adapted European sewing techniques. Innovation and experimentation are the tools of contemporary artists as they create new styles and utilize new materials. Students should keep this in mind when they design their own cloaks in activity 6.

5. For the Māori the cloaks are considered part of their heritage. Reread the quotations below (which form the Māori voices in the exhibition title), and analyze the meanings and feelings expressed by them. Some of the voices are reheard below:

"The cloaks embody everything about us: our language, our values, our worldview. The DNA of our ancestors is on them. We touch and view them as living."—Karl Rangikawhiti Leonard

"These cloaks—these ancestors—have been silent so long. Now they are speaking and shouting and singing."—Tharron Bloomfield

"They were created using methods that often incorporated prayer and tradition. The garment is only the end result."—Karl Rangikawhiti Leonard

(addressing the cloaks) "Relatives, I welcome you, and humble myself before you and ask for your forgiveness for our ignorance and your confinement in these places."—Cindi Alvitre, representing the Tongva people on whose ancestral lands the Māori cloaks now reside.

Māori Cloaks, Māori Voices
"I often heard my grandmother say, 'Oh, our people were clever, they were so smart.' Today our people need to know that we are connected to this intellectual property. There are cloaks that tell us volumes about who we were."—Rangi Te Kanawa

6. After viewing the cloaks, appreciating their history and their continuing significance, let students design or make their own cloak, or one for the class to be worn on auspicious days by a leader for that day. They should know that today cloaks emphasize ancestry and are worn to celebrate special occasions and the wearers. They’re worn at graduations, funerals, and ceremonial processions. To make their version, students may want to utilize a simple over-and-under weaving technique, may want to experiment with dyes, or may use paper feathers. A much less time-consuming activity would be to draw the cloak design and create samples using a range of colors and decorative elements.
Maorí Cloaks, Maorí Voices
October 13, 2013 – February 23, 2014

For more information, please contact: Stacey Ravel Abarbanel, Director of External Affairs, 310/825-4288, staceyra@arts.ucla.edu

Cloak. Ngāti Whakaue Maorí peoples, Rotorua District, Aotearoa; pre-1883. Harakeke, wool, feathers; double-pair weft twining, taniko weft twining; L: 87 cm, W: 150 cm, D: 2 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X65.8009, gift of the Wellcome Trust.

Cloak. Māori peoples, Aotearoa; probably 1880-1910. Harakeke, feathers; double-pair weft twining. L: 100 cm, W: 140 cm, D: 7.5 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X65.10283, gift of the Wellcome Trust.
As each completed piece came off the loom it was the size and shape that the weaver intended, the color and design were executed as planned, and the garment was ready for wear. Noteworthy were the four edges, or selvages, of the cloth all woven and uncut—the mark of a master weaver. Whether the finished piece was intended as a garment for everyday wear (a shawl, wrapping cloth, tunic, belt, sash, headband, or bag), a royal mantle, or a ritual cloth, Peru’s master weavers called upon ancient traditions, intricate planning, and incredible skills to produce their pieces.

Textiles with four woven edges like these produced in Peru are extremely rare. Weavers in Mexico and a few other places occasionally use the intricate process, but in the Andes of South America four-selvaged cloths were the norm. Before the Spanish arrived in the early 1500s, such textiles were important components of ritual, political, and social life. Found textiles dating from the period display varied qualities according to location, time period, and techniques used. Some of the textiles are knotted, others braided, embroidered, twined, and of course woven. A possible explanation for this diversity lies in origin stories, some of which were documented in the early seventeenth century. As cited in the exhibition, one story relates that when the world was made, the founder of the Inca people of Peru decreed that each area should have its own way of dress and its own language. Historians have noted that as the Inca king traveled through his empire, he was said to have changed his garments to conform to those of each region, donning the tunic of the local style as he crossed cultural boundaries.

Peru’s geographic regions are defined by the Andes mountains running parallel to the Pacific Ocean. Along the western coast or costa is a narrow, mostly arid plain with some valleys created by seasonal rivers. The eastern selva or jungle is the largest of the three regions and is covered by the Amazon rainforest. Between these two soar the sierra or highlands, the region of the Andes with their high peaks, steep canyon,s and the Altiplano plateau. Extraordinary ancient archaeological sites here led to our knowledge of early Peru. Found textiles contribute to that knowledge.
The contrasting geographic regions provided the threads for the remarkable textiles in the exhibition. Cotton still grows in the fertile river deltas punctuating the dry coastal desert, its natural colors of white, cream, brown, pink, and a green-gray incorporated into the woven thread designs. The high mountains and their valleys serve as grazing ground for animals of the camelid family (alpacas, vicuñas, llamas, and wild guanaco) with their prized silky hair that continues today to be woven into some of the finest cloth throughout the world.

Natural dyes from plants and animals gave hundreds of colors for the weavers to select: blues from indigo found in the leaves of tropical and semitropical plants; different shades of red from both plants and small cochineal insects; yellows from flowers, leaves, and barks of a number of plants; oranges from seeds of annatto pods; browns from seedpods and trees; and purples from a shellfish that lived along the rocky coast and the heartwood of tropical trees.

The coming-together of all of these elements—local materials, cultural traditions, shared techniques, and masterful weavers—is visible in the Fowler Museum’s noteworthy collection of ancient Andean textiles. Those in the exhibition range from ancient ritual textiles from early Chavin and Paracas cultures (500–100 BCE) to extraordinary garments of the Inca Empire (1485–1532). These textiles will help museum visitors gain insight into life in this wide span of time and diverse environments. Images of plants including corn or maize, and animals such as camelids and aquatic creatures, are included in the weavings, sometimes figuratively, but typically in more abstract design. Among the menagerie are a grinning feline deity with a miniature version of itself. This dual image may represent regeneration and fertility. On a large panel, abstracted figures carrying royal staffs are said to represent kings or perhaps composite mythical creatures with three toes. Many birds of the area fly through the works. For the Tiwanaku culture (200–400 CE) birds served as primary icons of power. In an earlier piece of the Nasca culture, nectar-seeking hummingbirds dip their long beaks into flowers. Crayfish live in local waters and on a woven tapestry panel. A frequently depicted stepped design may represent the surrounding mountains, or a pyramid, or perhaps another, more abstract concept.

Today the Andean weaving tradition lives on, and has spread. Textile artists far from Peru acknowledge the inspiration of the master weavers and their four-selvaged works. Their influence on three contemporary artists is an important component of this exhibition, *The Peruvian 4-Selvaged Cloth: Ancient Threads/New Directions*. Weavers Sheila Hicks and James Bassler and photographer John Cohen have been drawn to and profoundly
influenced by Andean textiles. Each of these artists has developed a unique and abiding interest in the substance and meaning of the Andean four selvaged cloth tradition, and that fascination remains a strong current in their respective creative processes.

**Textile Collections at the Fowler Museum**

According to Roy W. Hamilton, Fowler Museum’s senior curator of Asian and Pacific collections, “When the Museum was first established, the idea that textile studies might someday become an important field of inquiry within art history or anthropology was almost unimaginable. Material culture studies were regarded as an embarrassing holdover from the nineteenth century, and the few important university textile collections around the country barely survived in doomed departments of ‘Home Economics.’ From its beginning, however, the Fowler Museum collected, exhibited, and created publications about textiles that made important scholarly advances.

By 1982 the Museum’s holdings had grown to over 7,000 ensembles and textiles from various areas, including India, Indonesia, the Near East, West Africa, Guatemala, Mexico, and pre-Columbian Peru. Exhibitions were mounted in the new gallery created on the ground floor of Haines Hall in 1978.

Between 1986 and 1991, the Fowler was the recipient of over 550 works of art from ancient Peru from donors Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas. The gift made the Fowler Museum one of the most important repositories of Andean archaeological material in America. The Lucas Family Gallery, where exhibitions generally center on cultures of the Americas, is named after this generous couple.

Textiles comprised an important holding when the new Fowler Museum building opened in 1993. Nearly every year since has brought new textile projects highlighting the works of peoples of Africa and Southeast Asia and those of Central and South America, including Peru.

The present exhibition, *The Peruvian 4-Selvaged Cloth: Ancient Threads/New Directions*, as its name suggests, features not only the ancient Peruvian works, but also the creative production of contemporary artists whose works demonstrate influences of the past. The traditional and the contemporary, dynamic partners in world arts, again intersect.

One of the featured weavers, Sheila Hicks, uses needles, sticks, and her
fingers as tools to incorporate found materials (silk threads, flea market finds, industrial supplies) into complete units of four-selvaged cloth that express her personal reflections and conceptual process. Jim Bassler’s weavings carry with them the knowledge of the past brought into a vastly changed present. He uses a variety of materials and adaptations of early techniques to create works of great integrity. John Cohen, musician and artist, photographed rural life in Peru in the mid-1950s, including the weaving that he observed in each region. His photographs stress the transmission of knowledge from one generation of weavers to the next.

In this exhibition the Fowler Museum demonstrates again a commitment to featuring the work of today’s artists, underscoring the dynamism of world arts and the fluidity between the tradition based and the contemporary. The work of individual artists has been the subject of many shows: Haitian American artist Edouard Duval-Carrie in Divine Revolution, Ethiopian artist Qes Adamu Tesfaw in Painting Ethiopia, Brazilian artist and activist Adriana Bertini with Dress Up Against AIDS: Condom Couture by Adriana Bertini, Ghanaian artist El Anatsui whose metal “tapestries” dazzled visitors, and African American artist Nick Cave who called upon many traditions with his “sound suits.”

Suggested Activities

1. As one of the oldest arts, weaving has been used to shelter, feed, and clothe. Today woven materials still meet those needs. What are some woven items today other than clothing? Let students look around the classroom and around their homes in order to answer the question. They will find examples of woven material as they look at baskets, bags, furniture, and mats, and perhaps they’ll remember woven nets for fishing and basketball and tennis rackets. You can tell them about weaving’s role in medicine (stents) and in art installations. Encourage them then to distinguish between woven cloths and those made by other techniques, such as knitting.

The examples in The Peruvian 4-Selvaged Cloth: Ancient Threads/New Directions are part of the tradition of ancient weavers in the Andes. Elaborate cloth resulted from manipulating the threads while the work was still on the loom. European cloth-makers also produced elaborate works, but with different techniques. Students could speculate on how this was accomplished. (Elaborate cloths in Europe were often embellished further with embroidery, ribbons, brocade and other elements.)

The Peruvian 4-Selvaged Cloth: Ancient Threads/New Directions
2. Look closely at the Peruvian cloths when at the Museum. See animal images, including those of hummingbirds and other birds, crayfish, people, a motif known as “step and wave,” and a common stepped design. The latter may represent a pyramid or a mountain, or something more abstract. Students can produce original designs on graph paper.

3. Peruvian weavers colored their fibers with natural dyes from local plants and animals. Students can experiment with natural dyes such as fruit juices, tea, turmeric, onion skins, and other foods, including those that perhaps have stained clothing in the past. Certain colors may communicate particular meanings, varying across time and place. What factors affect the color choices made by your students?

4. There are many ways for students to explore weaving techniques, from simple paper strip weaving (which itself can be more complex if they incorporate irregular widths of paper or add ribbons, yarns, feathers, etc. to the project) to weaving on simple looms (of chip board, Styrofoam meat trays, shoeboxes, box lids or similar items to provide support for the warp threads), to having looms available in the classroom. For intriguing wefts provide and have students collect a variety of yarns, ribbons, raffia, sticks, strips of variously textured and patterned papers, grasses, dryer lint, folded fabric, pliable metals, etc. The library has many craft books with instructions and new approaches to weaving that are suitable for classrooms. The Internet offers additional resources.

5. In many traditions children learn the skills of their parents by watching and imitating. The exhibition The Peruvian 4-Selvaged Cloth: Ancient Threads/New Directions includes photographs taken by John Cohen of weavers with their children close by. What skills have your students learned at the sides of an adult? Was the teaching directed or informal? If they interview their parents they may hear stories of similar learning in the previous generation(s).

6. The other two artists featured in the “New Directions” part of the exhibition are Sheila Hicks and Jim Bassler. Both reference ancient techniques in their current production. Sheila Hicks incorporates a variety of materials into small works, often using her fingers, needles, or sticks as tools. Found objects like paper tags, toothpicks, shells, rubber
bands, flea market finds, and industrial supplies are placed within small units of four-selvaged cloth.

The second weaver, Jim Bassler, developed his own modern techniques to work through and understand Andean weaving processes. Some of his works show direct inspiration, not only because they have four selvages, but also with for his color and pattern choices. In the exhibition, woven strips that make up his shopping bag are fashioned from Trader Joe’s bags.

Students can use the ideas from both artists to create their own weaving experiences. They can also plan to weave with plarn—yarn made from plastic bags, or join in an experience of yarn bombing and help stage public installations, personalizing otherwise impersonal spaces or making socio-political statements by weaving, knitting, or crocheting with yarn. This should be done with permission from the owners of the property. Spaces on the schoolyard are likely locations. A smaller, more personal project will have students “shoelace weaving.” More information and instruction about these “new directions” are found on the Internet.
The Peruvian Four-Selvedge Cloth: Ancient Threads/New Directions

For more information, please contact: Stacey Ravel Abarbanel, Director of External Affairs, 310/825-4288, staceyra@arts.ucla.edu

Panel with stepped design. North coast, Peru, 1150–1450 CE; camelid hair; 146 x 145 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X94.27.11, Gift of the Neutrogena Corporation.

Tapestry panel with crayfish. North or central coast (?), Peru; 1150–1450 CE; cotton and camelid hair; 161 x 112 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X86.3950, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr.

Panel with crowned figures bearing staffs (detail). Chancay or Rimac, central coast Peru; 150–1450 CE; cotton and camelid hair; 77 x 74 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X65.8730, Gift of the Wellcome Trust.

Sheila Hicks (b. Hastings, Nebraska, 1934)
Squiggle, c. 1963
Silk; woven
28 x 24 cm
Private Collection

Jim Bassler (b. Santa Monica, California, 1933)
Thank you Wari, 2012
Linen, natural brown cotton, alpaca, silk; cochineal, indigo, and marigold dyes; tie-dye and blue print/silk-screen discharge; discontinuous warp
65 x 68 cm
Courtesy of Gail Martin Gallery

Panel with crowned figures bearing staffs (detail). Chancay or Rimac, central coast Peru; 150–1450 CE; cotton and camelid hair; 77 x 74 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X65.8730, Gift of the Wellcome Trust.
They’ve been called cabinet of curiosities, cabinet of wonder, chamber of marvels, and in German, *wunderkammer*, translated as room of wonder. They’ve existed since the sixteenth century, originally created by rulers and aristocrats, and gradually becoming popular with the merchant class and early European practitioners of science. Royalty, aristocrats, merchants, and early scientists formed collections and they established places to house them. Within these rooms (the word “cabinet” originally meant “room”) were displayed a wide assortment of objects. Often they were divided into the categories of *naturalia* (flora and fauna), *artificialia* (man-made objects), and *mirabilia* (things of a wondrous nature). They were organized to expand knowledge of the world and its inhabitants. Juxtapositions of disparate objects probably encouraged comparisons, comparable in many ways to the categorization and comparison that museum curators do today. Indeed, the wunderkammer is today considered a precursor to museums.

Amalia Mesa-Bains assembled for the Fowler Museum a *New World Wunderkammer*. She joined the collections of the museum to her own journals and family pieces to depict the centrality of the ancient Americas as they existed before colonial borders and divisions and to depict the collision of cultures that occurred in the colonial age.

The central cabinet in the *New World Wunderkammer* is dedicated to the Americas with objects from the indigenous Pacific Northwest, southwestern United States, and Mexico—one continent originally undivided. Guardian figures from Nayarit, Mexico serve as witnesses to history. The burial objects that are included were meant to assist ancestors in their transition to the spirit world and to provide them with necessary objects of everyday life that they would need.

Another cabinet references the histories of African peoples, brought to the New World as enslaved laborers. They, along with indigenous peoples and Europeans, created the racial mixing in the Americas. The guardian figure in this cabinet is an *nkisi*, a power figure made and used by Kongo peoples of Central Africa. It shares the space with objects suggestive of violence and reflecting the brutality of the slave trade, but
contains as well other African objects of great beauty connected with healing or possessing spiritual and social influence.

The central figure in the third of the three cabinets is a depiction of Saint John the Baptist from the colonial Philippines. He serves as reminder of the galleon trade and the exchanges between distant Spanish colonial realms. The Spanish purchased enslaved Africans from Dutch and British slave traders. The *mestizaje*, or racial mixing produced, along with great tension and conflict, many rich and innovative cultural changes.

Each of the cabinets contains a blessing space below where Ms. Mesa-Bains has placed objects, natural specimens and elements of religious practice. The blessing spaces attest to continuing cultural communities and the historical life of the objects.

To fill the large wunderkammer Ms. Mesa-Bains was given a rare opportunity. To select pieces to be included, she was able to explore the vast holdings of the Fowler Museum. Working with the Fowler’s collection allowed her as an artist to create her own understanding of history. At the same time, she was informed by the ceremonial, spiritual, and aesthetic meanings of the works, their communities, and cultures. As her own objects were included Ms. Mesa-Bains felt a connection to the lives of the Fowler works. As she wrote in her introduction, “In balancing the realms of human, ancestor, and spirit, the *New World Wunderkammer* becomes a true space of the miraculous and wonderful.”

The space also contains eight new prints made by the artist based on key pieces from the Fowler collection; images of artifacts are layered with botanical, cartographic, and historical photographic references. Two dimensional guardian figures appear alongside images from the blessing spaces. All come together as objects of beauty and narratives of power.

In neighboring vitrines flora and fauna from the Fowler collections accompany the artist’s own botanical journals highlighting plants from the ancient Americas and the agricultural history of her family. Images of the plant world along with the artist’s thoughts and reminiscences augment the wonders seen in the cabinets of wonder, the *New World Wunderkammer*.
Diverse Interpretations of Fowler Museum Collections

The creator of the *New World Wunderkammer* included many objects from the Fowler collection to help create her representation of history. Several members of the Fowler Museum staff helped in her searches through the collection. All visits required careful attention to the objects’ registration, rules for handling the objects, and guidance by involved staff members of the Museum.

Museum staff members everywhere perform a variety of services. Not all museums have the same roster of personnel, but many, including the Fowler, have departments of education, registration, conservation, external affairs, collections, technical support, exhibitions, public programs and events, development, publications, security, and curatorial affairs. The curators working at any one museum depend on the focus of that museum. At the Fowler there are curators of African Arts, Latin American and Caribbean Popular Arts, Asian and Pacific Collections, and Archaeology and a Director of Curatorial Affairs. It takes the cooperation of all these departments and others, working together to enable the Fowler Museum to fill the mandates listed in their mission statement.

This mission statement has evolved over the years to meet the changes in circumstances and areas of concern. Always there has been an emphasis on diversity, access, and inclusion. When the museum was founded, there were divisions both at UCLA and in the country. At the university the faculty, students, staff, and community urged the administration to institute Ethnic Studies on campus. The American Indian Studies Center, Asian American Studies Center, Bunche Center for African American Studies, and the Chicano Studies Research Center were the answer. The founding of the Fowler Museum cannot be separated from this growth in the 1960s of civil rights and antiwar movements.

You will think of this history when viewing *New World Wunderkammer* and be aware of division and the coming together of disparate groups. This is evident in the juxtapositioning of objects in the cabinets. The Fowler Museum is, in part, an answer to the division and an example of the coming together. As expressed by Director Marla C. Berns regarding the origin of the Fowler Museum in the volume celebrating the Museum’s fiftieth anniversary, “The relevance and purpose of a new museum dedicated primarily to the preservation and interpretation of largely non-Western arts and cultures—and to understanding and respecting the peoples whose heritages are embodied in these traditions—cannot be separated from the growth in the 1960s of a new liberal
consciousness rooted in the Civil Rights and antiwar movements and the student unrest that shook the foundations of many university campuses.”

In the *New World Wunderkammer*, Amelia Mesa-Bains investigates race, culture, and the history of the “other,” and uses that context to explore her own family’s experiences in that history. Juxtaposing objects sometimes creates a dialog between them. As she points out in her introduction, “I have renegotiated relations among objects….in the African cabinet, I have placed the manacles of the slave trade near weapons of war and a sculpture of the Queen Mother of the Kingdom of Benin and her guards to highlight the complexities of both European and African slave trading.”

At the base of each of the three cabinets, Ms. Mesa-Bains sees the “blessing space,” as places of spiritual protection and cultural honor. Here she includes some of her own objects as a personal connection to the lives of the Fowler pieces. In some respects the blessing spaces are like altars, holding meaningful items of devotion, typically a place for prayer or meditation. Altars demonstrating their importance and meaning in the lives of many peoples have been featured in Fowler exhibitions, most notably in the exhibition *Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou* (1995). Three Vodou altars were built in consultation with Haitian priests. Most of the objects on the altars came from prototype altars in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

**Suggested Activities**

1a. Collections in early wunderkammer were broadly divided into categories of *naturalia* (flora and fauna), *artificialia* (man-made objects), and *mirabilia* (things of a wondrous nature). The *New World Wunderkammer* of Amalia Mesa-Bains and its companion vitrines contain hundreds of objects that could be placed into these categories. Use the chalkboard to list all the things that students can recall fit into the three categories. If they were creating a personal wunderkammer, what selections would they make to fit into the three sections?

1b. Let students make their own wunderkammer, using actual objects, pictures, or words to fill them. They may choose to divide theirs into three (or any number of) significant units and determine how to place the objects into the categories they select. Their cabinets may have sections for past homes and remembrances, the present, and the future as they see or desire it; or for their ancestry and themselves today. Their wunderkammer should tell their own story.
1c. The *New World Wunderkammer* addresses thematic concerns of discovery and resistance, violence and healing, landscape and exploitation, and collectors and the collected. While viewing the exhibition at the Museum, or recalling after the visit, or looking at a picture of the cabinets online, students should select specific objects that address those four concerns. In a short essay students should write the reasons for their selections, and explain what the object means to them and/or to Amalia Mesa-Bains.

1d. This exhibition is one of eight in the galleries celebrating the Fowler Museum’s fiftieth anniversary. What objects that are part of the other seven exhibitions could have substituted for the ones the students selected in the above exercise? If Amalia had had them available in her selection process, would any of them been a better choice for her? Why?

1e. Of course there is no one correct response to the above question. The significance often lies in the arrangement or juxtaposition of the objects, and this changes as new objects are added, or objects are rearranged. In the following poetry-writing exercise a similar rearrangement occurs as new words are added and new connections are made:

Students should be told to begin with any three-word phrase to serve as the first line. Add a word at the end of the phrase for the second line which will then have four words. Each of the successive lines also has four words, since a word is added at the end and the first word from the previous line is dropped. Continue in this way until there is a resolution or an ending that makes sense or is pleasing or says what you want said. A sample follows, using the three-word phrase “Fowler at Fifty” for the first line.

Fowler at fifty
Fowler at fifty for
At fifty for those
Fifty for those who
For those who look
Those who look and
Who look and learn
Look and learn about
And learn about people.
Learn about people, art
About people, art and
People, art and the
Art and the world
And the world and
The world and how
World and how good
And how good it
How good it is
Good it is at
It is at the
Is at the Fowler
At the Fowler at
The Fowler at Fifty

2. The putting together of an exhibition involves the individual and cooperative work of many museum staff members. Some of these members are enumerated in the New World Wunderkammer text above. Each student could consider these museum work categories, select one that interests him or her, and report on it to the class. Book and Internet research should help the students determine the skills needed and the tasks involved. An interview with a member of a museum staff would be very helpful, as would the student’s self-evaluation of the skills he/she has and can cultivate to bring to the job.

3. We have noted that the 1960s, besides being the period of the formation and early development of the Fowler Museum, was a time of political activism and unrest at UCLA and on campuses throughout the world. In many ways the two are related. A pertinent activity was developed by the High Museum in their Multicultural Curriculum Handbook: Collect a wide variety of images and objects produced in the 1960s: photographs, newspaper clippings, toys, images and art form, music, magazine covers, advertising art, posters. Sort and group materials by major themes and topics, such as famous people (leaders, politicians, celebrities), social issues (race, drugs, crime), current events (Vietnam conflict, civil rights), movies, art, music. Combine or subdivide categories as needed.

In small groups (3-5 students) select a topic to investigate. Begin by researching and assembling ideas about the images and objects associated with the topic. (Examples: what were 1960s folk singers Joan Baez and Judy Collins singing about? Who were

New World Wunderkammer: A Project by Amalia Mesa-Bains
“flower children?” What is a “hippie?” Peter Max? What happened at Kent State? Little Rock? Selma?

Compile information, impressions, and a chronology of the topic to report to the class. Discuss and identify common threads to see how each topic fits with the others in order to construct a fuller picture and understanding of the tumultuous decade of the 1960s.

4. Ethnic studies at UCLA emerged as an intellectual movement in the wake of the unrest and the activities noted above. The Fowler Museum documented these and more in their 2010 exhibition, *Art, Activism, Access: 40 Years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA*, which highlighted the establishment of UCLA’s American Indian Studies Center, Asian American Studies Center, Bunche Center for African American Studies, Chicano Studies Research Center. Students might investigate the roles of these centers in the continual struggle with diversity, access, and inclusion, especially those that surfaced on the UCLA campus.

A front page article in the October 31, 2013, issue of the *Los Angeles Times* was titled, “Ethnic Studies Falter in New Era.” Read further to be able to discuss the reasons for and the consequences of universities’ cutting back on the program, and to take a position on the controversies. They could express the facts and their feelings in letters to the UCLA chancellor.
Standing male figure. Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico; Proto-Classic, 100 BCE–250 CE; ceramic; H: 74 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X2012.15.20a; Fante Collection.

Standing female figure. Ixtlán del Río, Nayarit, Mexico; Proto-Classic, 100 BCE–250 CE; ceramic; H: 74 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA X2012.15.20b; Fante Collection.

New World Wunderkammer: A Project by Amalia Mesa-Bains

For more information, please contact: Stacey Ravel Abarbanel, Director of External Affairs, 310/825-4288, staceyra@arts.ucla.edu
Re-evaluating an Artistic Tradition

In the 1920s extraordinary ceramics began to appear in art markets and private collections throughout Mexico. They were painted with geometric designs in bold black, red, and cream. Attributed to a site on the banks of the Lerma River in southeastern Guanajuato, the style was named Chupícuaro.

The appearance of Chupícuaro objects in the art market compelled Mexico’s National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) to explore the area, especially since the expected construction of a regional dam in the 1940s would flood the area, ending further exploration. Before the damming the INAH excavations had yielded significant finds, including a cemetery with nearly four hundred burials and offerings. These discoveries established Chupícuaro as a Preclassic culture (600 BCE–200 CE), one of Mexico’s earliest complex societies.

Chupícuaro tradition stands at the intersection of two cultural spheres: Western Mexican societies on the edge of the Pacific (the present-day states of Jalisco, Nayarit, and Colima) and the Basin of Mexico, the Mesoamerican heartland, which gave rise to the Teotihuacan metropolis. Chupícuaro represents a crucial step in the emergence of a new dynamic in northwest Mexico as the region became an active contributor to Mesoamerican Classic culture and a bridge to communities in the north.

Who were the Chupícuaro and where did they come from? Due to the scarcity of archaeological data, Chupícuaro studies languished for some time, but recently investigators have returned hoping to find more information about these artistic innovators. Their findings suggest that the Chupícuaro traveled from West Mexico along the Lerma River, settling in the Acámbaro Valley around 600 BCE. While artists drew on the source traditions of Colima, Jalisco, and Nayarit, they experimented with pigments and forms, ultimately developing a stark visual language whose legacy can be seen throughout central Mexico and into the American Southwest.
Chupícuaro culture developed along the banks of the Lerma River in present-day Guanajuato state during the Preclassic period (2000 BCE–200 CE). The river, which extends from central Mexico into the western states of Jalisco and Michoacán, facilitated the migration of West Mexican communities toward the center during the late Preclassic period. The strong resemblance of early Chupícuaro ceramics to the traditions of Preclassic communities in Colima, Jalisco, and Nayarit suggests their shared origin. Ceramics from Colima, for example, were the likely source for the Chupícuaro dark monochromes with incised and punctuated designs.

Chupícuaro artists employed many West Mexican forms and motifs such as the broken-shoulder or flying saucer vessels, which originated in Colima, and the geometric patterning of red-on-buff style ceramics. As Preclassic trade networks developed, western styles eventually traveled northward into present-day Arizona and New Mexico. Hohokam ceramics date to a much later period; nevertheless, the vessels visibly evoke the angularity of the Colima ceramics. The serrated lines and divided spaces of the surface design recall the patterning of Chupícuaro red-on-buff ceramics.

The *tecomate*, or wide-mouthed bowl, with its human features remained a popular shape during later periods as artists reinvented the colors and motifs applied to the form.

Animal effigy vessels are commonly found as funerary offerings in West Mexican tombs, notably in the shaft tombs of Jalisco. Dogs, birds, and fish—examples of local fauna—accompany the dead. Chupícuaro artists emulated the tradition, producing ceramic works in the shape of bats, crabs, and turkeys. INAH found several of these examples among the funerary offerings they excavated in the 1940s.

Figurines were produced in great quantities throughout north central Mexico and into the Basin of Mexico. Small, solid objects built by hand, they often appear as grave goods. Early investigators, therefore, used them as chronological markers: changes in facial features, dress, or manufacture could differentiate one era from the next. A distinct set of characteristics such as the shape of the eye, the body, hairstyle, and jewelry could identify a type. The H4 or "slant-eye," have angled coffee-bean-shaped eyes; wide, flat bodies; round or heart-shaped faces with long noses; short hairstyles; and long necklaces.

The Chupícuaro community settled into the Acámbaro Valley, at the edge of the Basin of Mexico. The valley’s rich resources gave rise to a densely populated settlement organized around the Lerma River and its tributaries. After 400 BCE, Chupícuaro society developed closer ties to the growing trade networks originating in the Basin of Mexico. As Chupícuaro artists came into closer contact with the Mesoamerican heartland, ceramic and architectural styles
rapidly changed. Vividly drawn abstract motifs such as net designs, stepped-frets, pyramids, and crosses revolutionized Chupícuaro artistic style.

These stylistic innovations, likely prompted by exposure to new cultures, constitute a distinct Chupícuaro visual language. The development of such singular forms as the tall, lean spider-leg tripods or the large painted figurines stand alone among other valley traditions. New pottery forms, including mammiform tripods and the shoe-shape vessel, resulted from the interaction between Chupícuaro settlers and neighboring communities in the Basin of Mexico. Artists continued to make ceramics in the dark hue but experimented with new bases and overall shapes.

The distinctive necks of some vessels resemble a riding stirrup. These stirrup spout vessels most commonly appear among ancient South American cultures. Colima artists likely came into contact with South American traders and adopted the form.

Little is known about the Chupícuaro culture. A team of French experts, however, have begun to associate dramatic architectural changes with Chupícuaro’s Mixtlan phase, circa 150 BCE–200 CE. Large sunken patios divided into four parts dominate the settlements at this time. The four-part pattern is associated in many cultures with the cardinal directions.

Latin American Collections at the Fowler Museum

A gift of 650 ceramics in 1968–69 brought to the Fowler Museum the largest and most important collection of Chupícuaro material outside of Mexico. It was the gift of actress Natalie Wood who had bought the collection from Los Angeles-based artists Mildred and Edgar Dorsey Taylor. The Taylors and Ms. Wood had met through connections to the new museum at UCLA. Wood first loaned the collection to the museum and then, with the encouragement of Chancellor Franklin D. Murphy, gifted it in 1968–1969. Selections were first exhibited in 1968, and a scholarly monograph followed in 1969, also supported by funds from Wood who wanted the collection to be made available for study by scholars and collectors. The Fowler Museum has worked with Mexico’s Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH, National Institute of Anthropology and History and archaeologist Francisco Javier Martínez Bravo, Department of History, University of Guanajuato, Mexico, to authenticate and to interpret the collection; Dr. Veronica Lyall co-curated the exhibition with Mr. Bravo. The materials still constitute the largest and most important collection of Chupícuaro material outside of Mexico.
The new museum was growing. It was the recipient of 138 African objects, including a group of important works that had been given to the donor, Mary Hastings Bradley, by King Njoya of the Bamum Kingdom in Cameroon. The gift of the George G. Frelinghuysen Collection added over 240 additional works from Africa and the Pacific, some of exceptional rarity and importance.

In its first decade the Fowler Museum had twenty-two exhibitions and had produced twelve publications. Many others contributed to the Fowler’s growth. In addition to the generous gifts of objects that built the Museum’s holdings, donors have given funds to allow Fowler curators to purchase necessary objects. Generous supporters have also lent their works for inclusion in various exhibitions.

Before the Fowler, or any museum, accepts a donation it must consider if it is appropriate for the institution. If it does choose to accept the gift there are many other issues to be considered. Was the object lawfully acquired and in compliance with international law? In today’s environment of heightened attention to cultural property laws and codes of museum ethics, for example, the receipt of the Chupícuaro ceramics would not take place. In the 1940s, however, when the Taylors were building their collection, no such laws were in place, nor did regulations exist prohibiting UCLA’s acceptance of the gift. Other considerations: Would the object pose and threats or dangers to other objects or staff? Does the museum have the resources to properly care for the object with appropriate storage space and adequate funding? Has the donor placed any restrictions on the gift (i.e., the gift must always be exhibited or must always remain in the museum’s possession)?

In recent years the Latino presence at the university, in Los Angeles, and in the country has increased. The Fowler Museum continues to educate the public about the arts and cultures of the ancient Americas while other exhibitions center on long standing and contemporary traditions of Latino culture.

Within the last ten years alone, exhibitions on the heritage of Mexico and/or those of Mexican descent have included Ceramic Trees of Life: Popular Art from Mexico (2003); Botánica Los Angeles: Latino Popular Religious Art in the City of Angels (2004); Caras vemos, corazones no sabemos/Faces Seen Hearts Unknown: The Human Landscape of Mexican Migration (2008); La Tinta Grita/The Ink Shouts: The Art of Social Resistance in Oaxaca, Mexico (2008); Silver Seduction: The Art of Mexican Modernist Antonio Pineda (2008); Monochrome: Sculptural Ceramics from Ancient Mexico (2010); X-Voto—The Retablo-Inspired Art of David Mecalco (2010); Mapping Another L.A.: The Chicano Art Movement (2011); and Curious Creatures from Mexican Popular Arts (2012).

Chupícuaro: The Natalie Wood Gift of Ancient Mexican Ceramics

55
Suggested Activities

1a. As we view ancient artifacts we can make a variety of inferences. It takes, however, scientific inquiry to substantiate those inferences. If your class is having this discussion following a visit to the Fowler Museum, you would want to begin soon after the visit when memories are fresh. Ask the students if they can surmise anything about the daily life of the people. What information do they feel they need to make those inferences?

1b. From study of ceramic styles, what insights can we draw about depictions of clothing of the period? What can the students tell about what people wore or how they decorated their bodies? (The people painted their faces and bodies, wore sandals, necklaces, earflaps, and earrings. Women wore elaborate hairstyles.)

1c. What kinds of animals lived in the area at that time?

1d. What inferences or speculations can one make from seeing these works? How can we determine the practices and beliefs of an ancient culture?

1e. What is the difference in what we can discern about a culture when we find an artifact removed from its original context as opposed to documenting it in the locations where it was made and/or used? How does it help if there are multiple objects in an area of digging?

2. Have students investigate the fields of archaeology and anthropology—how do they differ and what are their respective contributions to our understanding of ancient cultures?

3. There are many reasons to put pressure on archaeologists to work with haste to complete a dig. Let students offer some. One certainly is the presence of looters and grave robbers. Why is it important to have the unearthing of objects done by trained archaeologists? What can be done to discourage looting? How would students direct their efforts—toward the looters? The local or national government? The buyers of looted goods? They could make a poster to discourage the practice, or write a letter to concerned entities.
4. Another problem occurs when the area becomes open to modern development in the way of needed roads, wanted commercial or residential buildings, or, as in the case of the Mexican home of the Chupícuaro, the damming of a river. Much of the area has been under water since the 1946 construction of the Solis Dam.

Students could learn more about the often controversial activity of damming a river. They should approach the subject from the viewpoints of the archaeologist and other scientists, of the modern-day builder and residents of the area, and of environmentalists. They might include in their study the fairly recent damming (and the ramifications) of the Yangtse River in China, and rivers in the Middle East. They might even discuss the controlling of our own Los Angeles River.

They should discuss and debate the advantages and disadvantages of controlling a river with dams. How might it help a community? What about nearby communities? What are the effects on the habitats of plants and animals? Who should be responsible for keeping contaminants from a local water supply? Is it only officials who bear responsibility?

5. Many issues face museums when they are offered a gift. Let students think of how the museum decides if they should accept the gift. (Will it add to a collection in a meaningful way? Will it help to inform the public? Do the museum facilities offer protection for the stored gift? Are there any strings attached to the gift?)

6. Issues are again raised if the museum decides to no longer keep a gift (called de-accession) it had accepted. Again have students offer answers, discussions and/or debates. Why would the museum make such a decision? (wanting to sell or exchange the object for one they want more, deciding the object no longer serves the purpose of informing the public—perhaps because of duplication.) How do the students feel about museums de-accessioning? What if the donor had been promised that the museum would never remove the gift from the collection?

7. Can the same kinds of inquiries apply to students on a personal level? How do they feel if after giving a gift to a friend he or she “re-gifted” it and gave it to someone else as a gift? Does receiving a gift come with the need to reciprocate?

They could also look at gifts at another level: are gifts sometimes actually bribes? See recent newspaper articles regarding U.S. politicians, and situations in China.
8. In addition to seeing the boldly decorated figurine at the exhibition, you can find more examples in art books and particularly on this website: 
http://exhibitioninquisition.wordpress.com/2013/05/31/chupicuarolarge‐figurine‐type/
with twelve examples shown from various museums and from a collection up for auction.

Students will enjoy comparing the varied approaches made to the designs on the faces and bodies of the figurines. Note the bold use of jagged lines and the varied but consistent design element. Ceramic vessels from the Chupícuaro show the same approaches. Let students create a pattern—organic or geometric—of their own design and transfer this to vessels, book covers, jewelry, and other personal or appropriate school items. They will see the design changing form as they accommodate different shapes.

They can also read the text on the site to learn more about appropriation of goods from Chupícuaro and other sites.
Polychrome zoomorphic (bird) tripod vessel. Valley of Acambaro (Guanajuato, Mexico); 400-100 BCE; ceramic; H: 12.7 cm, W: 29.2 cm, D: 36.8 cm. FOWLER MUSEUM X68W.140, GIFT OF MISS NATAILIE WOOD.

Female figure with dog. Valley of Acambaro (Guanajuato, Mexico); 400-100 BCE; ceramic; H: 17.8 cm. FOWLER MUSEUM X68W.38, GIFT OF MISS NATAILIE WOOD.

Polychrome female figure. Valley of Acambaro (Guanajuato, Mexico); 400-100 BCE; ceramic; H: 24.5 cm. FOWLER MUSEUM X68W.286, GIFT OF MISS NATAILIE WOOD.

Chupícuaro: The Natalie Wood Gift of Ancient Mexican Ceramics
OCTOBER 13, 2013 – JANUARY 26, 2014

For more information, please contact: Stacey Ravel Abarbanel, Director of External Affairs, 310/825-4288, staceyra@arts.ucla.edu
From X—the beginning of each object’s identifying catalog number—to “Why.” Why do museums collect? Why do they collect the specific objects they collect? Why do they choose to display them as they do?

In the Fowler Museum’s cataloging system, “X” precedes a series of numbers that indicate first, the year that the item entered the collection, and then the object’s numerical place in the list of objects acquired that year. This accession number appears on informative labels near the works when they are exhibited or published.

As to the “Why,” museums exist to collect, preserve (generally art and/or artifacts), study, interpret, exhibit, and publish. These mandates are written in the Fowler Museum’s updated (c1990) mission statement (see below) and continue today to influence decisions made in many realms, including that of collecting. The Fowler’s collections are primarily from Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas and they range in date from the first millennium B.C.E. to the present.

"The Fowler Museum at UCLA explores global arts and cultures with an emphasis on works from Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas—past and present. The Fowler enhances understanding and appreciation of the diverse peoples, cultures, and religions of the world through dynamic exhibitions, publications, and public programs, informed by interdisciplinary approaches and the perspectives of the cultures represented. Also featured is the work of international contemporary artists presented within the complex frameworks of politics, culture and social action. The Fowler provides exciting, informative and thought-provoking exhibitions and events for the UCLA community and the people of greater Los Angeles and beyond."

When an object first comes to the Fowler, the “X” serves as a cataloging device, but also can be said to represent the transition to a new identity. The piece originated and/or existed to serve both aesthetic and effective purposes within the cultures that created
them. “X” marks the point of contact between cultures and disciplines as the Fowler Museum exhibits the objects and hopes to enlighten the public further through publications and programs. Thus is served the Fowler Museum’s key mission of education and preservation of rich and diverse cultural heritages from around the world.

The Museum’s vast collections (numbering over 120,000 objects) began with UCLA’s purchase of a collection formed by Los Angeles-based dancer Katharane Mershon who had lived in Bali for nine years. The very first work in the Museum’s collection, X63.1, identifies an Indonesian ceremonial cloth, *geringsing wayang*, woven using the very complex double-ikat technique. In this technique both warp and weft are resist-dyed prior to stringing on the loom. It is only produced in a small number of countries, including India, Japan, Ghana, and Indonesia.

Carnival masks from northern Europe and Northwest Coast boxes were early joiners of the Fowler’s diverse holdings. The early masks were gifts from supporters to the Museum. The boxes were part of the Sir Henry Wellcome Collection, a remarkable gift of 30,000 objects that came to the Museum just two years after its founding.

Although Native American art is not one of the Fowler’s primary areas of collecting, the Museum has mounted several exhibitions, including in the last decade, *Gifts of Pride and Love: Kiowa and Comanche Cradles* displaying some of the most beautiful of Plains Indians beaded arts, and *Katsina/Kachina: Tradition, Appropriation, Innovation* which explored the representations of benevolent Katsina spirits integral to Hopi belief, but also the subject of imitation and appropriation made for collectors and souvenir hunters. The exhibition *Cultural Copy: Visual Conversations on Indigenous Art and Cultural Appropriation* showed works by contemporary indigenous artists from North America and Australia and reflected on various forms of appropriation, from dispossession of land to artistic misappropriation. The strong holdings of Northwest Coast art has led to important collaborative work with First Nations communities in recent years.

In the large Fowler collection of works from the Americas, Moche ceramics from Peru dating from the first millennium CE are prized. The collection began as part of the Wellcome Trust gift of 1965. Ten years later UCLA professor Christopher B. Donnan was named Director of the Museum. The research of Dr. Donnan, an archaeologist and Moche scholar, led to further significant donations of material from the ancient Andes, notably by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. Some of the vessels created by the Moche peoples are exhibited now, including stirrup spout bottles, the name referring to their resemblance to a stirrup. The vessels were cast from molds and the stirrup spouts, built
by hand, were attached to the vessels. Their shapes depict animals and almost all aspects of Moche daily and ritual life.

The African continent holds a secure place in the collections of the Fowler Museum. With an impressive twelve thousand African objects acquired within the first four years of the Museum’s existence, (including the major Wellcome Trust gift which gave about two-thirds of those pieces) to today’s holdings of approximately thirty thousand objects from that continent, the Fowler Museum African collection is one of the largest and most diverse in the U.S. Subsequent directors Doran H. Ross and Marla C. Berns and deputy director Polly Roberts were instrumental in building the Fowler’s African collections and developing large scale, multi-disciplinary traveling exhibitions.

Quantity, while important in order to provide sufficient study material to promote understanding, evaluations and comparisons, is not the only criterion for collecting these materials. The quality of the material is at the very center of the African (and the other) collections in the Museum. The selected objects come from almost all parts of the African continent, and include textiles and other articles of dress and adornment, utilitarian arts, and popular urban arts, in addition to masks and figurative sculptures. One of the featured works in the X to Why exhibition is a male figure with a child on his back from the Teke peoples of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Such sculpted pieces typically are power objects used to protect and heal. The masks on display here from the Ogoni and Ijo peoples of Nigeria were important components of initiations and other rituals. The hats from the Lega and Ekonda peoples of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are often status indicators.

Other works of art from Africa appear currently in the accompanying exhibitions, Double Fortune, Double Trouble: Art for Twins among the Yorúbà and Powerful Bodies: Zulu Arts of Personal Adornment.

From X to Why: A Museum Takes Shape
The Museum’s Early History

As Fowler director Marla Berns writes in the Museum’s fiftieth anniversary publication of 2014, a variety of factors contribute to the development of any institution. In the case of the Fowler Museum, these can be said to include remarkable personalities, innovative thinking, the generosity of enlightened collectors and donors, the impetus of global politics and social change, the growing diversity of Los Angeles’s population, attention to debates concerning the definition of “art,” the changing roles and purviews of museums and universities and their relationships to their publics, and, of course, serendipity.

Dr. Franklin D. Murphy, Chancellor of UCLA from 1960 to 1968, was certainly one of those remarkable individuals. In 1963, envisioning a museum that would build and organize collections of art from the world’s cultures, he established the Museum and Laboratories of Ethnic Arts and Technology, the original designation of today’s UCLA Fowler Museum. As cited in The Mosaic Image: The First Twenty Years of the Museum of Cultural History (Barbara Ann Birney, 1984. Regents of the University of California) he believed that the study of the history and cultural context of ethnic art would promote greater understanding and appreciation of the world’s peoples.

It was serendipity that led to the Fowler’s acquisition of a portion of the important Wellcome collection of non-western art. Sir Henry Wellcome was a British citizen, but had been born in a log cabin in Almond, Wisconsin. After completing studies at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, he founded the pharmaceutical firm of Burrough-Wellcome in London. The firm prospered and Sir Henry won international fame as a medical researcher, at the same time as he collected, first medical artifacts, and later all types of objects from cultures in Africa, the Pacific, and the Americas. After his death a trust was formed to distribute his spectacular collections of archaeological and ethnographic materials. One of the trustees was a friend of a friend of Dr. Murphy. Feeling that the goals of the Wellcome Trust and those of the newborn Museum at UCLA were similar, he arranged a meeting between his two friends. In 1965, a gift of about 30,000 objects was the outcome.

In 1971, the Museum’s name changed to the UCLA Museum of Cultural History and a long-held desire for a separate building to house the Museum was realized in 1992, resulting in another name change reflecting the generosity of the lead donors, the family of Francis E. Fowler III. The newly renamed Fowler Museum of Cultural History opened with a newly updated mission statement which included “…the museum is committed to presenting highly contextualized interpretive exhibitions, publications, and public
programming heavily informed by interdisciplinary approaches and by the perspectives of cultures being represented.”

The most recent change of the Museum’s name, reflecting its wide-ranging programming, to the Fowler Museum at UCLA, was made in 2006 and now fifty years old, the Fowler Museum at UCLA continues to share changing histories of objects and continues to contribute to cross-cultural understanding.

Suggested Activities

Since its earliest acquisitions in 1963, the Fowler Museum has grown to be one of the premiere museums for the preservation and display of works of art from cultures around the world. It began with a singular object.

1. Students should call upon their own experiences to answer the question of why people collect. What have the students collected and what inspired them to select the items they did and do acquire? When does a group of objects become a collection?

Sometimes significant collections become part of a museum, and sometimes a museum will acquire objects to add to an existing collection. Why does a museum collect? Have students consider the factors that might be determinants in objects museums collect.

Museums define parameters for their collections. Can and should they move beyond those boundaries? What are some ethical and strategic considerations as museums build their collections?

2. How have museums evolved in time? Students can research the history of museums, encountering ancient Greek temples that evolved into “mouseions” where goddesses kept watch over the arts and sciences; the kingly treasure houses where spoils of war were displayed in the halls of royal palaces; the Victorian “Cabinets of Curiosity;” and today’s art museums, history, ethnographic, and science museums, and museums like the Fowler, a museum/learning center with a commitment “to promote life-long learning and provide multiple perspectives on the arts and values of a broad spectrum of cultures. (from the the Fowler Museum 2009 mission statement.”)
Let students choose a topic related to those in the last paragraph, and after suitable research, report to the class. After the students’ presentations, have the class compare the information they gathered. Do they want to add to the list above? What about some museums today that exist only on computer sites, in mobile vans, or those that “pop-up”?

Have students compare museums they have visited. How do the collections and exhibitions compare? Did students feel welcome? What did they enjoy most and least about their visit? What recommendations might they give to make those institutions more friendly to young people?

3. Most museums exist to educate. How do museums go about informing and teaching visitors? Museum-going students will be aware of informative labels, publications, lectures and programs, curriculum resource units like this one, guided tours, web sites. If possible have them evaluate one or more of these for a specific exhibition, or for a museum. These could be based on past experiences or as an assignment involving a museum or exhibition visit.

Regarding text as part of an exhibition, have students discuss how much information a label should convey. What are the possible reactions to lengthy informative printed matter about an object or a collection? What are the possible reactions to very abbreviated or no label text? Are there alternatives to the printed label copy? What are possible reactions, positive or negative to these alternatives? How does new media figure into this?

Is it possible that objects and the manner in which they’re displayed can give enough information and bases for thoughts for the visitor, negating the need for informative label copy? Is it possible that a curator’s intent was to leave a display’s meaning to the imagination of the viewer?

4. The “X” in “From X to Why”
“X” precedes information about when the object first came to the Fowler Museum. The “X” also marks the object’s transition from a previous context to a new one. What obligations does a museum have toward that object as far as respecting its past and its significance to the culture of which it was part?

*From X to Why: A Museum Takes Shape*
Often an object, of necessity, can convey only a small bit of information of a broad background. Consider a mask displayed as an work of art without the elaborate costuming, music, movement, participants, and viewers—all constituents of the masquerade of which the mask was only a part. How do students feel about the mask or another object’s transition to an independent presentation, devoid of its setting and meaning? Is there a way to regain a feel of the original context when it is displayed? Is that necessary, or even desirable?

5. What ideas do students have about placement of objects? How would they define the approaches in various exhibitions they’ve seen? Those may have been arranged geographically, historically, thematically. Would they have approached the exhibit the same way? Have them think about notions of display outside a museum context. Examples might include altar offerings, roadside shrines, curio cabinets, collections of posters on electrical/telephone poles, and collections like stamps, coins, baseball cards, and dolls.

6. There are many issues to be considered by museums at all times. Can the students offer some that occur to them? Among the issues are those that ask how best to conserve the objects held, how to evaluate items offered as gifts, how to deaccession, or no longer retain a piece in the collection. Does the person or group who donated a piece have a say in a deaccession process? How does the museum attain the money necessary to keep it running? What can the museum do to meet the needs and sensitivities of its audience as to racial, religious, cultural, gender and political issues? Is it important to get input from its audience into the above issues? If so, students can brainstorm possible ways to do so. And how do museums keep abreast of, or become part of changes that redefine neighborhoods and communities?

Students might research the District Six Museum in Cape Town, South Africa, which was established in 1989 and launched as a museum in 1994 to keep alive the memories of District Six and displaced people everywhere. It came into being as a vehicle for advocating social justice, as a space for reflection and contemplation and as an institution for challenging the distortions and half-truths which propped up the history of Cape Town and South Africa. Its origins are clearly rooted in the needs of a community ravaged by the forced removal policies of apartheid. Students may review the museum’s mission statement on its website, http://districtsix.co.za.
Geringsing Wayang cloth. Tenganan peoples, Bali, Indonesia; early to mid-20th century; cotton, red dye (merinda citrifolia), blue-black dye (indigo); 63.5 x 241 cm. FOWLER MUSEUM AT UCLA X61.1, THE KATHARANE MERSHON COLLECTION OF INDOONESIAN ART.

Male figure with child on back. Teke peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo; late 19th–early 20th century; wood, brass, metal; H: 53.4 cm. FOWLER MUSEUM AT UCLA X65.5463, GIFT OF THE WELLCOME TRUST.

Stirrup spout vessel. Moche peoples. North Coast Peru; 100–800 CE; ceramic; H: 19 cm. FOWLER MUSEUM AT UCLA X88.804, GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. HERBERT L. LUCAS JR.