Los Angeles, CA—The Fowler Museum at UCLA has been awarded a major grant for the international traveling
Assembled from public and private collections, it will include over 225 artworks from across the African continent,
 focusing on the region south of the Sahara, and covering a time period spanning early archaeological
evidence to the present day. It will be the most comprehensive treatment of the blacksmith’s art in Africa
anywhere in the world. *Striking Iron* reveals the history of invention and technical sophistication that led African
blacksmiths to transform one of Earth’s most basic natural resources into objects of life-changing utility,
empowerment, prestige, spiritual potency, and astonishing artistry. Nowhere else in the world is there a more
diverse and sophisticated corpus of forged iron utilitarian forms and artistic expressions than in Africa.

In his award letter, George Lazopoulos, Senior Program Officer in the Division of Public Program wrote to
Fowler Museum Director, Marla C. Berns: ‘With respect to your proposal, panelists appreciated the proposal’s
treatment of Africa ‘as a place of invention and innovation, as a world leader, spearheading iron technology.’
All of this, the panelists declared, reflects ‘years of thought and care’ on the part of the co-curators and
advisers. ‘I could go on and on,’ exclaimed one panelist who felt the exhibition scored ‘high points for all of
the NEH goals for advancement of humanities.’”

The curatorial team for *Striking Iron* is headed by MacArthur Fellow, acclaimed Santa Fe-based artist and
master blacksmith Tom Joyce, and includes Allen F. Roberts, UCLA Professor of World Arts and Cultures;
Henry John Drewal, Evjue-Bascom Professor of Art History and Afro-American Studies at the University of
Wisconsin-Madison; William J. Dewey, Associate Professor of African Art History at Pennsylvania State
University; and Marla C. Berns, Shirley and Ralph Shapiro Director of the Fowler Museum at UCLA.

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**About the Fowler Museum**
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 of world cultures
through dynamic exhibitions, publications, and public programs, informed by interdisciplinary approaches
and the perspectives of the cultures represented. The Fowler also features the work of international
contemporary artists presented within the complex frameworks of politics, culture, and social action.

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