Striking Iron: An Interdisciplinary Symposium
Friday, November 9, 7 PM
Saturday, November 10, 9:30 AM—6:00 PM
Fowler Museum at UCLA, Lenart Auditorium
RSVP at ironsymposium.eventbrite.com

Artists Sokari Douglas Camp and Alison Saar

This two-part symposium explores iron in the context of its history, spiritual potencies, cultural roles and meanings, and artistic possibilities in Africa and its Diasporas. On Friday night, acclaimed visual artists Sokari Douglas Camp and Alison Saar talk about the centrality of metal to their artistic practices, followed by a conversation moderated by Fowler Museum Director Marla C. Berns. Saturday’s sessions feature an interdisciplinary range of distinguished speakers, including astronomer and director of the Griffith Observatory Ed Krupp, archaeologist Shadreck Chirikure, artist Tom Joyce, historians Candice Goucher and Colleen Kriger, art historian Rowland Abiodun, and anthropologist Ade Ofunniyin.

Friday November 9, 12 PM: Join us for a Gallery Talk on bronze ofo with Philip M. Peek, guest co-curator of Summoning the Ancestors: Southern Nigerian Bronzes.

For a complete schedule and to register, click on ironsymposium.eventbrite.com

Friday, November 9, 7:00 PM

Keynote Presentation:
Artist Talks by Sokari Douglas Camp and Alison Saar
Followed by a conversation moderated by Marla C. Berns
Saturday, November 10, 9:30 AM to 6:00 PM

9:30 am Coffee reception in the UCLA Art Council Amphitheatre

10:00 am Welcome/Opening Remarks
Marla C. Berns, Shirley and Ralph Shapiro Director, Fowler Museum

10:15 am-12:00 pm Session 1: Africa’s Iron Origins
Moderated by William Dewey, Associate Professor of Art History, Director of the African Studies Program, Penn State

“Heavy Metal: Hammering Iron out of the Sky”
Ed Krupp, Director, Griffith Park Observatory, Los Angeles

“Archaeological Evidence for Iron’s Independent Invention in Africa: Empirically Proven or Red Herring?”
Shadreck Chirikure, Professor, Archaeology, University of Cape Town

“The Scabbard Only Embellishes, the Sword Never Feels Cold”
Rowland Abiodun, John C. Newton Professor of Art, the History of Art, and Black Studies, Amherst College

12:00-1:45 pm Lunch Break, Film Screening, and Exhibition Viewing

BLACKsmiths of Morocco, a 15 min. film by Henry John Drewal, will be screening on a loop in the auditorium

Fowler exhibitions will be open for viewing, including:

Striking Iron: The Art of African Blacksmiths
World on the Horizon: Swahili Arts Across the Indian Ocean
Summoning the Ancestors: Southern Nigerian Bronzes

2:00-3:00 pm Session 2: Iron and the African Diaspora
Moderated by Henry John Drewal, Evjue-Bascom Professor of Art History, Departments of Art History and Afro-American Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

“Forging the History of Iron in the Atlantic World”
Candice Goucher, Professor, History, Washington State University, Vancouver

“Memory and Public Culture: The Making of an African American Icon in Charleston, South Carolina”
Ade Ofunniyin, Adjunct Professor, Anthropology, African American Studies and Women’s and Gender Studies, College of Charleston

3:00-3:15 pm Break

3:15- 5:00 pm Session 3: Forging Identities
Moderated by Andrew Apter, Professor of History and Director of the African Studies Center, UCLA

“Forging History and Memory in Central Africa”
Colleen Kriger, Professor, History, University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Artist Talk by Tom Joyce: Lingua-Ferrum

5:00-6:00 pm Reception in the UCLA Art Council Amphitheatre