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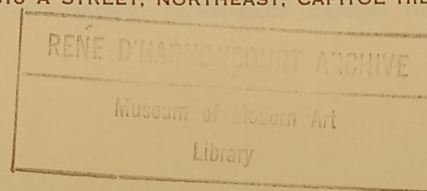
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*for Inter-cultural Understanding*

316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002  
LINCOLN 7-0324, LINCOLN 7-8690



February 21, 1966

Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 W. 53rd St.  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. d'Harnoncourt:

I guess we missed the boat in the matter of getting a grant from the Arts Foundation this time around. From what I have learned of the discussions at the last meeting, we would have been a natural for support. Certainly our project is as relevant to the need for national awareness in both the arts and social understanding as is the exhibition of Indian art - as desirable as that is.

I have been in touch with Dr. Moe as you suggested and we have possibilities with the Humanities Foundation but it may take much time and in the meantime we are truly struggling for survival.

Our Harvard University Peabody Museum show will open in March (after two postponements); also our formal dedication (with a good possibility of President Johnson's participation). In a few weeks, also, my book will appear. A copy is being sent to you. For now, only the book jacket.

Can you do anything, at this point, to help us get some funds?

Sincerely,

Warren M. Robbins

WMR:jms  
Enclosure

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January 21, 1966

To: Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt

Subject: Meeting of Board of Trustees

On Friday, January 28th, at 4:30 P.M., the pro tem Board of Trustees of the Museum of African Art/Frederick Douglass Institute will meet, together with the Board of Directors of the Center for Cross Cultural Communication. The Center has thus far administered the Museum as its legal entity. The two groups will now be consolidated into one body composed of an Administrative Board responsible for day to day operation, a broader group of trustees, and a number of honorary trustees.

Thus far the exigencies of operating a public institute without a fixed budget, as well as the geographically far-flung character of the Museum Board, have made it difficult to plan and hold meetings, but it is hoped that when formally established, the new Board will participate more actively in the development of the Museum/Institute.

A complete financial and program report will be presented at the January 28th meeting, with future plans outlined for discussion, recommendation and approval.

Also to be discussed are plans for the formal dedication of the building, scheduled for Sunday, February 13th on the occasion of Negro History Week (February 12-20). President Johnson has been invited to participate and Vice President Humphrey has already accepted. Coincidentally, a new exhibition of traditional sculpture on extended loan from Harvard University (Peabody Museum) is being installed with the formal opening to take place several weeks thereafter.

I sincerely hope you (or a representative) will be able to be present at this meeting and would appreciate your letting me know on the enclosed self-addressed postcard if we may expect you.

Very sincerely,

Warren M. Robbins

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MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART

MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART

As per your suggestion -

Warren M. Robbins  
Season Greetings  
Warren

HARNENCOURT ARCHIVE  
Museum of Modern Art  
Library

December 21, 1965

Dr. Henry Allen Moe  
National Council on the Humanities  
1800 G Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Moe:

Following a recent lengthy discussion with Rene d'Harnencourt, a member of our Board of Trustees, I decided to request an appointment with you. Because the educational implications of this Institute's work as a demonstration project are broader than the specific activities being carried on, I hope you will not consider a brief meeting an unwarranted imposition on your limited time and that you would be willing to take a first-hand look at what has been accomplished thus far.

Although much is made these days of the need to develop multi-disciplined programs and to foster private initiative in new directions, one encounters a certain institutional rigidity in attempting to gain support for a project which cuts across several fields and has more than a single purpose.

The undertaking straddles the arts and humanities and is, in fact, an attempt to demonstrate how the combined insights of the social sciences and the arts may be (legitimately) popularized and applied to the problem of understanding between the black and white "worlds."

The traditional sculpture of Africa, which has different meaning in both the Western and African worlds and which is of interest to both the ethnologist and the aesthetician, offers a unique opportunity to foster public education in the spheres of both art and socio-political understanding. But although African tribal sculpture is recognized as representing one of the great cultural heritages of mankind, it remains almost unknown to the general public, with its relevance to the struggle for equal rights and human dignity overlooked. It is our contention -- and it has been our experience -- that one need not have a specialized understanding of this art in order to realize its significance in this regard.

The educational task of the Institute/Museum is four-fold:

- 1) helping to make the white world cognizant of the rich creative past of the Negro peoples in order to provide a

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RENE D'HARNONCOURT ARCHIVE  
Museum of Modern Art  
Library

December 21, 1965

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National Council on the Humanities  
1800 G Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C.

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MUSEUM OF AFRICAN

-2-

foundation of equal regard which must underly the quest for equal rights,

2) of equal importance, helping to instill in the Negro himself a sense of ethnic identity and pride of heritage which is indispensable to his true integration in our society. (Any realistic approach to the problem of Negro socialization must concern itself with the void in the Negro identity and the negative self-image rooted in his largely suppressed ancestral relationship to Africa. This question remains controversial but we have already had much support for it from both Negro and white leaders who have taken the time to think it out.)

3) fostering international understanding and harmony by a) providing an educational resource for schools, colleges, and U.S. government agencies training people for overseas careers, and b) helping to make Africans themselves aware of the significance in aesthetic terms of the creative products of their traditional cultures which they tend to discard and play down in the process of modernization. Pride in their own cultural past is an important ingredient in their own nation-building process. In both these respects, the Museum's program -- indeed its very existence -- is in keeping with objectives 1 and 2 of President Johnson's recent Smithsonian address calling for a vast new program of international education.

In the strictly cultural sphere, the presence of the Museum in the Nation's Capital focuses attention for the first time on the cultural antecedents of 1/10th of the American population. The African heritage is nowhere adequately represented in the museums and galleries of Washington which do display the cultural traditions of Europe, Asia, Latin America, the Byzantine Empire, etc. Though Washington's population is over 50% Negro (and its school population 89.5% Negro), the cultural life of the area remains almost entirely white-oriented.

Occupying an historically important building nestled behind the Supreme Court on Capitol Hill -- the first Washington residence of the great 19th century Negro abolitionist orator, Frederick Douglass, the Museum has been operating on a provisional basis for a year and a half. In addition to its current exhibits of African sculpture, its program will include activities reflecting contemporary creative developments among the Negro peoples of the U. S. and Africa, photo-panel displays on the Negro contribution to American history, lectures, printed materials, curriculum supplements and an active campaign of public information.



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Museum of African Art

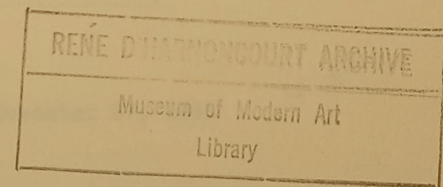
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*for Inter-cultural Understanding*

316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002  
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December 4, 1965



Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53rd St.  
New York, New York 10019

Dear Mr. d'Harnoncourt:

I was very sorry that Mr. Hyde of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund did not get in touch with us last week as intended while he was in Washington. Perhaps he never got here. Anything that you could do to get us a serious hearing with the Brothers Fund would be greatly appreciated.

We are going ahead with plans for the opening of the six-month-loan show of 70 pieces from the Peabody Museum in January, and in February we plan to have a ceremony in which the Capitol Hill Restoration Society will place a commemorative plaque on the building. For this purpose we hope that Vice President Humphrey will be able to persuade President Johnson to participate. The date is Frederick Douglass' birthday which falls, together with Lincoln's birthday, during Negro History Week. It would be a good occasion for a major statement by the President.

In anticipation of both of these events, we will be provisionally refurbishing the exterior as well as the first floor of our new building and must also do over our present galleries. But, to do this, we have very little by way of funds and I really must take steps now to get reasonable backing so that we can get off the ground.

I am following the other suggestion you made during our recent discussion and look forward to an occasion to talk with you again soon.

Sincerely,

Warren M. Robbins

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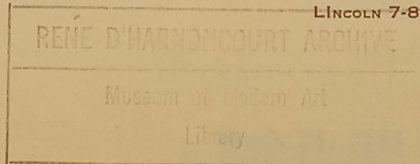
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November 17, 1965

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 Assistant Director  
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Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt  
 Museum of Modern Art  
 11 W. 53rd Street  
 New York, N. Y. 10019

Dear Mr. d'Harnoncourt:

I would be grateful for an opportunity to speak with you as soon as possible and a tentative appointment has been set up for Monday, November 22nd at 4 PM. A later time would be even better for me since I will be driving up from Washington that afternoon to attend the Stillman Congolese opening, but would be there promptly at 4 if this is best for you.

We have made a great deal of progress in all directions which I would report upon, but are still urgently in need of immediate operating funds as well as for long range support. Everyone seems to think that we should be in a strong position for support under the Arts Foundation and it is this that I would like to discuss with you.

Sincerely,

*Warren*

Warren M. Robbins

WMR: jms

MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART

11/19

4:30

11/19/65

Called Mr. Robbins and  
 told him  
 4:30 or  
 4:45 perfectly  
 agreeable  
 with Mr. d'd.

11/22/65

Mr. R d'd  
 saw him

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March 25, 1965

Dear Mr. Robbins:

I hope you will forgive me for not replying before this to your good notes but I stayed away longer than I had expected and am just trying to find my way around among the mountains of accumulated papers.

As you know, I am very anxious to see the Museum and will do so if at all possible during my next visit to Washington. Since this visit is on the occasion of the first meeting of the National Council on the Arts I cannot make any promises because the agenda looks very heavy and I simply do not know if I will have a minute to get away from the meetings.

With very best regards,

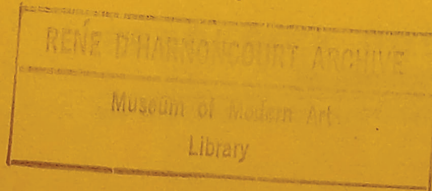
Faithfully yours,

René d'Harnoncourt

Mr. Warren M. Robbins  
Director  
Museum of African Art  
316 A Street, N. E.  
Washington, D. C. 20002

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January 20, 1965

Dear Mr. Robbins:

As you know, I have been ill and away from the Museum and am sorry that this letter has therefore been considerably delayed.

I was very much interested in hearing of the steps you have taken, all of which seem to go in the right direction.

I am leaving tomorrow for a vacation in Key West but I want to confirm my verbal statement to you by saying here that I am very glad to accept membership on your Board of Trustees.

With very best regards,

Faithfully yours,

René d'Harnoncourt

Mr. Warren M. Robbins  
Director  
Museum of African Art  
Frederick Douglass Townhouse  
316 A Street, N. E.  
Capitol Hill  
Washington, D. C.

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LIncoln 7-8290, LIghon 7-8724

Museum of African Art

JUL 15 1965

July 20, 1965

Dear Mr. Robbins:

Dear Mr. Robbins:

I have been asked to do a book on "African Art in American Collections". I am writing to acknowledge your letter of July 15th to Mr. d'Harnoncourt. As Mr. d'Harnoncourt is out of the country on vacation until the first week of August, I am holding your letter for his return. I will be sure you receive a prompt reply to your request to include pieces from Mr. d'Harnoncourt collection in your forthcoming book "African Art in American Collections."

With kind regards,

We hope that we may have your cooperation in providing photos if they are available. Sincerely yours, please return the enclosed self-addressed post-card by return mail to let us know whether you are in a position to contribute to the book.

Enclosed also are a Ellen MacKethan Assistant describing fully the special objectives of the project as well as a questionnaire which will help us to determine what photos we might be able to use. With such information and materials as we may receive, I believe we will be able to save several steps and meet the

Mr. Warren M. Robbins  
Director  
Museum of African Art  
316 A Street, N. E.  
Washington, D. C.

Sincerely yours,  
Warren Robbins  
Warren M. Robbins

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- Ellen MacKethan

WMR:krc  
Enclosures:  
Return Post-card  
Questionnaire

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JUL 15 1965

*Dear Mr D'Harnoncourt,*

I have been asked to do a book on "African Art in American Collections" which Frederick A. Praeger will publish.

We would like to consider inclusion of one or more pieces from your collection in the book. Because it is to be published in time for the First World Festival of Negro Arts to take place in Dakar, Senegal, in April 1966, we must work against a very tight deadline -- September 15th -- relying as much as possible on pictures which are already in existence.

We hope that we may have your cooperation in providing photos if they are available and would appreciate your sending the enclosed self-addressed post-card by return mail to let us know whether you are in a position to contribute to the book.

Enclosed also are a mimeographed paper describing fully the special objectives of the book as well as a questionnaire which will help us to determine what photos we might be able to use. With such information and materials as we may receive, I believe we will be able to save several steps and meet the publisher's deadline for the book.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Sincerely yours,

Warren M. Robbins

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Enclosures:

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To: American Private Collectors and Curators of Museums with African Collections

From: Warren Robbins, Director, Museum of African Art  
316 A Street, Northeast, Washington, D. C., 20002

Subject: Book: AFRICAN ART IN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS (working title)

This memo is being sent to some 200 collectors and museums to seek their assistance in the preparation of a book to be published by Frederick Praeger upon the occasion of the First World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal, April, 1966.

The book will be addressed to an African as well as to an American audience and will be directed not so much to art specialists as to professionals in other fields -- economics, politics etc. -- who have need for a deeper understanding of Africa's cultural heritage, but who have traditionally had little interest in art as such.

The book will include a 64 page essay together with some 100 photographs of art works in American collections.

In view of the "cross-cultural" purposes of the book, the introductory essay must attempt to convey the significance of tribal sculpture in the terms of reference of both African and Western cultures and in a non-esoteric vocabulary.

In the selection of photographs, it is our objective to provide as broadly representative a sampling as possible both of African tribal styles and of American collections. New and hitherto unpublished photographs will be sought out and a high standard will be maintained in the selection of both the art works themselves and the photographs.

The deadline for our submission of materials to the publishers, following final selection and editing of picture captions etc., is September 15th -- just two months -- but we believe that through the attached questionnaire and with your cooperation we will be able to assemble photos of art works of outstanding merit in sufficient time.

If you are interested in having your collection represented in the book, please take the following steps at the earliest possible moment:

- 1) Fill out and send by return mail the enclosed self-addressed postcard.
- 2) Return as soon thereafter as possible the enclosed questionnaire, indicating those pieces in your collection that you would suggest for inclusion and the specific availability of photos of high quality and sharp definition that would be suitable for reproduction. Please send available contact prints for identification purposes if no publishable photos are on hand.

(over)

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	RDH	VII.161

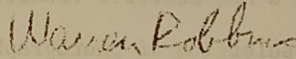
Since the budget for this book is extremely limited, we hope that wherever possible we may use such photos without charge. I wish to assure you that all photographs will be accurately recorded directly upon receipt, handled responsibly to insure against damage or loss and returned immediately upon the decision that they would not be used.

In some instances new photographs will have to be made and we would want to know if you could arrange to have them made by your own photographer and at what cost, or whether we should engage a photographer for this purpose.

I will be assisted in the editing of the photographic section of the book by Robert Hilton Simmons, a collector himself, who is a member of our Board of Trustees.

As Director of the Museum of African Art, I have taken on this task because I believe that such a book can contribute to African-American understanding. I realize the inconvenience that your compliance with our request may cause you and will be grateful for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,



Warren M. Robbins



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MUSEUM  
OF  
AFRICAN  
ART



FREDERICK DOUGLASS TOWNHOUSE  
316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002  
LINCOLN 7-8690

December 22, 1964

January 15, 1965

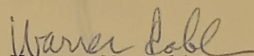
Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 W. 53rd St.  
New York, N. Y. 10019

Dear Mr. d'Harnoncourt:

Here is our new letterhead with a few enclosures bringing you up to date on our program. President Johnson's endorsement will be most helpful and Mrs. Duke's interest, even though she will now be leaving for Spain, will insure our active participation in protocol activities.

I was very sorry to hear of your illness. I hope you are already better and look forward to hearing from you when you have a moment.

Sincerely,

  
Warren M. Robbins  
Director

WMR:jms  
Enclosures

TRUSTEES  
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John A. Davis  
Rene d'Harnoncourt  
William O. Douglas\*  
Joseph Douglass  
Mrs. Angier Biddle Duke  
John B. Duncan  
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Assistant Director  
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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

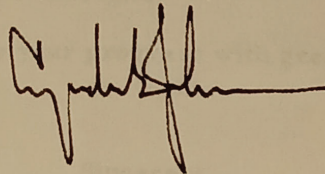
December 22, 1964

Dear Mr. Robbins:

I want to congratulate you on the establishment of the Museum of African Art in the Frederick Douglass House. Such an institute, by portraying the ancient cultural background of Africa, can contribute immeasurably to better African-American relations and to a better understanding of the Negro-American as well.

I have heard a good deal about your single-handed efforts during the past year to launch the Museum and I send you best wishes for its future success; it is a most worthwhile educational project.

Sincerely,



Mr. Warren M. Robbins  
Museum of African Art  
316 A Street, N. E.  
Washington, D. C.

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

December 19, 1964

Dear Warren:

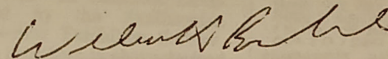
During the year and a half I have served on the President's National Security Staff, handling African affairs, I have repeatedly run into evidence of the value of your Museum of African Art. From my conversations with African diplomats and visitors, I know that the Museum is a very real force for goodwill and cultural communication.

Your own unselfish and brilliant contribution to this project deserve the highest praise. I want you to know that you have the support of this office, in any way that it can be useful to you, and I hope that many others with a concern for long term relations between the United States and the new nations of Africa will find it possible to support and assist the Museum.

I shall continue to follow your progress with great interest.

With best regards.

Sincerely,



William H. Brubeck

Mr. Warren M. Robbins  
Museum of African Art  
316 A Street, N. E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002

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C-8

## Art—Radio

THE SUNDAY STAR

Washington, D. C., December 20, 1964

## ART AND ARTISTS

## Effective African Exhibit

By FRANK GETLEIN  
Art Critic of The Star

According to legend Picasso and a couple of friends were standing on a Paris street during World War I, watching troops and vehicles move through the city. Suddenly there appeared a camouflaged tank and the painter's immediate response was that the government had at last caught up with what he and Braque had begun doing seven or eight years earlier, the dissolution of form into new forms, new planes, new inventions of light and shadow.

If true, the gap was a small one compared to another way in which the Cubists of 1906 were ahead of governments and Western society at large, namely in the recognition of the existence of an authentic African culture. Only since the end of World War II and really only much more recently has the process of African independence and nationhood begun to move. But the basic recognition of African virtue and integrity took place in modern art more than half a century ago. In the figurative Cubism of Picasso and Braque that recognition is even more obvious—and much more important—than the discovery of the principles of camouflage. That recognition entered modern art from two supposedly opposite and incompatible directions, from the preoccupation with form of the French and from the impassioned and direct expression of emotion of the Germans.

The two things never were incompatible, but in the atmosphere of 20th-century art history their reconciliation is especially clear in African art, where, for instance, geometric elaboration and decoration automatically pass into expressive evocation of ritual and rhythm.

## Art More Important

With the contemporary emergence of Africa as a thing in itself — no longer a branch of Europe — the existence and meaning of African art become even more important to the West than

they have been for half a century in our own art. Washington is particularly fortunate, therefore, in having here for the last year or so the Museum of African Art, 316 A St. NE. Part of the program of the museum is the diffusion of knowledge about the relations between 20th-century European and American art and African art of time immemorial. This function is left at the moment to the placing around the rooms of large reproductions of paintings by Picasso, Klee, Modigliani and others, all, in this context, with a definite debt to the Africans.

The relationship is not pursued too deeply and perhaps it should not be. But it is unmistakable that the moderns and the Africans are talking about many of the same things and in words from closely related languages. In the African sculpture as in the modern paintings, eyes and other bodily features are reduced to tiny dots or punctuation marks within facial and bodily planes exaggerated and colored so as to convey both the geometry of wood cutting and the angularity of the human figure. In the sculpture as in the paintings, the effect of such severe distortion is to suggest the presence of spirits within the forms, shaped by and shaping the strange personages of masks and wooden figures.

The most important contribution of the Museum of African Art is not the display of an interesting set of relationships between the arts of two cultures once thought to be worlds apart. Rather, it is the revelation of fundamental human concerns in an art language of effective universality.

This is what appears in the figures carved for invocations to gods and ancestors, in the figures that are developments of basic animal forms but that are carried endlessly away from nature in the human instinct to reshape nature.

The new installation of the permanent exhibition at the museum is effective and stimulating. At the moment



Double faced mask—male and female—from the Baoule tribe is in the permanent exhibition at the Museum of African Art.

there is also on view a temporary show, "The Art of Nigeria," an exhibition circulated by the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service. The sculpture is characterized by such recurrent themes as the nursing mother and especially twin figures of various kinds. The Nigerian work also shows more apparent humor than most African art. This kind of temporary show, placed within the permanent installations at the museum, has the value of giving a sharp focus on a small area within the vastness of all sub-Sahara Africa surveyed in the institution at large.

The Museum is in the Frederick Douglass house and is open Saturdays and Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., closed on Fridays.

## PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART, 17th Street and New York Avenue NW—Daily, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Sundays and holidays, 2 to 5 p.m.; closed Mondays.

DUMBARTON OAKS RESEARCH LIBRARY AND COLLECTIONS, 1700 32nd St. NW—Tuesday through Sunday, 2 to 5 p.m.; closed Monday.

FREER GALLERY OF ART, 12th Street and Independence Avenue SE—Daily, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART, 316 A St. NE, Frederick Douglass House—Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Fridays. Admission 35 cents.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, Constitution Avenue at Sixth Street NW—Daily, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sundays, 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.

PAN AMERICAN UNION, Constitution Avenue and 17th Street NW—Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

PHILLIPS COLLECTION, 1612 21st St. NW—Daily, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Mondays, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Sundays, 2 to 7 p.m.

TEXTILE MUSEUM, 230 S St. NW—Monday through Friday, 1 to 5 p.m.

WASHINGTON GALLERY OF MODERN ART, 1503 21st St. NW—Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sundays, 2 to 6 p.m.; closed Mondays. Admission, 50 cents.

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MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

The Museum of African Art is supported entirely by private contributions. At present, it is urgently in need of funds to continue in operation until it can develop more substantial support from foundations, industry and the African nations themselves, as well as from public membership.

The Museum is currently engaged in a fund-raising drive which will enable it to: a) purchase and refurbish the entire Frederick Douglass Townhouse only one-half of which is now occupied by the Museum; b) expand its facilities to include increased exhibition space, a lecture hall, a reference library, a study collection and curatorial offices; c) sustain a regular staff of five persons who will build around the exhibitions an active educational program of lectures, films, seminars, performances, school visits and extension activities covering all phases of African and American Negro creative life. \$500,000 is needed for the first five years of operation, with an initial target of \$125,000.

If you subscribe to the Museum's purpose of fostering deeper inter-racial understanding, we invite you to support its efforts in one of the following categories of membership:

\$10 Regular Member	\$ 100 Donor
25 Contributing Member	500 Patron*
50 Sustaining Member	1,000 Benefactor*
	\$5,000 Sponsor*

Your subscription to the Museum at this time will be designated as a Charter Membership which will extend for one year beyond the formal inauguration of the Museum's program of activities. (\* denotes Life Membership for which contributions are cumulative)

All categories of membership are valid for double admittance to the Museum and to its special functions. Members will also receive exhibition catalogues and other publications as they appear. (Students and teachers are extended the facilities of the Museum including its reference library for a yearly registration fee of \$2.00.)

The Museum is sponsored by the Center for Cross-cultural Communication, a private non-profit, educational institute. Contributions to it are tax-deductible under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code. Checks may be made payable either to the Museum of African Art or to the Center for Cross-cultural Communication.

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Informal Financial Report  
MUSEUM of AFRICAN ART

(Detailed 5 year budget plan, supplied upon request)

A. A two-phased fund-raising drive is underway for:

- \$125,000 - needed initially to pay for, refurbish and equip the Museum (purchased with borrowed funds).
- \$500,000 - total needed to sustain the Museum and a staff of five persons during a five year organizational period.

B. Initial sources of support: foundations, corporations and private contributions.

Categories of support:

Founder	\$10,000
Benefactor	5,000
Patron	1,000
(other categories: \$10 to \$500)	

C. Income and support to date\*:

<u>\$30,000</u>	grants and contributions (grants pending with several foundations)
<u>20,000</u>	aggregate value of gifts of art works to Museum (insurance value of art works on loan in excess of \$200,000)
15,000	repayable 5% loans
26,000	mortgages on property

D. Potential continuing sources of income: (to be developed during initial five year period to cover an annual budget of approximately \$100,000)

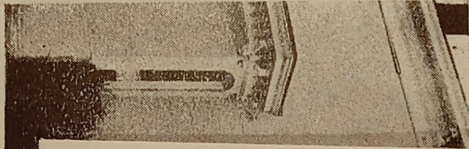
- 1) Public admissions: \$35,000 (of 10,000,000 annual visitors to Washington we hope to attract at least 100,000 persons)
- 2) Annual memberships and sales: \$20,000
- 3) Subvention by 40 African diplomatic missions in U. S.: \$25,000 - \$30,000
- 4) Subscription by major international business firms having a vested interest in improved African-American understanding: \$40,000

\*(Also non-salaried services of director for two years and other volunteer staff support totalling over two man-years)

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DECEMBER 1964  
**Negro Digest**  
35c



Located three blocks from the U. S. Capitol, the first home owned by Frederick Douglass now houses the Museum of African Art

In the town occupied by Douglass, a Service office published a hor

MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART  
FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSE  
316 A STREET, NORTHEAST  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002



Museum, for Mar

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RENE D'AVANCO COURT ARCHIVE  
Museum of Modern Art  
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Located three blocks from the U. S. Capitol, the first home owned by Frederick Douglass now houses the Museum of African Art

Museum for African Art

DECEMBER 1984

# Negro Digest

Name.....

Address.....

.....Telephone.....

Amount Enclosed.....Please Send Bill.....

Contributions of either funds or negotiable securities are tax deductible.

Checks may be made payable to the Museum of African Art or to its sponsoring organization, the Center for Cross-Cultural Communication.

I (we) subscribe to the purpose of the Museum of African Art of fostering better inter-cultural understanding and wish to contribute or pledge the sum checked below for its support:

- |   |         |                                     |       |
|---|---------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR MEMBER<br>(Single or Double) | \$10    | <input type="checkbox"/> DONOR      | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CONTRIBUTING                         | 25      | <input type="checkbox"/> PATRON     | 500*  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SUSTAINING                           | 50      | <input type="checkbox"/> BENEFACTOR | 1000* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SPONSOR                              | \$5000* |                                     |       |

\* Denotes LIFE MEMBERSHIP for which contributions or pledges are cumulative.

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DECEMBER 1964

# Negro Digest

A JOHNSON PUBLICATION

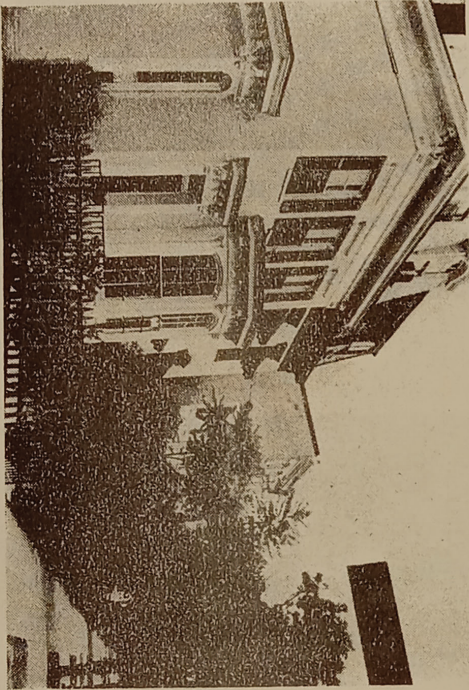
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Frederick Douglass Memorial

## WASHINGTON'S AFRICAN MUSEUM

*In the town house once occupied by Frederick Douglass, an ex-Foreign Service officer has established a home for African art.*

IT IS more than fitting that the first museum in the United States devoted completely to the art of Africa should occupy the premises of the former town house of Frederick Douglass.



*Located three blocks from the U. S. Capitol, the first home owned by Frederick Douglass now houses the Museum of African Art.*



*During opening...*

*And while...*



*Museum for...*

RENE D'AMATONCOURT ARCHIVE  
Museum of Modern Art  
Library

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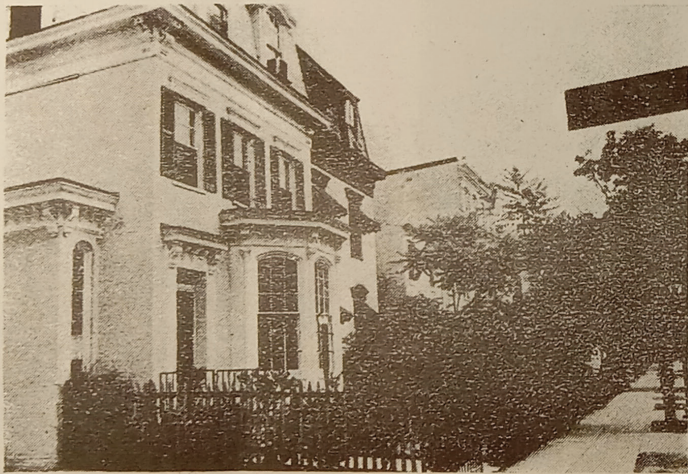
# Negro Digest

DECEMBER 1964 A JOHNSON PUBLICATION 35c

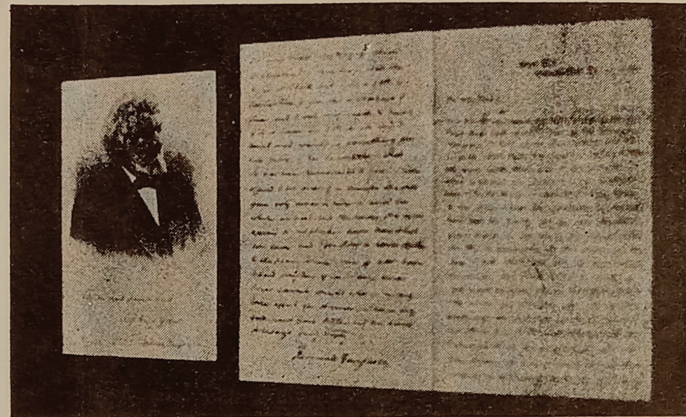
## Frederick Douglass Memorial WASHINGTON'S AFRICAN MUSEUM

*In the town house once occupied by Frederick Douglass, an ex-Foreign Service officer has established a home for African art*

**I**T IS more than fitting that the first museum in the United States devoted completely to the art of Africa should occupy the premises of the former town house of Frederick Douglass.

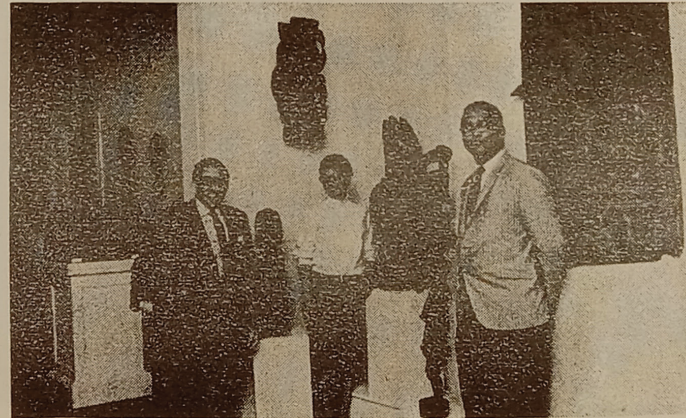


*Located three blocks from the U. S. Capitol, the first home owned by Frederick Douglass now houses the Museum of African Art*



*During opening of museum, this Douglass portrait and reproduction of one of his letters were displayed in building*

And while the museum does not bear the great abolitionist's name, it remains in a very real sense a memorial to him. For it was Frederick Douglass, more than any other Negro—and American—in the na-



*Museum founder Warren Robbins (left) poses with staff members Marianne Forssell and Donald Gaither (a volunteer)*

tion's history, who established the intellectual bases for the now acceptable linking of 20,000,000 Americans with ancient African cultures.

The Museum of African Art in Washington, D. C., is the project of Warren M. Robbins, a former Government employe who was once chief of the American cultural program in Germany. Following his resignation from the Foreign Service in 1962, Mr. Robbins established the Center for Cross-Cultural Communication, an organization concerned with educating the public in the relationship between the social sciences and the arts. Through the arts, it is felt, people may gain

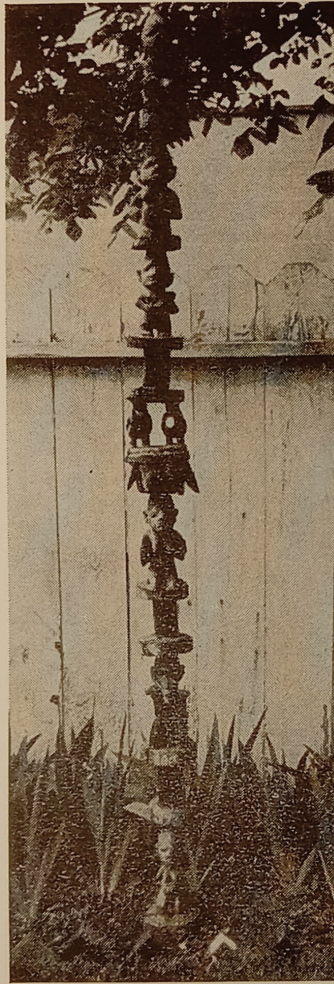


*A chair of the Senufo tribe in the Ivory Coast*

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—on both a national and international level—a new and constructive perspective on the customs, histories and cultures of other people. The Museum of African Art developed from Center for Cross-Cultural Communication plans.

When the museum opened last June, there were some 150 art objects from 15 African countries on display. A large number of pieces belonged to Mr. Robbins, and many others were borrowed from private collections and various institutions. Possibilities for expansion of the collection are limitless. Most of the 30 African nations which have gained independence since World War II have embassies



*An elegantly carved house post from Nigeria in the garden*

in the nation's capital, and it is not unlikely that they could be persuaded to make contributions to the museum.

Shortly after the Museum of African Art opened in the old town house once owned by Frederick Douglass, another Douglass home in the capital became a part of the national park system. The 14-room Douglass home, located on an eight-acre hilltop lot, officially was transferred from the Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association to the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. Douglass had occupied this home from 1877 to 1895, when he died.

The National Park Service is in the process of restoring the suburban Douglass home and its impressive furnishings, all of which were preserved by the association. Books and historical documents are stocked in the rooms.

At the Museum of African Art, a restful garden is one of the features. Spectacular pieces of African sculpture are distributed over the grounds.

Collections of African art similar to that in the museum can be found in several museums in other cities, notably the University Museum in Philadelphia, Penn. A group of Detroit artists and citizens recently opened a campaign to establish a special African section in the city's Art Institute. There are impressive collections of African art in the major New York museums.



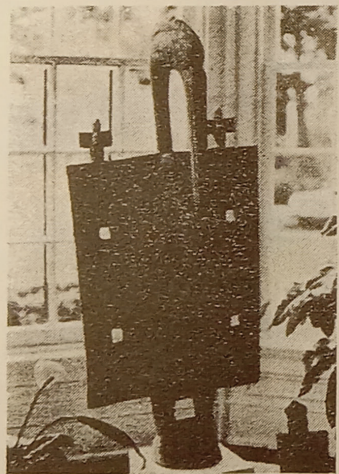
*An entire wall of masks from the Bambara tribe is featured in this section of museum. Bambaras occupy area around Mali*



*Dance helmet is antelope head-dress from Bambara tribe*



*A Basonga tribe power figure from the Congo (Léopoldville)*



*A horn bull head-dress, also of the Senuso tribe*

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MUSEUM  
OF  
AFRICAN  
ART



FREDERICK DOUGLASS TOWNHOUSE  
316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002  
LINCOLN 7-8690

February 15, 1965

Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 W. 53rd St.  
New York 19, N. Y.

Dear Mr. d'Harnoncourt:

Recently Stephen Currier of the Taconic Foundation visited the Museum to consider the possibility of support. He suggested a number of people whom I should write to, including William Burden. I hope that my following Mr. Currier's suggestion is acceptable to you. A carbon copy of my letter is attached.

I think you will be pleased to know that Ben Shahn has drawn four studies of Frederick Douglass for us and is signing an edition of 250 serigraphs of each one, single copies of which we will present to Sustaining Members (\$50) of the Museum. The set of four in a special portfolio with an added serigraph of a poem on Douglass by the Negro poet Langston Hughes will be presented to Life Members (\$500 Patrons and above). This can bring us upward of \$50,000 in income.

The American Federation of Arts has given us a \$5,000 grant under its Museum Donor Program to purchase works by young American Negro artists, which we are doing. *Any particular suggestions*

I am hoping very much that you will plan to visit the Museum briefly on your next trip to Washington.

Hope you are feeling better.

Sincerely,

*Warren*

Warren M. Robbins

WMR:jms  
Enclosure

TRUSTEES

Mrs. Frances Bolton\*  
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Rene d'Harnoncourt  
William O. Douglas\*  
Joseph Douglass  
Mrs. Angier Biddle Duke  
John B. Duncan  
Mrs. Joan Elisofon  
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Nicholas Satterlee

Acting Director  
Warren M. Robbins  
Assistant Director  
Henry H. Hecht, Jr.

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7/11

Mr. William Burden

-2-

January 29, 1965  
(dictated January 25)

Mr. William Burden  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 W. 53rd St.  
New York 19, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Burden:

It has been the suggestion of Stephen Currier that I write to you concerning the new Museum of African Art in Washington. I had never done so up till now realizing that your hands are quite full, I am sure, with the Museum of Modern Art. Mr. Currier believes that you would, nevertheless, be interested in the particular objectives of the Museum of African Art which are unlike that of any other cultural institute in the country.

The Museum is concerned not solely with aesthetics but with the implications of art - African art - in the realm of interracial understanding on both the international and domestic levels. Because in the traditional sculpture of Africa there is to be revealed a great creative propensity on the part of the Negro people, it is our contention that broader public awareness of the rich and ancient cultural heritage of Africa can help to break down prejudice and misconception concerning the origins and background of the Negro American. Such an awareness can promote not only greater respect for the Negro by white Americans, but can help give to the Negro American himself a greater sense of ethnic esteem. Our view is borne out by the support and endorsement that the project has won thus far in the Negro community.

Built around the Museum's exhibitions of traditional African sculpture (galleries with contemporary African art and works by American Negro artists will be added later) there will be an active program of lectures, films, discussions, and interracial programs dealing with the creative life of the Negro.

The Museum is the principal project of the Center for Cross-cultural Communication, a tax-exempt educational institute which I established two years ago following some 13 years in the Foreign Service. The Center's more general purpose is to popularize the perspectives of the social sciences and the arts and to apply them more fully in resolving problems of intercultural understanding.

As the parent organization of the Museum, the Center will work closely with the school system of the District of Columbia - Wesley Williams, the Board of Education's Negro President, as well as the District's first Negro Commissioner, John Duncan, are on our Board of Trustees - in making Washington's school population, over 70 percent of which is Negro, more aware of the ancient cultural heritage of the Negro in Africa.

The Museum has other objectives as well - to promote better African/American understanding; to act as an adjunct to diplomatic relations; to provide an educational resource for the people.

165-11

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MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART

FREDERICK S. DUNLAP'S TOWNHOUSE  
214 A STREET NORTHERN CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON D. C. 20002

Mr. William Burden

-2-

January 29, 1965

universities and government training programs concerned with Africa; to give the Nation's capital its only Museum dealing exclusively with African culture.

We must exercise great care not to let these broader objectives detract from the maintenance of high standards of Museum operation and we realize that aesthetic considerations must be paramount.

We would be grateful for your interest in this undertaking and would welcome your good counsel. I have enclosed a few background materials on the Museum and hope that I may have an occasion to show you through it in person.

Sincerely yours, the Museum directly to

A few materials are enclosed describing the Museum and the special role Warren M. Robbins only in the arts in diplomatic circles and in the sphere of inter- understanding as well.

WMR:jms  
Enclosures

Should you not be able to be in Washington at this time, we hope nevertheless that the Museum will win your interest and that we may welcome you as members.

Sincerely yours,

Warren M. Robbins

Warren M. Robbins  
Acting Director

It would be appreciated if you would indicate on the enclosed postcard whether or not you will be able to attend and how many persons would be in your party. Thank you.

FYI in the event that you could possibly come!

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postcard "lets"  
1/30/65  
EW

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MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART



FREDERICK DOUGLASS TOWNHOUSE  
316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002  
LINCOLN 7-8690

January 18, 1965

*Dear Mr D'Harnoncourt*

I believe that you have received from the Hecht Company in Washington an invitation to the opening on January 27 of an exhibition and sale of traditional African sculpture collected by Morton May, President of the May Company chain of which Hecht's is an affiliate.

We hope that if you take this occasion to come to Washington you will visit the recently established Museum of African Art. On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Museum, I would like to invite you to a Cocktail-Buffer at the Museum at 6:30, just preceding the Hecht opening at 8:30 (a 4:00 or 5:00 o'clock Eastern shuttle flight will bring you to Washington in ample time for both events. Transportation will be provided from the Museum directly to Hecht's).

A few materials are enclosed describing the Museum and the special role that it plays not only in the arts but in diplomatic circles and in the sphere of inter-racial understanding as well.

Should you not be able to be in Washington at this time, we hope nevertheless that the Museum will win your interest and that we may welcome you as members.

Sincerely yours,

*Warren Robbins*

Warren M. Robbins  
Acting Director

RSVP

It would be appreciated if you would indicate on the enclosed postcard whether or not you will be able to attend and how many persons would be in your party. Thank you.

*FYI in the event that you could possibly come!*

*Postcard - "regrets"  
rephrased  
1/21/65  
CW*

- TRUSTEES
- Mrs. Frances Bolton\*
  - John A. Davis
  - Rene d'Harnoncourt
  - William O. Douglas\*
  - Joseph Douglass
  - Mrs. Angier Biddle Duke
  - John B. Duncan
  - Mrs. Joan Elisofon
  - J. Wayne Fredericks
  - S. I. Hayakawa
  - Mrs. Frances Humphrey Howard
  - Eugene McCarthy\*
  - Porter McCray
  - E. Jefferson Murphy
  - Warren M. Robbins
  - James H. Robinson
  - Roy Sieber
  - Ben Shahn\*
  - Hugh Smythe
  - Robert Hilton Simmons
  - Adlai Stevenson\*
  - Wesley Williams
- \* Honorary

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  - Leon Sirota

- ADVISORY BOARD
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  - William Leo Hansberry
  - Harry Holtzman
  - Langston Hughes
  - Jacob Lawrence
  - Rayford Logan
  - Jacques Lipchitz
  - James Porter
  - Nicholas Satterlee

Acting Director  
Warren M. Robbins  
Assistant Director  
Henry H. Hecht, Jr.

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MUSEUM  
OF  
AFRICAN  
ART



FREDERICK DOUGLASS INSTITUTE  
for Inter-cultural Understanding

316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002  
LINCOLN 7-8690, LINCOLN 7-0324

*File -  
have talked  
to Robbins  
by phone  
JRC*

May 4, 1965

Mr. René d'Harnoncourt  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 W. 53rd St.  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. d'Harnoncourt:

Although our position in general seems to be getting more and more strong in terms of moral support, we are currently in a very desperate situation financially with our bank balance down to about \$1,000. If it is at all possible for you to scare up some interim funds for operating expenses so that we don't have to close down upon the occasion of our first anniversary in June, this would be deeply appreciated.

We are under active consideration by a number of foundations and individuals and something is bound to develop within the next months. The United Planning Organization is studying our proposal (they have more than \$4,000,000 of Ford and Office of Economic Opportunity money to dispense in Washington and we will also be eligible for grants from the 3 billion dollars that Keppel will be controlling at the HEW Office of Education.) Our approach couldn't be a better one for the National Council on the Arts to consider when they receive their funds. Letters are going to go out in our behalf also over Vice President Humphrey's signature and John Duncan, (the first Negro Commissioner of the District of Columbia) is going to jump actively into matters for us, feeling (and expressing quite strongly) that the Museum is extremely important just by its very existence; that we should immediately get \$150,000 from some foundation; that it is ridiculous that we haven't been helped already.

So our future seems to be assured; it is only the present that worries me.

Hopefully,

*Warren*

Warren M. Robbins

WMR:jms

- TRUSTEES
- Hubert H. Humphrey  
Chairman\*
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  - Stephen R. Currier
  - John A. Davis
  - Rene d'Harnoncourt
  - Thomas J. Dodd
  - William O. Douglas\*
  - Joseph Douglass
  - Mrs. Angier Biddle Duke
  - John B. Duncan
  - Mrs. Joan Elisofon
  - J. Wayne Fredericks
  - S. I. Hayakawa
  - Frank Horton\*
  - Mrs. Frances Humphrey Howard
  - Porter McCray
  - E. Jefferson Murphy
  - Warren M. Robbins
  - James H. Robinson
  - Roy Sieber
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  - Harry Holzman
  - Langston Hughes
  - Jacob Lawrence
  - Rayford Logan
  - Jacques Lipchitz
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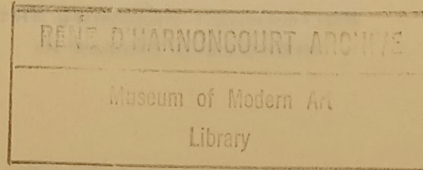
Director  
Warren M. Robbins  
Assistant Director  
Henry H. Hecht, Jr.

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MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART



FREDERICK DOUGLASS TOWNHOUSE  
316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002  
LINCOLN 7-8690



*Museum of African Art*

March 31, 1965

Mr. Rene d'Haroncourt  
Director  
The Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53rd Street  
New York, New York 10019

*File*

Dear Mr. d'Haroncourt:

Thank you very much for your letter of March 25th.

The Decatur House and the Smithsonian got the jump on us in inviting the members of the National Council on the Arts to lunch during its two days of meetings on April 9th and 10th. We have, however, extended an invitation to members of the group to visit the Museum just after lunch on Saturday as the meetings adjourn, and I hope that most of them will be able to attend. Of the 20-plus members of the Council two are on our Board, Ralph Ellison in addition to yourself. We are only a few minutes from the Smithsonian, and if you have to make a plane we would be glad to have you driven directly from the Museum to the airport.

We have made a great deal of progress lately: Vice-President Humphrey has agreed to become Honorary Chairman of our Board; Ben Shahn has done signed serigraph editions of four studies of Frederick Douglass as a fund-raising instrument; and some money is beginning to trickle in.

Hoping that you can make it, and with best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

*Warren Robbins*

Warren M. Robbins

WMR:krc

- TRUSTEES
- Mrs. Frances Bolton\*
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  - Rene d'Haroncourt
  - William O. Douglas\*
  - Joseph Douglass
  - Mrs. Angier Biddle Duke
  - John B. Duncan
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*Mus. of African Art*

53401

THE JOHNSON FOUNDATION  
IN RACINE, WISCONSIN

The Museum of African Art  
with the cooperation of  
The Johnson Foundation

cordially invite you to the Wingspread exhibition

of

"The Heritage of African Art"

and

evening lecture and reception

with

WARREN M. ROBBINS  
Director  
Museum of African Art, Washington, D. C.

at

8:00 p.m.  
Monday, November 6, 1967

at

WINGSPREAD  
33 East Four Mile Road, Racine, Wisconsin

Attendance will be limited to the capacity of Wingspread.  
Please telephone The Johnson Foundation switchboard  
(639-3211) with your response, by Friday, November 3.

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	RDH	VII.161

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WINGSPREAD

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ARCHIVES, NY

The Museum of African Art  
with the cooperation of  
The Johnson Foundation

cordially invites you

The Wingspread Exhibition

THE HERITAGE OF AFRICAN ART

"The Heritage of African Art" exhibition has been assembled at Wingspread by the Museum of African Art in Washington, D. C. The works of traditional sculpture from twelve African nations are from the private collections of Herbert Baker and Edward Hokin in Chicago, James Silberman in Washington, and the museum collection.

Warren M. Robbins is the founder and director of the Museum of African Art and related Frederick Douglass Institute of Negro Arts and History.

"The unusual carvings produced by the tribal peoples of Africa are recognized by contemporary art historians and connoisseurs as representing one of the great creative heritages of mankind."

Introduction to "The Heritage of African Art" catalogue

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## WINGSPREAD

THE JOHNSON FOUNDATION

RACINE, WISCONSIN 53401

The Museum of African Art  
with the cooperation of  
The Johnson Foundation

cordially invite you  
to

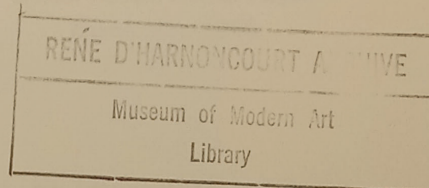
The Wingspread Exhibition

"THE HERITAGE OF AFRICAN ART"

November 5 - December 31, 1967

at Wingspread

33 East Four Mile Road, Racine, Wisconsin



Warren M. Robbins, Director of the Museum of African Art, of Washington, D. C. has assembled the exhibition at Wingspread. "The Heritage of African Art" includes 100 works of traditional sculpture of 12 African nations, on loan from the private collections of Herbert Baker and Mr. and Mrs. Edward Hokin in Chicago, of James Silberman in Washington, and from the museum collection.

### Public Events Planned During the Wingspread Exhibition

- PUBLIC OPENING AT WINGSPREAD on Sunday, November 5, 1:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Free tickets are available at Racine Public Library, Wustum Museum, Milwaukee Public Libraries and Milwaukee Public Museum.
- "The Negro Heritage in the United States and Africa", a public lecture by Warren M. Robbins, Director of the Museum of African Art, will be held at the MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM Tuesday, November 7 at 8:00 p.m. The lecture, sponsored by the museum, with the cooperation of The Johnson Foundation, is an event in PROJECT: NEGRO ACHIEVEMENT.
- GROUPS may arrange special tours during the period of the exhibition, November 5 - December 31, by writing to The Johnson Foundation.
- Wingspread will be open on THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9 and THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16 for individuals who wish to see the exhibition. GALLERY HOURS are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Additional dates to be announced.

"The unusual carvings produced by the tribal peoples of Africa are recognized by contemporary art historians and connoisseurs as representing one of the great creative heritages of mankind." -- from the catalogue of "The Heritage of African Art."

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MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART



FREDERICK DOUGLASS INSTITUTE  
for Inter-cultural Understanding

316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002  
LINCOLN 7-0324, LINCOLN 7-8690

March 31, 1966

*Mus. of African Art  
- Art  
- the drawer*

*Dear Mr. D'Harnoncourt,*

Please accept my apologies both for the lateness in informing you of progress with the book "African Art in American Collections" and the necessarily impersonal way of reporting to the 200 people with whom we were in correspondence during its preparation.

TRUSTEES

Hubert H. Humphrey  
Chairman\*

Mrs. Frances Bolton\*  
Mrs. Arthur A. Cohen  
Stephen R. Currier  
John A. Davis

Rene d'Harnoncourt  
Thomas J. Dodd  
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E. Jefferson Murphy  
Warren M. Robbins  
James H. Robinson

Roy Sieber  
Ben Shahn\*  
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Adlai Stevenson\*  
Sterling Tucker  
Wesley Williams  
\* Honorary

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Harry Holzman  
Langston Hughes  
Jacob Lawrence  
Rayford Logan  
Jacques Lipchitz  
James Porter  
Nicholas Satterlee

Director  
Warren M. Robbins  
Assistant Director  
Henry H. Hecht, Jr.

As you will note from the enclosed flyer, the book is about to appear through regular commercial channels in the United States. In addition, it is being distributed by our Embassies throughout Africa on the occasion of the First World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar Senegal, April 1-24.

This early deadline for its completion allowed only four months for the gathering, selecting and editing of photographs and related information and an equally short period for its production and printing.

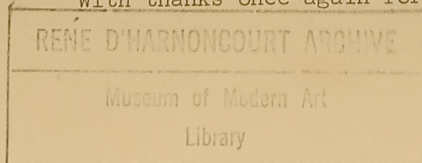
I am deeply grateful to all those whose assistance made it possible for a book so broadly representative of both African countries and American collections -- to be put together in such a short time. 106 Museum and private collections are represented among a total of 354 illustrations of sculpture from more than 100 tribes. We regret that we were not able to include many excellent photos sent to us and that there was not sufficient time to seek out or commission photos of pieces which we knew of and would have liked to include.

If works from your collection have been included in the book, the plate numbers are noted below. Photos lent to us which were not used will be returned to their owners by separate cover as soon as possible.

The book itself may be obtained from your local book dealer or if it conveniences you by mail from the Museum of African Art. It is available to Museum members <sup>*very low cost*</sup> at a special rate of \$8.00 per copy.

I have enclosed some descriptive material on the Museum for your perusal together with a copy of the catalogue of the Harvard Peabody Exhibition which we have just opened for a six month period.

With thanks once again for your interest and assistance.



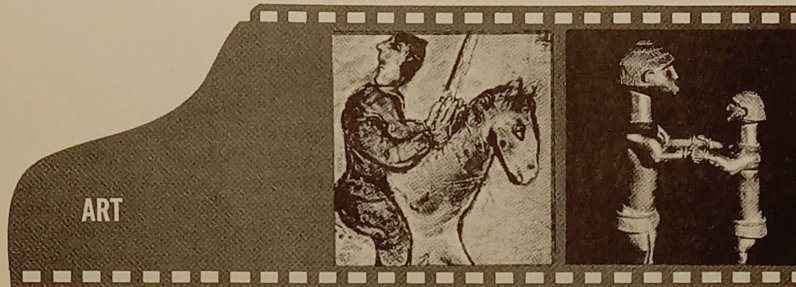
Cordially yours,

*Warren Robbins*  
Warren M. Robbins

WMR:lp

Plate #'s 146, 147

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**AFRICAN ART IN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS**

**Warren M. Robbins**

The tribal sculpture of Negro Africa, observes Warren Robbins, represents one of the great heritages of mankind and a principal force in the twentieth-century revolution in Western art. This volume, the most complete photographic survey yet published of African art in American museums and private collections, illustrates the various styles of the major sculpture-producing areas in Africa. The Introduction places in careful balance the interaction of African and Western cultures and examines African art from the perspective of these two civilizations. Warren Robbins, formerly a cultural attaché in the U.S. diplomatic service, is the founder and director of the new Museum of African Art in Washington.

May            ca. 256 pp.            350 black-and-white illus.            \$12.50

FREDERICK A. PRAEGER

111 Fourth Avenue

New York, N. Y. 10003

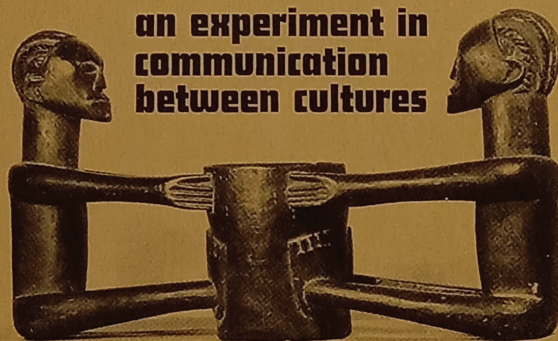
Museum of African Art  
Frederick Douglass House  
316 A St., N.E. Capitol Hill  
Washington, D. C. 20002

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# the museum of african art

RENE D'HARNOUCOURT ARCHIVE  
Museum of Modern Art  
Library

**an experiment in  
communication  
between cultures**



The week which encompasses the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (February 12th) and of the great 19th century Negro abolitionist orator-publisher, Frederick Douglass (February 17th), has been designated as Negro History Week.

An unusual approach to the task of making the American public more aware of the creative past of the Negro peoples of the world is being carried on by a new museum in Washington, D. C., The Museum of African Art. Located on Capitol Hill in the shadow of the Supreme Court, the Museum occupies the first residence in Washington of Frederick Douglass, a man whom Lincoln once called "the most meritorious person I have ever met" and who later served in high posts in the administrations of five U. S. presidents.

In the Museum's education program, art serves in a unique way the cause of social understanding.

The story of how the Museum evolved is an interesting one. It is the brain child of a former State Department and USIA cultural attaché, Warren Robbins, who while serving at various European posts for over a decade, began to collect modern art and African sculpture. Impressed by the considerable influence which African sculpture had exerted on many of the pioneers of twentieth-century art such as Picasso, Modigliani, Leger, Matisse, and the German Expressionists, Robbins discerned in the relationship between the two a strong basis for "cultural equivalency" between peoples of hitherto alien cultures.

Resigning from the Foreign Service in 1962, he established a non-profit educational institute with the unwieldy name of "The Center for Cross-cultural Communication." The Center's purpose was to more fully exploit the arts and social sciences in the struggle for inter-cultural—and in particular interracial (a term he doesn't like)—

understanding. It is precisely because people wince at the Center's name that he insists upon using it, to underscore the fact that communication between cultures is radically different from communication within a particular group.

As its first principle undertaking, the Center established the Museum, which is unique among American museums in that it is concerned not solely with art, art education and the limited (though growing) audience of art cognoscenti, but more particularly with its social implications. The Museum's program has two distinct components. The first is to conduct an art education program centered around a broadly representative permanent collection. This program is carried on not only for visitors to the Museum but, through extension activities, for school groups in Washington and throughout the country. The second comprises the program of a more broadly conceived organization, the *Frederick Douglass Institute for Inter-cultural Understanding*, of which the Museum is a part.

While the Museum itself focuses upon the art, the Institute will demonstrate and exploit its social meaning. One of its aims will be to furnish irrefutable evidence of the profound contribution that the Negro, in Africa and in America, has made and is making to the creative life of man. That African sculpture constitutes one of mankind's great artistic achievements has long been known to art historians, but the general public has remained largely ignorant of its significance. Because all great art transcends its cultural context in aesthetic terms, scholars have long recognized that African art retains its expressive power even when subjected to Western critical standards. At the same time, by synthesizing the insights of the anthropologist, archaeologist, historian and psychologist, the Institute will seek to

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educate the public not simply to the specific meaning and functions of African sculpture in the framework of tribal life, but to the validity and legitimacy of these cultural forms as expressions of man's universal probing of the meaning of his own existence.

The Museum itself will promote wider public awareness of the important influence which African sculpture has had on the development of modern Western art. It demonstrates this influence through exhibitions and study collections revealing not merely that Western artists have borrowed literally from the African but that they were profoundly impressed by the directness, immediacy and economy of expression which characterize so much of African art and found in its qualities a confirmation of their own revolutionary ideas.

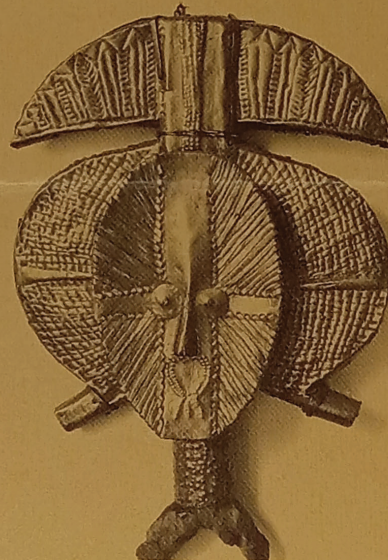
An important part of the Institute's task is to prove to the Negro peoples of both the United States and Africa the aesthetic importance of African sculpture and its significance as a human expression. In Africa, the intense concern for social, political and economic modernization has caused many people to disown and even destroy those manifestations of the tribal past with which they no longer wish to be identified. In the United States, the Negro's identification with Africa has, for understandable reasons, been a negative one.

The widespread myth that the Negro American has had no past other than slavery and savagery has constituted one of the most tragic—and unnecessary — stumbling blocks in his thinking about himself, while at the same time it has been a prime source of racial prejudice. Warren Robbins believes that it is essential to evoke in the Negro American that feeling of ethnic pride and sense of connection with an antecedent culture which is indispensable to his development as an "integrated personality" in an increasingly integrated society. One of the Institute's aims, therefore, will be to help build a foundation of what Robbins calls "equal regard" which is requisite to the full establishment of equal rights. Educating the public, both white and Negro, to the existence of a rich creative tradition dating back thousands of years cannot help but deracinate the notions which have estranged these two segments of the American population.

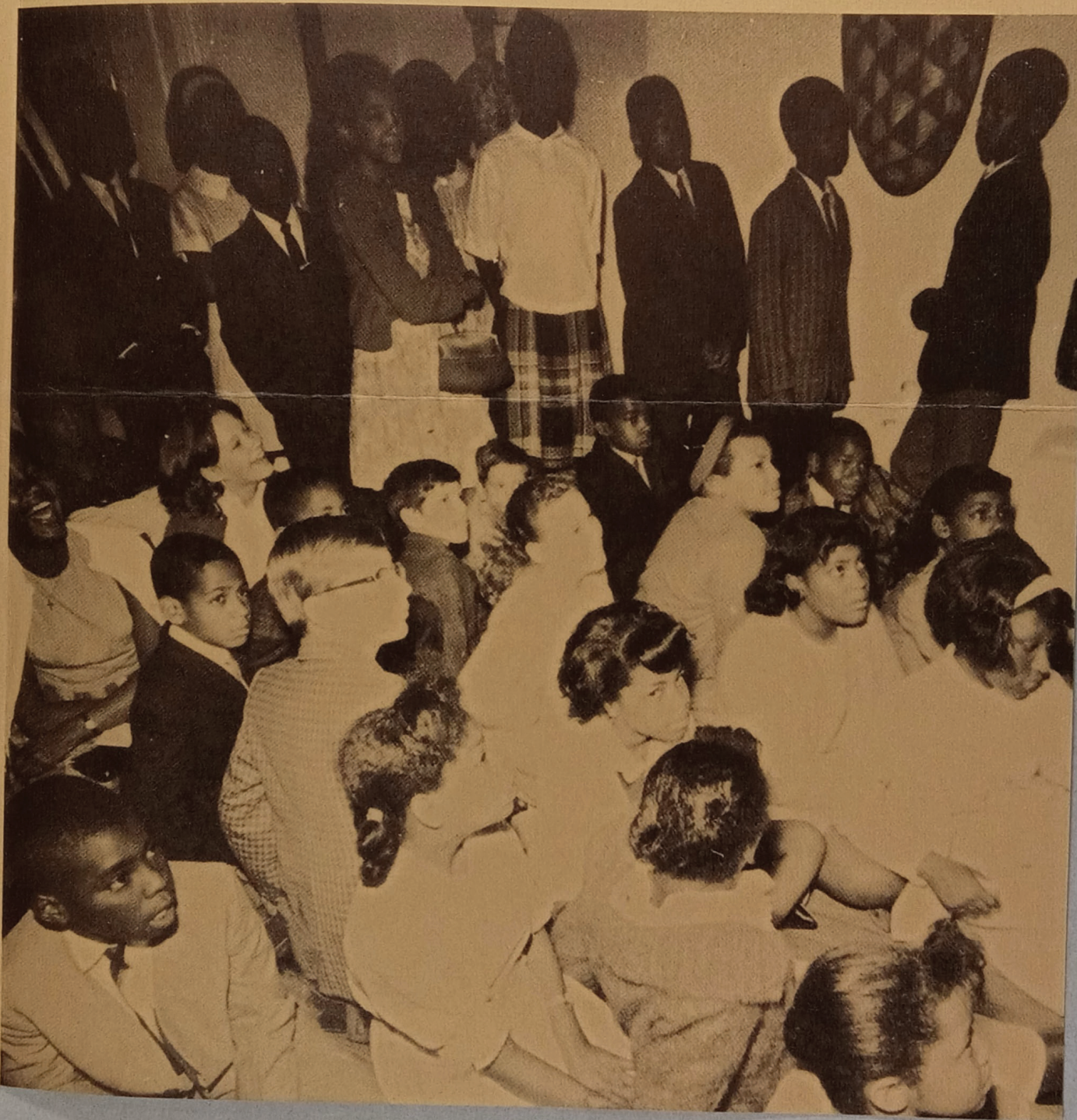
The Institute's program will encompass the total scope of Negro creativity, in the present as well as past. This purpose was fostered by a recent \$5,000 grant from the American Federation of the Arts for the purchase and display of works by young Negro American artists. Eventually, one gallery of the Museum will be devoted to such contemporary works. Another will be reserved for exhibits of primarily Western-influenced contemporary African painting and sculpture.

At present the Museum of African Art displays an unusual collection of over 200 pieces of traditional sculpture representing 35 tribes and 18 nations of present-day Africa. Juxtaposed with the tribal sculpture are selected works by modern European and American artists graphically illustrating the influence which African sculpture has had on the development of twentieth-century Western art.

The fact that the Museum occupies the one-time residence of Frederick Douglass symbolizes another of its objectives: to provide wider public recognition of Douglass as an authentic American —and not just a Negro—hero. Among the memorabilia of Douglass' life and times on display is a bound volume of the eloquent and highly prophetic newspaper which Douglass published in the 1870's.



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The Museum fills a major void in the cultural spectrum of the nation's capital. The National Gallery houses one of the world's greatest collections of European art; the Freer Gallery, the art of Asia; the Pan American Union and the Dumbarton Oaks Museum, that of Latin America (and the Byzantine Empire); the Phillips Collection and the Corcoran Gallery, the modern and traditional art of Europe and America. Thus far, however, no museum in Washington—or in the nation, for that matter—has adequately portrayed the antecedent culture of twenty million Americans of African extraction, and of an area of the world whose voice in world affairs is today demanding growing attention and response.

As its value to the city and to the cultural life of the nation has become apparent, support for the project has developed at an impressive rate. The Museum has the endorsement of President Johnson, and Vice President Hubert Humphrey who serves as Honorary Chairman of its Board of Trustees. The project has aroused the interest of numerous members of Congress, including Senators Pell, Yarborough, Clark, Gruening, and Javits. Senator Dodd and Representatives Bolton and Horton are members of its Board of Trustees along with John Duncan, Commissioner of the District of Columbia; Rene de'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York; the Reverend James B. Robinson, Director of Crossroads Africa; Sterling Tucker, Director of the Washington Urban League; Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas; and Mrs. Angier Biddle Duke. The Board also included the late Ambassador Adlai Stevenson.

Another Trustee, Ben Shahn, has made an especially significant contribution to the Museum both symbolically and financially through his drawings of Frederick Douglass. These four studies, in limited editions of 250 signed and numbered serigraphs, are presented to sustaining members of the Museum. Supported entirely by private contributions, the Museum has not yet received sufficient income to fully embark upon its intended educational program which will include, in addition to its present services, a reference library dealing with African art and its influences and the whole field of inter-cultural studies, the publication of catalogues and other materials concerning African art and contemporary Negro creative life, and the development of curriculum materials on the Negro contribution to history for use in the schools.

Public attendance at the Museum has thus far totalled over 16,000 persons, including several hundred school, civic and church groups. Though the Museum is only 1½ years old, such attendance already compares favorably with that of other small cultural institutes in the United States. An annual attendance of 100,000 persons is projected.

Abstracted from a press release issued by the Museum of African Art by Warren Robbins, the Museum's founder and Director.

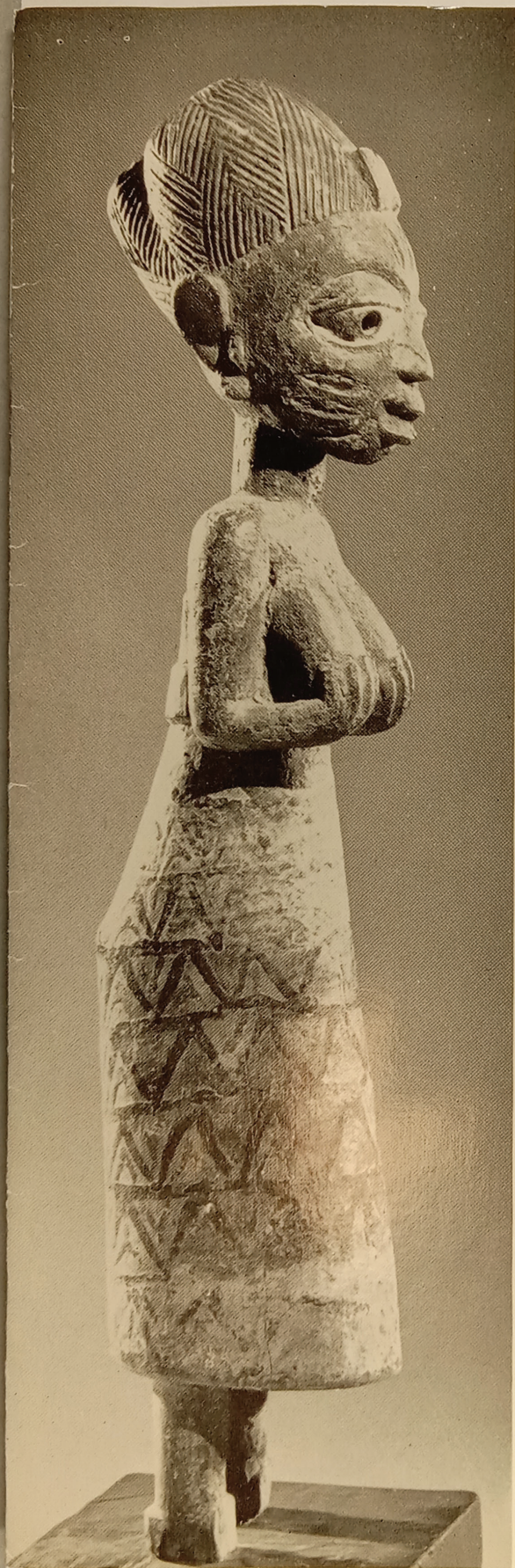
PHOTOS

All works reproduced are on view at the Museum of African Art. Page 12: Ancestor figure, wood, Senufo Tribe, Ivory Coast. Lent by Chaim Gross. Page 13: Figures holding palm wine cup, Basonge tribe, Republic of Congo. Gift of Emil Arnold. Page 14, above: Mask, wood, Baule Tribe, Ivory Coast. Page 14, below: Reliquary figure, wood with brass and copper strips, Bakota Tribe, Gabon. Both works on page 14 lent by the University Museum, Philadelphia. Page 15: School children listen to a lecture at the Museum. This page: Group of soldiers shown in firing position, bronze, Yoruba, Nigeria. Lent by D'Arcy Galleries, New York.



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# AFRICAN ART

IN AMERICAN  
COLLECTIONS

# L'ART AFRICAIN

DANS LES COLLECTIONS  
AMÉRICAINES

WARREN ROBBINS

347 ILLUSTRATIONS

PRAEGER

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\$12.50

## African Art IN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS

WARREN ROBBINS

During the past half-century, interest in the tribal sculpture of Africa has grown to such an extent in the United States that today there are more than 1,000 collections of African art in America. Approximately 200 of these collections—in museums and in private hands—can be considered of major importance.

Ranging from Ashanti fertility dolls to Bambara dance headpieces, from Bachokwe staff heads to Bakuba boxes—from Senegal to the Congo regions, from Mali to Sierra Leone—the 347 works reproduced in this book represent the most complete photographic survey yet published of African art in America. They provide a rare opportunity—for Africans and non-Africans alike—to view the tremendous diversity, the expressive quality, and the sheer evocative power of African art and to gain a better understanding of one of the great heritages of mankind.

In his Introduction, Warren Robbins surveys the long evolution of African sculpture, which he considers to be a classical rather than a primitive art, observing it from the perspective of the two civilizations of Africa and the West. In examining African art's vital role in the twentieth-century revolution in Western art, and in his sensitive analysis of the stylistic refinements of the various tribes of past and present-day Africa, the author emphasizes the importance of preserving this art for posterity and the part it can play in creating mutual respect among the peoples of the world.

Warren Robbins, formerly a cultural attaché in the U.S. diplomatic service, is the founder and director of the new Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C.

FREDERICK A. PRAEGER, *Publishers*  
New York • Washington • London

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## L'Art Africain DANS LES COLLECTIONS AMÉRICAINES

WARREN ROBBINS

Pendant ce dernier demi-siècle, l'intérêt manifesté pour la sculpture tribale de l'Afrique s'est accru à un tel point aux États-Unis qu'il y a actuellement plus de 1 000 collections d'art africain en Amérique. On peut considérer à peu près 200 entre ces collections—aux musées et chez les collectionneurs—d'une importance majeure.

Des poupées de fécondité Ashanti aux coiffures de danse Bambara, des pommeaux de canne Bachokwé aux boîtes Bakuba—du Sénégal aux régions du Congo, du Mali jusqu'à la Sierra Leone—les 347 œuvres reproduites dans le présent ouvrage représentent la vue d'ensemble photographique la plus large qui aie jamais publié sur l'art africain en Amérique. Cela fournit—aux africains et aux non-africains également—une occasion assez rare de voir l'énorme diversité, la qualité expressive, et le grand pouvoir évocateur de l'art africain, et de mieux comprendre un des héritages principaux de l'homme.

Dans l'Introduction, Warren Robbins fait voir la longue évolution de la sculpture africaine, qu'il considère comme un art plutôt classique que primitif, et il l'observe sous la perspective des deux civilisations de l'Afrique et de l'Ouest. Examinant le rôle vital de l'art africain dans la révolution de l'art occidental du XXe siècle, et dans son analyse sensible des raffinements stylistiques des tribus divers de l'Afrique au temps passé et de nos jours, l'auteur souligne l'importance de préserver cet art à postérité, et le rôle que ce dernier peut jouer dans la création d'un respect réciproque parmi les peuples du monde.

Warren Robbins, ancien attaché culturel au service diplomatique des États-Unis, est le fondateur et le directeur du nouveau Museum of African Art à Washington, D.C.

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RENÉ D'HARNONCOURT ARCHIVE

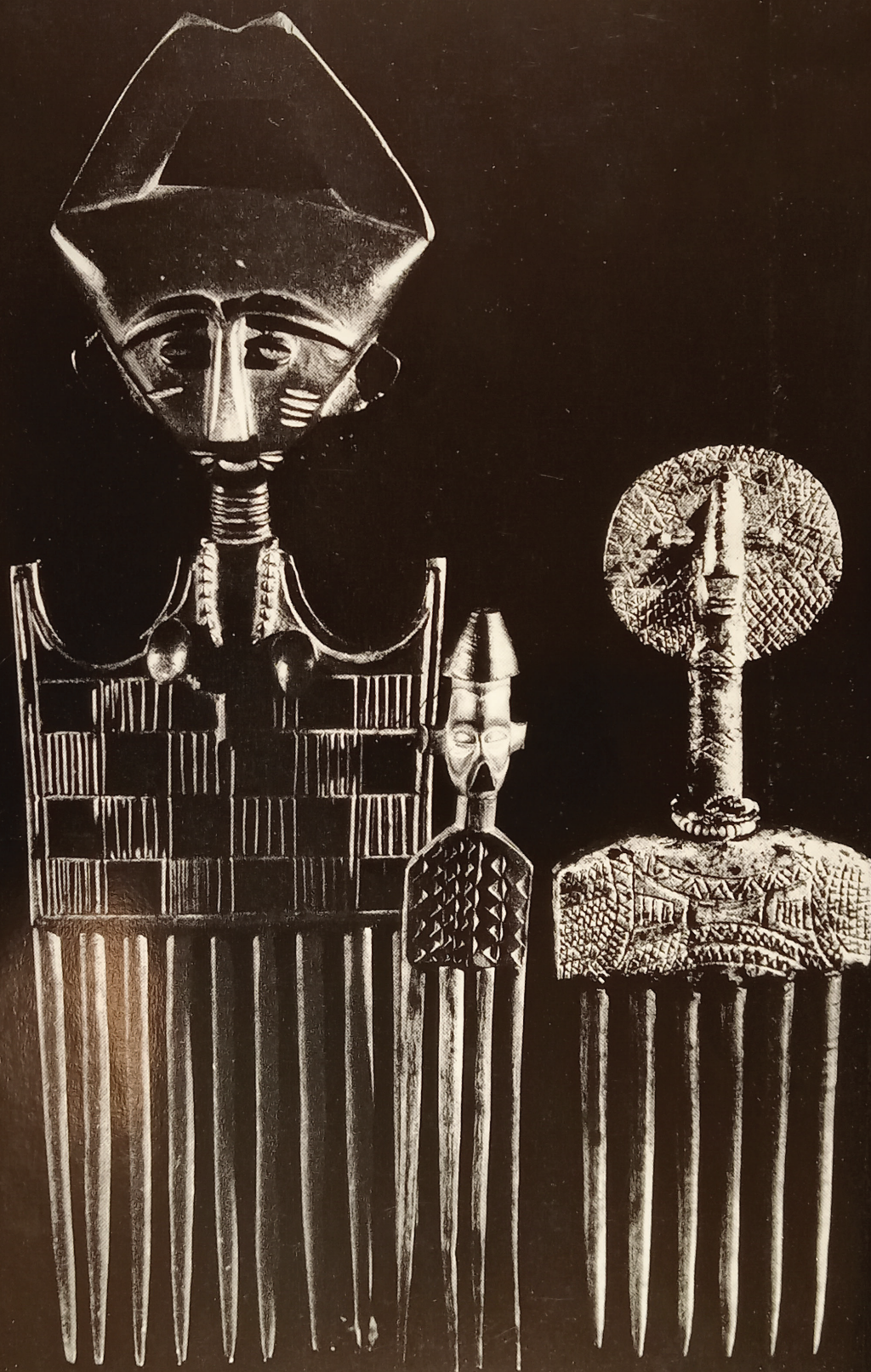
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MUSEUM  
OF  
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F R E D E R I C K   D O U G L A S S   T O W N H O U S E  
316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002

December 16, 1964      LINCOLN 7-8690

Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director  
Museum of Modern Art  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. d'Harnoncourt:

Three items to bring you up to date: Adlai Stevenson has agreed to be on our Board and we will have the active participation, in addition, of Vice President-elect Humphrey's sister, so we will be assured of high level governmental support. We anticipate shortly also the visit of President and Mrs. Johnson.

We currently have two shows at the Museum: in addition to our new permanent exhibition "The African Heritage" we have installed until December 28th a special exhibition "The Art of the Yoruba", given to us by the Smithsonian Travelling Exhibition Service. The Nigerian Embassy hosted a very lovely opening reception at the Museum.

The enclosed feature article published by the Washington Post has aroused a great deal of public interest. (We regret, however, that the text was greatly over-simplified and inaccurate in places and the photos selected, nothing special.)

Through the Old Dominion Foundation (Paul Mellon) we have just received two small "officers" grants for \$3,500, with promise of more at a later time.

Also the American Federation of Arts is granting us \$5,000 for the purchase of paintings by American Negroes. These will, however, not be able to be displayed until a later time when our facilities are broad enough to include a gallery of American Negro art under the umbrella of "The African Heritage".

Campbell Wylie, of your staff, has been to the Museum and has shown much interest in helping us in whatever way he can. Perhaps he could be a person to carry out some facet of your own participation.

Could your secretary send me a brief note formally acknowledging your membership on our Board of Trustees?

With kindest regards and thanks for your continued interest.

Sincerely,

*Warren Robbins*  
Warren M. Robbins

WMR:jms

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Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt

-2-

December 16, 1964

P. S. Would you have any interest in seeing what Morton May has put together for a giant exhibition and sale of African art at the May Company's Washington outlet, The Hecht Company? You will be invited to the opening on January 27th as well as to a reception at the Museum of African Art. We are compiling a list of all New York collectors for both these occasions. (The Hecht Company has donated \$1,000 to the Museum.)

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CENTER FOR CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

FROM: WARREN ROBBINS

Dear Miss Mac Kethan  
 your thoughtful note of  
 Dec 14 arrived just before  
 they went out. Many thanks  
 How you will come and  
 visit us soon in  
 Washington

Sincerely,  
 Warren Robb

530 6TH STREET, S.E., CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON 3, D. C.

Ellen MacKethan  
 Assistant to the Director

I am overjoyed that you are willing to be on our board and if it is acceptable to you, would prefer to stick with the original idea of your being a member of the Board of Trustees rather than on the Advisory Board. This should be Mr. Warren M. Robbins, Director, Museum of African Art, Frederick Douglass Townhouse, 316 A Street, N. E., Washington, D. C. 20002

I would appreciate it if you could send us a brief note confirming your willingness to be associated with the new Museum in this way and look forward to another occasion to talk with you again.

Sincerely yours,

Warren M. Robbins  
 Warren M. Robbins

With you

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MUSEUM  
OF  
AFRICAN  
ART

RENE D'HARONCOURT

Museum of Modern Art  
Library

FREDERICK DOUGLASS TOWNHOUSE  
316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON D. C. 20002  
LINCOLN 7-6890

December 14, 1964

November 9, 1964

Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 W. 53rd Street  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Robbins:

Dear Mr. d'Harnoncourt:

I am writing to let you know that your letter of November 9th reached Mr. d'Harnoncourt just as he was leaving on a business trip. On his return, he became ill with bronchitis and is still away from the Museum.

I am very sorry for the very generous allotment of your time which you gave me recently to discuss some of the problems of the Museum of African Art and I am certain you are impatient for a reply to your letter and want to assure you that Mr. d'Harnoncourt will answer as soon as he possibly can.

I am not unmindful of the schedule which you carry and am therefore all the more grateful for your willingness to help us win support in the world of art and philanthropy.

Faithfully yours,

I have written earnestly these past two years to get the Museum launched and will continue to do so in order to bring to its management persons of the highest qualifications and to gather for its collection art works of the best quality.

Ellen MacKethan  
Assistant to the Director

I am overjoyed that you are willing to be on our Board and if it is acceptable to you, would prefer to stick with the original idea of your being a member of the Board of Trustees rather than on the Advisory Board. This should not be over-looked as we have to show up. I can keep you fully posted on important developments and management would merely formalize the kind of advice you already generously began to give.

Mr. Warren M. Robbins  
Director  
Museum of African Art  
Frederick Douglass Townhouse  
316 A Street, N. E.  
Washington, D. C. 20002

I would appreciate it if you could send us a brief note confirming your willingness to be associated with the new Museum in this way and look forward to another occasion to talk with you again.

Sincerely yours,

*Warren M. Robbins*  
Warren M. Robbins

WRM:jm

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MUSEUM  
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F R E D E R I C K   D O U G L A S S   T O W N H O U S E  
316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002  
LINCOLN 7-8690

November 9, 1964

Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 W. 53rd Street  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. d'Harnoncourt:

I am very grateful for the very generous allotment of your time which you gave me recently to discuss some of the problems of the Museum of African Art and I thank you for the cooperation of your staff in arranging for the loan of a number of graphic works for display in juxtaposition with African sculpture.

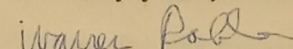
I am not unmindful of the demanding schedule which you carry and am therefore all the more grateful for your willingness to help us win support in the world of art and philanthropy.

I have worked earnestly these past two years to get the Museum launched and will continue to do so in order to bring to its management persons of the highest qualification and to gather for its collection art works of the best quality.

I am overjoyed that you are willing to be on our Board and if it is acceptable to you, would prefer to stick with the original idea of your being a member of the Board of Trustees rather than on the Advisory Board. This should not necessarily entail your attendance at meetings, though we would be overjoyed if you were to show up. I can keep you fully posted on important developments and the arrangement would merely formalize the kind of advice and assistance which you have already generously begun to give.

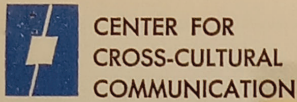
I would appreciate it if you could send us a brief note confirming your willingness to be associated with the new Museum in this way and look forward to another occasion to talk with you again.

Sincerely yours,

  
Warren M. Robbins

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*African Art, Museum of*

3, D. C. Lincoln 7-0324

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MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART

INAUGURAL EXHIBITION

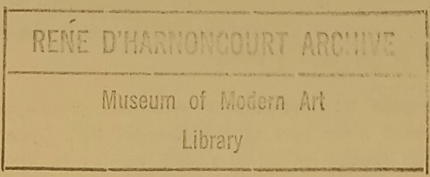
TRADITIONAL

AFRICAN SCULPTURE

FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSE

316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL

WASHINGTON, D. C.



Museum Hours:

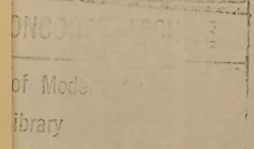
May and June: Sat. and Sun., 2-5 P.M.

July and August: Special Showings and by Appointment

September thru December: Wed. thru Sun., 2-6 P.M.

*July 11  
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**THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSE**

The location of the Museum of African Art in an historic house on Capitol Hill, the first residence in Washington of Frederick Douglass, serves to call attention to the figure of Douglass as one of the important Americans of his century and a vital force for democratic institutions. Though regarded today as the father of the civil rights movement, he remains relatively unknown to most Americans.

Born a slave, Douglass, aided by a remarkable intellect, with great personal integrity, and through the sheer force of his own personality, rose to become a friend and advisor to President Lincoln and to hold high office in the succeeding administrations of Presidents Grant through Cleveland. He served as Marshal and Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia and as the first U.S. Minister to Haiti.

Gaining international renown as a brilliant and militant orator and publisher in behalf of abolitionism, women's rights and free education, Douglass was the nominee for Vice-President on a ticket headed by Victoria Woodhull, the first woman candidate for President of the United States. His autobiography is a classic document of American history and a masterpiece of 19th century prose.

Douglass' later residence in Anacostia, Washington has been made part of the National Park System through special legislation signed into law by President Kennedy in September, 1962. A bill to issue a commemorative stamp honoring Douglass has been introduced in Congress by Representative Frank Horton of Rochester, New York.

\* \* \* \* \*

The life of Frederick Douglass—a uniquely American story—serves as an inspiration and a symbol for all those who are today engaged in the struggle for individual rights and human dignity.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The exhibition has been made possible by the generous loans or gifts of art works from:

- |                         |                                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Emil Arnold             | Harold Rome                         |
| Julius Carlebach        | Alan Sawyer                         |
| Bernard Coleman         | Mark Scher                          |
| Eliot Elisofon          | Robert Hilton Simmons               |
| Chaim Gross             | Smithsonian Institution             |
| Edith Gregor Halpert    | University Museum<br>(Philadelphia) |
| Gaston de Havenon       | Fred Welty                          |
| John J. Klejman         | William Styx Wasserman              |
| Jacques Lipchitz        | G. Mennen Williams                  |
| Museum of Primitive Art | Herman Warner Williams              |
| Warren Robbins          |                                     |

Installation of Exhibition by Joan Elisofon  
Attribution of Sculpture: Marianne Forsell

**MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART**

Warren Robbins, Founder

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**MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT**

This inaugural exhibition anticipates the permanent establishment of the Washington Museum of African Art in the Frederick Douglass House. Only one part of the building is currently in use as a museum.

The exhibition launches a \$350,000 fund-raising drive to refurbish the Douglass House and to staff and operate the Museum on a full time basis for its first several years.

Only through broad public contribution to supplement foundation support will this effort to provide Washington with a proper institute of African culture succeed.

Charter subscriptions to the Museum are being solicited at this time. They will extend for one year beyond the date of the Museum's formal dedication in 1965. All categories of membership are valid for double admittance to Museum functions and for regular visits as well as for exhibition catalogues and other publications of the Museum.

Categories of support are:

Benefactor	\$5,000
Patron	1,000
Life Member	500 (and over)
Donor	100
Sustaining Member	50
Contributing Member	25
Regular Annual	10
Student	2

All contributions are tax deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Checks should be made payable to the Museum of African Art.

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**A CULTURAL FOUNDATION  
FOR INTER-RACIAL UNDERSTANDING**

What archaeologists and historians are rediscovering about the cultural heritage of Africa bears close relevance to this generation's quest for accord and respect between the Negro and white peoples of America and the world. The Washington Museum of African Art is the first public institution in the United States to devote itself exclusively to portraying the significance of this heritage and its implications today.

Though the Nation's capital has a Negro population of over 50% and one of the highest concentrations of African diplomats, students and official visitors of any city in the world, its cultural life is almost entirely white oriented and there is little public knowledge of the rich vein of creative expression which stems from Africa.

With exhibitions of the ancestral arts of Africa and with programs of lectures, films, discussions and performances reflecting its contemporary culture, the objectives of the Museum are:

to provide for Washington and the nation a permanent manifestation of the past and the potential contribution of the Negro peoples to the culture of man.

to build a cultural foundation not only for social respect for the Negro by the white world but also for that group-esteem which the American Negro himself can derive from greater knowledge and appreciation of his own ancient creative inheritance.

to serve as a cultural center in the United States where representatives of the nations of Africa can join with Americans and people from other lands in

common interest in the arts of the Negro peoples. to fill the need for an educational resource in the spheres of both art and general inter-cultural understanding for the schools and colleges of the District and the nation, for government agencies engaged in international training and research, and for visiting foreign officials and scholars.

The Museum is sponsored by the Center for Cross-Cultural Communication, a non-profit corporation which fosters intercultural understanding through programs in the social sciences and the arts.

**NOTES ON THE INAUGURAL EXHIBITION  
OF THE MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART**

Although to the uninitiated observer, the tribal sculpture of Africa appears strange and often grotesque, it is recognized by art historians and anthropologists as representing one of the great creative traditions of mankind. To be able to understand and appreciate it, one should perhaps exercise with Samuel Taylor Coleridge "that willing suspension of disbelief", looking beyond its surface forms and alien subject matter to recognize those important and powerful elements which constitute art. Behind the seeming crudity of some pieces, fashioned often with the unrefined tools of a pre-technology society, there is to be seen an emotional expressiveness which comes from strong spiritual conviction; a highly disciplined conformity to tradition despite original and extremely varied execution of detail; a subtle control of composition and balance; and an inherent understanding of the abstract which surpasses by far, that of many modern Western artists.

Its human and animal representations, often in ingenious combination, are carved in different forms and for differing purposes. For example, highly sophisticated, if grossly distorted, masks and headdresses intended to protect or to coerce; male or female figures used as fetish or fertility images; purely decorative ceremonial implements, prestige symbols and household objects important to, and logical for, the cultures that they were part of.

The 150 pieces of sculpture in this first exhibition of The Museum of African Art comprise a broad but by no means complete survey of the kinds of carving characteristic of the traditional cultures of Western Africa—the predominant area for such art.

Illustrative is the Kono bird, the tribal emblem of the Senufo people of the Ivory Coast. It is included in several different forms along with other Senufo configurations which extol ancestors or lodge spirits and forces.

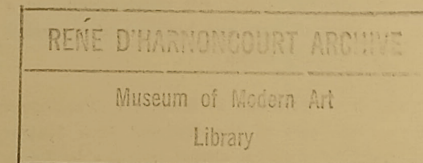
Displayed in rich variety are depictions of the antelope, an animal which figures importantly in the life and ritual of the Bambara people of traditional Mali. Dominated by the horns symbolizing power and ranging from naturalistic to highly abstract versions, they are worn as headdresses in ceremonial dances. Particularly remarkable carvings from the Congos, Nigeria, and Gabon are also among the sculpture which all told represent some 30 tribes from regions covering 15 countries of modern Africa.

This sculpture, taken from its original tribal context and isolated for its aesthetic qualities, reveals that there is imbedded in the traditional African personality a creative force and a propensity for cultural expression which has a vital contribution to make to modern civilization.

WMR

**MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART  
INAUGURAL EXHIBITION  
TRADITIONAL  
AFRICAN SCULPTURE**

FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSE  
316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL  
WASHINGTON, D. C.



**Museum Hours:**

May and June: Sat. and Sun., 2-5 P.M.

July and August: Special Showings and by Appointment

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*July 11  
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African Art, Museum of

530 Sixth Street, Southeast Capitol Hill Washington 3, D. C. Lincoln 7-0324

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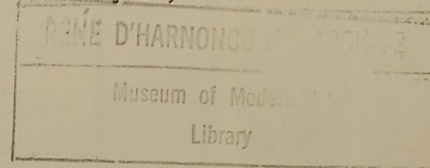
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Peter von Zahn

Warren M. Robbins  
Director  
Stacy B. Lloyd III  
Administrative Officer

July 29, 1964



Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt  
Director  
The Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53rd Street  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. d'Harnoncourt:

The hour's discussion we had last Friday was a luxury for me which, as an indication of your interest, portends well for our future.

I will be deeply grateful for -- and urgently need -- all the weight you can throw behind this fledgling enterprise, not only the brotherly, (or is it sisterly?) cooperation of the Museum of Primitive Art which we will welcome, but your own assistance in helping us to win support among those who are interested in African art and its implications for intercultural understanding.

I have come this far almost alone and as a non-professional in the Museum world, but I am a fast learner. When we have funds I will seek and employ professional and competent persons to make the undertaking aesthetically, scientifically, and educationally sound. For now, it is a question of sheer survival. If you can lead us to "emergency" financial assistance now, I am sure that the substantial sums we seek from the foundations will eventually be forthcoming. As it stands, unless we are "rescued" we will not be able to reopen in September as scheduled and the break in continuity would not be fortuitous. Please pardon me for sounding so desperate, but this is the most crucial point for us.

Looking forward to the pleasure of your visit the next time you come to Washington,

Sincerely yours,

Warren M. Robbins

P.S.: I was at a White House Dinner for the President of Malagasy the other evening and had the opportunity to discuss the project with Mrs. Johnson whose patronage I hope we will be able to win.

An educational-informational institute integrating the resources of the sciences, the arts and the communications media to promote intercultural understanding.



The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY

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RENE D'HONNOCOURT

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

MUSEUM WEDNESDAY, JULY 3, 1964

Negroes' artistic past

By Leslie Field Alexander

Washington (UPI)—The opening of the new Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C., is a landmark event in the history of the Negro people in America. It is the first time that a museum has been devoted to the art and culture of a single race in this country.

Heritage Museum Has Art of Africa

By STACY NEIKER

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ONE MAN'S CAMP AIGAI African Art Museum Is Set Up Here

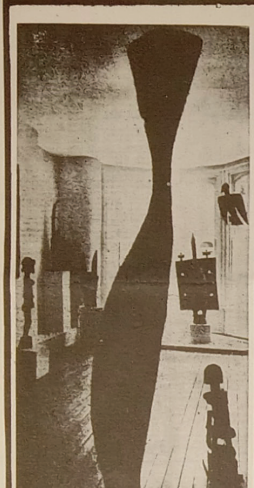
By HON HANSON

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African Museum Opens

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This is an interior view of one of the galleries in the new Museum of African Art which formally opens today with an important exhibition of traditional African sculpture from 7,000 B.C. to 19th century.

800 Invited to Opening of African Art Museum

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Warren Robbins is shown at home with part of his collection of primitive and modern art.



A view of African art in the new museum.



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Ex-Slave's Home to Become Art Museum

By JOSE M. WHITE

WASHINGTON (UPI)—The new Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C., is a landmark event in the history of the Negro people in America. It is the first time that a museum has been devoted to the art and culture of a single race in this country.

Old Frederick Douglass Home Now Museum of African Art

By STACY NEIKER

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African Art Museum geared to promote 'understanding'

By STACY NEIKER

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Traditional African Sculpture Shows Artistic Heritage of Negro Past

By STACY NEIKER

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Sultan Collects Art Cameroon Royal Couple Visiting

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Art in Washington Handsome Home For African Art

By WOLF FON SCHWAB

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Washington International Art Letter

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Art Walk Covers Centuries

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This small sculpture on exhibition at the new Museum of African Art is a bronze figure of a woman.

Primitive Isn't Sophisticated Enough

By STACY NEIKER

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African Art Needs New Term

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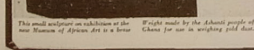
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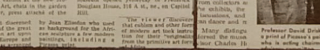
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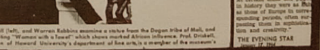
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- African Art,  
Museum of  
x A#B

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

July 28, 1964

Date \_\_\_\_\_

To: Mr. Alfred Barr

Re: Museum of African Art

From: René d'Harnoncourt

November 4, 1964

Dear Alfred,

I have seen Warren Robbins and discussed with him the financial problems of his Museum of African Art in Washington.

He seems very sincere and I think he deserves support. I hope

I can give him some help.

This is to request the loan of the following works of art for display at the Museum of African Art in Washington for the period November 11, 1964 through January 31, 1965. If an extension of this loan for a longer period could be considered it would be appreciated but it is our understanding, of course, that they are to be returned to you the first week in February. This is to certify that the items are completely covered by our insurance will to wall. Transportation will be arranged by us. The items are:

1. Max Perbatata, "Dialogues 1919" color woodcut (\$9.25)
2. Schmidt-Rothluff, "Halembolia", woodcut, black and white (\$12.45)
3. Ben Enobri, 6 color woodcuts in single set (\$131.40, 1478.40, 1471.40, 1464.40, 1478.40, 1461.40)

With very thanks for your courtesy and assistance and kindest regards to Mr. d'Harnoncourt.

Sincerely,

Warren H. Robbins  
Director

cc: Mr. d'Harnoncourt



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*African Art Museum of*

MUSEUM  
OF  
AFRICAN  
ART

F R E D E R I C K   D O U G L A S S   T O W N H O U S E  
316 A STREET, NORTHEAST, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002  
LINCOLN 7-8690

September 24, 1964

Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53rd Street  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. d'Harnoncourt:

I am sorry that it was not possible to catch you in while I was running around in New York, but I look forward to seeing you on my next trip. Better still, I hope you will combine several reasons to travel to Washington and come see the Museum.

We will re-open on October 3rd with the same exhibition but I hope to put together a much better quality and more comprehensive show by the first of November. Our problem is to select not merely first class pieces but ones which will not confirm prejudices before people have a chance to learn to understand something of the art. Our audience, which is potentially very large here in Washington, is thoroughly uninitiated in art itself, let alone African art. Yet it is a very significant audience of government officials, economists, political scientists, businessmen, diplomats, etc., all of whom have an awakened interest in Africa and in the Negro, but who are filled with misconceptions about both art and race. This compounds our problem as a Museum to the point of uniqueness, at the same time that it gives us an unusual opportunity. We are not dealing with the kind of sophisticated art public that one finds in New York or with collectors pre-occupied with patina or the authenticity of a piece measured in terms of whether or not it was used in tribal ceremony.

We must take our audience by the hand, so to speak -- white American, Negro American or African, it's a three part educational job -- and gradually show them how to look at this art so that they can appreciate it and the people who produced it, recognizing the significance of their creativity despite the concept of "savagery" which clouds perception. In this instance, where art becomes so relevant to social and political understanding, one must start with the more limited awareness of the audience and somehow get through to them. I find that the single approach of neither the art historian nor the ethnologist nor the collector is enough.

I know of no one who is thinking in these pedagogical terms as regards educating Americans to non-western cultures and I am convinced that it is a fundamental approach that must be taken if "primitive art" is to be more than just a highly esoteric hobby for a select few.

But I need to buy time to do it and we are still in dire straits financially

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	RDH	VII.161

Mr. Rene d'Harnoncourt

-2-

September 24, 1964

making it imperative that I give almost all of my time to raising survival funds with little time left either for the Museum itself or for the implementation of a broadly conceived education and information program.

Fortunately, two young men have joined me, willing to work for a month or so without compensation: both have had some Museum experience and one was a Peace Corpsman in Sierra Leone. This takes some load off of me but I have worked myself into a state of exhaustion these past months trying to hold all sides together.

A little support at this time will go a long way and I hope you can help us to raise some of the \$50,000 needed immediately to keep going.

With kindest regards to Alfred Barr.

Sincerely,

Warren M. Robbins  
Acting Director

WMR:jms

P. S. Ebony Africa carried a four page lead article on the Museum which it will also run in its domestic issue; Martin Luther King is going to talk about the Museum at this week's Negro Leadership Conference on Africa and we even made Mademoiselle.

Our chances for continuing support once we have been launched, incidentally, are quite good: the African Embassies can be counted on to contribute a substantial amount collectively. (I wouldn't let total more than 1/3 of our annual budget, however, since it would give them disproportionate control.) We should be able to attract at least 100,000 of the 10,000,000 tourists who visit Washington each year. (At \$.35 admission, this would bring in \$35,000.) American business firms interested in Africa will also be solicited for regular annual subscriptions. We project a yearly budget of around \$100,000.

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	RDH	VII.161



*The Washington Post*

# Potomac

In Roman times, Pliny the Elder said, "Always something new out of

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The Washington Post

# Potomac

In Roman times, Pliny the Elder said, "Always something new out of Africa." The newest thing in Washington is an institution perhaps unique in the United States—a museum devoted solely to the dimly-known art of Africa.



RENE D'HARNOUCOURT ARCHIVE  
Museum of Modern Art  
Library

SUNDAY  
November 29, 1964

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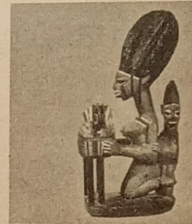
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The Washington Post

# Potomac

November 29, 1964



## A Nigerian Fortune-Teller

THE YORUBA tribes of Nigeria once used the ceremonial object pictured on our cover today as an oracle. In their minds it answered

their questions, foresaw the future. This wood female figure with a child on her back can now be seen at the Museum of African Art, one of Washington's latest in a growing list of small, fascinating institutions featuring native art. The small bowl the figure can be seen holding could have been a receptacle for cola nuts and the chicken seen on the lid was used, perhaps, in the dark art of divination during a tribal rite. There are many such interesting objects to be viewed by the public at this Capitol Hill museum. Price of admission is 35 cents. Karl Meyer's story and pictures on page 24 give you a preview.

## A Place To Be From

UNTRoubLED by population explosions and progress, King and Queen County, Va., has fewer people now than it had in Revolutionary times, one drug store, no jail. It's a fine place to be from, though. The pews may look mighty empty, but memberships on the church rolls have been known to exceed the county's population. And 500 people from 26 states are dues-paying members of its historical society. A photographic look at the homes and ponds these people left behind begins on page 30.

## The Peace Keepers

IN OUR modern world of crises and confrontations we have become accustomed to living in the shadow of war. But we no longer fight at the drop of a kingly coronet. Wars now are fought under cover. They are battles of subversion. Fighting them are the policemen of the free world. The job of fitting them for their task is performed here in the Nation's Capital at the International Police Academy where men of many countries are equipped for a common cause—keeping the peace. An inside look at these men and their training begins on page 7.

Cover Photo by Dennis Brack

PAUL HERRON, Editor JUNE HILL, Art Director

The Washington Post POTOMAC

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## New Museum Spotlights Dimly-Known Art of Africa

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DENNIS BRACK



By Karl E. Meyer

"ALWAYS something new out of Africa," Pliny the Elder said in Roman times. The newest thing in Washington is an institution that is believed to be unique in the United States—a museum devoted solely to the rich and only dimly-known art of Africa.

Since May, the Museum of African Art has welcomed visitors at 316 A st. ne. in a tree-sheltered house located within sight of the Supreme Court Building (the hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays and 2 to 5 p.m. weekends).

The house itself has an appropriate history. It was the first Washington residence of Frederick Douglass, who was born a slave and who died, in 1895, as one of the most prominent American Negroes of his time.



At left, Frederick Douglass town house at 316 A st. ne., now African museum. Above, Baluba tribe dance masks.



Above, lithograph by German expressionist Alexis Jaulensky juxtaposed with Yoruba goddess figure from Nigeria.

The Washington Post POTOMAC

## Known Art of Africa

A handsome bust of Douglass gazes in the hallway as you enter the museum. The walls are lined with memorabilia of the great Negro writer and orator.

Walk into the main gallery, and you may encounter Warren M. Robbins, a Bay State native and former Foreign Service officer who has been the moving spirit behind the founding of the museum.

"You have to look at these ritual objects with a fresh eye," explains Robbins as he takes you through the rooms ornamented with tribal treasures gathered mainly from West and Central Africa. Most of the museum's 200 objects were loaned or donated by private American collectors and museums.

Both function and tradition governed the style of the art. The tradition can go back for centuries.

Continued



Above, Warren Robbins, founder and director of the museum holds a Bakota reliquary figure such as the ones that influenced the art of Picasso. Figure is on loan from Alan Sawyer of Textile Museum.



Elaborate buffalo headdress was used on ceremonial occasions by Baule tribe. On loan from Edith Gregor Halpert.



Above, a Bambari from Mali. It was a crop fertility symbol (Chi-Wara) and was generally attached to a headpiece. The doe antelope carries a child on her back.



Ceremonial knife, above, was a prize possession of tribal leaders in Congo-Leopoldville. Made of iron, it is a gift from Emil Arnold of New York.

Sunday, November 29, 1964