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Hand loomed Textiles

Tribal textiles from Cameroon, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Ghana and the Democratic Rep. of Congo.

An International Collection of Tribal Jewellery

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SIDEWALK TRIBAL GALLERY

AFRICAN ART - TRIBAL JEWELLERY - ETHNIC TEXTILES

19-21 Castray Esp. Battery Point . Tasmania 7004

t & f: 03 62240331 sidewalktribal.com ann@sidewalkgallery.com.au

OPEN DAILY 10 - 5

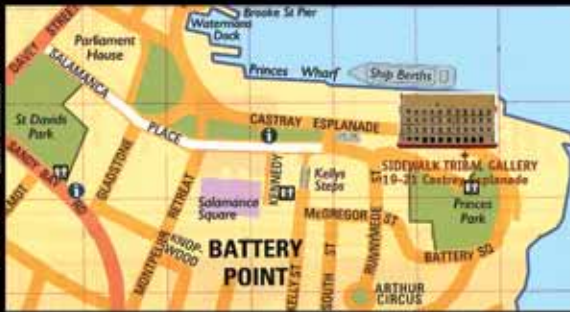
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In Melbourne each winter for 2 weeks

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Caulfield Town Hall, Cnr Glen Eira & Hawthorn Rds.

SIDEWALK TRIBAL GALLERY



FROM TIMBUCTOO TO TASMANIA 2009



Africa Revisited

BEADWORK DIALOGUE IN AFRICAN ART

Africa Revisited: Introduction

Small and beautiful, beads are one of the most versatile and expressive art mediums. For thousands of years across the continent of Africa, beads were prestigious trade items that were used in masquerades, shrines and royal regalia and as adornment for the body. In each of these contexts, beads have had a primary role in communicating complex ideas about religion, aesthetics, and social and political status. This exhibition focuses on the many ways that beaded objects communicate meaning within a variety of historical and cultural contexts and explores the transformation of meanings throughout time and across cultures.



Girls Leather apron with Ostrich shell border and belt, Turkana, Kenya. Apron Length 29cm.

The most extensive evidence of early bead production and use has been found in Africa. The oldest beads that have been discovered on the continent are drilled ostrich egg shells from southern Africa that have been dated to the Middle Stone Age (280,000 to 45,000 years ago) and perforated shells from northern Africa that are 80,000 years old. In addition to ancient beads, prehistoric paintings of humans wearing elaborate beadwork adornments have been discovered on cave walls in Southern Africa and the Sahara Desert. Among the earliest items used for domestic and religious purposes and body adornment, beads are some

of the first material signs of symbolic thought, an indicator of modern human behavior. Although we have no way of knowing the full meaning of these ancient beads, we may conjecture that they were not only a means of adorning the human form but also an expression of social identity or religious practices.

Later, locally produced beads were made of bone, shell, wood, reed, ceramic, ivory, glass, semi-precious stone, and horn and metal. Through early trade routes from Asia and the Mediterranean, other kinds of materials and beads were imported that extended the bead workers' palette to include amber from the Baltic; ceramic glazed beads from China; agate and carnelian from India; and glass beads from Rome. Brass, imported from Europe beginning in the fifteenth century, was a precious metal used in bead production that continued for centuries in West Africa. By the sixteenth century, spun, drawn and molded glass beads from the famous Murano glassworks in Venice found their way to Africa. In the nineteenth century, beads from Moravia and Bohemia, now the Czech Republic, flooded the west, central and southern African markets. These kinds of imported beads were acquired at great cost and regarded as signifiers of wealth and prestige. In the exhibition, ceremonial garments and objects illuminate the use of imported beads to convey the links between economic status and social, religious and political status.

Within these groups are beaded objects used in daily life, such as doll-like figures and garments and adornments for everyday wear. Other works, including masks, costume, containers, implements, display objects and royal regalia, were used in sacred and secular ceremonies. These objects demonstrate ingenious strategies used to communicate ideas with beads. Some works express highly complex ideas through subtly configured colours and patterns, and others employ representational imagery.

Dynamic strategies of beadwork communication used in and across cultures are traceable. This is most clearly seen in Zulu beadwork used to convey messages to lovers as an important form of marriage negotiation. By the nineteenth century, this form of negotiation had developed into a highly sophisticated courtly art. The beaded panels, commonly known today as "love letters," were originally composed of



Beaded Clay Pipe, Turkana People, Kenya



*Woven bead necklace
Kamba People, Kenya.*

Sidewalk Tribal Gallery

We invite you and your friends to join us for the opening of

Africa Revisited: Beadwork Dialogue in African Art

Featuring a beautiful selection of South African work including Ndebele aprons dating from the mid 19th century from the private collection of Susan Drerup along with a spectacular collection of beaded items from across Africa. The exhibition will also include an overview of artefacts, jewellery & textiles from the diverse collection at Sidewalk Gallery Hobart.

Susan Drerup

will introduce the exhibition and talk about the culture, and traditional beadwork of the people of her homeland. Susan's interest in the work of the Ndebele people began as a young woman living in South Africa. Her knowledge of the culture of the region is extensive.

Preview 10am Thursday May 7th

Official opening 6 - 8pm

at

**Glen Eira City Council Gallery
cnr. Glen Eira and Hawthorn Roads, Caulfield.**

Monday-Friday 10am-5pm

Weekends and public holidays 1pm-5pm

Last day Thursday May 21st 2009

(13th annual touring exhibition of African Tribal Art from Timbuctoo to Tasmania)

For further information contact:

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OR Glen Eira City Council Gallery on (03) 9524 3402

geometric abstract shapes in various configurations, but by the mid-twentieth century, this wholly visual system gave way to using written text. In many types of beadwork, it is the material used to produce beads that conveys meaning. This is seen in Fulani amber and carnelian necklaces in the exhibition regarded as powerful medicines for healing and preventing maladies.

The beaded art objects in this exhibition can only begin to suggest the versatility of beadwork in communicating cultural and personal meaning, and can only hint at the length of the time span that beads have been one of the most prevalent African art forms used to further various modes of social and political discourse. Text adapted from <http://www.harn.ufl.edu/beadwork/images.php>.



Young Woman's Apron (Pepetu) Ndebele people, South Africa. A beaded apron worn by young women when initiated. It signifies passage from girlhood to womanhood.