

AFRICA

Human life, which is understood to have begun in Africa, developed over millions of years and radiated beyond the continent of Africa. The earliest African art dates to 77,000 years ago. While interpretation of this art is conjectural at best, the clarity and strength of design and expression in the work is obvious.

MAJOR CIVILIZATIONS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| • Nok (500 BCE-200 CE) | Nigeria |
| • Great Zimbabwe (11th- 15th c.) | Zimbabwe |
| • Ife Culture (11th-12th c.) | Nigeria |
| • Aksum (1200-1527) | Ethiopia |
| • Benin (13th-19th c.) | Nigeria |
| • Mende (19th-20th c.) | Sierra Leone |
| • Kongo (19th-20th c.) | Congo |



KEY IDEAS

- Centered around spirituality, the spirit world, and the role of ancestors is huge to incorporate into artworks
- Spirituality, initiation, and ancestors are main drives to create art
- Fertility of man and of the land is key
- Mostly utilitarian, usually for ceremonies. Most artworks are used in some type of performance
- Most common materials are wood, ivory, and metal
- Architecture is predominately mud brick, rarely stone
- Stone is however used in Zimbabwe and Ethiopian churches
- Kings/leaders/chiefs showed their status by commissioning artists to create sculptures, decor, and clothing that used the most expensive materials
- Masks are mainly worn by men - some sit on the wearer's face, some sit on top, some make the wearer look like a giant, etc.
- African art is concerned with ideas rather than objects from the real world
- Art may be prescribed by a diviner, commissioned by someone, and produced by a specific artist
- Art is created for specific reasons and to produce expected results
- African histories, often sung or recited, are the responsibility of specialists

MAJOR CIVILIZATIONS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| • Nok (500 BCE-200 CE) | Nigeria |
| • Great Zimbabwe (11th- 15th c.) | Zimbabwe |
| • Ife Culture (11th-12th c.) | Nigeria |
| • Aksum (1200-1527) | Ethiopia |
| • Benin (13th-19th c.) | Nigeria |
| • Mende (19th-20th c.) | Sierra Leone |
| • Kongo (19th-20th c.) | Congo |

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Aka | Mblo |
| Bieri | Ndop |
| Bundu | Nkisi n'kondi |
| Cire Perdue | Oba |
| Ikenga | Pwo |
| Lukasa | Scarification |
| | Torons |