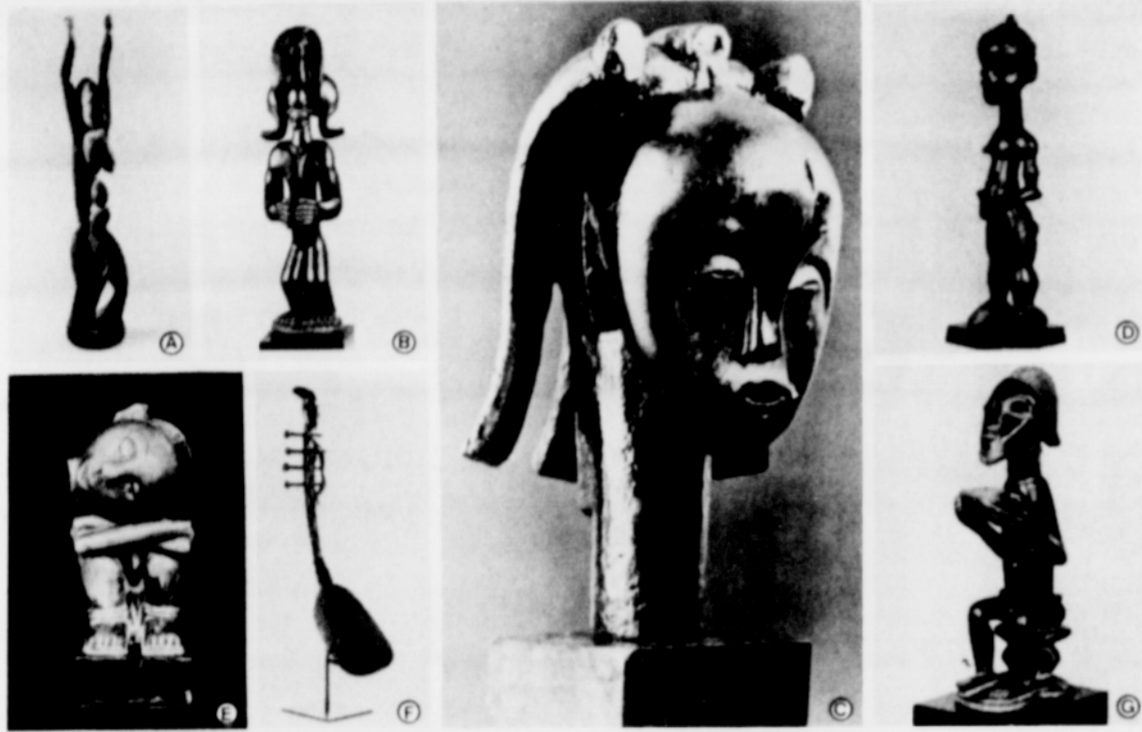


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# Major African Art Exhibition at Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

## PERSPECTIVES: Angles on African Art, Brings Crowd of Near Record Size as Museum Opens New African Art Gallery



A SAMPLE OF THE CO-CURATORS' CHOICES FOR PERSPECTIVES: Angles on African Art includes: (A) Mother and Child, Mali, Romare Bearden; (B) Figure of Warrior Hero, Angola, James Baldwin; (C) Reliquary Guardian, Gabon, David Rockefeller; (D) Standing Male Figure, Zaire, Iba N'Diaye; (E) Seated Figure, Zaire, Robert Farris Thompson; (F) Harp, Zaire, William Rubin; (G) Seated Male Figure, Ivory Coast, Lela Kouakou.



THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR of Virginia, Douglas Wilder, second from right, gave the state's official welcome to PERSPECTIVES: Angles on African Art, during the reception at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. With him are, from left, W. John Campbell, Senior Vice President, Plant Operations, Philip Morris U.S.A.; Dr. Susan Vogel, Executive Director of the Center for African Art in New York City and Paul N. Perrot, Director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

### The Co-curators for "Perspectives"

The prominent Africans and Americans invited to select and discuss African art from their own perspectives included: James Baldwin, novelist and playwright; Romare Bearden, artist; David Rockefeller, collector; and Dr. Ekpo Eyo, Nigerian Art Historian at the University of Maryland. The other "personal perspective" curators are: an American artist, Nancy Graves; a Senegalese artist, Iba N'Diaye; the Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, Museum of Modern Art, New York City, William Rubin; an Ivory Coast artist, Lela Kouakou; the curator of African Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, Ivan Karp, and a Professor of African and Afro-American Art History at Yale University, Robert Farris Thompson.

RICHMOND, VA. — More than 800 persons attended the opening of the exhibition, PERSPECTIVES: Angles on African Art, at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

The exhibition, developed by the Center for African Art in New York City, is sponsored by Philip Morris Companies Inc.

The organization of this exhibit was unique in that it was co-curated by 10 prominent Africans and Americans. Each was allowed to select 10 pieces for the exhibit. The resulting total of 100 pieces reflect their personal points of view and give the exhibition considerable variety.

Each piece is exhibited with the curator's portrait and a written statement from him or her explaining why it was chosen.

#### A variety of perspectives

Following the leads of the co-curators, the guests at the "Perspectives" reception found much to admire in the exhibition and different ways to express it.

"I marvel at this wonderful exhibition," said Virginia's Lieutenant Governor Douglas Wilder. "I join with others in expressing thanks to our corporate sponsor for helping us to assemble this rich, cultural contribution."

W. John Campbell, Senior Vice President, Plant Operations, Philip Morris U.S.A., told the museum visitors that Philip Morris "shares a concern for excellence" with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Calling the museum "an exciting platform for diverse ideas" that offers "the building blocks for a democratic society," the Museum's Director, Paul N. Perrot,

termed the exhibition: "Wonderful symbols of what the ancestors of so many of Virginia's citizens have given to the world."

#### Rich cultural heritage

Mrs. Bessie Taliaferro, secretary for the Richmond Chapter of the Coalition of 100 Black Women, said: "For so long they tried to tell us that our history began with slavery and that we had no past, no culture."

She said: "I want all our children to see this — no, I want everybody in Virginia to see that African art has had such an important influence on Western art."

The 100 works in the exhibition represent more than 55 ethnic groups in Africa and are rich in a variety of media, including wood, gold, ivory, terra-cotta and bronze.

The opening of "Perspectives" coincided with the inauguration of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts permanent gallery for African art.

Museum officials reported near record numbers of visitors — more than 3,500 — to the 58-year-old museum on the weekend following the opening.

"Perspectives" is scheduled to remain at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts through April 26, 1987 before traveling to the San Diego Museum of Art, where it will be on display from May 25, through August 16, 1987, then to the Center for African Art, New York City, September 10, 1987 through January 3, 1988 and finally to the Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Ala., January 31, 1988 through March 27, 1988.



LEADING THE WAY as guests moved through the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts was Adesanya Adeyeye, right, and his group of African musicians, dancers and drummers. The musician's repertoire of Yoruba songs and dances were a highlight of the reception for PERSPECTIVES: Angles on African Art, as were the several kinds of African foods served to the guests.



SEVENTEEN-MONTH-OLD Nicole rests peacefully as her mother, Linda Browne, inspects a West African art piece in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. A former Richmond resident now residing in Rochester, Minn., Mrs. Browne said it was important that children be taught the importance of all art at an early age.

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