



WINTER 2025 K – 8TH SCHOOL TOUR CURRICULUM

Know, Learn, Wonder: Highlights from the Sub-Saharan African Collection

Hodges Gallery | January 23 - April 26, 2025

This exhibition presents a selection of works from the Albany Museum of Art permanent Sub-Saharan African Collection. The AMA has one of the largest collections of Sub-Saharan African Art in the Southeastern region outside of a college or university setting.

This collection currently consists of over 1,000 works. It continues to grow and become a widespread collection that intentionally brings the nuanced cultures and traditions of the African continent to the forefront. While these works have been with the AMA for over 40 years, it is important to consider how scholarship, documentation, and literature of these specific regions, communities, and cultures have developed.

Part of this exhibition's purpose is to spotlight the vital but often unknown aspects of collections care. Many of these works cannot be displayed without proper equipment. The exhibition showcases a rich tapestry of cultural artifacts from various African regions, each offering unique insights into their respective traditions and beliefs. Ethiopian Hand Crosses, for example, exemplify intricate craftsmanship and serve as daily tools for blessings in religious practices. Liberian Face Masks, used by the Dan people during ceremonies, embody spiritual connections with the spirit world, fostering communal harmony and prosperity.

Ibeiji Figures from Nigeria highlight Yoruba beliefs in divine twins, symbolizing spiritual protection and familial bonds. Fon artists' Applique Tapestries from Benin depict narratives of lineage and historical victories, illustrating the artistic prowess of the Fon people. The exhibition also features artifacts like the Sudanese Hyena Pipe Bowl, symbolizing ancestral rituals, and Sierra Leonian Nomoli Figures, revered as spiritual conduits by different ethnic groups.

For K-5th graders, this exhibition offers a gateway to explore diverse cultures and their artistic expressions. It provides a hands-on opportunity to learn about craftsmanship, symbolism, geography, and the role of art in conveying stories and beliefs across generations. Through guided tours and interactive activities, students can engage with these artifacts to broaden their understanding of African cultures, fostering appreciation for global diversity and cultural heritage.

The exhibition was made possible with generous support from the Georgia Council for the Arts and Kiana Addo.



GADOE STANDARDS TO BE MET THROUGH THIS EXHIBITIONS

The relationship of this exhibition to Geography, History, Cultural Studies, English/Language Arts, and Visual Arts, are presented in Georgia's Standards of Excellence. This exhibition also gives students the opportunity to grow an appreciation and understanding of artistic process; explore how art, human connection, Story Telling, craftsmanship, and language merge together; gain critical thinking skills, and develop visual critique and literacy. For a list of specific standards to be address for your class trip, please reach out to the AMA Director of Education and Public Programming at Annie.vanoteghem@albanymuseum.com.

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY

This pre-visit activity introduces students to the themes of the *Know, Learn, Wonder* exhibition, which highlights works from the Albany Museum of Art's permanent Sub-Saharan African Collection.

Discussion: Art as a Window into Culture

Begin by discussing what art can tell us about different cultures and traditions. Introduce students to the idea that objects, like masks, sculptures, and textiles, can serve as more than just decorations. They hold meaning, tell stories, and are used in ceremonies, religious practices, and daily life.

Drawing Activity: Art That Tells a Story

Ask students to think about an object in their own lives that has special meaning—something that represents their family, culture, or personal story. Have them each draw the object and explain its importance. Encourage them to consider how art can be a way to express identity, beliefs, and traditions, just like the artifacts they will see in the exhibition.

Sharing & Connection to the Museum Visit

Invite students to share their drawings and discuss how their chosen objects compare to the works they will see at the museum.

Museum Etiquette

Before visiting the museum, please remind students of basic etiquette:

- Look with your eyes, not your hands.
- Walk, don't run.
- Use a quiet voice in the galleries.

This activity helps prepare students to engage with the exhibition by encouraging curiosity, personal connection, and appreciation for the artistic and cultural heritage of Sub-Saharan Africa.

FIELD TRIP ACTIVITIES

Gather in Amazing Space

Students will be introduced to the role of museums in our community and why they are important to us.

Gallery Tour: Art & Nature

An educator will introduce *Know, Learn, Wonder*. Students discuss the geography and culture of Africa and examine an atlas. Students will examine the works on display, as well as items that they will be able to handle, and discuss their materials, purposes, and spiritual connections. Students will be introduced to the idea of storytelling through art, and listen to a Kenyan fable.

Activity: Creating a Storytelling “Tapestry”

Students will recall the fable read in the galleries to create a visual retelling of the story using black paper and colorful cut outs.

We will discuss their work together, what elements did they include? What do they think the fables lesson teaches us?

Amazing Space: Teamwork

In our Amazing Space play gallery, students will work together in a team building game with our big blue blocks.

POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

Post-Visit Activity: Reflecting on Art and Cultural Storytelling

Objective:

- Reflect on what students learned during their museum visit.
- Create an artwork that communicates an important cultural story or message inspired by the exhibition.

Activity Steps:

Reflection on the Museum Visit

Begin by asking students to share their favorite moments from the exhibition.

- What artwork stood out to them the most?
- What did they learn about the cultures represented in the collection?
- How did the objects and artifacts tell stories about history, beliefs, or traditions?
- Discuss how art helps people preserve and share their heritage with others.

Cultural Storytelling Poster Creation

Explain that students will now create their own posters inspired by what they learned at the museum. The goal is to share an important cultural message through art—just like the works in the exhibition.

Provide examples or ideas for what they could include, such as:

- A drawing of an object or symbol from the exhibition with a message about its meaning.

-
- A representation of a tradition or story they learned about, using colors and patterns inspired by the artwork.
 - A collage incorporating different artistic elements to highlight the diversity of African cultures.

Allow students time to create their posters. Encourage them to think about what message they want to share. Once finished, students can present their work to the class, explaining their artistic choices and the meaning behind their creations.

Extension Ideas:

- Create a “Cultural Connections” display in the classroom where students can continue adding artwork inspired by different traditions.
- Organize a small school or community exhibition to showcase the posters and share what students learned from their museum visit.