contains arms, armaments, and artillery dating from the Middle Ages through the eighteenth century.

The Bellevue Museum, Bellevue Pavilion (Bellevue Museum/Musée Bellevue), Place de Palais 7, was founded in 1978. The collection is devoted to art objects and furnishings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The museum sponsors monthly seminars, “Les Conférences à Bellevue,” on topics related to the collection.

The Chinese Pavilion (Paviliones Paviljoen/Pavillon Chinois), Avenue van Praet 44, is located in the Royal Park at Laeken, and renowned for its collection of Chinese and Japanese porcelain and art objects from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It also houses the Vergaeghe de Naeyer Collection, an important group of Far Eastern porcelain and paintings, and European ceramics.

Selected Bibliography


CYNTHIA LAWRENCE

Tervuren


The origin of the Royal Museum of Central Africa dates from 1897, when King Léopold II of Belgium decided to create the Section de L'État-Indépendant du Congo in Tervuren as part of the Brussels International Exhibition. Although the basic aim of the exhibition was economic, an important place was given to the arts and crafts of the Congo Free State. Th. Masui, secretary-general of the section, in 1897 and 1899 prepared guides to the peoples, cultures, and economies of the Congo and to the art collections. The ethnographic objects, organized into
six large geographical regions, had been secured by agents of the Congo Free State and by the Société Anonyme Belge pour le Commerce du Haut-Congo. The initial success of the display encouraged the organizers to transform the temporary exhibit into a permanent Musée du Congo, which by 1902 included about eight thousand objects from Zaire. The curator E. Coart and the director A. de Hauleville embarked on the publication of systematic inventories, descriptions, illustrations, and classifications of musical instruments (1902); of amulets, figurines, and masks (1906); and of ceramics (1907). Until his death in 1909, King Léopold II was instrumental in securing funds (by passing royal decrees) for the building program of the museum. The plans for the new museum building were drafted after 1902 by the famed French architect Girault following the royal decree of 1902 deciding to replace the Palais de l’Exposition Coloniale de Tervuren with the construction of a large museum building. The work was undertaken (1904–8) by the Brussels firm of Wouters-Dustin, which also was involved in other monumental structures of the era of Léopold II. The museum building has many of the grandiose and sumptuous aspects of palaces and other public buildings erected under Léopold II. Particularly impressive is the huge marble gallery (made with rare marbles from French quarries) in which many of the artworks are displayed. In 1910 the new museum was inaugurated by King Albert I. Later additions to the museum were made in 1958 and 1964, and restorations of existing display areas have continued since 1947.

The museum, called Musée du Congo belge from 1910 and Musée Royal du Congo belge from 1952, depended on the Belgian Ministry of Colonies. After the Belgian Congo became the independent Zaire Republic in 1960, the name of the museum changed to Musée Royal de l’Afrique Centrale (1962). Since then the museum has been dependent on the Division of Scientific Research in the Belgian Ministry of Education. Founded on a tradition of public support, the museum has received many gifts of collections and objects and has acquired others through scientific missions, bequests, and purchases. In 1951 the museum director Olbrects created the Association des Amis du Congo belge to assist in the expansion of collections, documents, and archives and to contribute to the general enrichment of the museum through the organization of lectures, special exhibitions, performances of ethnic music, the journal Congo-Tervuren (called Africa-Tervuren after 1960), and other publications. Largely financed by patrons of the arts, the association also purchases collections for the museum.

The museum is administered by a director. It is organized into the departments of Cultural Anthropology, Geology and Mineralogy, Zoology, Agriculture and Economics, and History; an administrative department includes the library and educational services. The Department of Cultural Anthropology comprises four sections: Linguistics and Ethnomusicology, Prehistory and Archaeology, Social Anthropology and Ethnohistory (including the important bureau for ethnographic documentation), and Ethnography. The Ethnography section mainly manages the vast collections from Central Africa, and more recently from sub-Saharan Africa as a whole; Oceania; and the Americas.
The fame of the museum rests on its extensive ethnographic and art collections from Zaire. The most comprehensive and representative collections in the world, they cover diverse aspects of technology, material culture, and art from virtually all ethnic groups in Zaire. The artworks are primarily sculptures in wood, ivory, bone, stone, mud, clay, ceramics, and metals; construction masks in leaves, fibers, cloth, feathers, and other materials; and figurines made in cloth. The range of sculptured forms is unusually large. Outstanding artworks drawn from different ethnic groups may be found in each of the following categories: anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines and masks; carved tree branches, house posts, panels, doors, and jams; neckrests, backrests, and stools; snuffboxes and mortars; pots, vases, jars, cups, beakers, boxes, powder kegs, engraved calabashes, and potlids; ceremonial spoons, dippers, ladles, axes, adzes, spears, arrow stands, knives, swords, and paddles; musical instruments (idiophones, aerophones, cordophones, membranophones); scepters, swatters, batons, staffs, and walking sticks; combs, hairpins, necklaces, pectorals, bracelets, armlets, and anklets; coffins; drumstands; divination devices; miniature sculptured replicas of utensils; and carved bellows. Many sculptures excel because of their beautiful patinations and polychromy, others because of accumulations of sacrificial matter and beads, shells, resins, cloth, hide, feathers, and iron objects with which they are adorned. Many sculptured wooden masks are enhanced by various added constructions of collarets, hoods, costumes, beards, hats in fibers, cloth, and hide. The handles, hafts, and shafts of axes, adzes, scepters, batons, knives, spears, and slit-drums are frequently decorated with heads, busts, and human or animal figurines carved in the round or in relief. Some stools, neckrests, and drums are supported by human or animal caryatids. Many musical instruments are enhanced with colored designs and sculptures in the round or in relief. There are many artistically superb specimens among the pottery, basketry, mats, textiles, regalia, and paraphernalia (e.g., hats, caps, hoods, diadems, belts made in fibers, feathers, shells, beads, scales, pods).

A large part of the Zaire artworks in the museum were collected in situ by colonial administrators, travelers, explorers, missionaries, magistrates, traders, merchants, personnel working for various companies, and settlers, as well as by museum personnel on scientific missions and by scholars not directly attached to the museum. The collections also include important gifts made by chiefs, headmen, and other tribal authorities on the occasions of state visits by Belgian kings and high-ranking officials. Other objects were purchased from dealers and private collectors and obtained through exchange. In recent years the Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire transferred a significant number of artworks to the museum. Large acquisitions of artworks and ethnographic objects were made throughout the existence of the museum, culminating between 1910 and 1926 and 1947 and 1958. In 1910 a royal decree notified the African personnel that objects acquired from the Belgian Congo pertaining to the “political, moral, scientific, and economic history of the colony” and not reserved for particular
institutions should be deposited in the museum. By the end of 1947, 45,525
numbers had been assigned to ethnographic holdings and artworks, with several
items sometimes registered under a single number. During the period between
1947 and 1958, F. M. Olbrechts, director of the museum, anthropologist, and
eminent connoisseur of African art, secured many collections noted not only for
their range and quantity but also for their quality. By 1959 there were about
100,000 objects in the museum and in 1967 about 118,000 pieces. Since 1961,
mainly through purchase and scientific missions, the Zaire collection has been
complemented by the addition of sculptures and ethnographic items from sub-
Saharan Africa, Oceania, and the Americas; the number of representative pieces
from each of these regions has steadily been increasing.

The artworks from Zaire represent and illustrate virtually the entire spectrum
of regional, local, ethnic and subethnic styles and forms, as well as their inherent
usages, functions, and meanings. Of great artistic and scholarly significance also
are the artworks derived from less commonly known areas and groups. For the
rich artistic province of southwestern Zaire, where cultural units overlap with
others in the Peoples’ Republic of the Congo and Angola, the museum possesses
large representative collections from all Kongo subgroups and from Teke, Yaka,
Suku, Pende, Mbala, Mbuun, Holo, Hungaan, and Cokwe and from the less
frequently mentioned Mfinu, Wuum, Sakata, Sengele, Dia, Buma, Yansi, Dzing,
Nkanu, Soonde, Kwese, and Pindi. From the artistically poorer northwestern
Zaire province are included sculptures from Bollia, Eleku, Mongo, Ntumba,
Ngala, Ngombe, Ngbandi, Sango, Ngbaka, Gobu, Langbwase, Mbanja, and
Togbo. The northeastern Zaire province, which extends into the Central African
Republic, the Sudan, and Uganda, is represented by works from the Zande,
Mangbetu, Bali, Mamvu, Bwa, Lori, and Bari. From eastern Zaire there are
specimens from Mitoko, Lengola, Mbole, Yela, Komo, Pere, Lega, and Bembe;
and from southeastern Zaire, Hembia, Binja, Bangubangia, Kusu, Tabwa, the
riverain populations of Lake Tanganyika, Boyo, and various Luba subdivisions.
Objects from south-central Zaire include those by Songye, Nsapo, Tetela, Kan-
yok, Luntu, Luluwa, Luba-Kasai, Lunda, Cokwe, Ndembu, Kuba, Kete, Binji,
Leele, Wongo, Ndengese, Salampasu, Lwalwa, and Mbagan.

Among the outstanding artworks, only some selections can be mentioned:
royal statues of the Kuba; mother and child figurines of the Kongo, Yaka, Mbala,
Luba, and Luluwa; funerary figurines from the Ndengese; nail and mirror fetishes
from Kongo and Songye groups; ancestral and bowl-holding statues from the
Luba; initiation masks from the Pende, Yaka, Suku, Cokwe, Kuba, Bembe, and
Luba; wooden and ivory masks from the Lega; caryatid and other sculptured
stools and neckrests from the Luba, Luluwa, Kusu, Kanyak, Yaka, Pende,
Cokwe, Songye, and Mbala; anthropomorphic harps from the Ngbaka and the
Mangbetu; anthropomorphic, painted, and decorated drums from the Kongo,
Cokwe, Leele, and Kuba; anthropomorphic pots from the Mangbetu, Luba,
Kanyak, Cokwe, and Kongo; anthropomorphic adzes and axes from the Luba,
Pende, and Teke; sculptured batons from southwestern Zaire and sculptured ceremonial spears from the Luba; and anthropomorphic pipes from the Kuba, Mangbetu, and Ngbaka.

The museum possesses rare sculptures from the Bari, Bwa, Bali, Pere, Komo, Mbole, Yela, Lengola, Mitoko, Luntu, Mputu, Nsapo, Tetela, Kete, Binji, Lunda, Pindi, Kwese, Nkana, Eleku, Mongo, Ngala, Togbo, and Langbwase. Among the miniatures and nonfigurative carvings are exquisite combs from the Yaka and Cokwe, cups and boxes from the Kuba, whistles from the Kongo and the Pende, and miniature masks and pectorals from the Pende and the Hungaan. There are unusually large collections from the Kongo, Yaka, Pende, Kuba, Luba, Songye, Luluwa, and Lega.

These and other artworks derived from widely diverging cultural contexts were made essentially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but the formal and stylistic traditions that they reflect and incorporate are often much older. Only relative ante quem chronologies can be constructed to assess the age of individual pieces. The usages, functions, and meanings of the artworks illustrate the widest possible patterns. They are part of the rituals, institutions, and ideologies connected with cults of the dead and of the ancestors; worship of the soul, other spiritual principles, and nature spirits; capture of life force; birth and marriage ceremonies; initiation, enthronement, and burial ceremonies; insignia and paraphernalia of rank and status in the social system, in cults, and in associations and exclusive groups; magic of fertility, aggression, protection, and curing; divination and witch finding; oath taking and legal procedures; sociopolitical control and integration.

Only a small fraction of the artworks and the ethnographical objects are permanently displayed. Some of the finest artworks are arranged by ethnic group and by region and exhibited in two large rooms. A huge display area presents artworks and other manufactured items based partly on ethnic and regional grouping and partly on typology and function. Separate exhibition windows illustrate economic, social, religious, and political activities such as hunting, fishing, and blacksmithing; ceramics, woodwork, weaving, and basketry; dress and adornment; marriage, initiation, cult, death, and burial; magic and divination; legal and political authority; music, dance, and games; and communication systems. The museum organizes small changing exhibits of masterpieces and recent acquisitions and contributes artworks to national and international exhibitions.

The museum has an extensive library that covers all scientific fields represented at the museum. It includes broad coverage of the major journals in anthropology, non-Western art, ethnomusicology, linguistics, oral literature, history, political science, and economics. The library is highly specialized in journals and books pertaining to all facets of Central Africa. Of unique relevance for the scientific study of Central African art, technology and material culture, and general ethnography are the museum's archival documents, ethnographic dossiers, and photographic documentation (photographs of the collections, ancient and recent field photographs, and comparative photographic materials from other public
and private collections). Especially significant for the scientific study of wood sculptures is the Service d’Anatomie des bois tropicaux, which identifies the types of woods used in carvings and their properties. The library is open to the public, but the holdings do not circulate.

Slides and photographs in the collection may be purchased by application to the Section ethnographique. Publications by the museum are available from the Patrimoine du Musée Royal de l’Afrique Centrale, B–1980 Tervuren, Belgium. Some of the publications are out of print; others are reserved for exchanges or purchases of an entire series. The museum has engaged in an intensive program of scholarly publications involving all represented disciplines (geology, zoology, economics, history, social and cultural anthropology) and, within social and cultural anthropology, the subfields of prehistory and archaeology, ethnomusicology, linguistics, oral literature, ethnography, and ethnology. The Annales, Sciences humaines, have appeared since 1899. The in quarto editions of the Annales include many descriptive studies of sculptures, musical instruments, ceramics, mats, and textiles prepared by various museum curators and also early ethnographic monographs relevant for an understanding of the sociocultural contexts in which the arts of many diverse groups are manifested. Three other types of publications (ethnographic monographs, archives of anthropology, bibliography) complete the documentation provided by the Annales. Of great research value are the forty-two volumes of systematic annotated bibliographies (called Bibliographie ethnographique du Congo belge and, since 1962, Bibliographie ethnographique de l’Afrique sub-Saharienne). The museum also publishes separate series in other scientific fields. The quarterly journal Africa-Tervuren (called Congo-Tervuren before 1960) devotes much attention to the art and other museum collections. In cooperation with the Belgian Radio and Television, since 1968 the museum has produced a series of documented recordings of African music.

**Selected Bibliography**


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