

Cultural Masks Project

Working with plaster: a soft mixture of lime with sand or cement and water for spreading on walls, ceilings, or other structures to form a smooth hard surface when dried.



Learning Goal

- # Discuss how artworks reflect **ideas**, **images** and **symbols** from the culture within which they were made.
 - # Students will be able to develop plans for his or her own artwork (sketch).
 - # Students will be able to use the elements and principles of art in their own artwork (texture).
 - # Students will be able to explain the use of symbols and themes in their own artwork.
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How will we achieve these goals?

- # PowerPoint (take notes)
 - # Complete mask research, artist statement
 - # Complete preliminary drawing of mask
 - # Complete mask project
 - # Reflection
-

History of Masks

- # Masks are a **functional** art form (artwork that serves a purpose)
- # All masks incorporate some of the elements and principles of design



History of masks

- # Masks have been made for centuries.
- # The oldest known mask is thought to be about 9,000 years old.
- # Many ancient masks have not survived due to the materials from which they were made.
- # Every culture has some form of mask.



This stone mask dates to 7000 BC and is probably the oldest mask in the world (Musée Bible et Terre Sainte).

History of masks

Masks are made and worn for different reasons including:

- Ceremonial
- Ritual
- Protection
- Ornamental
- Theatrical



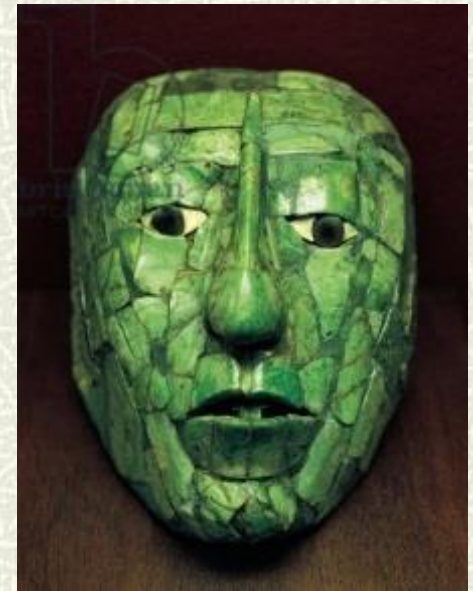
History of masks

- # Masks were/are made using local materials readily available in the environment.
- # Materials include:
 - Shells
 - Beads
 - Fibers (grasses, etc.)
 - Human/animal hair and teeth



History of masks

- # Masks can be zoomorphic (having animal characteristics), anthropomorphic (having human characteristics), or a combination of the two.



Masks from Around the World: Africa

Created for a specific purpose,
and generally used in **magic
& religious rituals**:

- # To celebrate life
- # To summon spirits
- # To educate the young
- # As good luck charms
- # To ensure people observe the laws
- # To represent an ancestor



African Masks

- # Escape reality and enter world of spirits
- # A mask is a link between the natural and the supernatural world
- # Secrets are understood by those who have been initiated into the culture
- # Generally seen only on special occasions
- # Typically created to accompany dancing and movement in a ritual



African Masks

Made from natural materials including:

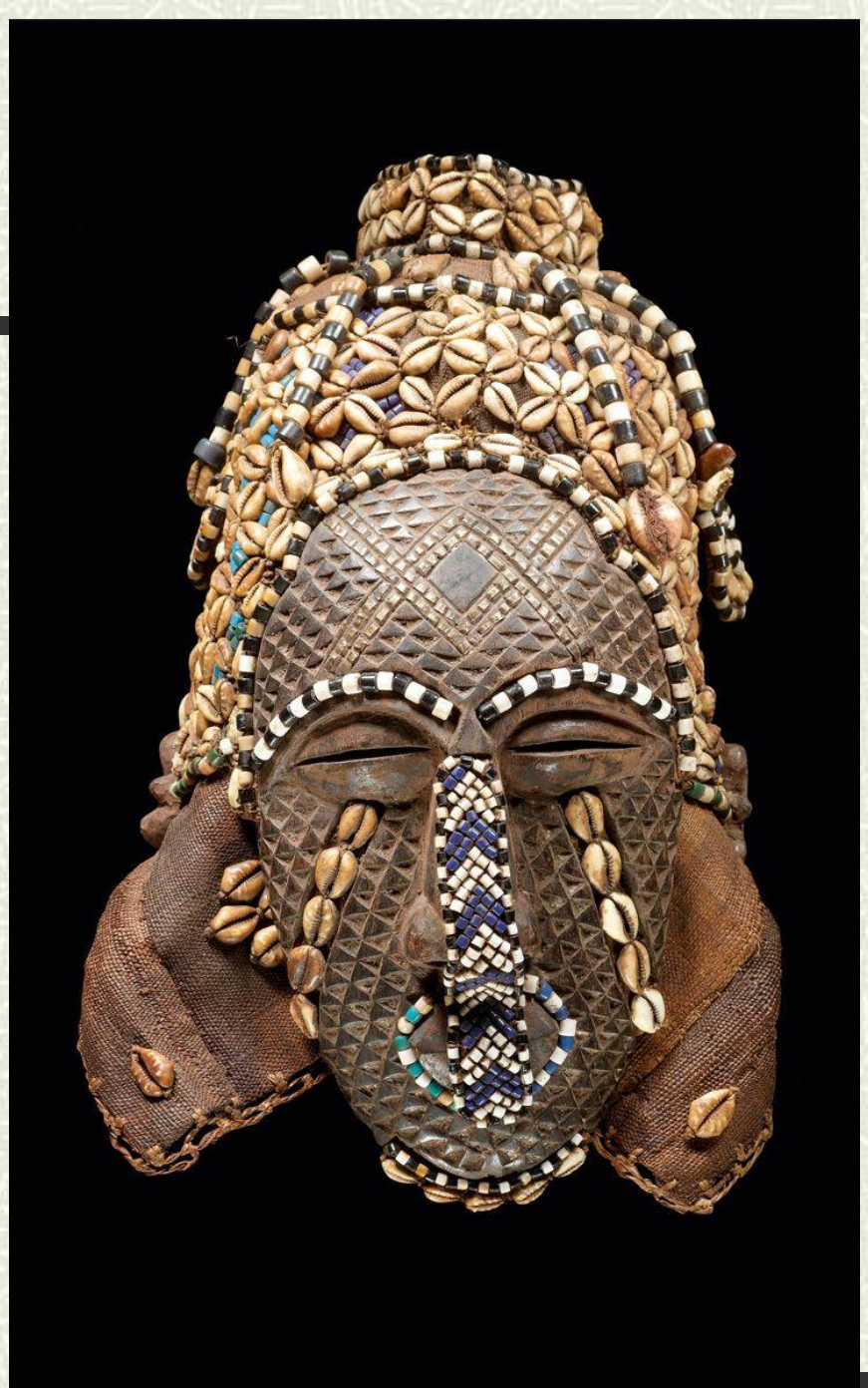
- Wood
- Raffia and grasses
- Beans
- Seeds
- Seashells
- Clay
- Hair and teeth



African Masks

Elements of Art & Principles of Design

- Symmetry
- Texture
- Color
- Line
- Pattern
- Movement



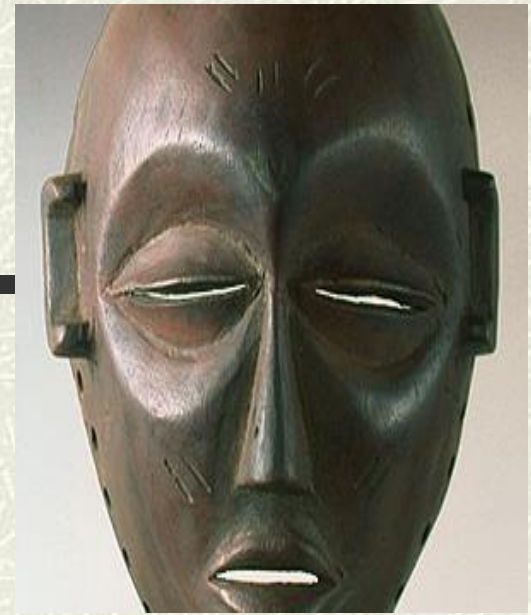
African Masks



Anthropomorphic: human characteristics

Zoomorphic: animal characteristics

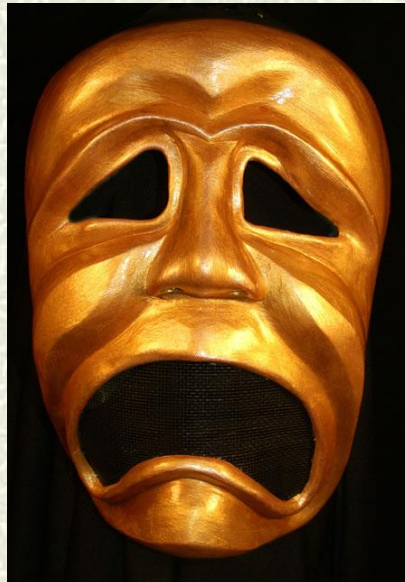
African Masks: More Examples...





Masks from Around the World: Greece

- # Greek theater masks were worn by the actors to portray many characters.
- # One actor could play up to three roles, including female parts, and needed the masks to change appearance and performance.



Greek Theater Masks

- ⌘ Exaggerated expressions helped define characters & helped those in the cheap seats to see better
- ⌘ Masks acted as a small megaphone to project voices
- ⌘ Masks used in tragedies were more lifelike, while those in comedies were ugly/grotesque
- ⌘ Made of lightweight organic materials: stiffened linen, leather, wood, cork, and human or animal hair



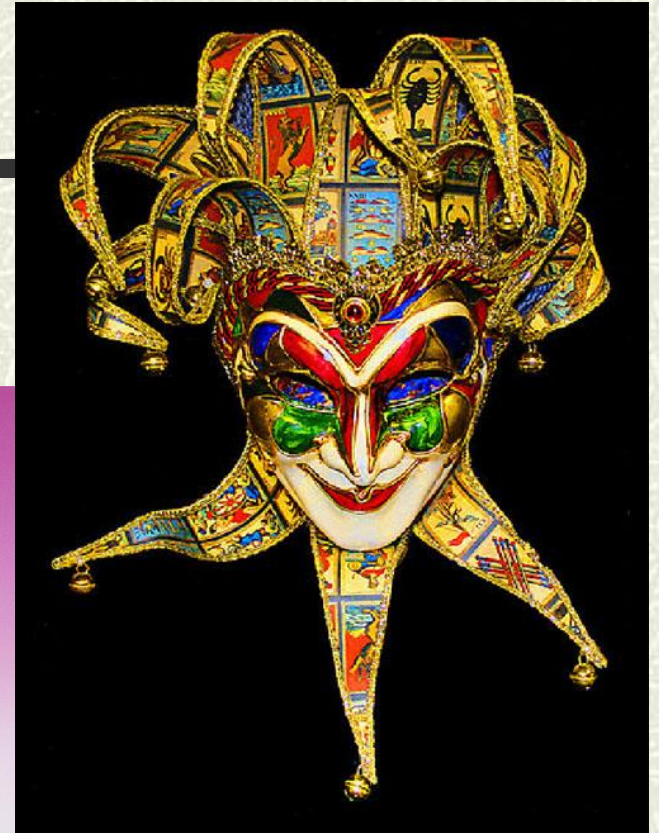
Masks from Around the World: Mardi Gras

- ⌘ Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) celebrations in New Orleans, LA for several hundred years; originally a religious celebration, marked a day of indulgence before 40 days of Lenten fasting
- ⌘ Masks were worn at masquerade balls, allowed wearers to escape society and class constraints—could mingle with whomever they wanted
- ⌘ They incorporate the colors picked by 1st King of Carnival in 1872:
 - green (faith)
 - gold (power)
 - violet (justice)



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Mardi Gras Masks



Masks from Around the World: Iroquois

- # Native American masks differ from tribe to tribe
- # **Iroquois** masks, or false face masks, are carved from the trunk of a tree, have vivid facial expressions, and incorporate human characteristics including hair; they are used as part of a healing ritual.



Masks from Around the World: Inuit

- # **Inuit** masks were inspired by a vision; each has an individual story and song to correspond to its meaning.
- # Masks are made of spruce or cottonwood, intricately carved with metal tools, and detailed with painting.
- # Masks used for dancing in religious ceremonies or festivals. Example: Arctic nights during which storytelling, singing, dramatic masked feats and shows were performed to solicit spiritual assistance for survival in the harsh climate.
- # Other ceremonies to build a sense of unity and a sense of cooperation among the people; and festivals to solicit success in hunting.



Inuit masks



Masks from Around the World: Japan

- Many types of Japanese masks. Used in traditional theater and festivals.
- Noh theatre is a type of traditional Japanese musical drama. Historically all roles were played by men; female and old men were acted with masks. Today female actors participate, but traditional masks are still used.
- Noh masks** are often incredibly complex. They display different facial expressions based on the angle from which they are viewed. A slight angle change displays a different face.



Japanese Masks



Okame mask: typically cheerful Japanese woman



Hannya mask: her dark side; jealous and scorned. A female demon.

Japanese Masks



Mempo: Japanese Samurai masks

- Designed to protect the face and strike fear in the enemy
- Crafted to suit the personality and preference of each Samurai

Other cultures to consider. . .

Mexican



Chinese



And many more . . .

More examples...

