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Thirty-eight artworks from a major, new bequest to be displayed at the Fowler Museum

Fowler in Focus—Radiance and Resilience: Arts of Africa and the Americas from the Goldenberg Collection Opens May 29



In the fall of 2010 the Fowler Museum received a bequest from the estate of Barbara (1928–2010) and Joseph (1925–2001) Goldenberg of 180 works of art from Africa, Mexico, Indonesia and the Northwest Coast of America. *Radiance and Resilience: Arts of Africa and the Americas from the Goldenberg Collection*—on display at the Fowler Museum at UCLA from May 29–September 11, 2011—offers a first chance to view highlights from this important gift.

The theme of radiance characterizes many prestige objects in the Goldenbergs' collection that reflect and amplify royal power, including a stunning Yoruba beaded crown, intricately carved Kongo staffs, and a group of elaborately modeled pre-Columbian ceramic figurines from the Maya island of Jaina. Radiance also alludes to the Goldenbergs' charisma and to their eye for beauty as dedicated art collectors.

Resilience is made manifest in objects used in healing, problem solving, and spiritual mediation aimed at sustaining wellness and encouraging fortitude in the face of adversity. Exhibited examples include striking power figures and initiation masks from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola that help to regulate the social order; a figure of a mother and child used by young women to sustain or restore fertility; and divination objects that assist communities and individuals in resolving specific difficulties. Resilience also aptly characterizes the Goldenbergs' own inspiring responses to health challenges and to losses they faced during their lives.

One of the largest and most eye-catching works in this exhibition is a magnificent beaded crown by the Yoruba peoples of Nigeria. This elaborate royal headpiece features a beaded veil that reaches nearly to the ground, not only to mask the identity of the wearer but also to protect the ruler's inner spiritual person.

Several objects in the exhibition are used for divination, including an elegant wood figure (above)

holding a bowl attributed to the artist Kitwa Biseke (ca. 1880s–ca. 1950s) of the Luba peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Divination was integral to the formation of the great Luba kingdom (17th–19th centuries), and continues to be practiced today. Luba diviners use an array of objects that enable them to communicate with the spirits, including this sculpture carved in the form of a woman holding a bowl.

Objects from the Democratic Republic of the Congo are well-represented in the collection, including an *nkishi* from the Songye peoples, who created power figures like this one to safeguard their community from threats such as drought, disease, or invasion. An intricate sculpture of a female with child, by the Yombe peoples and dating prior to 1896, was used to reverse infertility in women and belonged to a women's group dedicated to female health and well-being.

Fowler in Focus: Radiance and Resilience: Arts of Africa and the Americas from the Goldenberg Collection is curated by Marla C. Berns, Shirley & Ralph Shapiro Director of the Fowler Museum; Mary (Polly) Nooter Roberts, professor, UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures; and Gemma Rodrigues, curator of African arts, Fowler Museum. It will be on view in the Fowler in Focus gallery, the central space within the long-term exhibition *Intersections: World Arts, Local Lives*. Fowler in Focus is dedicated to rotating installations of new acquisitions, sub-collections, and particular artistic genres in the Fowler's permanent holdings.

The **Fowler Museum at UCLA** is one of the country's most respected institutions devoted to exploring the arts and cultures of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA Arts, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$10 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call 310/825-4361 or visit fowler.ucla.edu.