



AN EYE ON ART

African Masks c. 20th Century Various Artists

(left to right) Senoufo Mask, Yoruba Mask, Baule Mask, Senoufo Mask, Senoufo Mask, Yoruba Mask, Senoufo Mask, Yoruba Mask, Yoruba Mask, Senoufo Mask, Yoruba Mask.

Wood
Collection of Dr. Alan and Linda Rich.

Over the course of four decades, Dr. Alan and Linda Rich have displayed a passion for helping others, traveling the world and bringing medical care to those in need. With his profession as an ophthalmologist and eye surgeon and hers as an occupational therapist trained to help Alan in clinics and in surgeries, the Riches worked together to transform the lives of many in need of critical eye care. While working in clinics in Papua New Guinea and throughout Africa, the Riches also immersed themselves in the diverse artistic cultures of the countries they visited. Along the way, they acquired a collection of ritual and ceremonial objects.

Among the highlights of the newly gifted Linda Rich African and Oceanic Art Collection collection are eleven magnificently crafted and varied masks that come from all over West Africa, including Ivory Coast, Nigeria, and Mali.

Senoufo Masks (Ivory Coast)

These are known as Kpeliye'e masks and are used in various stages of the Poro, the Senoufo's initiation and age-grade system. In these ceremonies, the masks are worn by dancers who celebrate an individual's passage from one grade to the next, including funerary rituals. The Senoufo style includes elongated, concave noses and round, protruding mouths.

Baule Mask (Ivory Coast)

This type of mask is of great importance to the Baule and can be worn only by certain people. It's design is based on the face of a specific person, and as part of the Mblo ceremony, it is worn by a skilled dancer honoring that person as an artistic expression. Oftentimes, the mask's subject will partake in the Mblo ceremony as well.

Yoruba Masks (Nigeria)

Yoruba masks have a characteristic hairstyle similar to those seen in their statues.

Activity

Chocolate Mask Cookies

Makes approximately 14 cookies

Cookie Ingredients

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 ½ cups white sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp salt
- ¾ tsp baking powder
- ⅔ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3 ½ cups flour
- Handful of chocolate chips

Directions

- 1 Preheat oven to 375°F.
- 2 Cream together butter and sugar until well blended.
- 3 Add eggs, vanilla, baking powder, and salt and mix again.
- 4 Mix in cocoa powder.
- 5 Scrape the sides of the bowl and add flour and mix.
- 6 After mixing, use your hands to form a ball with the dough.



Cutting the Masks

Flatten your dough slightly and sandwich it between two pieces of parchment paper (preferred over using flour to prevent sticking, which will make your cookies drier). Roll the dough out evenly, to ⅜" thick or if you prefer crunchy cookies, roll the dough a little thinner, about ¼" thick.

Cut the printed mask templates (below) and set the template on top of your dough. Use a sharp knife to cut along the outline of the paper template. Carefully transfer the cookies to a baking pan lined with parchment paper. Excess dough can be rolled again, but make sure to save enough dough to make the eyes, noses, and eyebrows. Before baking the dough, use your paring knife to cut decorative patterns into the mask. Bake the mask shapes for 7 minutes.

Gather and roll the remaining dough to ⅛" thick. Cut the eye, nose, and eyebrow shapes out of this thin dough. Bake these shapes on a tray with parchment paper for 3 minutes and let the cookies cool on the tray for about 20 minutes.

Assembling the Masks

Once the cookies are completely cool, you can use a little bit of melted chocolate as a sort of edible glue to attach the eyes, noses, and eyebrows to the mask cookies.

Melt a handful of chocolate chips using a double boiler* or microwave the chocolate chips in short 15-second intervals until melted. Using a decorating bag or a spoon, apply a small amount of chocolate to the backs of the eyes, noses, and eyebrows and place onto the mask shapes. After everything is attached, let the chocolate dry and enjoy!

*DIY double boiler method: Heat a small pot of water on the stove until it boils and reduce to a simmer. Set a glass bowl on top of the pot so that it does not touch the water. Place ½ cup of chocolate chips in the bowl and use a spatula to slowly stir the chocolate as it melts.

Share and tag your beautiful creations with the hashtag #PMoAatHome!



