Transvaal Tsonga - head-rest
Northern Nguni

1987 3.66

object type: head-rest	acc no: 1987.3.66
vernacular:	contact prints
sub-type:	
community: Transvaal Tsonga	
sub-group:	location: [redacted]
	shelf: [redacted]
geographical location:	b/w: c/t: c/s:
	dimensions:
date and place collected: Elim, Transvaal, c. 1930	h: 15 cm diam:
	w: 20 cm mounted:
date executed:	d: 9 cm
artist name, sex: male	medium: wood
use: for resting the head while sleeping	

Northern Nguni - reattr. by Nessa Leibhammer
Curator: Traditional African Art 1995

~~purchase~~ / donation / ~~bequest~~: Anglo American Johannesburg Centenary Trust

price paid: - (R168 000 incl. GST paid by Trust for Collection

insurance value: R346 291 (114 objects in Jaques Collection) (1990)

authority: AGC 1987-03-26
MC 1987-03-30

original collection no: Jaques Coll./ Africana Mus. 50/964

object type translation.

catalogues: Wanless, AN&N 27(5):208

physical description:

JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY

ARCHIVE SHEET II

PROVENANCE

ARTIST: ACC. NO.:

Collected by Rev. A. A. Jaques

Lent to the Africana Museum in 1950

JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY

ARCHIVE SHEET III

EXHIBITIONS

ARTIST: ACC. NO.:

JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY

ARCHIVE SHEET IV

REFERENCE

ARTIST: ACC. NO.:

Wanless, A Africana Notes and News, see acc. card for vol. and page no.

JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY

ARCHIVE SHEET V

LOANS / LOCATIONS REGISTER

ARTIST: ACC. NO.:

Placed in [redacted] Oct 1988, formerly on display in [redacted]

Archives
Tswana

COJ : COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,
ROADS AND PARKS COMMITTEE 2001-10-31

Full document
in 1992-11-16.

ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE SERVICES

4 REQUEST FOR LOAN
OF WORKS OF ART

1 STRATEGIC THRUST

In the spirit of fostering partnership with the private sector and other stakeholders, the Arts, Culture and Heritage function has entered into agreements, in principle, for inter-museum and gallery loans as a standard practice of museums and galleries. This is an international practice that provides opportunities for support in order to make exhibitions exciting, diverse and different at all times.

2 OBJECTIVE

To request permission to lend the following works of art in the collection of the Johannesburg Art Gallery and MuseuMAfrica for an exhibition to be held in France from 19 February to 17 June 2002:

Johannesburg Art Gallery:

Accession no.	Community/Artist	Object/Title
1992.11.16	Tswana	Knife
1992.11.06	North Nguni	Staff
1992.11.09	North Nguni	Staff
1995.02.90	Zulu	Platter
1997.09.13	Zulu	Platter
1995.02.118	Zulu	Pot
1987.03.111	Tsonga	Headrest
1992.11.13	Unknown	Headrest
1995.02.303	Ntwane	Headrest
1987.03.08	Swazi	Headrest
1987.03.66	Tsonga	Headrest

MuseuMAfricA:

Accession no.	Community/Artist	Object/Title
1956/1560	Northern Nguni	Stick
1946/95(d)	Swazi	Waistband
3862	Nguni	Apron
3956	Xananwa	Drum
1961/1046	Ndebele	Cape
5087	after George French Angas of Umpanda the King of the Amazulu	Lithograph

NLW
HH ✓ filed copy on 11/4 + Archives.

Acc no
1987-3.66

ZEITGEIST-Gesellschaft

zur Förderung der Künste in Berlin e. V.

Dr Nessa Leibhammer
Johannesburg Art Gallery
Joubert Park 2044, King George Street
Johannesburg
South Africa

FAX 0027 11 720 6000

Berlin, 22 March 1996

Ref.: Africa - The Art of a Continent

Dear Dr Leibhammer,

The exhibition in Berlin is going extremely well and has received great attention from both the press and the public alike. Once again we would like to thank you for your generous loan which has contributed to making this exhibition possible.

We have already started to prepare and organise the deinstallation and transportation of all the loans for the exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum. The exhibition at the Martin-Gropius-Bau will close on 1 May and the deinstallation will begin immediately on 2 May. The deinstallation at the Martin-Gropius-Bau will be undertaken by Keith Taylor and his team of conservators. This has been arranged to ensure the optimum safety as the team is now very well aquainted with the objects in the exhibition, their fixtures and mounts.

The exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum will open to the public on 5 June with the opening reception taking place on 4 June. The Guggenheim Museum will confirm direct to you which pieces they would like to be shown in their exhibition.

The transportation will take place between 6 and 20 May in several shipments. Should any of your loans not be required by the Guggenheim Museum we will of course arrange for them to be returned to you directly. We will start packing on 2 May. When we have worked out a precise schedule Hasenkamp, our transport agent, will contact you with exact dates, flight details, etc.

If you have any further queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.
My direct line is: 030-324 50 78 or fax: 030-324 49 37.
Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Tina Aujesky

Tina Aujesky
[illegible]
Zeitgeist-Gesellschaft e.V.

Wielandstraße 18 D-10629 Berlin Telefon: 030-324 50 78 Telefax: 030-324 49 37

- Lobedo, Pot figure (wood) 340

- Shangaan headrest. Wood 341

- South Sotho/ snuff container 342

- South Sotho, snuff container 343

First Press Release

AFRICA
THE ART OF A CONTINENT

Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin
1 March - 1 May 1996

The Exhibition *Africa: The Art of a Continent* is a celebration of thousands of years of civilization. For the first time, the outstanding artistic achievements of the whole continent are presented and discussed together. At the Royal Academy of Arts in London, where the exhibition was on show until 21 January, it enjoyed an overwhelming public and critical success: 'It will change your view of Africa for ever,' said the distinguished London daily *Financial Times,* while *The Independent* described it as 'the show of a lifetime'.

This extraordinary opportunity has been grasped for Berlin by the Zeitgeist-Gesellschaft. After London, Berlin will be the only European city to present this unique exhibition to the general public. It will subsequently be shown at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Africa: The Art of a Continent presents masterpieces from ancient Egypt and Nubia alongside breathtaking works from Sub-Saharan Africa and from the Islamic North. From the first handworked stone implements of the dawn of the human race to Zulu earplugs made in the 1950´s, the exhibition sets out a cultural history of Africa that vastly enlarges the European understanding of its art. *Africa: The Art of a Continent* is not an ethnographic exhibition; this is no display of enigmatic curiosities. At long last, it treats the art of Africa with all the same respect that is paid to the so-called 'high cultures'.

Africa is the cradle of humanity: no other continent has so long a cultural history. *Africa: The Art of a Continent* begins with the earliest manifestations of human creativity. The quartzite implement found in Tanzania dates back some 1.6 million years; and the 'portable' painting from the Apollo 11 rock shelter in Namibia, now exhibited for the first time in Europe, is 27.000 years old.

After this prologue, the journey through Africa begins. The exhibition divides the continent into seven geographical zones, leading the visitor clockwise from the cultures of Ancient Egypt and

Wielandstraße 18 D-10629 Berlin Telefon: 030-324 50 78 Telefax: 030-324 09 37

Nubia by way of Eastern and Southern Africa to Central and West Africa and then by way of the Sahel back to Northern Africa. Within each region, works of contrasting periods and cultures are to be seen. The diversity of materials is astonishing: works made of animal dung, metal, ivory, cloth, clay and gold appear together with unsurpassable wood carvings from every region of the continent.

The Curator of the exhibition is the artist and Royal Academian Tom Phillips, supported by a committee of international scholars and Africanists. The approximately 800 exhibits have been provided by more than 170 lenders, including museums and private collections from all over the world.

The catalogue of the exhibition is already coming to be regarded as the standard work on the art of Africa. Most of the works on show are reproduced in colour. The text is the work of scholars from Africa, Europe and North America. Published by Prestel of Munich, the catalogue runs to approximately 620 pages.

The exhibition at the Martin-Gropius-Bau has been made possible by the generous financial support of the Stiftung Deutsche Klassenlotterie Berlin.

AFRICA
THE ART OF A CONTINENT

Martin-Gropius-Bau, 10963 Berlin, Stresemannstraße 110
1 March - 1 May 1996
open daily 10:00 - 20:00

Berlin, 24 January 1996

Zu einem Empfang anläßlich der Ausstellungseröffnung

AFRIKA

DIE KUNST EINES KONTINENTS

laden wir Sie herzlich ein
am Donnerstag, den 29. Februar, um 22.00 Uhr

Restaurant FOFI'S
Rathausstraße 25 • 10178 Berlin-Mitte

ZEITGEIST-Gesellschaft
zur Förderung der Künste in Berlin e.V.
Wielandstraße 18 • D-10629 Berlin

R.S.V.P.
Tel. 030.323 34 52
Fax 030.324 49 37

Bitte diese Karte
mitbringen

Antwortkarte

Am Empfang anläßlich der Vorbesichtigung der Ausstellung
„Afrika – Die Kunst eines Kontinents“
am Donnerstag, den 29. Februar 1996, um 22.00 Uhr
bei FOFI'S

○ nehme ich teil

○ nehme ich teil in Begleitung

○ kann ich leider nicht teilnehmen

.....

Name (bitte in Druckbuchstaben)

L34 Headrest
wood
15 x 20 x 9
insc, underside: A.A. Jaques
Tsonga, Transvaal
collected Elim, Transvaal, c 1930
Collection: Jaques Collection,
Johannesburg Art Gallery
acc no: 1987.3.66 (Pl. 29)

1987 - --
Northern Nguni

SPORTS, RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE
ART GALLERY COMMITTEE 95-01-20, 95-03-10

JOHANNESBURG ADMINISTRATION
(CULTURE AND RECREATION DIRECTORATE)
Libraries and Museums

REQUEST FOR LOAN OF WORK OF ART

The Royal Academy of Arts, London, has requested the loan of the following work of art in the Gallery's collection for the exhibition Africa: The Art of a Continent to be held from 5 October 1995 to 28 January 1996.

Artist	Title	Medium
Northern Nguni	headrest	wood

All expenses including packing, travelling and insurance will be covered by the organisers.

The Royal Academy of Arts has also offered to pay the costs for Mrs Rochelle Keene, Chief Curator, Johannesburg Art Gallery, or her alternates, Ms Nessa Leibhammer, Curator of Traditional southern African art, or Mrs Teresa Wimberley, Paintings Conservator, to courier the work along with items from the Brenthurst Collection, which is on permanent loan to the Johannesburg Art Gallery, to London in September 1995. It is critical that a museum curator familiar with the works of art and the handling thereof courier the works to England. The United Kingdom import requirements regarding plant and animal products are particularly stringent and the courier will be required present a vitasanitary certificate and a certificate from the State Veterinarian at Customs.

It would also be of benefit for these members of professional staff to view this major exhibition and to network with international curators who will be in London at the time regarding an exhibition of historical African art to be held at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in 1998.

IT IS RECOMMENDED

1 That the request by the Royal Academy of Arts in London for the loan of the works of art detailed in the item be agreed to at no cost to the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council and on condition that the Royal Academy of Arts indemnifies the Council against any loss or damage and subject to such further conditions as the City Secretary may deem necessary to protect the Council's interests.

/2 That

SPORTS, RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE
ART GALLERY COMMITTEE 95-01-20, 95-03-10

JOHANNESBURG ADMINISTRATION
(CULTURE AND RECREATION DIRECTORATE)
(Libraries and Museums)

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2 That Mrs Rochelle Keene, Chief Curator, Art Gallery, or her alternates, Ms Nessa Leibhammer, Curator of Traditional southern African art, or Mrs Teresa Wimberley, Paintings Conservator, be granted 5 days special leave to courier the works of art to London in September 1995 and be granted 5 days special leave to courier the works to Johannesburg in February 1996.

(AG 39/95)

Mrs R Keene
Ext. 6857
(95-08-01)

Approved:

DIRECTOR: LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS

ACTING EXECUTING DIRECTOR:
CULTURE AND RECREATION

1987-3-66
Natte Iguri

L1995.01
EK/jw

29 August 1995

Ms Emeline Max
Exhibition Co-ordinator
Royal Academy of Arts
Piccadilly
London WIV 0DS
United Kingdom

Dear Ms Max

I refer to the loan of four works for the Africa: Art of the Continent exhibition (L1995.01).

Press coverage has indicated that the exhibition will transfer to the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum in New York in June 1996. Please confirm whether this is the case as a separate loan request will have to be tabled before the Art Gallery Committee and the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council committees.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Erika Kruger (Ms)
REGISTRAR

Huge African art exhibition

■ BY GARNER THOMSON
IN LONDON

Britain's Royal Academy of Arts is to mount a spectacular exhibition of African art, bringing together for the first time the creative achievements of the continent as a whole.

Part of the RAA's tradition of exploring the artistic achievements of other cultures, it will consider Egypt and its neighbours north of the Sahara in the context of Africa as a whole, as well as highlighting the often neglected art of the southern regions.

The exhibition also recognises that, as the birthplace of the human race, Africa has a cultural history of unparalleled length. Exhibits range from the earliest artifact produced by man, a handmade stone tool from the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania, dating from 1,6-million years BC, through totemic bird poles of Zimbabwe to groups of Zulu snuff bottles and neckrests from South Africa, which, the Academy says, "reveal an unrivalled design sensibility".

The exhibition is conceived as a journey round Africa, and divides the continent into seven geographical areas, including the island of Madagascar.

"Africa: The Art of a Continent", which opens in London in October, is sponsored by Angola American Corporation and De Beers.

Star 25-5-95

25-05-95

X2

1987.2.66
Transvaal
Northern Nguni

Art

Desperately Seeking Africa

During the closing months of 1995, the 'africa95' festival in Britain offered a diverse programme celebrating the cultures of Africa. It was a multi-faceted event, including conferences, theatre, dance, films, literature and a number of art exhibitions at different venues in London and other centres, organised by a range of curators, and accompanied by catalogues with contributions by a variety of scholars. NESSA LIEBHAMMER and ELIZABETH RANKIN look at a number of the art exhibitions, but take 'Africa: The Art of a Continent' at the Royal Academy as their primary focus

In an interview for *The Royal Academy Magazine* in 1995, artist Georg Baselitz, whose private collection of African art is well represented in the Royal Academy exhibition, remarks:

> For centuries the purpose — and therefore the forms — of African sculpture scarcely changed. There was no development, so there's no essential difference between, for example, a Basonge carving made 1,000 years ago and others that are 500 or 200 years old. (vol. 48, p. 50)

Baselitz's statement voices a number of troubling stereotypes about African art — most notably the conviction that it is unchanging through time, and that outside influences undermine its innate quality. The admiration for Africa as a discrete civilisation with a seamless history, unaffected by a range of influences, including western modernity, is not only a romantic myth, but also one that denies dynamism and adaptability in the cultures of Africa, both in the past and in the contemporary world. It is a notion of Africa that produced a particular brand of art connoisseurship fashionable through much of the twentieth century.

The 'africa95' festival would seem to have provided the ideal opportunity to challenge such stereotypes, and indeed many of those writing in the variety of publications that accompanied the festival expressed this aim. Visions of complexity are voiced in the catalogue and the introductory brochures of the Royal Academy exhibition itself. Cornel West assures us in the Preface to the catalogue that:

> Gone are the old intellectual frameworks predicated on crude white supremacy and subtle Eurocentrism. The homogenous definitions and monolithic formulations of 'African Art' have been shattered. (*Africa: The Art of a Continent*, p. 9)

In condemning 'the old ugly stereotypes of African persons' West goes further than simply challenging conceptual misperceptions about African art. He expresses the hope that the exhibition will foster 'intellectual ferment in the art world in regard to African artworks [that] may contribute to overcoming the invisible status of African life in late 20th-century international relations'. This implies a forthright political agenda to retrieve contemporary Africa.

The aspiration to challenge preconceptions of Africa at the Royal Academy exhibition also permeated its education programme and was unequivocally expressed in the painstakingly 'politically correct' guide for teachers published by the Royal Academy (*Africa: The Art of a Continent. Background Material for Teachers*, Royal Academy, London, 1995). The author, Elizabeth Harney, stresses that 'interaction between peoples and the spread of ideas, objects and technology remain the defining features of African life and continue to inform the artistic process'. Harney draws attention to the importance of 'the environmental changes and human ecological history; the trade of objects, ideas and technology coupled with the movements of peoples; and the spread, adoption and practice of Islam and Christianity by a large proportion of African peoples' as well as the African diaspora and the development of pan-Africanism. Any notion of stasis is firmly countered. Yet the publication of Baselitz' statement, cited at the beginning of this review, quoted without comment in the mouthpiece of the Royal Academy, might alert us that not everyone involved in the project shared this attitude.

'africa95' festival

Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa
edited by Clémentine Deliss.
Flammarion (distributed by Oxford University Press),
R310,00 hbk, 320pp, 2 08 013599 6

Africa, the Art of a Continent
edited by Tom Phillips.
Prestel (distributed by Oxford University Press), 540pp,
R430 hbk, 3 7913 1603 6

This sense of equivocation also permeated the discourse around 'africa95' in more subtle ways. For example, the rejection of formulaic views of African art was particularly strongly represented in the catalogue of 'Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa' (Whitechapel, Gallery, London), an exhibition focusing on current art practices and thus challenging the popular notion of a 'traditional', unchanging Africa. The lead article by Clémentine Deliss in *Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa* opens with a quotation by Wole Soyinka that stresses the multiplicity and variety of African art:

> The exhibition for our times is indeed one that truly celebrates the bounty of styles, themes and exploratory verve from a continent where every act or product of the imagination is always conveniently summed up by the word 'African'. Yes, indeed, here is an entity called 'Africa', but the creative entities within its dark humus — fecund, restive, and protean — burst through the surface of a presumed monolithic reality and invade the stratosphere with unsuspected shapes and tints of the individual vision. (p. 13)

Even he creates a paradox — two impulses run concurrently in the text. While acclaiming Africa's variety and innovation, Soyinka speaks in unifying terms: Africa is an entity covered by a 'dark humus — fecund, restive, and protean'. Implicit is a 'coverall' notion of Africa, and one, moreover, that evokes old stereotypes — Savage Africa, Darkest Africa.

Considering the privileged position of 'Africa: The Art of a Continent', both as the premier venue of Britain's 'africa95' and as its most lavishly funded project, it has been widely commented upon that the task of curating the exhibition was entrusted to Royal Academician Tom Phillips, an artist whose main claim to the position was no more than his personal love of African art. While no one doubts that this relationship was and is both genuine and passionate, it hardly seemed an adequate qualification for a position of such responsibility. The choice may well suggest the primary agenda for that particular exhibition: the celebration of African material culture *as art*. An artist could be relied upon to put together an exhibition that privileged aesthetic criteria. It might also be condoned if he employed a kind of artistic license to offer an individualised, idiosyncratic and creative interpretation of Africa.

11

Although Phillips made personal choices in the items selected, there was no strongly innovative direction. Possibly such idiosyncrasy would have seemed irresponsible if the show was intended to represent Africa, rather than the artist/curator. But it could be argued that the result falls between two stools (an apt metaphor for this exhibition?), achieving neither creative verve nor academic authority. This exhibition was couched in a discourse of European connoisseurship. Its dependence was on the time-honoured formula of selecting the 'best' pieces and in this case doing that on such a scale — well over 800 works are included — that the spectator could not but be overwhelmed by its magnificence.

If the agenda was simply to convince viewers to take African works seriously in an art context then it must surely have succeeded. 'The time is at last ripe perhaps for such an assertion of Africa's artistic wealth to need no alibi, either political or ethnographic, nor

require some sociological peg to hang it on, nor a link to some new-minted piety or rectitude,' writes Phillips in *Africa: the Art of a Continent*. 'Best of all it might start not to require the service of European art to give it its credentials of definition ...' (p. 11). Yet he still selected the majority of works in terms of aesthetic criteria that have dominated European attitudes to African art for decades. A high proportion of the works were figurative, and, even when that was not the case, they were predominantly sculptural in form. Moreover, the objects were presented in the aura of spotlit seclusion invented for the twentieth-century artwork in the gallery context.

Undoubtedly the most obvious example of this emphasis was the simple five-seat stool turned through 90 degrees to present itself vertically like a new version of Brancusi's *Endless Column*, totally denying its horizontal functionality. Even more extraordinary was the fact that the stool was represented in the same way in the catalogue. The collector/owner would seem to have mounted the stool in this way, and thus became the 'author' of the piece as an artwork. The visual denial of this work's real purpose was particularly conspicuous, and it signals the lack of contextualisation of works in the exhibition as a whole.

Only the labels hinted — and that quite faintly because of their poor presentation — that these works were made for anything other than display and aesthetic admiration. The information offered gave the unfamiliar viewer little enough to go on, and almost no indication of the purpose of an object. Terminology familiar to specialist scholars and museum personnel was regularly assumed to be appropriate and was used without explanation. Was it likely, for instance, that most viewers would know what *Nkisi* means in the Central African section? Similarly, the places of origin included on the labels were probably unfamiliar to many: was it an oversight that the small maps of Africa on each label had no marker on them to show the relevant area? Or was this yet another indication that, despite all the protests to the contrary, a homogeneous notion of Africa still dominated the thinking of the organisers?

Given an exhibition of such breadth, an opportunity was offered to make manifest both the diversity of production and the real connections that link the many histories and material aesthetics of Africa — connections much discussed in the catalogue (and also carefully explained for teachers by Elizabeth Harney). The exhibition claimed to cover all Africa and recover neglected areas: it prided itself on challenging stereotypical concepts of Africa by making those areas previously excluded from the 'idea' of Africa — Egypt, North Africa, southern and eastern Africa — part of the whole. But the layout of the exhibition and the sequencing of areas failed to take full advantage of the possibilities offered by the exhibition to demonstrate the relationships which the catalogue addressed. The bulge of Africa was divided latitudinally into Western Africa and the Guinea Coast, Sahel and Savanna and Northern Africa. Although it was suggested that the partitions were to be neutral and purely geographical, they in fact fell largely into conventional, historically held divisions of the area. Had this part of Africa been divided longitudinally, for example, it would have made the connectedness between the northern areas and the southern areas easier to articulate. Issues such as the spread of Islam and its influence on West Africa became tenuous in the display; as objects which showed connectedness were separated in different areas of the exhibition, the impact of the iconoclastic gesture of uniting Africa north and south of the Sahara was lost (other than in the debates of the catalogue).

Also noteworthy was the different labelling information employed for North African works, which were categorised within their geographical areas by dynasty, period or religious affiliation, invariably indicating a position within an historic process. The labelling applied to other areas, with the odd exception, overwhelmingly privileged an ethnographising of objects, denying them historical resonance, even though time and place were not excluded. Although classification according to 'tribe' was discussed in the catalogue as a largely specious and colonialist form of categorisation, no attempt was made on the labelling to counter this mind-set. 'Tribal' attributions provided the main emphasis and were used throughout the exhibition as if completely unproblematic. For example, the provenance of a *linaga* or beaded skin cloak, included in the southern African section, declares it to be *Ndebele*. Yet only its *form* falls into conventionally accepted *Ndebele* style. The beadwork is completely atypical, showing cultural crossovers in both patterning and colour. Here was a perfect example to challenge the conventional stereotypes with regard to 'ethnic' classification. Yet the opportunity was missed.

The conceptualisation of 'The Art of a Continent' seems to have relied on two contradictory positions. The exhibition reflected a mid-twentieth century assumption which sanctioned the West to judge, select and elucidate the art and culture of Africa, an assumption marked by relative certainty, stability and confidence in the discourse of the West. Simultaneously, different expectations were raised by changed attitudes and current theoretical debates reflected in the catalogue. But the essentialist vision of Africa presented by the exhibition was easier to grasp and therefore likely to dominate, particularly because it was not questioned in the display itself.

It must be acknowledged, however, that this shortcoming is not unique to the Royal Academy exhibition. Western art curators who display African art generally fall back on familiar methods of representation. This leaves little scope for developing new strategies which break with given paradigms. Invariably they are caught in a dilemma of contradictory alternatives. Either the work is displayed as 'art' without any contextualisation or explanation, since 'art' is meant to be self evident. Or it is contextualised with such extensive texts and illustrations that these dilute the impact of the visual qualities of the work in their attempt to afford a fuller understanding of concepts and practices in Africa. In this case exhibitions are accused of falling under the rubric of 'ethnography'. Exhibitions habitually lean too far in one direction or the other, and in either instance fail to give African arts an independent value. In the first case, Africa is subsumed into the western aesthetic paradigm. In the second, it is presented as 'other'. Both approaches measure Africa against Europe, thus defining it in western terms, rather than in its own right.

Rather than grappling with these issues in the exhibition itself, the curator of 'The Art of a Continent' relied on publications to balance the discourse. And it would be ungenerous not to acknowledge that many of the problematic issues were taken up in the catalogue. Yet if 'The Art of a Continent' aimed to enlighten western audiences about Africa and its art, surely a certain amount of information had to be supplied and issues revealed through the display itself. For example, nowhere were the reasons for the selection made transparent nor the role or significance of the object explained.

Although 'The Art of African Textiles. Technology, Tradition and Lurex' at the Barbican also failed to show the application and context of the fabrics on exhibit, its brightly-lit, multi-layered display of vibrant suspended materials and garments, devised by British fashion designer, Joe Casely-Hayford, offered a greater sense of the richness and life of fabrics in use. This was supported by readable and informative labels, which, by quite frequently including the name of the maker, reminded the viewer of the specificity of production. Curator of the exhibition, John Picton, explains this practice in his introduction to the catalogue:

> While it is taken for granted that art is a form of social practice, it must be recognised that so much of the literature on African art has been constituted in terms that leave out the voices of the artists, patrons, critics and teachers. ... the effect of naming the artists responsible for particular cloths, wherever one can, and of including as wide a range of uses of cloth as the space in the gallery will allow, is to problematise the Romantic idea of the Artist even while enabling individual identity to be made apparent. (*The Art of African Textiles*, Barbican, London, 1995, p. 13)

There is some irony in the fact that, while the textile exhibition which avoided strong overtones of 'high art' deliberately sought to name artists, the Royal Academy exhibition, which consciously promoted a concept of aesthetic value, mentioned very few artists by name. The problem of identifying artists is acknowledged, but even the label 'Artist Unknown' that has been favoured of late was not used, and appellations assigned on the basis of style, such as the 'Buli Master', which also suggest the involvement of an individual, were deliberately avoided, we are told, as a reflection of Eurocentric practice. (*Africa: The Art of a Continent*, p. 19). Yet surely the use of the 'tribal' labels already discussed is equally Eurocentric, another western device re-establishing conventionally held systems of categorisation. While it is acknowledged that the very concept of 'artist' may be a western construct, so too is the concept of 'fine art' which was the focus of the Royal Academy exhibition. It seems paradoxical then that the exhibition celebrated artistic creativity without honouring the individuality of makers, and thus underwrote the notion of an 'anonymous' African art, part of an unchanging tradition — however conscious the curatorial team and contributors to the catalogue may have been of current debate around such issues.

Conventional notions of African 'tradition' seemed to be more overtly challenged in the Barbican exhibition. But in the case of the Barbican exhibition the polemic was not restricted to the catalogue. It was implied in the exhibition itself, explicitly in the installation of 'colonial' costumes in 'African prints' by Yinka Shonibare, but also more generally by the diversity of the textiles and the fact that they were not exclusively 'precious' objects, historically distanced. Amongst sumptuous woven, dyed and embroidered fabrics, many items were factory-made of modest materials and many were conspicuously of recent date, such as a cotton print with Nelson Mandela design for the 1994 elections in South Africa. And in a few cases artists were specifically commissioned to produce pieces, such as the appliqué entrance hangings designed by the Cairo tent-maker Salah El-Din M. El-Ozy — a reminder that these works are part of a 'living tradition'. As was made clear by the title — 'Technology, Tradition and Lurex' — this exhibition did not restrict itself to historical examples presented as 'high art', but also confronted current practices.

A similar breadth of representation was achieved at the Crafts Council exhibition 'African Metalwork', curated by the Kenyan-born potter Magdalene Odundo. Of relatively modest scale, this exhibition none the less ranged from historical to present-day, from decorative to utilitarian, from symbolic to representational. The objects selected foregrounded the skill of the artist, but it was a notion of skill mediated in a variety of ways, from delicate crafting to witty ingenuity, with materials varying from precious metals to industrialised alloys and even discarded waste. Perhaps it was the context of the Crafts Council, and of the current art-craft debate, that made it possible to negotiate such a wide range of objects with refreshing unpretentiousness. The exhibition succeeded in drawing attention to the fine handcrafted work of historical objects from all over Africa without losing sight of contemporaneity and popular culture.

Because the Royal Academy exhibition itself served to underwrite the widely accepted idea of an ancient African art, varied in different areas, but fundamentally eternal and unchanging, untainted by contempo-

rary influences, it was difficult for viewers to make connections with contemporary exhibitions that formed part of the 'africa95' festival. Many of these shows offered art that was not recognisable as 'African', and might have been displayed in London galleries at any time. A number of shows in the commercial galleries of Cork Street fell into this category, as did the southern African exhibition, 'On the Road', at The Delfina Studio Trust, which included artworks from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola and by well-known South African artists from the Goodman Gallery, such as Kentridge, Siopis, Bester and Mautloa. What made these exhibitions appropriate for the festival was that the artists came from Africa, not that they worked in terms of some generic style.

The fact that these works were not significantly different from other contemporary practice relayed an important message about art in Africa today and challenged stereotypes about an inherently 'African' character in works produced on the continent. But perhaps this made them less interesting to London audiences, 'desperately seeking Africa', and they seem to have attracted less attention and fewer reviews. A show like 'Big City — Artists from Africa' at the Serpentine might have come closer to meeting the public's expectations, because it exhibited current work but selected artists who did not fit the mainstream of international contemporary art — including works like the emblematic murals of Cyprien Tokoudagba from Benin, the extraordinary constructions of fantastic architectural models by Bodys Isek Kingelez from Zaire, and also the carving of Johannes Segogela from South Africa, who might be described as a 'folk artist'.

To show overtly 'African' choices was the directive at the Whitechapel Gallery where 'Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa' displayed work from seven countries in Africa. The responsibility of selection was assigned to curators from each of the selected countries, individuals involved in the production and culture of each area. This strategy certainly had the advantage of 'legitimising' the representations — although it might well be asked who selected the curators. But 'Seven Stories' suffered from a lack of direction driving the exhibition as a whole. There seemed to be no overriding voice to give a sense of coherence, and the impact of individual voices was reduced, given the restricted space limiting their choice. In contrast was the coherence yet unconventionality of the Museum of Mankind exhibition, 'Play and Display: Masquerades of Southern Nigeria' by Sokari Douglas Camp. Nigerian by birth but raised and educated in England, Camp moved confidently between two cultural positions. She assumed multiple roles as artist and curator, subject and object, disrupting and renegotiating conventional categories by combining Nigerian masks from the museum collection with her own multi-media sculptures of masqueraders and supporting videos.

Whatever their strengths or limitations, the exhibitions of contemporary African art played the important role of challenging stereotypes of an essentialist Africa, a convention reinforced by Phillips' display at the Royal Academy. It was unfortunate that the multiple voices of 'africa95', smaller in scale and physically separated from 'The Art of a Continent', were not enough to modify the implicit authority of the prestigious Royal Academy exhibition. Intended to compensate for the undervaluing of African culture in an imperial past, 'The Art of a Continent' was destined to relive and reinforce the narrow perceptions forged in that history.■

Nessa Leibhammer is curator of the African art collection at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Elizabeth Rankin is Professor of Art History at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Criticism

Critical Distance

JENNIFER WENZEL reviews two books that explore violence, distance and the white South African writer

Colonization, Violence, and Narration in White South African Writing: André Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, and J. M. Coetzee
by Rosemary Jane Jolly.
Ohio University Press, Athens; Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, xvii + 172 pp., 1996, $18.95, 0 8214 1131 4

Critical Perspectives on J. M. Coetzee
edited by Graham Huggan and Stephen Watson.
Macmillan, London; St. Martin's, New York, xvi + 246 pp., 1996, $49.95, 0 333 56912 1

Yes, it is a long, long way from South Africa to Texas. This distance is perhaps most palpable not in transit nor in the disorienting echoes of a transatlantic telephone conversation, but rather in an American undergraduate classroom. Sometimes it seems as if all destinations not on the itinerary between one spot in mainstream America and the next are equidistant, too remote or exotic in the imagination of the typical student (the ones I know are at the University of Texas at Austin) to be meaningful in considering the questions they struggle to answer, and, sometimes, to ask.

The proliferation of post-colonial studies in the North American academy, in which I am an uneasy participant, could take as its primary pedagogical task an examination of the distances, and, indeed, proximities that position our students in relation to their global counterparts. Easier said vaguely than done well. To be fair to my oft-maligned undergraduates, the primary intellectual challenge I feel as a young scholar in a relatively young field is to reconcile theoretical debates with classroom discussion: to do justice to the many kinds of distance between myself, my students, and the texts and contexts we attempt to engage.

13

J. M. Coetzee recalls yet another kind of distance between himself and his University of Texas undergrads in 'Remembering Texas,' a brief memoir of the years he spent in Austin in the late sixties working toward a Ph.D. in linguistics (in David Attwell (ed.), *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*, Harvard UP, Cambridge, pp. 50-3). Less generous than I (but with good reason), Coetzee admits that his students 'might as well have been Trobriand Islanders, so inaccessible to [him] were their culture, their recreations, their animating ideas'. No more accessible was the central Texas landscape: 'the green hills ... were as alien as the Surrey downs', while Texas voices sounded as empty of nuance as his memory of the South African land and sky.

Reading the essay, I am struck by Coetzee's implication that the only thing capable of spanning the vastness of the globe was violence. He creates a scene in which he huddles under a desk while student/sniper Charles Whitman terrorises the Austin campus from the clock tower; meanwhile, offstage, and weighing heavily in Coetzee's mind, Verwoerd is assassinated and war rages in Vietnam.

Violence, distance, and the place of the white South African writer are themes explored in the two books under review. To date, much of the critical debate on Coetzee's fiction has concerned the distance he seems to place between himself, his fiction and the violent history of South Africa. Graham Huggan and Stephen Watson, editors of *Critical Perspectives on J. M. Coetzee*, the first such anthology of essays, contextualise the arrival of their volume on the critical scene as somewhere beyond this initial debate, which David Attwell once described as an 'oversimplified polarisation between on the one hand, those registering the claims of political resistance and historical representation ... and, on the other, those responsive to postmodernism and poststructuralism' (*J. M. Coetzee: South Africa and the Politics of Writing*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993, p. 2).

The current crisis, as reflected in the anthology, concerns the seeming distance between Coetzee's intellectual affinities – his European modernist 'inheritance' – and his role as a South African writer in a discursive milieu of assorted 'posts'. While some of the contributors link this awkward position to the confusion facing a white South African intelligentsia more generally, this crisis at times seems yet another version of the initial one, where Coetzee was labelled either brilliant or boorish, depending on a critic's political agenda and/or her proximity to South African life. Huggan and Watson unnecessarily oversimplify this 'new' debate by describing Coetzee in their introduction as 'a first-world novelist writing out of a South African context'.

It may be instructive to turn to Rosemary Jane Jolly's book, *Colonization, Violence, and Narration in White South African Writing: André Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, and J. M. Coetzee*, in which she offers a tentative last word on the engagement/escapism question. By considering Coetzee's representations of violence alongside those of two other 'dissident' Afrikaner writers, Jolly simultaneously addresses his relationship to this local tradition and the place of white South African writing in an international context.

Jolly argues that many literary representations of physical violence are guilty of an analogous violation, because writers and readers try to approach such scenes as innocent bystanders, and thus remain safely distant from them. While audience and author may hope that a literary 'treat-

1987-03-66
North Nguni
Transvaal Tsonga

The rainbow nation shines out

Britain is hosting the most spectacular festival of African culture ever seen — and South African art has been given by far the biggest platform. This is not the only irony of Africa95, as JACOB DLAMINI reports from London

ST 27/8/95

WHEN *Ipi Tombi* toured Britain in the early 70s, Time Out magazine described the epic Zulu musical as "the most patronised show" on stage: it neatly summed up audience reactions to the heady exotica of happy Africans showing off their natural rhythm.

The same will not be said about Africa95, a nationwide season of the arts of Africa taking place in galleries, museums, theatres, cinemas, universities and on BBC television and radio. It is more than likely that when this £5-million (R28,5-million) extravaganza finishes its five-month run in December, it will go down as the most controversial spectacle ever put on display.

Organisers say the festival seeks to put the vibrancy and innovation of African arts on centre stage in British institutions, thereby helping to explode the myths and stereotypes surrounding African culture. But Africa95 has already sparked furious debates among black cultural activists who want to know why most of the organisers are white academics.

The season has also brought to the boil the debate about what is truly African art. How do you evaluate the cultural contribution of the largest continent in less than five months without treating Africa as nothing more than one huge country, as the title suggests?

The festival boasts a heavyweight set of patrons — including President Nelson Mandela, Queen Elizabeth and former Senegalese president Leopold Senghor. But critics say the inclusion of the African leaders is a "smokescreen" to hide the fact that most of the material on display is from the private collections of Europeans.

The award-winning black British newspaper, The Weekly Journal, has been the most vociferous in its criticism of Africa95, going so far as to ask that most of the African artefacts languishing in European museums and galleries be returned to their countries of origin.

But while the debates continue, the proverbial show goes on.

Dance, music and photographic events have attracted a number of spectators from Africa and the black diaspora, as well as from the British public. The festival has also provided most artists with a much-needed platform for self-expression.

Nigerian sculptor Sokari Douglas-Camp is exhibiting massive and mysterious figures made of steel at the Museum of Mankind in London. She told the women's magazine Marie-Claire that she would not have been able to make those sculptures in her home country — because she is a woman.

"It's like our language is being stunted before it's spoken. So the more people talk, the richer everyone is," she said.

Perhaps the biggest irony of all is the disproportionate involvement of South African artists of all shades and stripes. Apart from patron Mandela and Africa95 executive committee member Mandla Langa, hundreds of South African artists have been lined up for the festival.

For a country that is evidently still reeling from the effects of isolation and the cultural boycott, South Africa has provided the single largest component of participants. These include gumboot dancers, photographers, artist Sam Nhlengethwa, actor Andrew Buckland, storyteller Gcina Mhlophe, author Breyten Breytenbach and TV talk show host Dali Tambo — he of the "my-uncle-Nelson" fame.

The festival has come at an opportune time for South Africa and will hopefully help the cultural community in its efforts to redefine its mission and find a new label that does not begin with the word "protest". To show that we have more than just gumboot dancers and P J Powers to offer, the organisers have also lined up Hugh Masekela, Sibongile Khumalo and Lucky Dube to perform at venues around the country.

1997 - 3 - 66
Natti Iguni

MAIL & GUARDIAN
August 25 to 31 1995

African images: Above, Malian Seydou Keita's photograph from Big City: Artists from Africa, and (above left) a still from Ceddo, by Ousmane Sembene, part of the Screen Griots season

Beyond masks and drumming

Africa95, a huge festival of the continent's arts, opens in Britain next weekend. But, reports MAYA JAGGI, it already faces passionate criticism

THE Dark Continent. Africa labours on towards the new millennium under this curious misnomer, its "darkness" often a mirror of the ignorance of the beholder.

September 2 sees the launch in Britain of Africa95, a festival which hopes to fill that void, putting the vibrancy and innovation of African arts centre stage in British institutions. Already, Africa is flavour of the month on television, and the British Film Institute (BFI) has opened *Screen Griots*, a series of African classics, at the National Film Theatre.

June Givanni, head of the BFI's African and Caribbean Unit, says one aim is to "shift the focus of popular understanding of what Africa is — it's not only disasters, famine and war, but has a resilient, creative side".

In scope, it rejects the mythological border that split the so-called Arab north from "sub-Saharan" Africa. Spanning visual and performing arts, cinema, music and literature, Africa95 aims to widen conceptions beyond what Adotey Bing, the director of London's Africa Centre, calls the "masks and drumming" view of the continent's art.

Its centrepiece is a synoptic Royal Academy exhibition of classical African art, from 1,6-million BC to the turn of the century. A complementary exhibition of modern African art will be shown at the Whitechapel Gallery in London.

Visual art from the continent has enjoyed a surge of market interest in Britain in recent years, but Western taste has homed in on work spuriously labelled "tribal" or "primitive", dismissing any but the "self-trained" artist as "inauthentic".

Such a denial of change and modernity is ultimately saturating. Helen Denniston of Africa95 believes falling British audiences for African dance reflect a weariness with a limited style. "They think they've seen that, done that, but Africa95 will surprise them," she says.

Yet the season, many years in the making, has provoked passionate criticism — not least among some of the African and black British advisers recruited by an initial core of white enthusiasts.

Some cite an arrogance in attempting to showcase an entire continent — unlike past festivals on India, Japan or Spain — and exoticising it. Others observe a bitter irony in that many treasures hail from European store houses — the fruit of centuries of plunder. Writing in the black British newspaper *The Weekly Journal*, Mike Phillips anticipated a "theme-park atmosphere" divorced from the concerns of contemporary black artists.

Mark Sealy of Autograph, the Association of Black Photographers, cites a problem with festivals whose scope is geographical: "It makes things difficult for artists and curators later; there's a tendency to think it's been done."

Others insist Africa95 is different. Funded predominantly by corporate sponsors and individual donors, along with British grants, it has, according to its artistic director, Clementine Deliss, sought to involve African artists rather than governments in its planning — for example, as co-curators of the Whitechapel show. Artists, not simply objects, will be flown in to benefit from "cultural exchange". Nor, she adds, does it pretend to be "representative" of at least 50 African countries.

There are hopes that Africa95 — linked to workshops on this continent, such as in Senegal and Zimbabwe — will build a long-term momentum, opening the eyes not only of audiences but of hitherto blinkered curators, venues, film distributors. Catherine Lampert, the Whitechapel's director, says: "The quality of art is so strong, it'll be a natural step for invitations to follow."

Among its fiercest critics are those who see it as a token gesture by a racist British art establishment. There is suspicion that galleries are flinging open a door to Africa while black British artists have a hard time getting a foot in.

While the Royal Academy absurdly touts its show — ultimately the vision of a single collector, the artist Tom Phillips — as "authoritative", Olu Oguibe, editor of the New York-based *Journal of Contemporary African Art*, questions how far much of the modern art flown in bucks Western expectations. Rasheed Araeen, founding editor of the art magazine *Third Text*, recalls an unlearnt lesson from the 1982 Festival of India: British Asian artists were driven to staging an "alternative" show.

The initial plan for Africa95 was to confine British artists, film-makers and writers largely to talks and "dialogues". In the reasoning of Sir Michael Caine, director of the Commonwealth Institute and chairman of Africa95: "We thought of Africa95 as continent-based, with north Africans and white South Africans participating. There wasn't a racial element, so we wouldn't include Afro-Caribbean art."

Yet the links within the black diaspora are cultural, not simply racial. One Caribbean artist, who declined to be named, senses a sinister divisiveness. "Jews from anywhere in the world can call Israel home, but Africans from the diaspora are questioned when they lay legitimate claim to an African heritage," he says. "Even if the focus is the continent, its art impinges at points on the diaspora."

While not all Caribbean or black British artists would choose to have their work viewed in the context of Africa95, several shows do opt for exploring the links.

The Nigerian-born writer Simi Bedford, an early backer, welcomes what she sees as some black British organisations "taking advantage of Africa95 to put on their own events". It might be truer to say that many are simply doing what they do — such as Autograph's long-planned interrogation of anthropological images at London's Photographers' Gallery — while allowing Africa95 to spread its umbrella of hype over them. According to Sealy: "You can't just stand outside with your fist in the air."

What Africa95 cannot do is dictate. Its small core of co-ordinators may advise, but venues each secure their own funding and, as Sealy points out: "You only have control if you're coming to the table with money." Perhaps therein lies part of its promise. The experience of many has modified and expanded what began as the vision of a few. Although that initial vision may still prove limiting, there will be much on show to enjoy and to debate.

South Africans at play in Britain

SOUTH AFRICA is represented at Africa95 by a variety of fine arts shows as well as theatre, music and dance.

The Junction Theatre Company's *Marabi*, directed by Malcolm Purkey, will play at London's Stratford East Theatre, while *Faustus in Africa* is scheduled (subject to confirmation) to run at the Battersea Arts Centre in London in October. Gcina Mhlope will be present, as will Andrew Buckland and Lionel Newton with *Mouthpiece*.

Lucky Dube is set to perfom alongside World Music greats Youssou n'Dour and Salif Keita at a gala concert in London on September 22.

Southern Sotho snuff-boxes, Nguni headrests, Tsonga carvings and rock paintings are among the artefacts on loan from South African galleries and museums to the Royal Academy show, *Africa: Art of a Continent*. Textiles, including beadwork, will be on view at the Barbicon Gallery, while wire baskets and other crafts form part of a *Metalcraft* exhibition.

At the Whitechapel's contemporary show, the South African section, curated by David Koloane, includes works by Robert Hodgins, Pat Mautloa, Ezrom Legae and Sam Nhlengethwa. Works by Johannes Segogela (exhibited in Grahamstown in July) also form part of *Big City: Artists from Africa* at the Serpentine Gallery in London.

Colin Richards and Pitika Ntuli, of the University of the Witwatersrand, have curated *Siyawela*, which runs from October 21 at the Birmingham Art Gallery. The show features the work of about 30 artists, including Penny Siopis, Noria Mabasa and Jackson Hlungwane.

***On the Road*, curated by Linda Givon at the Delfina Studio Trust Gallery in London, consists of works by artists from four Southern African countries, centred around the studio residencies of South African artists Penny Siopis, Pat Mautloa, Willie Bester and Norman Catherine.**

You should remember that the whole of England would fit into the Kruger National Park.

Harry – Bosfontein

Dear Harry,

The South African Postal Services have long been aware of this problem. This is why they use road transport to move the mail around this enormous

Dear Robert,

Clearly you know a lot about dogs. Is there any reliable way in which dogs can be persuaded not to yap and bark? We have neighbours who own and adore two small, white, fluffy monsters which I would happily drown if I got the chance.

Mad Jill – Parkhurst

vibrate and no sound but a sort of whistling gasp emerges from the little fluffy bastard's throat.

Several ends are hereby met: The neighbours get some peace, the dog thinks it is barking and the owners go ape trying to work out what has happened.

Everyone ends up happy which is the way things should be.

ROBERT KIR

Dear Robert,

Never mind "paradign fication" and "liometrics"

Sunday Independent
15 Oct. 95

1987-0-3-66
Martin Iguni

STORY: WALDEMAR JANUSCZAK

Africa95 seen as most thrilling displ

Controversy about African art continues in London. Some see the hand of neo-colonia it; another view is that the sophistication of African art raises questions about western

London is holding one of its greatest exhibitions in a decade, an extraordinary window into Africa's treasures.

It is an array of chronologically astounding, heart-stoppingly beautiful, relentlessly interesting masterpieces, as thrilling a parade of great art as you are likely to encounter in London this decade. But since its arrival on our autumnal shores has been preceded by an unpleasant summer brouhaha, it is incumbent upon this piece – and any piece about the African art exhibition at the Royal Academy – to come quickly to the bad news, which is that this show has wandered into an ethical quagmire. The question being asked in several important quarters is not "Is it any good?" but "Should it be happening?"

So, is it indeed an act of post-colonial coarseness to attempt to cover the artistic output of an entire continent in 10 rooms? Would anyone try to reflect the artistic output of Europe in one such display? Can any conclusions reached in such circumstances be of lasting value? No, no, yes, are the answers to the above. This is not a display that aims at any sort of comprehensiveness that I can discern. It is a selection that challenges an assortment of entrenched western preconceptions about African art.

Archaeology in Africa is still in its very early stages – there are fragments of wall painting here that can be dated no more precisely than to the nearest 5 000 years – but even on this irresolute evidence it is clear that we have been misled mightily in the past about the art of the continent. In particular, we have completely underestimated the sophistication of various African civilisations. At the same time, we have overemphasised the tribal, the bellicose, the exotic. Basically, we are pig-ignorant about African art.

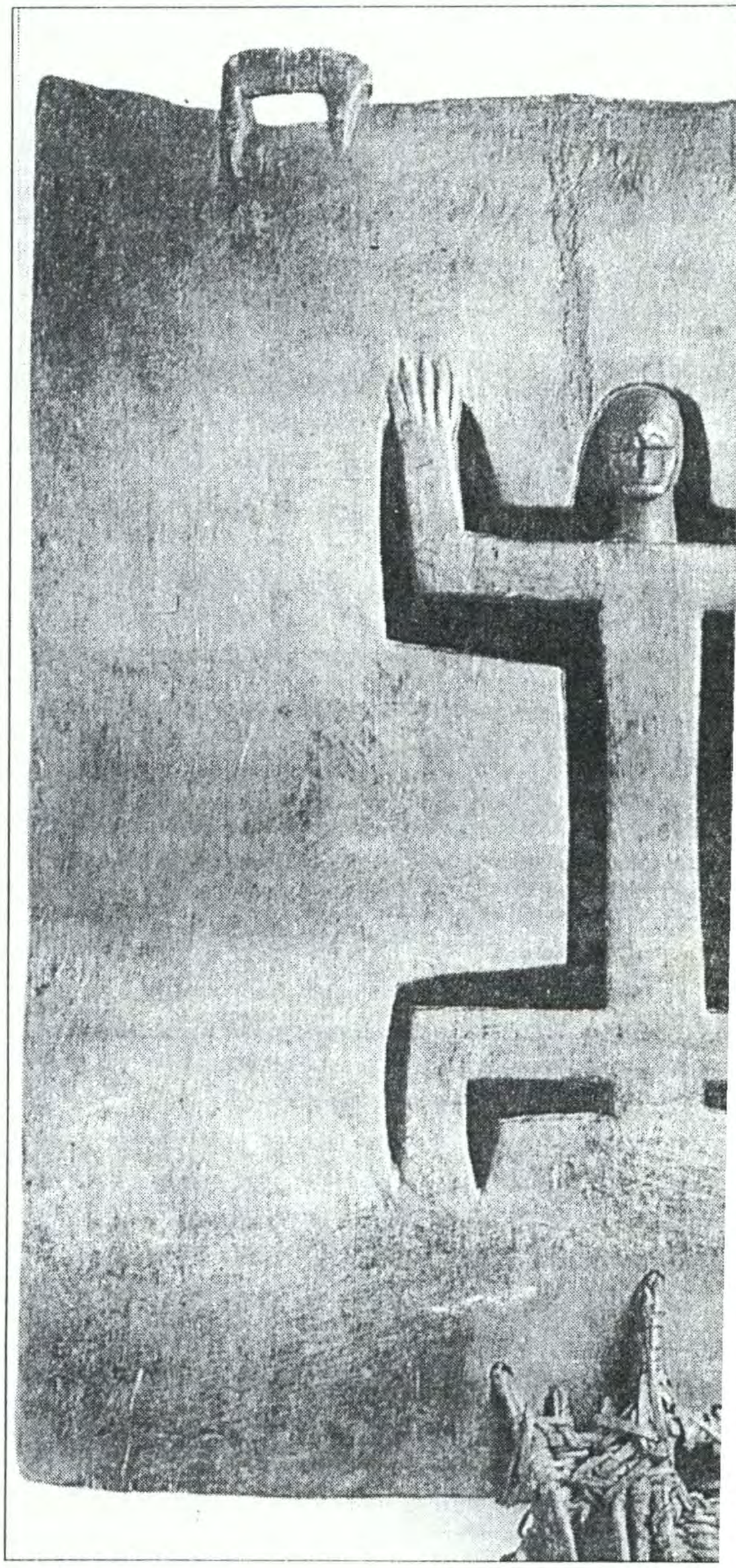
Who, for instance, would have believed that the so-called Lydenburg head is an object from the 10th century or earlier? Three hundred or more years before Henry III began building Westminster Abbey, an artist in ancient South Africa was modelling the face of regal dignity in glowing terracotta. The certainty of expression boasted by the Lydenburg head unites it in one direction with the gorgeously calm art of ancient Egypt and in the other with the work produced this century by the mask carvers of the Ivory Coast. It is as if African art never had the equivalent of Europe's Dark Ages, never experienced a crisis of knowledge, never needed a Renaissance. Nothing in this display is concerned with personal neurosis. Everything on display is bigger than that.

There is a unity of purpose that has no European parallel. The Lydenburg head makes European 10th-century art, our manuscripts, hairpins and jewel boxes, look fussy, trinkety and small. Even then, we were a continent of shopkeepers.

More problematically, there has been controversy over the provenance of several of the exhibits in the show. At some point in their history many were obviously stolen, and sold abroad. Others were looted by the colonial powers themselves.

We are right to worry about dodgy provenances. Where we are wrong is in pointing a finger at this particular display, which seems to have taken as much care as is reasonably possible to remain pure of heart as it picked its way through the forest of disinformation, the conmen, spivs, cheats and thieves who operate in the modern market for African art. Yet the British Museum has somehow found the cheek to threaten to withdraw its loans from this show unless the Royal Academy removed from display some Djenne terracotta figures that were discovered in Mali 20 years ago and which have begun appearing on the European art market.

If the British Museum is to begin insisting upon absolute perfection of provenance then it might as well begin emptying itself today. The Elgin marbles are the most precious of all Greek possessions; but they are not allowed to be in Greece. The Benin bronzes are a royal Nigerian birthright. In that British Museum annex, laughably entitled the Museum of Mankind (which should be called the "museum of colonisation"), there are millions of neglected artefacts acquired from all corners of the globe, especially Africa, the artistic dowries of hundreds of nations, the equivalent of our crown jewels. – *London Sunday Times*



An early 20th-century headdress from the Ivory Coast is disp

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Several ends are hereby met: The neighbours get some peace, the dog thinks it is barking and the owners go ape trying to work out what has happened.

Everyone ends up happy which is the way things should be.

ROBERT KIRBY

Dear Robert,

Never mind "paradigm" and "massification" and "liometrics" and all the rest

Dear Roo,

You have found a passionate fellow-sufferer. I think "hopefully" has been like hakea in the fynbos. It ranks as the single most invasive shrub in the English lan-

as most thrilling display of decade

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An early 20th-century headdress from the Ivory Coast is displayed at the Royal Academy

BOFFINS' CORNER

JBL ✓ JLC p125

Josef Albers
P2156
White line square VIII,
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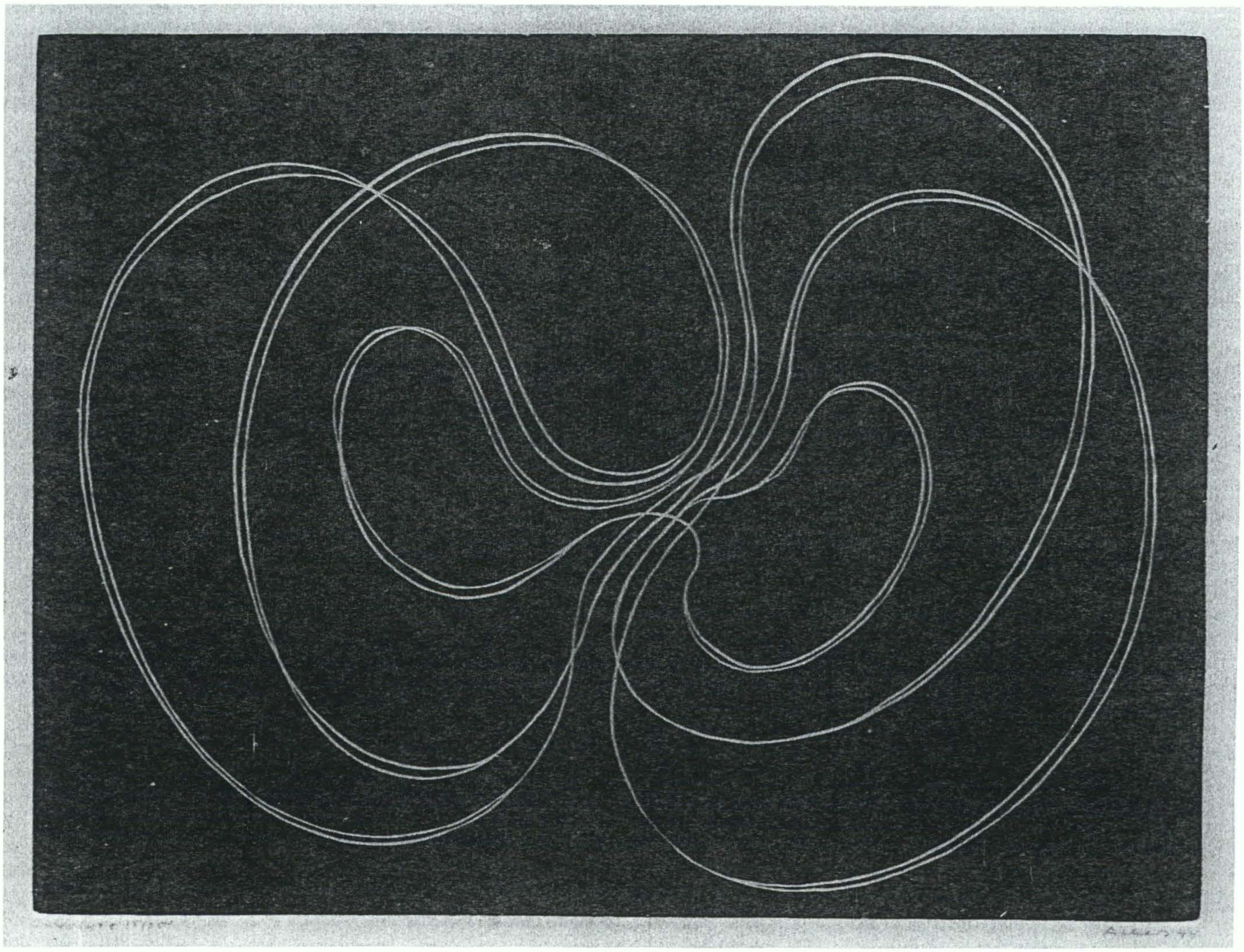
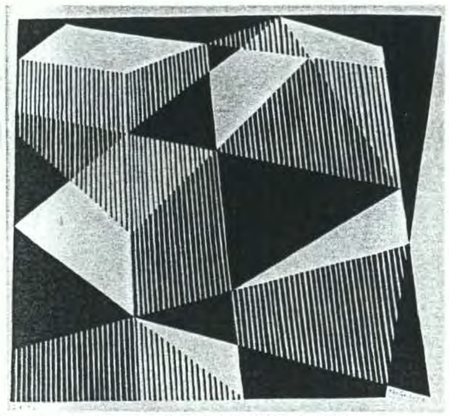
The Print Collector's Newsletter

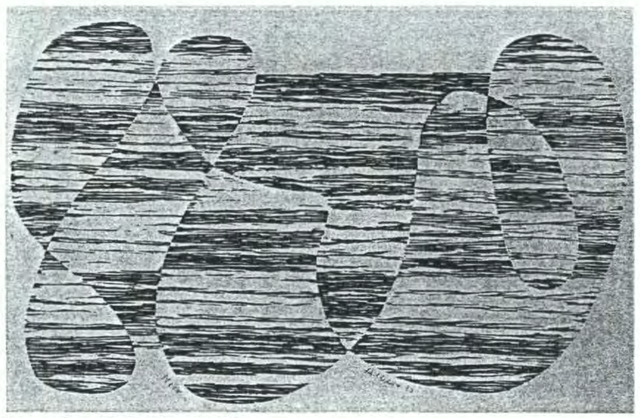
Vol. XXVI No. 4 September–October 1995

ALBERS PRINTS OF THE '30s & '40s: ARTIST'S CHEAT *by Faye Hirsch*





Josef Albers, *Tents*, woodcut (14x19-3/8 in.), 1933.



Sea, woodcut (14x17-5/8 in.), 1933.

Last winter, Brooke Alexander Editions mounted an exhibition of prints by three artists who seemed an unlikely trio: Josef Albers, Naum Gabo, and Jackson Pollock. Josef Albers, rigid geometrist, alongside the surreal expressionism of Pollock? Yet, on viewing, the affinities were in places quite striking; Albers' prints seemed justly poised between the tectonic curves of Gabo and Pollock's intuitive swerves. Most of the Albers were little-known works he made during the '30s and '40s, while he was teaching at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Curvilinear and whimsical, evocatively titled, the prints seemed quite uncharacteristic of the master of the straight and narrow. Yet, throughout the '30s and '40s, before Albers had settled on his trademark "nested squares," he demonstrated a surprising openness to formal experimentation. There were always limits, of course, but the twists and turns of his printmaking demonstrate a receptivity to trends like surrealist biomorphism and the playful nuances of some of his more carefree contemporaries.

Albers made prints before joining the Bauhaus in 1919, where he was first a student and then journeyman and master, ceased for nearly the duration of his tenure, and resumed only in 1933, after the school moved from Dessau to Berlin, where the Nazis finally forced its closure that same year. His prints from the teens, cubo-expressionistic works influenced by Cézanne and Picasso, are representational, an approach he abandoned as soon as he arrived at the Bauhaus. Although he made no prints during his decade and a half there, Albers fully formulated the artistic and pedagogical concerns that would absorb him for the rest of his career, in all its many facets. Among other duties, he directed the glass workshop, where he produced purely abstract "paintings" in sandblasted flashed glass.[1] In this medium he began to explore his distinctive perceptual puzzles. His return to printmaking came during a period of great uncertainty for himself and his wife, Anneliese Fleischmann, a master weaver at the Bauhaus. As Bauhaus teachers, both were under [illegible] threat; moreover, Anni was of Jewish [illegible] was Anni's mother's family, Ullstein, who in 1933 printed Albers' five linocuts and eight woodcuts, as well as one cork relief print, in editions of 15 to 25.

Albers' 1933 compositions present a continuity with his earlier Bauhaus work; *Tents*, for example, draws upon the figure/ground relations he previously explored in flashed glass. A mysterious allover design is created by interlocking passages of jutting triangles and quadrilaterals, in solid or striped black and white. The stripes act both as flat, lively decoration and orthogonals receding into space; likewise, the solid shapes exist both on the surface and illusionistically, as sharply inflated, dynamic volumes. Such were the effects in Albers' preceding geometric glass paintings, although *Tents* presents a greater versatility of forms. However unwieldy a woodcut might be, compared to sandblasting it must offer relative flexibility. The woodcut *Sea* is kindred spirit to the 1931 *In the Water*, a glass painting; both present horizontal striations within an undulating design. But, by comparison, the striations of *Sea* are more freewheeling. In 1973, Albers described the technique he used for *Sea*:

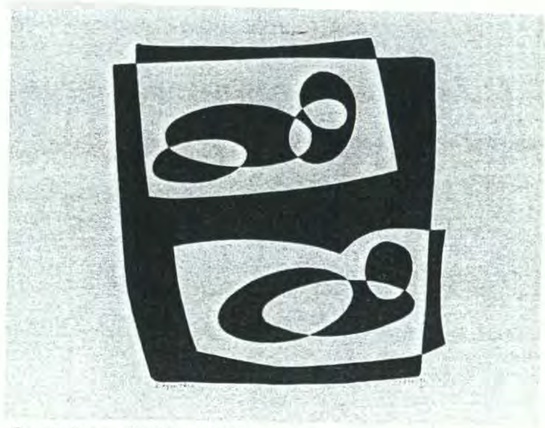
> The curve, which was incised with a razor blade into a very hard wood veneer (glued on top of a soft linoplate), remained invisible until a chisel lifted horizontal strips of woodgrain, alternatingly left and right along the curve. The resulting effect of this treatment led to its title, Sea.[2]

While Albers may have returned to printmaking, in part, out of material exigency, the medium presented new possibilities for his formal concerns.

It is a testimony to Albers' workmanlike spirit that there was no break in print production between his last months in Berlin and his first in America. In fall 1933, Josef and Anni Albers received an invitation to teach at the fledgling Black Mountain College in North Carolina. The college needed art instructors; the Albers came on the recommendation of Philip Johnson, director of MOMA's architecture department, who had met Josef a few years previously. Despite the fact that Albers knew no English, he quickly accepted the offer. During 1934, while he became accustomed to his new home, Albers produced another ten prints—four linocuts and six woodcuts, very similar to those of the previous year—in editions of 12 to 25. No formal records exist testifying to the actual production of these prints—where they were editioned, or by whom, although years after, Albers scribbled in a notebook that they were editioned at Biltmore Press, a small operation in Asheville, North Carolina.[3] His Bauhaus preoccupations are still evident in the 1934 prints—and no wonder, given he was in the process of translating his sophisticated pedagogy from one progressive school to another. He still had the Bauhaus very much in mind.

For example, Albers had begun experimenting with typography in Dessau in 1926; this interest surfaces in the 1934 print *i*, which shows a dynamic letter "i" zigzagging against an irregularly striped field, the oblong dot over the "i" hopping up as if to indent the border above. One wonders if Albers' choice of this particular letter had any subliminal impetus—or even a consciously wry urge to self-portraiture. The first-person pronoun in English is "I," in German "ich"; Albers retains the lower-case in a letter that is, in English, also a whole word, a whole identity. And the dynamism of the composition—indeed, the vivacity of many of the prints from 1934—might be linked to the invigorating new world to which he had come, and where he was, by all accounts, extremely happy for the first few years.[4]

Albers continued to make prints in spurts for the next 16 years, at Black Mountain itself or during visits elsewhere. After the 1933–34 prints, the next he produced were a series of four lithographs (*Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta*), made during a trip to Mexico in 1939; he followed these with five drypoint etchings in 1940 (perhaps also done in Mexico; in a notebook, Albers writes that he made "3 drypoints" in Mexico City, maybe some of this group); and, in 1942, seven drypoints, as well as a series of eight zinc lithographs (*Graphic Tectonics*, drawn at Harvard in 1941 and editioned in 1942 by Reinhard Schumann).[5] In 1944 he published seven woodcuts at Biltmore Press,[6] as well as one linocut and two cork reliefs. Finally, in 1946–48, Albers created his *Multiplex* woodcuts: the first in Asheville in 1946, an edition of 25 simply titled *Multiplex*, of which he destroyed all but five; the second, *Multiplex A*, which he did in Mexico in 1947;[7] and the rest, *Multiplex B, C,* and *D*, which he printed at Biltmore Press in editions of 30. A separate woodcut edition, *High Up*, was completed the same year.



Opposite, linocut (14x20 in.), 1933.

i, linocut (13-7/8x15 in.), 1934. Courtesy Josef Albers Foundation, Orange.

Black Mountain scholar Mary Emma Harris reports that there was a printshop at the college, but that it was used mainly to produce pamphlets and other typeset documents for Black Mountain programs, and that Albers never made his prints there. Nor, she says, did he teach printmaking as such, something that Ruth Asawa, a student from 1946–49, confirms. He did, however, cut his blocks himself, according to Asawa, to whom he gave a gift of a "masonite plate" with "two connected kidney shapes" (perhaps the 1944 cork relief, *Involute*), and to Lorrie Goulet, who assisted Albers in his studio. Goulet remembers the blocks lying about his studio and is certain he cut them there, but she believes that to print the editions he went into Asheville. Eva Schumann, Reinhard Schumann's widow, asserts the lithographic *Graphic Tectonics* were printed at Black Mountain, where there was at that time, according to her, a handpress. She vividly recalls visiting Black Mountain College during 1942 (the Eden Lake buildings were still under construction) when her husband brought his plates to work with Albers. Reinhard was an emigré from Munich, Germany, where his father owned a commercial lithography company in which he had trained. According to Eva Schumann, her husband was the only person in North Carolina capable of making handpress lithographs. Albers would watch Schumann, who was given complete freedom; they sometimes communicated in English and sometimes in German.[8]

Albers was pleased enough with the prints he made in 1933–34 to give them as gifts to friends, and noted who got what, up until 1942, in a notebook preserved at the Albers Foundation. Paul Klee and Jean Arp received the most generous gifts—13 went to Klee and ten to Arp (although he did not send Arp the most Arp-like of the prints, *Opposite*!); Herbert Bayer received one, unspecified, and Wassily Kandinsky four—*Sea* and *Encircled* in 1933, *Aquarium* and *Segments* in 1934. Some American friends, as well, are noted as receiving prints—the artist Werner Drewes, who was given *Eastward*, Philip Johnson, and Thornton Wilder, whom he met at Black Mountain in 1934. Johnson and Wilder each received *Sea*, a print that evidently very much satisfied Albers. Among other recipients of 1933–34 prints were Walter Gropius, "Rogo Hirsh" (artist Stefan Hirsch and wife Elsa Rogo?), and colleagues Ted Dreier and John Andrew Rice. According to Ruth Asawa, Albers continued giving "black and white prints" as Christmas gifts late into the '40s.

Kandinsky liked the prints enough to write a catalogue essay for Galleria del Milione in Milan, which exhibited 24 of them with other prints by Luigi Veronesi from December 23, 1934, to January 10, 1935. This exhibition may account for the fact that Albers translated his 1934 titles into Italian in his notebook, as well as into English, German, and Spanish (Albers loved Mexico and considered moving there in the '30s).[9] In his essay, Kandinsky concluded,

> Galleria del Milione offers to the Italian public for the first time the woodcuts of Josef Albers and, observing these beautiful sheets, one will be bound to agree with all my affirmations, because in them are clearly reflected all of Albers' qualities: artistic inventiveness, clear and convincing composition, simple but effective means; and above all, a perfect technique.[10]

Crisp figure/ground relations, efficient draftsmanship, and a knowing exploitation of materials are marshaled to create an inextricable relationship between a craftsman's perfectionism and an artist's content, the latter based on the potential of abstraction, as Albers saw it, to deliver more than it promises.

The prints of 1933–34 demonstrate a "discrepancy between physical fact and psychic effect," a paradoxically seamless rupture where Albers locates the origin of art. In 1935, he wrote,

> We should study and learn in all fields of art...what is tectonic and what decorative, structure and texture; or, mechanical form and organic form and when they are opposite, overlapping, or congruous; and what results from parallelism and interpenetration, enlarging and diminution—that after such-or-other cross-sections we may see the proportion between effort and effect.[11]

Such an exercise could be fruitfully applied to his 1933 linocut *Opposite*. Two curvaceous, "organic" forms, like abstract reclining odalisques, are displayed in roughly rectangular grounds set within a black field. The figures neatly balance each other in weight and composition. Their looping design at first seems decorative, an effect enhanced by two "flaps" of black along the border, sober flourishes. Because of the greater proportion of white in the left part of the bottom figure, it at first appears to be the exact opposite of its mate, or to be a front view of the top figure, which seems to have its back turned. All this formal intrigue is the excess of extremely efficient compositional means. Years later, Albers wrote,

> Only the artist, the poet, is not forbidden such legerdemain, because it is his concern...to deal with the discrepancy between physical fact and psychic effect. Thus he is expected to cheat us, but in a positive way, to our advantage. And so, only the artist is selling more than we pay for. This leads us to see that we, that men, carry Janus heads with a front and a back face looking in two opposite directions.[12]

Albers in 1933 was already quite adept at "cheating" the viewer in order to turn looking into a profitable experience. Already he was formulating his principle that, in art, "1 + 1 = 3."

Albers was never exactly a cutup, but his statements and lectures contain amusing, whimsical tidbits. One can only imagine the impression he made in 1935 when, in giving a speech in Asheville,[13] he drew an analogy between the abstract properties of language and those of art by reciting nonsense ditties from English, French, and German sources, no doubt in a very thick accent. Hugo Ball he was not, but the thought of Albers repeating "Fully la fulla la" or "Hei didel Hei didel" to a roomful of listeners conveys a slightly Dada flavor. Similarly, in many

prints from the '30s and '40s made at Black Mountain, where he stayed until leaving for New York and then Yale in 1949, Albers presents a more whimsical side of his artmaking, something looser, more liberated, than the rigor usually associated with him. In a 1968 dissertation from NYU, Irving Finkelstein wrote, "Certain of Albers' last works executed in Berlin and a number of his earliest American creations display a playfulness in some cases even marked by quite humorous associations."[14] Finkelstein observed this playfulness in such prints as *Aquarium* and *Elephant* of 1933, comparing them to works by Miró, Paul Klee (with whom Albers taught at the Bauhaus and remained a good friend), and Alexander Calder, with whom Albers was also in touch in the '30s. As late as 1942, in a series of drypoint etchings, Albers was still showing this playful streak. These prints of the '30s and '40s are the last works in which Albers would extensively use curved lines. Perhaps developing out of his late Bauhaus series of "Treble-Clef" paintings, these curves might, on the one hand, be interpreted as fundamentally tectonic, as basic to "building" a form as any straight line. But their effect is more serendipitous in works like *Rondo* (1942), where curved lines at least *pretend* to be without a tectonic care.

During his years at Black Mountain, Albers' paintings and collages show a similar freedom of conception; he worked loosely in groups (in the late '30s with pairs of irregular vertical forms in ever changing colors; in the early '40s with collages of leaves on geometric, colored grounds, etc.), though not with the more narrow seriality of *Variants*, begun in the late '40s, or, of course, his *Homages to the Square*, begun 1950. From 1935 to 1940, Albers produced somewhat moody, impressionistic abstractions (*Etudes* of 1935, or *Evening (An Improvisation)*). One of these, *Almost Four (Color Etude)*, is playfully "incomplete," as its title suggests: three pink double-looped forms decrease in size to a fourth form that is only one loop; the ground is a roughly brushed square with no distinct outline. Between the paintings and the prints there is little explicit connection. His paintings are more particularly concerned with exploring color balances than linear relationships.[15] His extant drawings, too, are rarely related to the prints. In 1936, he executed a series of simple, delicate line drawings of geometric form that Nicholas Fox Weber has related to Paul Klee's *Modells* of 1931.[16] They look forward, at least in spirit, to the optical puzzles of his late '40s *Multiplex* series, but were certainly not preparatory for it. However, one series of drawings used in prints survives: the *Graphic Tectonics*. These are also the only other group of finished drawings extant from his Black Mountain years, aside from a few preparatory sketches done for oil paintings.

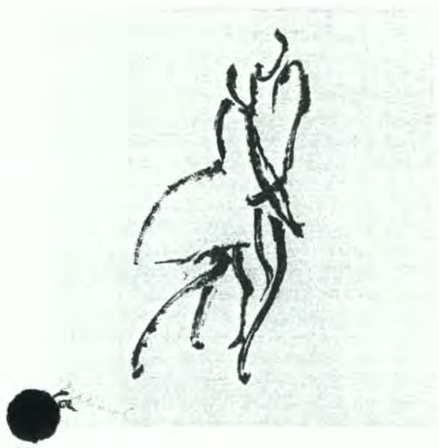
In his book on Black Mountain College, Martin Duberman describes a masquerade of surrealist theme thrown there in 1944. Albers, who had been teaching at Black Mountain for a decade, showed up in a weirdly understated costume:

> Albers chose a surrealistic design for himself that was a masterpiece of subtlety, and in perfect taste. He wore an ordinary, but superbly pressed salt-and-pepper tweed suit, and in his eyes put two paper cones, truncated to allow vision; the contrast between the altogether normal suit and the strange monocles created a deeply disturbing effect.[17]

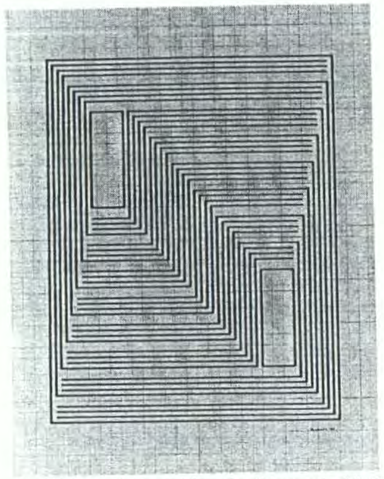
Albers was not Black Mountain's most permissive faculty member; when he saw some of the outrageous getups—one woman came bare-breasted and another as a sheaf of wheat labeled, "REAP ME"—he left in a huff. (Tensions were high anyway at Black Mountain in 1944.) But his costume made a deep impression on those recalling it later, and presents a handy metaphor for prints he made during his years at Black Mountain. *Rondo* might almost be mistaken for a work by Louise Bourgeois. A single line, meandering through curlicues and spirals, traces the contours of anthropomorphic figures. Whether he titled it before or after the fact, the dancelike association is indisputable. In fact, it recalls a representational lithograph from 1916, *Dancing Pair*.[18] But the differences are significant. Like the limits imposed by the tweed suit of Albers' "surrealist" getup, nothing is out of control in *Rondo*. The line playfully twists and turns, but challenges the viewer to find its beginning and end, its mazelike starting and finishing points. A problem is set up and solved—how to force a single line to create myriad forms. In his surrealist costume, Albers attempted maximum effect from minimum effort; so, too, in this print, his formal means were quite simple, but wielded to profound effect.

The curvilinear designs of many of the prints done in the '30s and early '40s, however abstract, seem automatically more allusive than those that are more angular. And who can help, in works like *Homeward*, *Elephant*, or *Maternity*, making associations begged for in titles? The 1940 drypoint *Eh-De* was named for Eddie Dreier, the child of good friends at Black Mountain, and one can almost imagine a toddler unsteadily following the looping contours of its illogical path. Albers only titled his works after completing them and sometimes even invited others to do so—this in order to avoid proceeding with assumptions formed outside the work itself. But, as George Heard Hamilton wrote about Albers in 1956, "Even a title which has been discovered later or by someone other than the artist exists in a relation to the painting as an independent but contingent factor."[19] As we have seen, the woodcut *Sea*, done two years after the glass *In the Water*, is formally related to the earlier work; Albers chose to give it a title that similarly alludes to water. In 1944, Albers executed yet another woodcut, *Above the Water*, that, again, presents an undulating woodgrain highly suggestive of waves. But he is hardly consistent. *Astatic*, another 1944 woodcut, is very similar to *Above the Water*, and carries a much more neutral title. And the suggestively titled *Maternity*, a drypoint made in 1942, is very similar to *Studies for "Proto-Form B"* (1938), paintings whose titles conjure a noncommital biomorphism. Nonetheless, without going so far as to suggest Albers was too deeply steeped in representation to jettison it entirely, it seems not entirely inappropriate to seek allusive properties in many prints of the '30s and '40s.

Sometimes the inevitable associations drawn by art historians, whom he mistrusted, rankled the artist. In 1973, Jo Miller wrote that Albers told her that the two large and four smaller loops of *Circle* (1933) showed his parents and their four children.[20] Albers heatedly denied ever having said this and requested changes in the galleys, writing, "this paragraph misleading. The visual illusions [sic] to people etc. came later—after the prints were completed," and, in red, "false."[21] When the changes were not made, he threatened a lawsuit. He very much resented biographical interpretations of his work. In fact, Jo Miller was inaccurate in at least one other instance: she wrote that since the 1940 drypoints "Albers has not curved a line."[22] Such 1944 prints as *Adapted B*, which looks like three microorganisms wriggling across the woodgrain, or *Involute*, with its kidneylike disposition, prove otherwise. "No!" wrote Albers in the proofs, "some curves in 1944 & 1942. see



(*Left*) Josef Albers, *Dancing Pair*, lithograph (11-1/8x15-3/4 in.), 1916. Unknown. Photo courtesy Josef Albers Foundation. (*Right*) Josef Albers, *Rondo*, drypoint (11-1/4x8-3/4 in.), 1942. Courtesy Josef Albers Foundation, Orange.



Josef Albers, *To Monte Alban*, zinc lithograph (24x19 in.), 1942. Courtesy Josef Albers Foundation, Orange.

'Velocidad,' etc." The error was not corrected before the book went to press.

All this is not to say that Albers avoided parallel lines throughout the '30s and '40s. The lithographs in his 1941–42 *Graphic Tectonics* series are, in contrast to the more delicate, curvilinear prints, monumental in concept. *To Monte Alban*, for example, with its simple lines of dual width bent only at right angles, is characteristic of the series as a whole. An initial impression of flatness gives way to illusions of dramatic projection and depth. The tiny signature seems dwarfed by the architectural force of the image, which, in its nested rectangles, presages the compositions of Albers' *Homages to the Square*. And his white-on-black *Multiplex* woodcuts of 1946–48, with their complex games of directional hide-and-seek, similarly look to the future, when the angle would definitively triumph over the curve.

*This article owes much to the efforts of Brenda Danilowitz and Kelly Feeney at the Josef Albers Foundation in Orange, Connecticut. Danilowitz is currently compiling a catalogue raisonné of Josef Albers' prints. Thanks also to Carolina Nitsch-Jones at Brooke Alexander Editions.

[1]An exhibition that includes the glass paintings can be seen at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum to September 17.

[2]*Formulation: Articulation*, Kunsthaus Zurich, 1973, 1:7. This is a brochure accompanying the exhibition of the two portfolios in January–February 1973. See also Nicholas Fox Weber, "The Artist as Alchemist," in *Josef Albers: A Retrospective*, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1988, p. 31.

[3]Weber says that prints made in 1934 in North Carolina were produced in Asheville, though he does not mention the Biltmore Press; *ibid.*, p. 32. Albers' notebook is at the Albers Foundation in Orange, Connecticut. When shown reproductions of the prints Albers said were made at Biltmore, Bob Williams, the current director of the press, said that they looked more like studio prints from a handpress than prints made at Biltmore. Williams is the son of the man in charge of Biltmore when Albers was at Black Mountain, and himself never met Albers; he also searched old ledgers at Biltmore, but was unable to turn up additional information on Albers' work at Biltmore. Phone conversation, May 2, 1995.

[4]For example, letter from Anni Albers, 1934; Albers Foundation.

[5]For a printed reference to Reinhard Schumann, see Jo Miller, *Josef Albers: Prints, 1915–1970*, Brooklyn Museum, 1973, p. 13, who states that the prints were done in Hickory, North Carolina, where Schumann lived. The Brooklyn Museum catalogue was one in a series on prints published by the museum; it resembles an exhibition catalogue, with a checklist, but there was evidently never an exhibition. Prior to the forthcoming catalogue raisonné, it is the most complete survey of Albers' prints, with 22 from the '30s and '40s illustrated. The eight *Graphic Tectonics* are *Ascension*, *Interim*, *Introitus*, *Prefatio*, *Sanctuary*, *Seclusion*, *Shrine*, and *To Monte Alban*. A ninth print, *Co-Ordinal*, was for some reason not editioned with the others despite its obvious connection to the rest of the series. There are only two known surviving examples of *Co-Ordinal*, which was first reproduced in the Brooklyn Museum catalogue. *Graphic Tectonics* is, therefore, sometimes referred to as a series of nine, including *Co-Ordinal*; see, for example, Weber, *The Drawings of Josef Albers*, New Haven, 1984, p. 40.

[6]In her essay, Jo Miller reports that in 1944 Albers often used "a bookbinder's bone to incise his lines to get a softer white edge," p. 9. In the proofing galleys for Miller's essay, Albers inserted his own, handwritten notation: "instead of cutting them." The notated galleys are at the Albers Foundation. Biltmore is the press cited in the Brooklyn Museum catalogue, p. 14, and this fact was not, like others in the catalogue, disputed by Albers. According to Eunice Hord Allen, however, who worked at Biltmore Press from 1938 to 1973, the only jobs done by Biltmore for Black Mountain College were large printing jobs like catalogues and brochures. She does not remember Albers editioning at Biltmore. Phone conversation, April 25, 1995.

[7]This is the print for which he received the Purchase Award at the Third International Print Exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum in 1949.

[8]Phone conversations with Mary Emma Harris April 24, 1995; with Eva Schumann, April 25, 1995; with Ruth Asawa and Lorrie Goulet, May 2, 1995.

[9]For Albers and Mexico, see, *inter alia*, Brenda Danilowitz, "Josef Albers at Marfa," *Josef Albers*, Cologne, 1991, p. 27.

[10]*Il Milione*, 34, Milan, 1934–35, n.p. See also Weber, "The Artist as Alchemist," p. 32.

[11]"Art As Experience," *Progressive Education*, October 1935, pp. 391–93.

[12]Albers, *Search Versus Re-Search: Three Lectures at Trinity College, April 1965*, Hartford, 1969, p.18.

[13]"Abstract Art," unpublished typescript at Albers Foundation. The lecture was revised and delivered again as "Concerning Abstract Art" in 1939.

[14]Irving Leonard Finkelstein, *The Life and Art of Josef Albers*, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1968, p. 108 and passim.

[15]Weber, "The Artist as Alchemist," pp. 34–35.

[16]Weber, *The Drawings of Josef Albers*, New Haven, 1984, pp. 36–37.

[17]Martin Duberman, *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community*, New York, 1993; published 1972, p. 217.

[18]Albers loved dance. In the 1935 speech, Albers says, "Everybody who likes Fred Astaire is an admirer of abstract art, and he who wants to dance like him, wants to be an abstract artist." See above, n. 13.

[19]*Josef Albers: Painting Prints Projects*, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, 1956, p. 31.

[20]Jo Miller, pp. 7–8.

[21]See above, n. 6.

[22]Jo Miller, p. 8.

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Contents:

Cover: Josef Albers, *Involute*, cork relief (11-3/8x17-1/4 in.), 1944. Courtesy Brooke Alexander Editions, New York.

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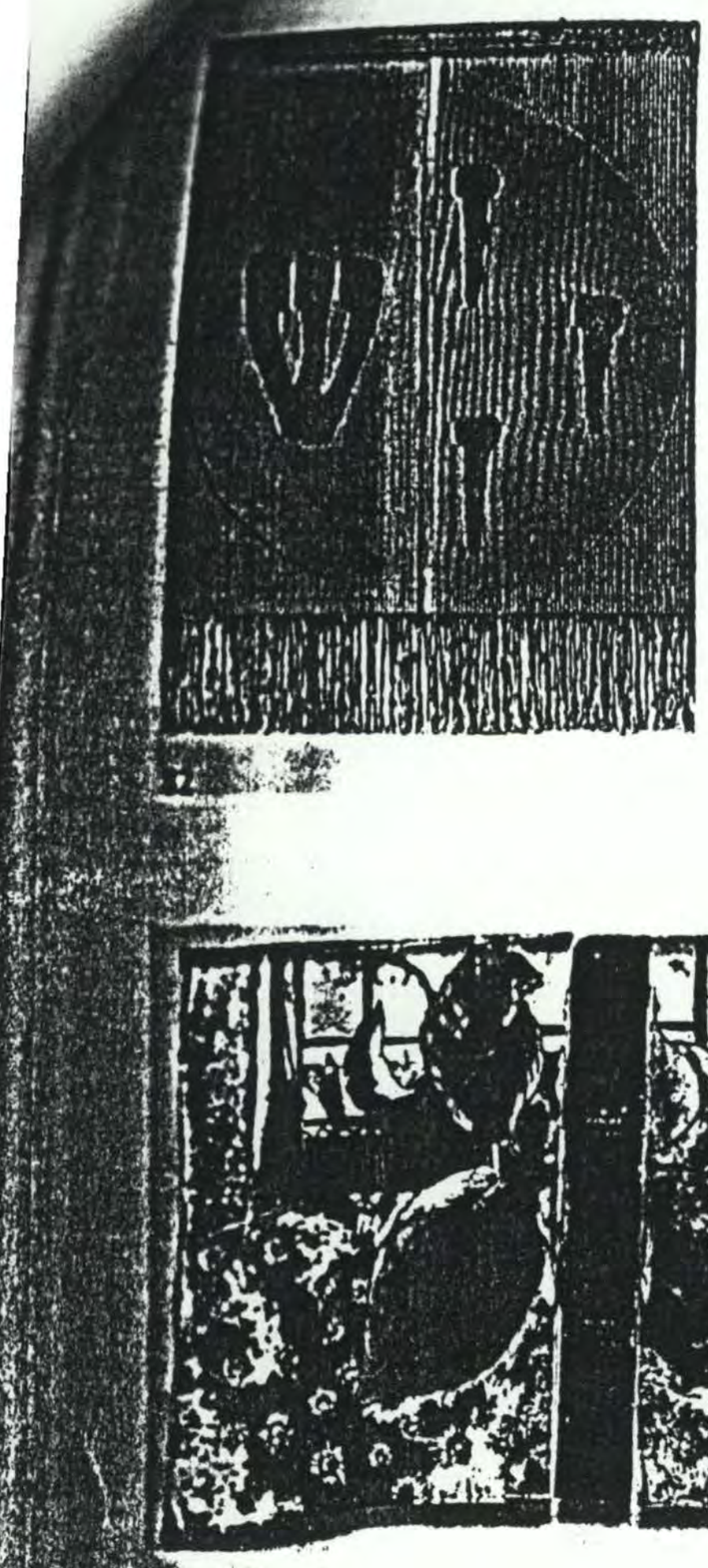

83

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82 Thomas Gleb. *Shabbat ou le septième jour,* 1976, tapisserie, carton de 1964, 180 × 150 cm. Angers, Musée Jean Lurçat et de la Tapisserie Contemporaine (acq.).

83 Philippe Favier. *Nature morte, vitamine C 86,* peinture sous verre, 14 × 21,4 cm. Nîmes, Musée d'Art Contemporain (acq.).

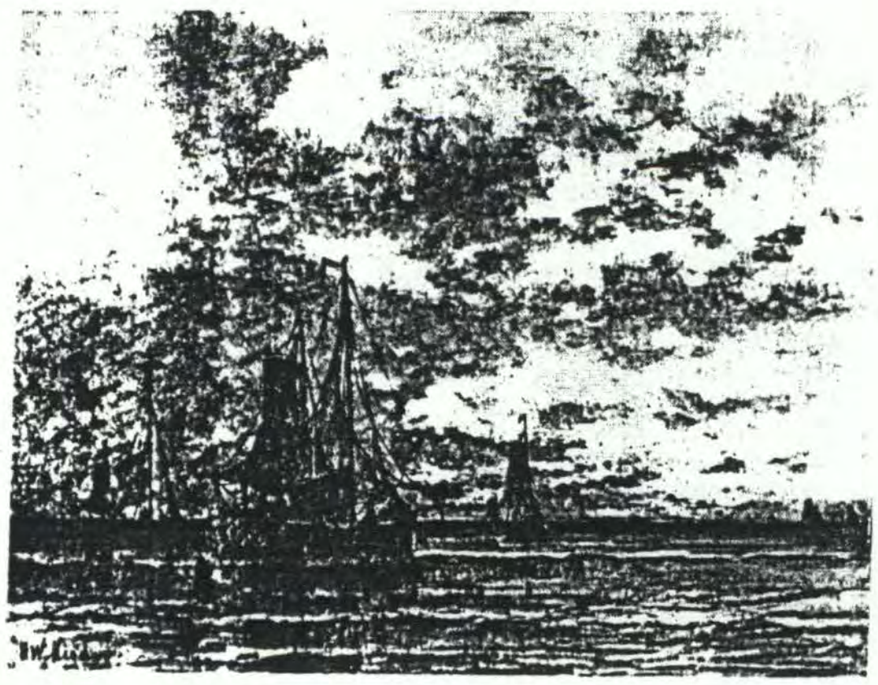
84 Vincent Corpet. *14-16-17-18 mars,* 1987, huile sur toile, 100 × 81 cm. Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne (acq. à l'artiste).

AFRIQUE DU SUD

50/964

85 Art traditionnel sud-africain, *appuie-tête,* Elim, Transvaal, vers 1930, origine Transvaal Tsonga. Johannesbourg, Art Gallery (première acq. faite par The Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa's Endowment Fund, coll. A.P. Jaques).

86 Hendrik Willem Mesdag (1831-1915). *Sunset, return of the fishing-fleet,* vers 1880-1890, huile sur toile, 69 × 87,9 cm. Johannesbourg, Art Gallery (acq.).



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98 50/961

Size:

Height	150 mm
Length	165 mm
Width	70 mm
Length of base	175 mm

Description: Crossbar: Rectangular, curved and decorated near one narrow end with a row of incised parallel lines. At the other end the corners have broken off to form a point.
Lugs: One missing, the other a slim, rectangular piece facing the side.
Column: Three cylindrical pillars converge at the centre to form a "V" with a vertical bar in the middle. They rest on a horizontal rectangle which is decorated at front and back with incised cross-hatchings, and from which descend two rectangular bars to form an inverted "V".
Base: Two flat, roughly circular pieces joined by a bar.
Comments: This piece is in very poor condition and has many cracks and repairs which were made before it came to the Museum.

99 50/962

Size:

Height	130 mm
Length	190 mm
Width	70 mm
Length of base	120 mm

Description: Crossbar: Rectangular, flaring slightly at ends, curved, and decorated near the narrow ends with a row of zig-zags carved in relief.
Lugs: Open arches facing front.
Column: Two rectangular pillars decorated front and back with a series of diagonal corrugations.
Base: Two flat circles linked at centre.

100 50/963

Size:

Height	140 mm
Length	240 mm
Width	70 mm
Length of base	150 mm

Description: Crossbar: Retangular, curved and undecorated. Pitted in places — probably caused by insects.
Lugs: One broken, the other an open arch facing front.

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Column: Four rectangular pillars in a row, the two inside pillars curve almost meet at the centre. All are blackened.
Base: Flat, roughly ovoid, and blackened on top.

101 50/964

Size:

Height	150 mm
Length	200 mm
Width	90 mm
Length of base	150 mm

Description: Crossbar: Rectangular, curved and decorated near the flattened narrow ends with a row of small zig-zags carved in relief.
Lugs: Long, thin half cylinders running from front to back, each having a wide band around its centre.
Column: Four circular pillars curving from crossbar to base and twisting around each other. They are joined at the centre to a barrel-shaped bar.
Base: Flat rectangle with a repaired corner piece.
Comments: The whole head-rest has been blackened and has a heavy patina.

102 50/965

Size:

Height	135 mm
Length	205 mm
Width	65 mm
Length of base	135 mm

Description: Crossbar: Rectangular but flaring slightly at narrow ends, curved and decorated near the flattened, narrow ends with a row of zig-zags carved in relief.
Lugs: Filled arches facing sides.
Column: Two short circular pillars rest on a horizontal rectangular bar from which descend two rectangular pillars which curve inward at centre.
Base: Two flat "spade" shapes linked at centre.

103 50/966

Size:

Height	140 mm
Length	205 mm
Width	70 mm
Length of base	130 mm

Description: Crossbar: Rectangular, curved and decorated near the narrow ends with a row of zig-zags carved in relief.

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