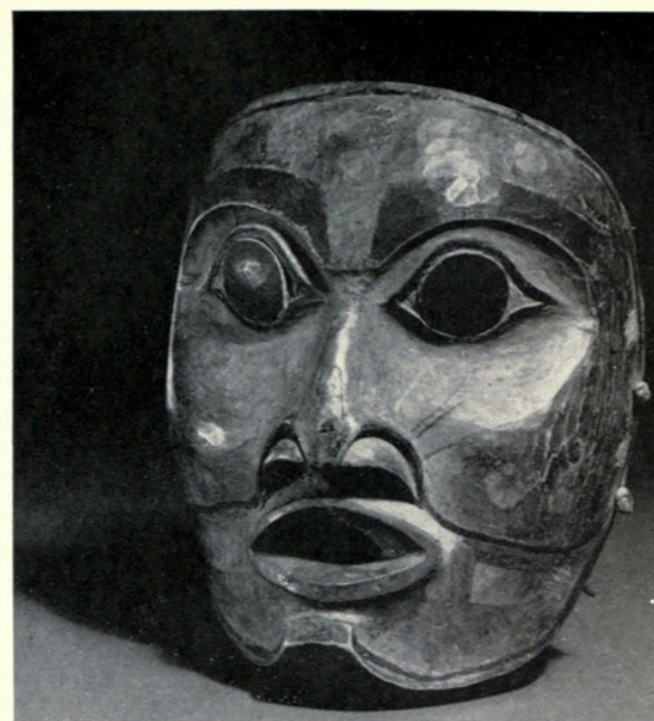


*RIGHT: SHAMAN'S MASK. 19th Century.
Tlingit Indians, Alaska*



*LEFT:
RELIQUARY FIGURE
Early 20th Century.
Bakota Tribe,
Gabon Republic, Africa*



THE PRESENTATION OF in Primitive Art" as May signals the open-new Hall of Primitive galleries of its kind in

"The Human Image the featured exhibit for ing of the Museum's Art, one of the largest the world.

The exhibit brings to culmination more than two years of work. From the fifty to one hundred thousand specimens of primitive art in the Museum's archaeological and ethnological collections, more than 200 objects have been selected for display in the new exhibit. These have been drawn largely from primitive societies of Africa and the Oceanic areas of Melanesia, Polynesia, Micronesia, and Malaysia; and also include art works from American Indian societies of North and South America.

*BELOW: DANCE MASK
Early 20th Century.
Bafut Tribe,
Cameroons, Africa*

*LEFT: PORTION OF CHIEF'S STAFF
Early 20th Century.
Ovimbundu Tribe,
Nigeria, Africa*



The subject of the exhibit—the human image itself—is the most universal in the art of any people and is especially prevalent in primitive art. Visitors to the Hall will see man—and some of his gods—portrayed in a multiplicity of ways: in calm and supernal beauty, as ferocious and cruel, or as satirical and funny.

The first art was probably not painting or sculpture at all, but the posing, gesturing, and dancing of the living person. Thus many of the images of man presented in the Museum's new exhibition picture him in elaborate dress, ready to take part in the important social, ceremonial, and religious occasions of his life. Such moments were caught and fixed by the tribal artists in sculpture, painting, or in the ornamentation of utensils and weapons.



THE HUMAN IMAGE in Primitive Art

By Phillip H. Lewis
Curator, Primitive Art



ABOVE: BEGGING FIGURE

Early 20th Century.
Baluba Tribe,
Congo area, Africa

RIGHT:
DETAIL OF
HEADRESS FIGURE
Early 20th Century.
Ibibio Tribe,
Nigeria, Africa



Other pieces in the exhibit are memorial statues of deceased relatives, sometimes shown in funeral attitudes, sometimes in poses symbolic of ferocity in war or virility in procreation. These figures evoke powerful images of real persons attempting to establish immediate and personal relations with the supernatural forces and beings that governed their lives.

Deities are depicted either directly or through the portrayal of human beings costumed as gods. Thus, although the art objects have been removed from their religious and social contexts, the new exhibit presents a fragmentary view of a hundred religions, as well as a gallery of the myriad art styles of the primitive world.

The new Hall of Primitive Art is located on the main floor of the Museum adjacent to Stanley Field Hall. It encloses 9,000 square feet of exhibition area. An earlier exhibit, "Primitive Man Looks at Civilization" (see BULLETIN for July, 1961) opened last July in the new Hall and, together with the present exhibit, will remain on display for an indefinite period.



Turnbull, William D. 1962. "The Human Image in Primitive Art." *Bulletin* 33(5), 2-3.

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