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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

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In the Exhibition of African Negro Art, which will open at the Museum of Modern Art Tuesday, March 19, 603 of the finest specimens from private/and museum collections here and abroad will be shown. The art of the primitive negro in its mastery of aesthetic forms, sensitiveness to materials, freedom of naturalistic imitation and boldness of imagination parallels many of the ideals of modern art. We find many characteristics of Epstein's work and that of several other modern sculptors and painters such as Picasso, Modigliani and Brancusi, that point to their respect for African art.

Religion has been the chief stimulus of African art. In the parklands and forest fringes of the continent ancestor worship was practiced. In the denser jungles animistic beliefs predominated: trees, streams, rocks and animals were worshipped as supernatural forces in rituals which involved sculptured masks and fetishes. There are fetish-men's war masks, hunting masks, circumcision ritual masks, and masks worn at funeral and memorial ceremonies--different variations of type in every tribe for every purpose, in wood, ivory, gold, wicker, cloth, straw, parchment, and endless combinations of materials. There are fertility idols and fetishes for conjuration to heal the sick or effect the death of an enemy. There are figures that represent the dead and figures to insure successful childbirth.

African Negro art, however, is not confined to religious expression. It is shown in household utensils, weapons, implements, and many other objects such as bobbins for weaving cloth, spoons, headrests, musical instruments, and tiny weights used by natives in weighing gold dust.

It is impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy the age of the objects; those in wood, due to the perishable nature of the material and the omniverous white ants of Africa, may not be more than two or three hundred years old. Objects in metal and ivory may precede the sixteenth century.