Vocabulary

**Amulet** An object believed to possess the ability to protect or bring good luck.

**Anthropomorphic** Based on the human figure. See *Mangbetu* vessels and tools, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2003.65.6 and 1994.3.19.

**Durbar festival** A public procession held every year for the people of the Asante nation to honor their King and Queen Mother through dance and music. During the *durbar*, Asante people wear elaborate gold jewelry and kente cloth through which they communicate messages about their identity as Asante people and express their solidarity to the king and nation.

**Colonial** Relating to colonization by European nations. The term may also illustrate the influence of the occupying nation on indigenous art. See *Colon Figure*, Ghana 1994.4.788.

**Post-Colonial Nation** One of the 54 independent African nations whose borders were first created after 1885.

**Egungun** A masquerade by the Yoruba people representing the collective spirits of the ancestors. See *Egungun Masquerade Costume*, Nigeria, 1994.4.505.

**Ghana** Located in West Africa, Ghana borders Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Togo, and the Gulf of Guinea. In 1957 Ghana became the first sub-Saharan African nation to gain its independence from the United Kingdom. The name Ghana was chosen for the new nation to reflect the ancient Empire of Ghana, which once extended throughout much of West Africa.

**Gold Weight** Made of brass, these figurative sculptures are based on the Islamic ounce and are used to weigh gold and merchandise. See *Gold Weights*, Ghana, L2003….various.

**Golden Stool** The symbol of the Asante nation and believed to contain the spirit of the people. Today it represents Ghana’s unity and strength.

**Granary** Structure to protect stored grain. See *Granary Door*, Mali, L2007.010.001.

**Icon** Image of a sacred subject thought to provide a direct means of communicating with the divine. See *Ethiopian Icon*, late 1800s. L2007.11.4.
Kente cloth A woven cloth originating with the Akan people as a royal and sacred cloth worn only for special occasions by royalty. Over time, kente became available to all people, however its importance has remained and it is held in high esteem with the Akan and Asante people and the citizens of Ghana. It has come to represent the diverse cultures of the African continent to much of the world.

Masquerade In Africa, a rite or festival usually connected to religious beliefs involving the wearing of costumes and masks. See Egungun Masquerade Costume, Nigeria, 1994.4.5050.

Kwame Nkrumah First president of Ghana inaugurated in 1957.

Prestige Object A rare object that denotes the high status of the owner See Beaded Bowl Figure, Cameroon, 1994.3.3.