



EMORY

MICHAEL C.
CARLOS
MUSEUM

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**CULTURAL ASTRONOMY AND CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART
INTERSECT IN *AFRICAN COSMOS: STELLAR ARTS* AT THE CARLOS MUSEUM**

ATLANTA, GA (October 8, 2014) – The Carlos Museum will host a major exhibition from the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian entitled *African Cosmos: Stellar Arts* from January 31 through June 21, 2015. This is the first major exhibition exploring the historical legacy of African cultural astronomy and its intersection with traditional and contemporary African Arts. The exhibition of some 100 objects considers how the sun, moon, and stars and celestial phenomena such as thunder and rainbows serve as sources of inspiration in the creation of African arts from ancient times to the present. Far from abstract concepts, African notions of the universe are intensely personal and place human beings in relationships with earth and sky and with all celestial bodies.

African Cosmos will showcase outstanding works of art that illuminate Africa's contributions to the science and practice of astronomy. African interest in and observation of the cosmos go back as far as the stone circle and megaliths of Nabta Playa, a site in southern Egypt dating to the 5th millennium B.C., which has been interpreted as one of the world's earliest archeoastronomical devices making star alignments and the summer solstice. Selected ancient Egyptian and Nubian works of art will examine solar and stellar themes, demonstrating Africa's early engagement with celestial observations and its foundational place in visual arts and religion. Other pieces range from 19th- and 20th-century masks, figures, and ritual objects made by artists from regions south of the Sahara, to works by internationally recognized contemporary artists who draw on the cosmos for inspiration, including El Anatsui, the late Alexander "Skunder" Boghossian, Gavin Jantjes, William Kentridge, Karel Nel, and Marcus Neustetter.

Exhibition highlights include:

- An ancient Egyptian mummy board ornamented with a representation of Nut, the sky goddess
- Dogon (Mali) sculptures and masks that relate to origin myths connecting earth and sky
- Yoruba (Nigeria) sculptures honoring Shango, the thunder deity
- Tabwa and Luba (Democratic Republic of the Congo) sculptures connected to ideas about the moon, enlightenment, and special insight
- A time-based video "Deep Survey" by South African artist Karel Nel that uses data from the COSMOS survey project to suggest the sights and sounds of moving deep into space.

Major sponsorship for "African Cosmos: Stellar Arts" is provided by the government of the Republic of South Africa and South Africa's Department of Science and Technology. Additional support is from BET Networks, Stuart Bohart and family, Brand South Africa, Credit Suisse, South African Airways, South African Airways Cargo and the Embassy of South Africa in Washington, D.C.

This exhibition is in conjunction with Emory's *Creation Stories Project*, which explores the timeless questions of origin, creation, and intent that have served as a catalyst for human thought and creativity. *African Cosmos: Stellar Arts* and associated educational programs have been made possible by generous grants from the Thalia N. and Chris M. Carlos Foundation, Inc.; the Thalia and Michael C. Carlos Foundation, Inc.; and the Massey Charitable Trust.

About the Michael C. Carlos Museum

The Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University collects, preserves, exhibits, and interprets art and artifacts from antiquity to the present in order to provide unique opportunities for education and enrichment in the community, and to promote interdisciplinary teaching and research at Emory University. The Carlos Museum is one of the Southeast's premier museums with collections of art from Greece, Rome, Egypt, Near East, Nubia, the Americas, Africa, and Asia, as well as a collection of works on paper from the Renaissance to the present. For location and admission information, visit carlos.emory.edu/visit/hours-admission.

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