



# ARTFUL ANIMALS

*Activity Guide*

THIS  
BOOK  
BELONGS  
TO

.....



This collaborative programming project has been supported by the Smithsonian School Programming Fund.

*cover*  
Edward Saidi Tingatinga  
1935–1972, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania  
*Conger Birds* (detail)  
1972  
Oil on fiberboard  
Gift of Ambassador and  
Mrs. W. Beverly Carter, Jr., 79-28-50

*below*  
Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1966

*below right*  
Paa Joe  
b. 1945, Ghana  
Fantasy coffin  
Late 20th century  
Wood, paint  
Collection of Kenneth and Bonnie Brown

*Symbols of animals and insects representing leadership may be found throughout Artful Animals. This guide includes the motifs and meanings for 13 animals and insects embroidered on the Fante “cloth of the great,” illustrated on the back cover.*

*Symbols and meanings based on the field research of Doran H. Ross. From “Cloth of the Great,” a gallery handout for the 1992 exhibition Elimina: Art and Trade in the West African Coast at the National Museum of African Art.*

• BUTTERFLY •

*The butterfly feeds on the sweet nectar of flowers and is said to know where the good things are. It is a Fante symbol of the chief as a person of knowledge.*



Curated by Bryna Freyer  
Compiled by Deborah Stokes  
Edited by Migs Grove  
Photographs by Eliot Elisofon housed in the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art  
Art object photography by Franko Khoury  
Designed by Lisa Buck Vann

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# ARTFUL ANIMALS AND THIS ACTIVITY GUIDE



*Artful Animals* (July 1, 2009–February 21, 2010) showcases 125 artworks that feature African mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and even fantasy animals serving as metaphors for leadership, royalty, beauty, spiritual affiliation and moral values. Colorful children’s labels throughout the exhibition provide information about the animals’ traits and their symbolism in African cultures.

The National Museum of African Art partnered with the Discovery Theater and the education departments of the National Postal Museum, the National Zoo and the National Museum of Natural History to develop activities at each site that further explore and complement the *Artful Animals* theme. Activities from each partner are included in this guide. For more information about the exhibition, visit [africa.si.edu/exhibits](http://africa.si.edu/exhibits).





# ARTFUL ANIMALS AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART



## There are lots of ways to think of animals . . .

Some we love as pets.

Some we visit at the zoo.

Some we see only in books.

The animal world also includes human beings, the main subject of *Artful Animals*. As you travel through the exhibition, ask yourself

- what can we learn about *ourselves* by looking at our relationship to animals?
- what is *our* place in nature and the world?

On this visit, we can learn by **looking**.



As you go through the exhibition, look for **10 large letters** and write them below.

Unscramble the letters to identify the **mystery animal!**

(Find the answer at the end of the exhibition.)



• CHAMELEON •

The proverb, "The chameleon can change its clothes but not its soul," evokes the need for chiefly character.



Let's see which animals we find most often in African art.

**Let's get started!**

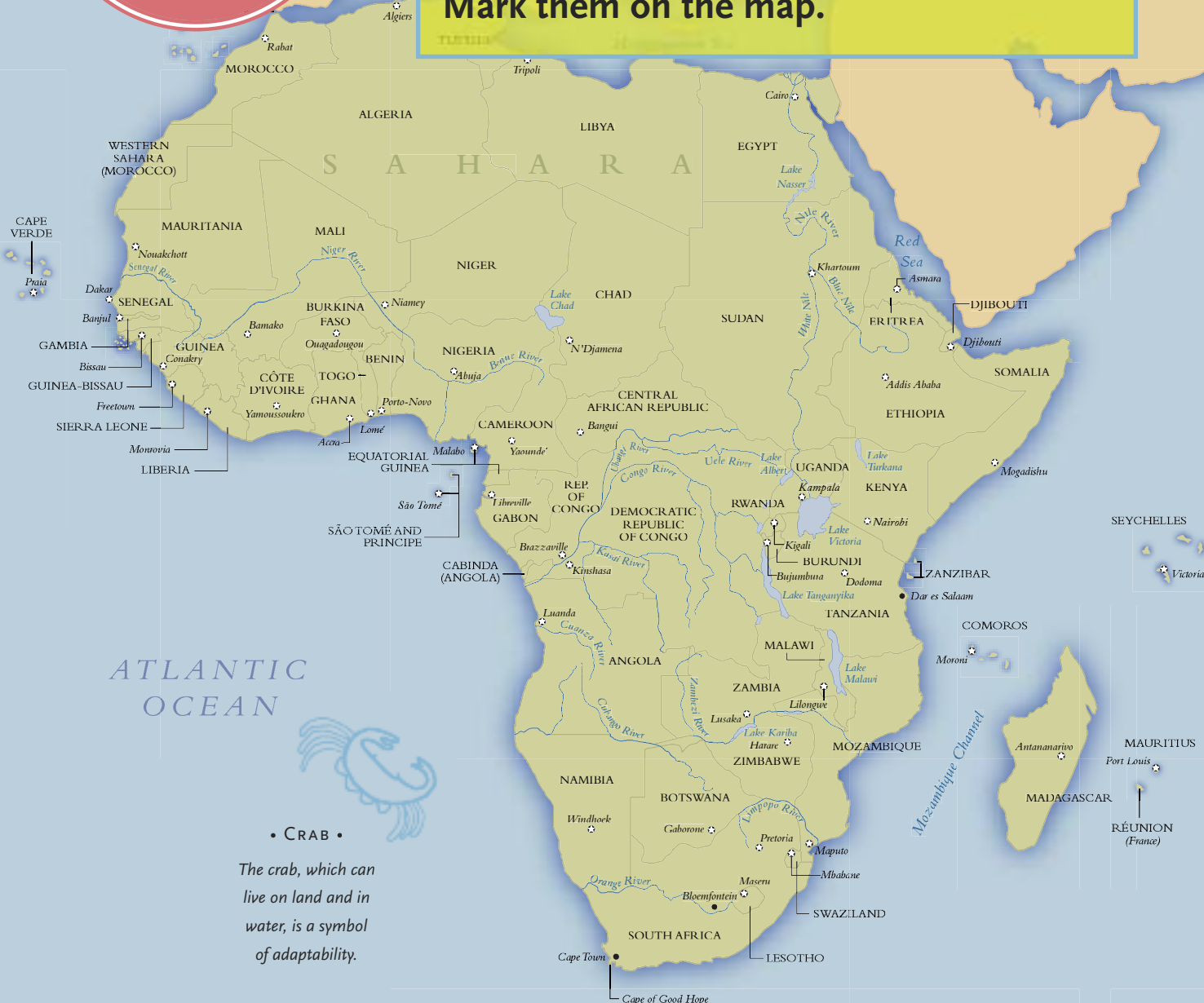
How many countries can you find?

.....

Art in Africa is a mix of old and new. Many of the works in *Artful Animals* were made 50 to 100 years ago. Others were created more recently in villages as well as modern, urban cities.

The objects in *Artful Animals* come from many of the **54** countries that make up the African continent. ASIA

Mark them on the map.



• CRAB •

The crab, which can live on land and in water, is a symbol of adaptability.

# AFRICA

☆ National capital

INDIAN OCEAN





Kaballa, b. 1920, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Untitled , c. 1940s–1950s, oil on paper, anonymous gift, 2002-11-4

## In *Artful Animals* you will find

### *the familiar*

- dog
- chicken
- pig
- horse

### *the unusual*

- pangolin
- aardvark
- chameleon

### *the untamed*

- antelope
- leopard
- crocodile
- elephant
- spider
- snake



• CROCODILE •

*The image refers to the crocodile as a symbol of chiefly strength and power: "Fish in the stream grow fat . . . for the benefit of the crocodile who eats them."*



# MY JOURNAL OF ANIMALS

{AS YOU WALK THROUGH THE EXHIBITION, KEEP A JOURNAL OF THE ANIMALS YOU SEE AND WRITE A STORY.}



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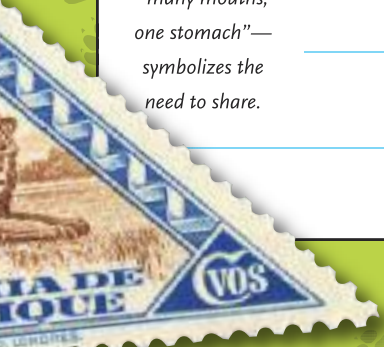


• DOUBLE CROCODILE •

*Double crocodile with one stomach*

*This image—  
“many mouths,  
one stomach”—  
symbolizes the  
need to share.*

Initiation rituals among the Yaka peoples (detail)  
Near Kasongo Lunda, Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo)  
Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1951





African masks and sculptures have a **purpose**. The **form** of an object can often tell us its **function**. Would you use a baseball bat to write a story? a bicycle to go swimming?

Objects are unique to the cultures that create them. Their forms are designed for particular purposes. The objects in *Artful Animals* include **designs** that represent an animal or part of an animal.

### Match the animal to its special feature.

Antelopes have pointed

Leopards have lots of

Crocodiles have big

Roosters have a red

Elephants have a long

Snakes have dangerous

Spiders have eight

Chameleons have a spiral

Butterflies have colorful

tail

horns

wings

legs

comb

fangs

spots

trunk

teeth

WHAT DO YOU WEAR  
OR OWN THAT HAS AN  
ANIMAL DESIGN?

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....



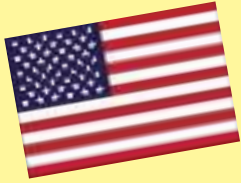
Lion face mask (detail)  
Bamana peoples, Mali  
Early to mid-20th century  
Wood, plant fiber,  
pigment, cotton, nails  
Museum purchase,  
2004-14-1



• ELEPHANT NEXT  
TO A PALM TREE •

*This image was a symbol of the Gold Coast colony (present-day Ghana). The lion on the elephant may refer specifically to the Fante town of Anomabu.*





A **symbol** is a shape that stands for or reminds us of something.

What does a heart shape suggest? .....

What does the American flag mean? .....

What qualities does the American bald eagle represent?

When we don't understand the symbol, its meaning may be hidden.

African artists observe the special talents of animals in nature. They use animals to represent ideas such as strength, beauty, power and protection.

**Read** the colorful children's labels to discover the meanings of Africa's artful animals.

Choose an animal symbol to represent you!

My special talents are

My friend is as special as



• FISH •

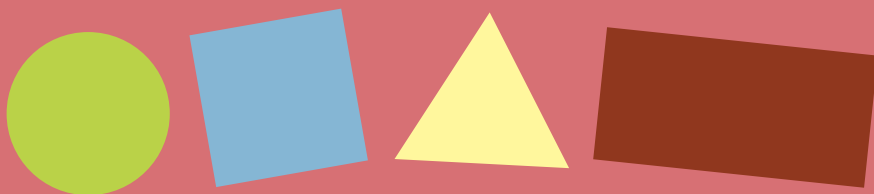
This image refers to the Fante proverb, "Fish in the stream grow fat . . . for the benefit of the crocodile who eats them," and symbolizes lesser chiefs or subjects.

Dogon *dyomo* masqueraders during *dama* ceremony (detail)  
Sanga, Mali  
Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1970



When creating works of art, African artists often use geometric *shapes*.

## Find



Some African artists cut or paint a decorative *pattern* on the surface of their masks or figures.

## Complete the unfinished pattern



above  
Gaboon viper panel  
(detail)  
Nkanu peoples,  
Democratic Republic  
of the Congo  
20th century  
Wood, pigment  
Collection of Kenneth  
and Bonnie Brown

left  
Python-pattern bowl  
(detail)  
Artist: Tamdyna  
(1930–1978)  
Sara-Nar peoples, Chad  
c. 1970–73  
Gourd, pigment  
Gift of Ellen Patterson  
Brown, 94-2-4



• ROOSTER •

*The rooster, who  
crows to begin the  
day, is a Fante symbol  
of the chief's ability  
to initiate action.*



Look for other animals in art when you walk around the Smithsonian Institution.

# AT HOME

**Look** through your local newspaper for the names of sports teams. What animals did the teams choose?

They are symbols for.....

ANIMALS I FOUND  
IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

ANIMALS I FOUND  
AT THE SMITHSONIAN

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

ANIMALS I FOUND  
IN MY ROOM

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....



• SANKOFA BIRD •

The bird who looks back—"Pick it up if it falls behind you"—is a Fante symbol of the ability and wisdom to learn from the past.

*background*  
Asiru Olatunde  
1918–1993, Oshogbo,  
Nigeria  
Untitled (detail)  
1966  
Aluminum  
Gift of Bernice M. Kelly,  
95-7-1

# ARTFUL ANIMALS AT THE NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM



Postage stamps not only pay for the mail, they also use pictures to visually describe world cultures. In fact, looking at postage stamps from all over the world is a fun and inexpensive way to travel around the globe.

African postage stamps showcase a variety of different ideas, especially art from all over the continent. You can build your own postage stamp collection using the pictures on your stamps to write your own creative story.

## Step 1

Head into the museum's Philatelic Gallery. The pullout frames hold stamp collections from the African countries listed on the poster board. Use the catalogue on the wall to find the Congo, Nigeria and many more.

## Step 2

Choose an African stamp frame to investigate and ask the following questions:

DO THE STAMPS SHOW PEOPLE? WHO?

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DO THE STAMPS CHANGE OVER TIME? HOW?

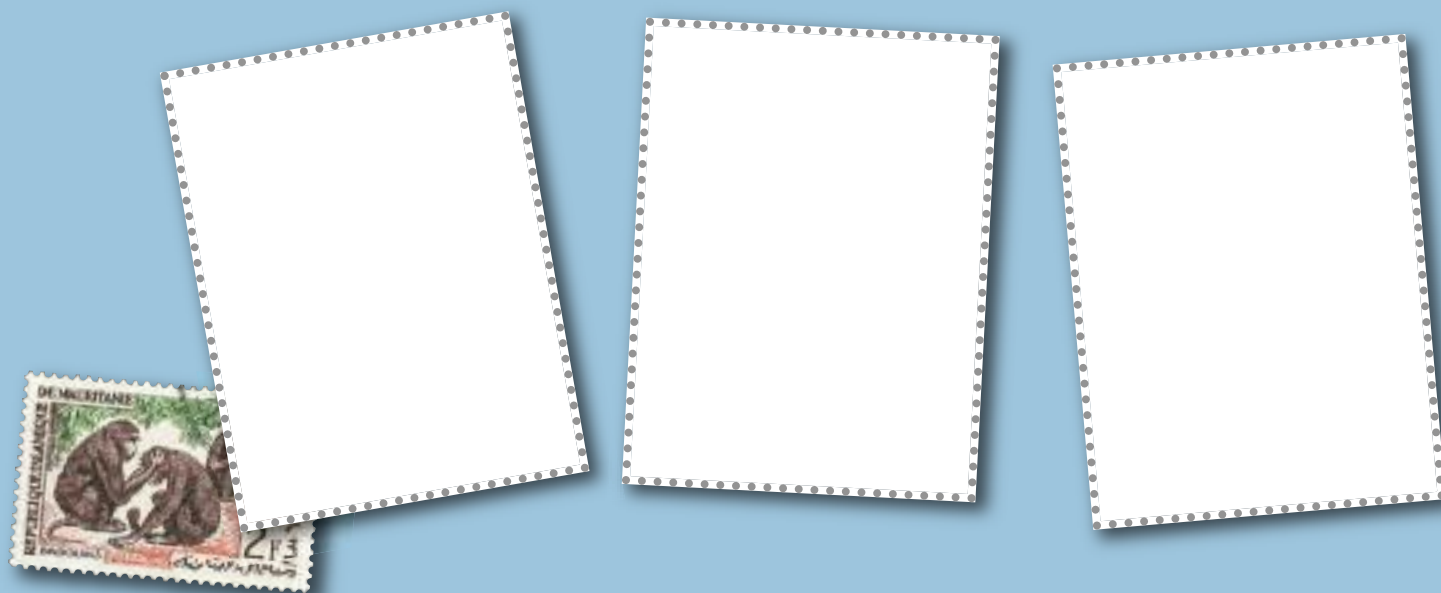
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WHAT KIND OF STORY DO YOU THINK THE STAMPS TELL?

---

WHICH STAMPS ARE YOUR FAVORITES? WHY?

---





### Step 3

Choose **five** stamps to draw in the stamp frames below. Use these stamps to create a story. The story can be about anything you like. Use your imagination and be creative!

{WRITE YOUR STORY HERE}



- SHIELD  
FLANKED BY  
BIRDS •

*Inspired by a European coat of arms, this image was adopted as the symbol of the national government of Ghana.*



# ARTFUL ANIMALS AT THE NATIONAL ZOO



## Mix and Match

Many of the creatures seen in African artwork combine parts of different animals. The *chi wara* that taught the Bamana peoples of Mali to farm was part oryx antelope, part pangolin and part aardvark.

**Create** your own mythical animal. Grab something to draw with and let your imagination go wild.

## Can you move like an animal?

Animals move in some amazing ways.



- Don't get dizzy trying this one!

A chameleon can move its eyes in opposite directions.

*Can you?*

- Hidden in the forest, the Gaboon viper can stay still for hours before attacking its prey.

*Can you sit perfectly still without moving a muscle?*

- Quick, what's that behind you? The mythic *sankofa* bird can look straight backward.

*Can you see what's behind you?*

- The *chi wara* taught the Bamana peoples to farm.

The motions of the antelope as it uses its hooves and horns mimic the farmer as he breaks the earth with his hoe.

*Can you dig the ground with your toes?*

{MY MYTHICAL ANIMAL}

Photograph by  
Ann Batdorf,  
Smithsonian's  
National Zoo



• SNAIL •

Like the tortoise, the snail refers to an important food gathered by hand. It is thus a Fante symbol of peace.





## The Spider and the Leopard: A Fable

**ONCE** upon a \_\_\_\_\_(noun), Spider went down

the \_\_\_\_\_(adjective) path that led to the

\_\_\_\_\_ (noun). Leopard was there with a \_\_\_\_\_(adjective)

look in his eye. Spider \_\_\_\_\_(past-tense verb) behind a great \_\_\_\_\_(noun), and

Leopard could not find him. "Never mind," Leopard thought. "I will go to Spider's

\_\_\_\_\_ (noun). I will \_\_\_\_\_(verb) behind his \_\_\_\_\_(noun) and then I will

\_\_\_\_\_ (verb) him."

Spider was scared when he got home, so he hatched a \_\_\_\_\_(noun). He

\_\_\_\_\_ (past-tense verb) out, "Ho! My \_\_\_\_\_(noun)!" Nobody answered. "That's

funny," said Spider loudly, "my little \_\_\_\_\_(noun) always answers me." With all his

\_\_\_\_\_ (noun), he \_\_\_\_\_(past-tense verb), "Ho! My house. How are you?"

A \_\_\_\_\_(adjective) voice answered. "I am fine,

Mr. Spider. Come on in."

The Spider \_\_\_\_\_(past-tense verb)

out laughing. "Now I know where you are,

Mr. Leopard, and you shall never catch me."

**THE END**



# ARTFUL ANIMALS AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY



African artists throughout history have created powerful works of art using images of animals. From rock art to contemporary painting, animals are used as symbols in royal art, in masquerades and to show respect for ancestors. Many of the elements of design are derived through direct observation of the animals in their natural habitat.

**Pick up a floor map at the information desk. Let's start at the big mounted elephant in the Kenneth E. Behring Family Rotunda on the 1st floor.**

Walk completely around it and take a good look!  
Are elephants solitary animals or do they live in herds?

SOLITARY    IN HERDS

Name 3 other creatures that share the elephant's habitat.

.....

**Next, go to the 2nd floor and find the Elephant Discovery Station.**

Find the elephant mask.  
When is it worn?

---

What does the elephant symbolize in the Kuba peoples' culture?

---

Read the proverb that compares a ruler to an elephant. What qualities do they share?

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Photograph by Chip Clark

*far left*  
Elephant mask  
Kuba peoples, Democratic  
Republic of the Congo  
Early 19th century  
Beads, cowrie shells, hide,  
fur, raffia, horn rattan  
National Museum of  
Natural History, E385718

FIND THE TWO CASES DISPLAYING AFRICAN MONEY. PICTURES OF ANIMALS CAN BE FOUND ON MANY OF THESE. LIST ALL THE ANIMALS YOU CAN SEE.

{Hint: there are more than 10!}

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

4 .....

5 .....

6 .....

7 .....

8 .....

9 .....

10 .....

11 .....

12 .....

## Go to the African Voices exhibition on the 1st floor.

Look for the carved head-dresses. Worn on top of the dancer's head, they are a traditional art form created in Mali by Bamana carvers. They represent the mythic ancestor *chi wara* (chee-WAR-rah) who taught the Bamana peoples how to farm. One is male and one is female. How can you tell the difference?

*right*  
 Pair of *chi wara*  
 Artist: Siriman Fane  
 Bamana peoples, Mali  
 1970  
 Wood  
 National Museum of Natural History,  
 gift of Dr. and Mrs  
 James Pascal Imperato,  
 E428439-40

Bamana *chi wara* headaddresses, Bamako, Mali, Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1971



Design your own paper money with an animal that means something to you!

• SPIDER •

*Ananse, the trickster spider of Akan folklore, is a symbol of wisdom and cleverness.*



FOR MORE AFRICAN ANIMALS, GO TO THE BEHRING HALL OF MAMMALS OFF THE ROTUNDA. WATCH OUT FOR THE LION ON YOUR LEFT! HUNT FOR THE ORYX AND THE GAZELLE.

Find the teeny tiny animal behind the zebras. What is it?



Photograph by Meghan Murphy, Smithsonian's National Zoo



# ARTFUL ANIMALS AT THE DISCOVERY THEATER



*Artful Animals* is coming to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art on the National Mall, the National Zoo, the National Postal Museum, the National Museum of Natural History—and Discovery Theater will be there with great shows and educational programs for every age!

## Sunset Serenade: Mother Africa

Thursday, July 23, 2009

6:30–8:00 p.m.

National Zoo

Soul in Motion performs at the band shell on the green. Enjoy a family picnic with your favorite African animals.

FREE  
PROGRAM!



## Animals R Us! Activity Programs

*National Identity and Animal Stamp Art*

Tuesdays and Thursdays in July 2009

10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Advanced registration encouraged, 202.633.5535

National Postal Museum

Learn how animals make important points about a country and its people, look for artful animal examples in the stamp vaults, collect animal stamps from around the world and create your own stamp!

FREE  
PROGRAM!



Photograph by Jessie Cohen,  
Smithsonian's National Zoo



## Animals R Us! Family Day

*National Identity and Animal Stamp Art*

*Saturday, August 1, 2009*

*1:00–3:30 p.m.*

*National Postal Museum*

Enjoy presentations about African animals, folklore and peoples with Discovery Theater's Soul in Motion. Explore examples of artful animals in the stamp galleries, collect animal stamps from around the world and design your own stamp!



## Artful Animals at Play

*Thursday & Friday, August 6 & 7, 2009*

*10:15 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 11:45 a.m., and 12:30 p.m.*

*National Museum of African Art*

*Discovery Theater, Meet the Museum Program*

*Limited seating; for tickets, call 202.633.8700 or visit*

*<http://discoverytheater.com/shows/aug/artful.shtm>*

Enjoy an intimate, close-up, interactive show with stories, drumming and more with performers from Soul in Motion. Then go into the gallery for your own *Artful Animals* experience!



## Mother Africa @ Natural History

*Wednesday, September 30, 2009*

*10:15 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.*

*Baird Auditorium, Natural History Museum*

*Discovery Theater, Meet the Museum Program*

*Limited seating; for tickets, call 202.633.8700 or visit*

*<http://discoverytheater.com/shows/sep/mother-africa.shtm>*

Join the Soul in Motion drummers and dancers for a joyous dance concert with audience participation. Afterwards, visit the African Voices and Mammals halls to explore more about the land, the animals, and its people. School groups welcome!



• TORTOISE •

*The tortoise is a symbol of peace. It is an important food source gathered by hand, not shot with a gun.*

*above*  
Male *chi wara* mask  
Bamana peoples, Mali  
Early to mid-20th century  
Wood, metal, plant fiber,  
hide, cowrie shells  
Bequest of Eliot Elisofon,





# Smithsonian Institution

## National Museum of African Art

950 Independence Avenue, SW  
Metro: Smithsonian  
202.633.4600  
africa.si.edu

## National Postal Museum

2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE  
Metro: Union Station  
202.633.5555  
www.postalmuseum.si.edu

## National Zoo

3001 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Metro: Woodley Park or Cleveland Park  
202.633.4800  
www.nationalzoo.si.edu

## National Museum of Natural History

10th Street & Constitution Avenue, NW  
Metro: Smithsonian or Federal Triangle  
202.633.1000  
www.mnh.si.edu



Photo: Graph by Elliot Ellisofof, 1972

LOCATIONS

Man's wrapper or  
"cloth of the great"  
Fante peoples, Ghana  
Mid- to late 20th century  
Mill-woven wool,  
embroidery thread  
Museum purchase,  
84-6-10

