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Persona -- Masks of Africa: Identities Hidden and Revealed

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New Exhibit

Persona -- Masks of Africa: Identities Hidden and Revealed

April 24, 2009 - January 3, 2010

Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13, 3080 Tervuren, Belgium.

Description from the Museum:

By examining the use of masks in dances, rituals and the belief system they serve and represent, the book also explores their concrete and symbolic roles as objects that are "devitalized" once they have been removed from their environment. They raise questions about identity, self-respect and the perception of the "Other" in Western society. A mask hides an identity, or reveals it. The traditional mask, used during African ceremonies and festivals, is always more than the wooden face worn by the dancer: it allows an entity to take shape, with its own way of dancing and moving. The wearer transforms into another person, a deity, sometimes even an animal. The exhibition presents 180 masks in an original way, grouped according to 18 themes including the history of the collection and the role of the mask in communication with the supernatural, in the harvest, during initiation rituals, at funerals, etc.

Catalogue of the exhibition co-published by the Royal Museum for Central Africa and 5 Continents, in English, French and Dutch. Written by Anne-Marie Bouttiaux, the exhibition's organizer, this work also includes an essay by Roger Pierre Turine. ISBN 978-88-7439-513-2. Additional information is available at www.africamuseum.be.