Artistry of African/Diaspora Blacksmiths

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Call for presenters on the artistry of African/Diaspora blacksmiths for the 15th Triennial Symposium on African Art, University of California, Los Angeles, March 23-26, 2011. This is an open call for scholars to present on the topic of the artistry of African blacksmiths as part of a major traveling exhibition and publication project tentatively entitled *Striking Iron: The Art of African Blacksmiths*. We envision an exhibition of approximately 250 pieces of the very finest iron artwork from the entire continent, from earliest times to the present. Some objects may be combinations of iron and other metals, or smelting/forging related objects in other media, but the central emphasis will be on forged forms. Smelting, its histories, technologies, and cultural contexts will also be included. The publication will be a substantial edited volume of essays accompanied by a DVD. Topics may include, but are not limited to the following:

**The Histories and Cultures of Iron in Africa** - Origins; places; techniques/technologies of smelting and forging; independent inventions/diffusions; iron, trade, and state-formation; social/spiritual aspects of earliest iron-working sites, hunter-gatherers, herders, agriculturalists, complex societies; first Afro-Euro-Arab-South Asian contacts; trade in goods and humans; colonial impact; post/neo-colonial influences and realities; the arts of blacksmiths' societies, including masking, songs, musical instruments, dance regalia, etc.; others?

**Forms/Intentions** - Studies of object types according to purposes/significances from all parts of the continent: Figures of Ascendancy; Forms of Descent; Lamps and Illumination; Iron and Authority; Musical Iron -- Shapes and Sounds; Currency and Forging Value; Tool Artistry; Iron Ornament -- Prestige and Presence; Artful Weaponry; Smelting/Smithing Related Forms (copper anvils, wood/clay bellows, brass pokers, etc.); others?

**Forging the Future** - Works by contemporary African/Diaspora artists and issues of changing technologies/resources; others?
This project and the Triennial sessions are being forged by the team of Tom Joyce, Allen Roberts, Bill Dewey, and Henry Drewal and we hope to include essays on specific topics by scholars and artists from Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas. We are excited about this project and look forward to receiving at your earliest convenience the following: 1) Title; 2) Abstract (200 words); 3) Media requirements (PowerPoint, video, etc.); 4) Full contact information including mailing address, phone, and email address. Please send this to all team members not later than September 15, 2010: wtjoyce@earthlink.net, aroberts@arts.ucla.edu, wjd14@psu.edu, hjdrewal@wisc.edu.