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**African Histories and Diasporas:
A Conversation with Robert Farris Thompson**

**Forum of the African Diaspora Archaeology Network
Society for Historical Archaeology Annual Conference
Austin, Texas, Jan. 5-9, 2011**



The annual Forum of the African Diaspora Archaeology Network at the January 2011 SHA Annual conference in Austin, Texas, is entitled "African Histories and Diasporas: A Conversation with Robert Farris Thompson." Bob Thompson is the John Trumbull Professor of the History of Art at Yale University. He has devoted his life to revealing the histories of African cultures and the material culture heritage of African diasporas throughout the Americas. Thompson's first book, *Black Gods and Kings*, provided a close study of the history of the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria. Several in-depth analyses of the beliefs, practices, and material culture expressions in African cultures and diasporas followed, presented in numerous works including: *Face of the Gods: Art and Altars of Africa and African Americas*; *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy*; and *Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (with Joseph Cornet). His works have been anthologized fifteen times and translated into French, German, Flemish, and Portuguese. Thompson will discuss his perspectives on African diasporas and the related research questions he would like to see archaeologists pursue in interdisciplinary collaborations. Leland Ferguson, Maria Franklin, Grey Gundaker, Jill Koverman, Akin Ogundiran, and Ken Brown will respond to Thompson's suggestions from their experiences as leading researchers in historical, archaeological, and material culture studies of African and African diaspora histories. Those comments will be followed by open discussions among all in attendance at this three-hour forum.