



SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE

Fowler Museum
www.fowler.ucla.edu

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"A standard-setter among ethnology-based art institutions" – Holland Cotter, **The New York Times**

"The most reliable place for a fix of the unexpected, though, remains UCLA's Fowler Museum, which has hosted some of my favorite shows of the last few years, including exhibits about Senegalese Sufi saint Amadou Bamba, Inuit printmaker Jessie Oonark, associative neo-pagan thought-stylist and certified madman Aby Warburg, and the deliriously postmodern hand-painted movie posters of Ghana." – Doug Harvey, **LA Weekly**

"Terrific objects, illuminating installation, refreshing viewpoint, excellent catalog—this UCLA Fowler Museum offering was the best show of the year." – Christopher Knight, **Los Angeles Times** on the Fowler exhibition "Ways of the Rivers: Arts and Environment of the Niger Delta"

"Artists, more than any art lovers on earth, will love what they see." – Holland Cotter, **The New York Times**

Important Facts

Previously known as the Museum of Cultural History, the Fowler was founded in 1963 by Chancellor Franklin D. Murphy.

Re-opened as the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History in 1992 in a three-story state-of-the-art facility with 20,000 square feet of exhibition space. Name shortened in 2006 to Fowler Museum at UCLA.

Primary venue: Fowler Museum, just west of Royce Hall, on the UCLA campus.

Approximately 60,000 annual attendance (average).

Since 1992, Fowler exhibitions have been seen by more than five million people outside of the Los Angeles area in a range of locales including New York, Washington, D.C., Detroit, Chicago, Atlanta, Baltimore, Miami, Minneapolis, New Orleans and Houston.

A public unit of the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture.

Overview

The Fowler Museum is committed to exhibitions, publications and public programs that celebrate the diverse cultures and rich visual arts found throughout the world. The Museum oversees a collection of more than 750,000 objects (150,000 ethnographic and 600,000 archaeological) that represents ancient, traditional, and contemporary cultures. The African collection is one of the largest and finest in the United States, and the Latin American holdings are extensive, with special strength in pre-Columbian ceramics. More than 10,000 textiles trace the history of cloth over two millennia and five continents.

The Museum's mission is to collect, preserve, study, interpret, exhibit and publish the art and material culture of past and present peoples, primarily from Africa, Asian, the Pacific and the Americas. Established in 1963, the Fowler Museum has emerged as one of the leading university-based museums in the world, renowned for presenting innovative, highly contextualized exhibitions, many of which travel nationally, that draw upon the disciplines of art history, anthropology, folklore, archaeology and ethnomusicology.

With a changing schedule of eight to nine new exhibitions a year, the Museum provides a dynamic educational resource for the students, faculty and staff of the University and for the diverse communities of greater Los Angeles. The publications program based on these exhibitions places the Fowler among the world's most active publishers of African, Southeast Asian and Latin American arts. Three to four scholarly publications are produced annually. The Fowler has enjoyed a long and successful relationship with the National Endowment for the Arts (13 projects funded since 1973) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (27 projects since 1977).

The Museum's mission and its diverse collections were determining factors in the original conceptualization and dedication of its four gallery spaces: the Lucas Gallery featuring Latin American exhibitions; the Jerome L. Joss Gallery featuring a selection of highlights from the Fowler's permanent collection in a long-term exhibition called "Intersections: World Arts, Local Lives"; the J. Paul Getty Trust Gallery presenting an ongoing series of exhibitions consisting of 150–500 objects each; and the Fowler Gallery featuring a permanent exhibition of 175 silver works interpreted in all of its social contexts. The Goldenberg Galleria, which encircles the four galleries around a central courtyard, features photographic and other two-dimensional works that complement the exhibitions on view.

Exhibitions

Recent groundbreaking projects include "Mami Wata: Arts for Water Spirits in Africa and Its Diasporas," (2008) which *The New York Times* recently called "An object lesson in how exhibition design can be visually magnetic, object-centered and idea-clarifying; how it can deliver both a big thrill and a hard think," "iCARNAVAL!" (2006), which explored the revelry of Carnival festivals as they are enacted today in eight different geographic and cultural regions; "The Art of Rice: Spirit and Sustenance in Asia" (2004); "Ways of the Rivers: Arts and Environment of the Niger Delta" (2002), hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as "the best show of the year"; the acclaimed "A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal" (2003), which explores the arts and expressive culture of Islamic West Africa and was the only Los Angeles exhibition lauded by *The New York Times* in its year-in-review article entitled "The Art and Artists of the Year"; and "Ceramic Trees of Life: Popular Art from Mexico" (2003), a bilingual exhibition that showcased these richly symbolic and highly collectible objects from Mexico. All of these Fowler-produced projects were accompanied by scholarly publications and educational programming.

Nationwide Impact

Numerous Fowler exhibitions travel the country for appearances at major museums. “Mami Wata: Arts for Water Spirits in Africa and Its Diasporas” is in the middle of a prestigious five-venue US tour with stops that include the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., the Contemporary Center at the American Folk Art Museum in New York City, and Stanford University’s Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts. After a fall 2006 debut at the Fowler, “The Art of Being Tuareg: Sahara Nomads in a Modern World” (co-organized with the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University) was on display at the Cantor Center at Stanford University and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art. “Painting Ethiopia: Life and Work of Qes Adamu Tesfaw” was on display at the Birmingham Museum of Art in Alabama in 2006, “The Art of Rice” traveling to Copia: The American Center for Wine, Food & the Arts in Napa, California, and then to the Honolulu Academy of Arts after its debut at the Fowler in 2004, and “A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal” was seen at the Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida (2005), the Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (2006), the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas (2007), and the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico (2007).

Community Outreach Programs

The Fowler’s education philosophy is rooted in the Museum’s mission to “serve the teaching and research interests of the students, faculty and staff of the University” and to be “an accessible educational resource for the multicultural communities of greater Los Angeles and beyond.” The education department develops programs to meet the interests and needs of its constituents and to complement and extend exhibition themes and ideas. Each program — be it a symposium, film series, teacher in-service or arts workshop — is designed to encourage dialog and to engage visitors as active participants while furthering the audience’s understanding of the works on view.

Approximately 17,000 elementary and secondary students visit the Museum each year for interactive lessons designed to enhance their appreciation for the arts and humanities. The Fowler enhances state curriculum frameworks through comprehensive resource units, in-service teacher workshops and museum-school partnerships that seek to bring the ideas and themes of the works on view into the classroom. Since 1992, the Museum has published numerous resource units of up to 150 pages each that include both broad and specific background essays, classroom lessons, student activities and object slide sets. Designed as stand-alone resources in the area of global arts, these guides include pre- and post-visit lesson plans to assist teachers in integrating visits with their own curricular planning.

One recent outreach program of note is the Fowler’s Teen AIDS Awareness and Action program, developed in conjunction with the 2008 exhibition *Make Art/Stop AIDS* to engage high school students in discussion and action related to the global AIDS epidemic. The Fowler worked closely with the LAUSD HIV/AIDS Prevention Unit to identify schools in need of the services of this program. Teen AIDS Awareness and Action (TAAA) was designed to provide students with multiple opportunities to examine issues around HIV/AIDS, and to provide safe spaces to open up, ask questions, and discuss issues for young people on the verge of sexual activity, if not sexually active already.

Through museum visits, peer-to-peer education, a dance theatre performance, slide show presentations, guest speakers, and artist residencies, the project worked to affect the students in the following ways:

- Educate them on basic facts about HIV transmission, prevention, and treatment

- Promote methods of prevention, including condom use; increase the likelihood that students will choose to be tested for HIV, thereby reducing the rate of infection among at-risk youth
- Contribute to a reduction in stigma and emphasize compassion in students' attitudes to HIV-positive individuals, and
- Mobilize young people in action as informed and responsible artist-activists in their schools and communities.

Public Programs

In addition to these extensive educational programs, the Fowler offers lectures, symposia, performances, art workshops and gallery talks for general audiences, scholars, educators, and visitors of all ages, including a hands-on summer art camp for children. Family festivals attended by thousands celebrate the themes of major exhibitions through music, dance, and art-making activities. K-12 educators benefit from the Museum's extensive teacher-training programs and published arts and humanities curricula, which enable them to extend their students' fieldtrips to the Fowler with interactive lessons back in the classroom.

In 2002 the Fowler debuted a student performance series called "Fowler Out Loud." Occurring most Thursday evenings throughout the academic year, the series features free live performances in the Museum courtyard by talented UCLA student musicians, dancers, singers, poets and others.