

FINE2057 Arts of West, Central and Southern Africa (6 credits)

Second semester

Lecturer: Dr. J.A. Van Eijck

This course explores some of the artistic practices and material culture found in West, Central and Southern Africa. It provides a general introduction to the topic and offers a selective overview of the diversity of practices, styles and mediums. The course is organised geographically beginning with West Africa; from the earliest evidence for sculptural traditions and the rise of centralised structures of authority, to the variety and richness of the artistic and material culture traditions found in this region. It proceeds on to Central and Southern African communities and concludes with some examples of contemporary art practice and the ways in which the twentieth century has been a time of great change for visual culture in Africa.

The aim is to provide a basic understanding and appreciation of the complexity and diversity of the art and material culture found in these regions of Africa. It aims to develop students' historical and cultural awareness of Africa and their understanding of the relationship of the art to the culture and context in which it was/is created and utilised. To this end, students will learn to approach the artefacts and practices from an inter-disciplinary standpoint so they can be understood in their particular religious, ritual and/or specific socio-cultural and historical contexts. This also raises questions about the place of the arts in the constitution of identity-and-difference (personal, gendered, chiefly, ritual, ethnic, regional and national).

Assessment: coursework 100%

Prerequisite: None