

## IN A NEW LIGHT CAMPAIGN



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# NEH Grant Provides an Extraordinary Opportunity to Explore Treasures of the African Collection

The BMA is entering the final stretch of planning for a major reinstallation of the African art collection in 2014, which has been funded in part by a \$30,000 planning grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

March 2012



The African Art Planning Advisory Panel viewed *Hand Held: Personal Arts from Africa* during their two-day onsite visit in 2011, exploring some new exhibition approaches that visitors will experience when the collection is reinstalled in 2014. Pictured: Ben Vinson, Professor of History and Vice Dean for Centers, Interdepartmental, and Graduate Programs at JHU.

The grant offered an extraordinary opportunity to bring in a distinguished panel of scholars who visited the BMA for two-day sessions in June and November 2011. These scholars, together with the Museum's curators, explored content, design, and interpretive strategies for the African reinstallation.

In addition, individual scholars visited to review the Museum's holdings in their areas of specialty. According to Jay Fisher, Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs, "most of us are familiar with the BMA's masterpieces in masks and sculptures, but the collection is much more extensive than that. These scholarly visits helped refine understanding

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of the importance of individual objects within the collection and expand knowledge of regional artistic styles in African art.”

The NEH funding also allowed BMA team members who work with the collection to visit cutting-edge installations of African art around the world. BMA Director Doreen Bolger believes the opportunity is great: “We want to bring the best current practices to bear as we present this rich and historic collection in a way that will improve the visitor’s experience with the art, inspire creativity, and encourage learning.”



Left to right: David Binkley, Independent Scholar; Rowland Abiodun, Professor of History and Art and Black Studies at Amherst College; and Raymond Silverman, Director of Museum Studies at the University of Michigan.

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