



Art Across Cultures

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Blackfoot

Who creates art?

In the Blackfoot culture, both women and men have roles in creating art. You do not have to have a job as an artist to create art. Although, women and men in this culture do create different styles of art and each style has a different meaning.



Before getting started on each type of art they would do, an interesting fact is that each member had their own pictograph that would be used to track their identity and their location if ever split from the tribe

Another valuable symbol was the pictographic signature which served to identify the individual Indian by name. The lone Indian when separated from his war party or his camp could draw his signature, coupled with other pictographs indicating his recent actions, and a small arrow indicating his direction of movement, on a rock, a piece of bone, skin or cloth and leave it in a conspicuous place where others of his tribe might find it and learn of his past accomplishments and future plans. A few pictographic signatures of well known elderly Indians of the Blackfeet Reservation, Montana, are shown in figure 19.

Excerpts & Images from John Ewers:
Blackfeet Crafts

Men's art in the Blackfoot Tribe

Men often painted using animal and human forms in their art. They painted on hides to place on shields and drums while also using lodgelinings as a canvas. Religious symbols were commonly painted on lodgelinings. Paintings on shields consisted of the buffalo, the sun, the moon, and the stars. Each of these symbols were intended to protect the men during war. Additionally, eagle feathers were added to shields. Drums were painted for ceremonies. Usually robes were painted by women, but war robes were always painted by men. These robes were painted by the wearer themselves or they had a skilled male painter do it for them. Men who had good war records would paint their war experience on lodgelinings.

As a general rule women were the painters of geometric designs on rawhide cases, robes and lodge linings; men used human and animal forms and painted the devices on their shields and drums, the religious symbols on their lodge covers, and covered [Page p.16]

stars. They were symbolic medicine paintings intended to protect the shield owner in war. An old Blackfoot shield bearing a single crude painting of a buffalo in red is shown in figure 13. As was customary, a fringe of eagle feathers surrounds the raw-hide body of the shield. Symbolic paintings were also made on the heads of drums used in ceremonials, such as the drum from a medicine pipe bundle bearing the claws of the thunder bird and dots symbolizing hail shown in figure 14. Horse and deer hides were preferred for drum heads.

Even though a renowned warrior owned a "marked robe," he preferred to wear a robe on which was pictured his successful encounters with the enemy and symbolic of his leadership in war. War history robes were always painted by men. Either the wearer decorated his own robe or he secured the services of a more skillful painter

Excerpts & Images from John Ewers: *Blackfeet Crafts*

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Women's art in the Blackfoot Tribe

Women in the Blackfoot Tribe painted distinct, geometric designs instead of the human and animal forms used by men. Women painted on robes, rawhide cases, and lodgelinings. They most often painted a parfleche, a hide, usually a buffalo hide. Once painted these were used for transporting and storing items. The geometric patterns women painted identified the culture in a way, after viewing their designs you could tell it was part of the Blackfoot tribe.

To make a pair of parfleches a woman selected a buffalo hide with the hair on, whose inner side had been fleshed and scraped to an even thickness. She soaked the hide in water and, while it was still damp, pegged it out on the ground hair side down. She knelt over the hide on her knees and began to paint on a portion of it the design composition she had in mind. She measured the lengths of the lines outlining the desired motives precisely with peeled willow sticks of different lengths. Using these sticks as rulers she drew the outlines of the forms with paint on a bone brush. Usually a single color was used for outlining all painted forms on the parfleche. Then she filled in the larger areas of the composition with other desired colors. The paint was mixed only with hot water, which caused it to sink into the damp hide and become permanently fixed after it had dried.

The large, buffalo skin draft screens that lined the lower portions of Blackfoot lodges were painted with bright geometric designs by women. The painting was confined to a long, narrow horizontal band near the top of the lining, and additional vertical bands projecting downward from it at intervals of about 15 inches. Simple as this pattern was it was distinctly Blackfoot.

Excerpts & Images
from John Ewers:
Blackfeet Crafts

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Balinese art

Art shares an equal amount of significance between male and female in Balinese culture. Both male and female artistic roles hold extreme value and there is no greater position over the other. Art in Bali is seen as something very sacred and important to Balinese culture and most of the time holds no monetary value. It is said that not until a few years ago the Balinese did not paint pictures, or build statues without a definite symbolic purpose. Whether that being an offering towards their gods or for cultural purposes such as festivals. It is also said that there are no words for the term "Art" or "Artist" in the Balinese language. Whenever art was created it was seen as a member simply serving their community, furthering the idea of the Balinese that art was simply intertwined within their lifestyles.



Until a few years ago the Balinese did not paint pictures or make statues without some definite purpose. It has often been stated that there are no words in the Balinese language for "art" and "artist." This is true and logical. Making a beautiful offering, and carving a stone temple gate, and making a set of masks are tasks of equal aesthetic importance, and although the artist is regarded as a preferred member of the community, there is no separate class of artists, and a sculptor is simply a "carver" or a figure-maker, and the painter is a picture-maker. A dancer is a legong, a djanger, and so forth — the names of the dances they perform.

Balinese art

Nothing is made for posterity. The material that is used to create structures crumbles away after a few years. Temples, sculptures and monuments have to be renewed constantly. Balinese creations have never suffered from fossilization due to ants devouring wooden sculptures and humidity rotting away paper cloths. The balinese are proud of their culture , but they are also really progressive and unconservative adopting a lot of foreign ideas. In Bali there are all kinds of influences from indian, chinese, and javanese culture which have all left their mark on Balinese art.



Nothing in Bali is made for posterity; the only available stone is a soft sandstone that crumbles away after a few years, and the temples and reliefs have to be renewed constantly; white ants devour the wooden sculptures, and the humidity rots away all paper and cloth, so their arts have never suffered from fossilization. The Balinese are extremely proud of their traditions, but they are also progressive and unconservative, and when a foreign idea strikes their fancy, they adopt it with great enthusiasm as their own. All sorts of influences from the outside, Indian, Chinese, Javanese, have left their mark on Balinese art, but they are always translated into their own manner and they become strongly Balinese in the process.

Balinese

Female art in Bali

Female art in Bali consists of basket weaving, and creating beautiful textile images on the baskets, dancing and acting. However, a key and important role by the females in Balinese society, is to create beautiful offerings to the gods. Females must create intricate structures of cut-out palm leaf, or great pyramids, of fruit, flowers, cakes, and even roasted meats. These wide varieties of materials are used to create an extremely impressive and complex artistic compositional pieces, that were used as offerings to their gods. It is said that there are some monuments that are up to seven feet tall, made completely from pig's meat.

The main artistic activity of the women goes into the making of beautiful offerings for the gods. These are intricate structures of cut-out palm-leaf, or great pyramids of fruit, flowers, cakes, and even roast chickens, arranged with splendid taste, masterpieces of composition in which the relative form of the elements employed, their texture and colour are taken into consideration. I have seen monuments, seven feet in height, made entirely of roasted pig's meat on skewers, decorated into shapes cut out of the waxy fat of the pig and surmounted with banners and little umbrellas of the lacy stomach tissues, the whole relieved by the vivid vermilion of chili-peppers. Although women of all ages have always taken part in the ritual offering dances, in olden times only little girls became dancers and actresses; but today beautiful girls take part in theatrical performances, playing the parts of princesses formerly performed exclusively by female impersonators.



Balinese

Male art in Balinese culture

Paintings, sculptures, and playing on musical instruments is usually reserved for men by tradition. Art in Balinese culture is highly valued, and it is said that it is the educational requirement to learn some form of art such as wood carving, the use of musical instruments, painting or dancing and singing in Kawi, the Balinese classic form of literature. If one is somehow not able to possess other academic skills to become productive in this society, they will have at least some knowledge of some form of art.

Painting, sculpture, and playing on musical instruments are arts by tradition reserved to the men, but almost any woman can weave beautiful stuffs and it is curious that the most intriguing textiles, those in which the dyeing and weaving process is so complicated that years of labour are required to complete a scarf, are made by the women of Tenganan, an ancient village of six hundred souls who are so conservative that they will not maintain connections with the rest of Bali and who punish with exile whoever dares to marry outside the village.

requirement for the education of every prince that he should know mythology, history, and poetry well enough; should learn painting, woodcarving, music, and the making of musical instruments; should be able to dance and to sing in Kawi, the classic language of literature. There is hardly a prince who does not possess a good number of these attributes, and those deprived of talent themselves support artists, musicians, and actors as part of their retinue. Ordinary people look upon their feudal lords as models of conduct and do not hesitate to imitate them, learning their poetry, dancing, painting, and carving in order to be like them.

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Ojibwa

Who makes the art



In Ojibwe culture, the artistic brunt goes mostly towards the women. They create decorative garments worn by the native men. They also make leather coats for their husbands in the form in the style of trading captains. Many of the Native songs that in Ojibwe culture, have been composed by women. However Artistic women continuously make contributions but are never given any formal recognition. Women in Ojibwa culture are generally not respected as much as the men

Women continually make artistic contributions which are much appreciated, but which are given no formal recognition. Artistic women—in marked contrast to gifted men—are given no title nor are they regarded with the awe that indicates general respect. Many of the native love songs which are immensely popular, known over several localities, and passed down for several generations, have been composed by women. Songs are composed quite spontaneously by women while at their work; they are overheard by others who repeat and add to them, and they are gradually added more or less permanently to the cultural stock. Not much less than one hundred years ago, Two Seated Woman composed a song in quite a homely fashion at her work. Her lover had departed for a time, and missing him, she hummed about him:

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Native women were “beasts of burden,” stating instead that women took pride in their ability to harvest foods and process meat, hides, and furs

Is it a communal practice or restricted to specialists? (Ojibwa)

- The creation of the majority of arts in this culture are a communal practice.
 - The practice of passing skills down from generation (parent-to-child) is common.
 - As well as people overhearing a song and adding to it as time goes on.

Summary (Azande)(Zande Beer Dances)

R.T.

- Adults rarely dance, they focus on observing the ceremony.
- Fun and dancing is for the younger group.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (Edward Evan), 1902-1973. The dance

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Paragraph

Subjects (OCM)

- These intimate functions are carried out by the kindred of the dead and by other persons bound to them by close social ties. The relatives do not take part in the festivities. Their activities are quite distinct from those of the friends and neighbours who have come to dance. These latter have come to enjoy themselves. The dance is an important local affair to them and no young person of either sex would care to miss it. They come in holiday mood. But the activities which form part of the intimate ritual of the more boisterous and profane activities of the dance. Even if the emotions of the dead man's relatives and [462] the emotions of the dancers are different, nevertheless, the dance must be regarded as part of the whole ceremonial complex."

Dance (535)

Mourning (765)

How do these societies compare in terms of who creates art? (Azande)

- Song leaders (baiango)(usually only 2 or 3 men) are seen as high figures in the tribe.
- If one wants to become a song leader, he must serve as an apprenticeship to one of the song leaders. This apprentice is known as a suali.
- A Sauli learns and accompanies the song leader in all his songs and performances, so when the song leader is not present the apprentice can take his place.
- There can be multiple Sauli (in that case they have rank)

How do these societies compare in terms of who creates art? (Azande)

R.T.



"The leader's prestige is of course conditioned by his ability in composing and singing songs, but his ability in the eyes of the Azande is due to the possession of the right magic. No man who had not the correct magic could be a good author and singer of songs. In return for small presents, sometimes as much as a spear-head, the [455] song-leader will give magic to his followers. The eating of the magic acts in two ways. Firstly, it gives a man confidence to enable him to compose and to sing his songs and attract suali or followers. Secondly, it gives him a diploma, a right to take the most prominent place in a dance. One man, in my service, used sometimes to have quarrels when we were travelling in a strange district, since he considered himself a good soloist and tried to monopolize this role. People used to ask him from whom he had got his magic and the fact that he was able to tell them that he had it from a famous song-leader to some extent disarmed criticism.

Is it a communal practice or restricted to specialists? (Azande)

R.T.

However, we must not forget that the song is often a weapon of some power. A clever and popular creator of songs is much respected both for his talent and for his ability to lampoon his enemies. It serves also as an organ of law, in the wide sense of the word as a body of binding sanctions, in that it chastises the man who has offended public opinion, praises those who have distinguished themselves and lauds the chiefs.

Music (533)

- The musician can use his words in a way to offend or please the people.
- Musicians can use their music in a sense to gain power or diminish it.
- While there is some sense of leadership and roles in this dancing ritual. It is usually relaxed.
- There may be the occasional quarrels if someone exceeds the cultural norms, but that is not common.
- Chiefs see themselves with high dignity and do not partake in the dance.
- The Chief's son (if present) makes the final decision of all quarrels during the ceremony. (regardless of age).
- Each position is given to the highest specialist present, and taught to a chosen few.

Is it a communal practice or restricted to specialists? (Azande)

R.T.

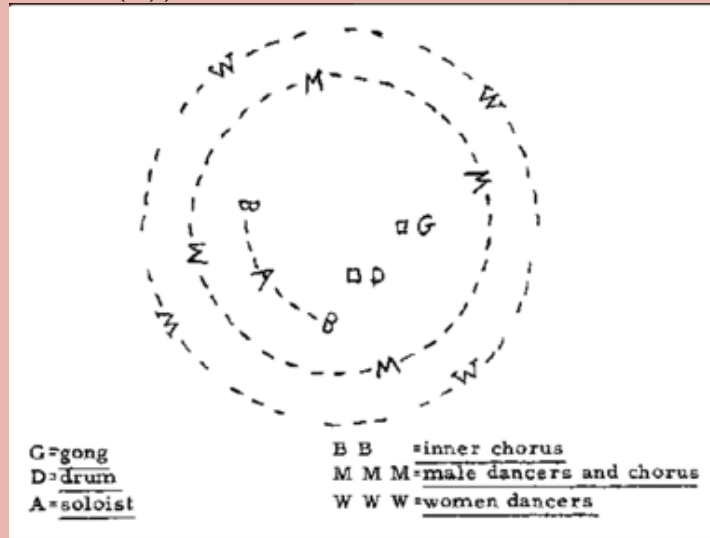
“As children grow up into boys and girls they will never miss a dance. To both sexes it is a means of display which becomes intensified at puberty. The dance is one of those cultural milieux in which sexual display takes place and selection is encouraged. The sexual situations of the dance are not very obvious to the observer. Boys and girls come to the dance to flirt, and flirtation often leads to sexual connexion, but society insists that neither the one nor the other shall be indulged in blatantly. At the same time society permits these sexual incidents so long as they occur with discretion and moderate concealment. A boy who openly approached a girl would be reprimanded and abused, but if he catches her attention whilst she is dancing with her friends, gives her a little nudge perhaps, and when he sees that his advances are reciprocated says mu je gude (come on kid!) no one will interfere. They go quietly into the bush or into a neighbouring hut and have intercourse. It is a different matter with married women. Their husbands are always jealous of [458] them going to dances and generally accompany them. Men are also frightened to flirt with married women since they will have to pay heavy compensation to the husbands and in the past risked the severe punishment of mutilation.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (Edward Evan), 1902-1973. The dance, 457-458(1)

While the specialists perform, the community also have an important role in these ceremonies. The community connects in various ways and in a sense creates a foundation for future socialization.

What distinctions determine who may be an artist? (e.g. gender, training, social status, type of designs) (Azande)

- "There must be one man for the gugu (gong) and one man for the gaza (drum with membrane)." (pg. 447-448(2))



This diagram of the formation of the Azande dance explains that there is a diverse group of people incorporated in the performance.

- The men are positions on the inside, while the woman orbit the outside.
- The culture is passed down to chosen individuals by leaders who are currently in power.

Page Focus

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Region: Africa
Culture: Azande
Field Date: 1926-1927
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Place Coverage: Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Central African Republic
Section Title(s): [Untitled]

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Paragraph Subjects (OCM)

All these songs have meaning but the degree of meaning varies. Their meaning is not doubtful in their context in their creator's mind, for they refer to persons or events known to him. The meaning conveyed to those who sing and hear them depends upon the degree to which they are acquainted with the persons or happenings referred to. I have not found that there was any difficulty in getting the author to give me a clear commentary but I have often found that other people, though they knew and sang the songs, had only a very vague idea as to their meaning. Meaning in both its qualities of sound and sense undergoes many phonetic and grammatical changes. Generally speaking we can say that it is the melody and not the sense which matters, or, as we say in common parlance, it is the tune which matters and not the words." ⁽¹⁾ Music (533)

Although the authors of the songs used in these events had a clear meaning of the song, it was often found that people that sang along usually didn't know the true meanings of the song.

- It is common that the tune mattered more than the actual words/meaning.

Hausa - who creates art?

In the Hausa culture, males more often than not are the creators in the artistic sense. Also Known as *Cult Musicians*

- Sons of musicians begin to learn their place in society from the perspective of their immediate families and the people with whom they live.
- Learning to play a musical instrument is a formal and informal component.



Hausa - communal practice or restricted to specialist?

In the Hausa culture, becoming a cult musician is restricted to specialists and not a communal practice.

- Remembering that 'usefulness' is an important consideration, there are frequent occasions in a possession-trance event when the focus of the performance is on the instrumentalist and not the vocalistPg. 57
 - Vocalist music focus on "call of spirits", informs or entertains the audience.
- A role that the son of past musicians can uphold, to "set the mood" for a possession-trace.
- Anecdotes change from musician to musician but in fact constitute a small part of total song content. The content of the actual call for a spirit's presence which immediately precedes a cult-adept's altered state of consciousness depends heavily on the pace of the induction and the vocalist's style. It is not primarily the linguistic content of the call wherein its effectiveness lies; it is its melodic and rhythmic accompaniment Pg. 58

Hausa - what distinctions determines who may be an artist?

- Musicians and praise-singers are also placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy. All musicians share this low social placement, royal musicians and popular performers included, but bori musicians seem to have an unusually low position and, except for artistic considerations based on creativity and virtuosity, are rarely ranked above any other type of musical group. Pg. 150
- Though women do participate in possession-trance, the cult musician seems to be reserved to men only - especially with vocal and instrumental performances.



Art: Blackfoot vs. Balinese

Similarities:

- Both men & women can practice art, neither having a higher status than the other
- Both use spiritual symbolism in their art
- Both have art intertwined with their lifestyle

Differences:

- Blackfoot paint hides, drums, lodgelinings, robes, and use those for canvas whereas the Balinese use stone and wood for sculptures, monuments, and temples
- Balinese use their art as offerings to the gods

Art: Azande vs. Hausa

Similarities:

- Learning to perform art in both cultures has its formal and informal aspects.
- Becoming a musician is for specialist and not communal in both cultures.
- Both cultures have a spiritual attribute to it.
- Both cultures have a higher importance with the melody and feeling of the song rather than the actual words themselves.
- The singing aspect seems to be more reserved for males over females.

Differences:

- In Azande culture the singer is the focus and in Hausa the instrumentalist can be the focus of art.
- Where Hausa musicians are at a lower level in the social hierarchy, Azande have a high respect and hierarchy placement for their musicians.

Hausa vs. Balinese

Similarities

- ❖ Art is very important and sacred to both cultures.
- ❖ Both aspects of art play a large role in connect the people to spirituality
- ❖ With both styles of visual art is symmetrical
- ❖ The artists are highly praised for the virtuous and creativity

Differences

- ❖ While in balinese culture there is not much of difference in gender roles, only the men contribute to art in the hausa culture.
- ❖ Balinese women play an important role in creating beautiful offering to the gods

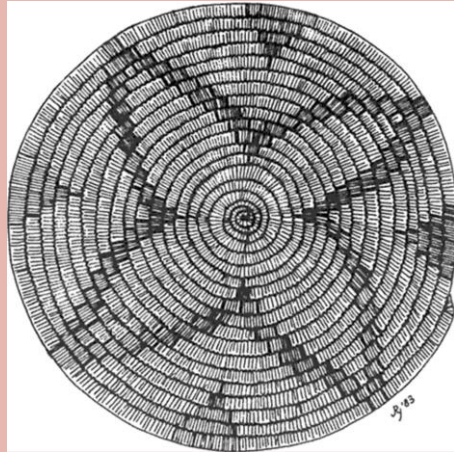
Is asymmetry more frequent among agriculturists than hunter-gatherers?

Mescalero Apache

Image from Living Life's Circle: Mescalero Apache cosmovision by Claire R Farrer Pg. 77.

Hunter-gatherer or Intensive
Agriculturalists?

Symmetrical or Asymmetrical?



Polychrome Guanaco cloaks of Patagonia

R.T.

(Tehuelche)

Image from Lothrop, S. K. (Samuel Kirkland), 1892-1965. Polychrome Guanaco cloaks of Patagonia

Hunter-gatherer or Intensive
Agriculturalists?

Symmetrical or Asymmetrical?



Is asymmetry more frequent among agriculturists than hunter-gatherers?

Hausa



Hunter-gatherer or Intensive Agriculturalists?

Symmetrical or Asymmetrical?

Balinese



Hunter-gatherer or Intensive Agriculturalists?

Symmetrical or Asymmetrical?

Is asymmetry more frequent among agriculturists than hunter-gatherers?

Zuni

Image from Zuni Pottery by Margaret Ann p.136



Hunter -Gather or **intensive agriculturalist?**

Symmetrical or Asymmetrical?

Haitian

Image from The drum and the hoe: life and lore of Haitian People by Harold Courlander p.112



Hunter-Gather or **intensive agriculturalist?**

Symmetrical or **Asymmetrical**

Conclusion

- Our results do not conform to Fischer's proposed relationship between complexity and asymmetry. Fischer's proposed relationship: he argues that egalitarian societies (like hunter-gatherer) will have more symmetry in their work and stratified societies (like intensive agriculturalist) will have more asymmetry in their work
- In our research between each culture we found different types of art. For example the Mescalero Apache symmetrical basket and the Zuni symmetrical pot. This could be a factor in why our research does not line up exactly with Fischer's theory.
- Haitian is the one stratified society that has asymmetry in its art work. This may be because it is a painting opposed to the other works of art.
- One case that was ambiguous or otherwise difficult to code was the Tehuelche' cloaks, while most were symmetrical in shape for the most part, the woven designs were not always symmetrical. This may have been in part due to these pieces of art being hand woven and designed by hand.