

AFRICAN TRIBAL MASKS

presentation :

- This mask is called the "Banda Mask from Africa" from the Baga Tribe. It was made in the 19th century (200 years old). And it is 54" tall (over 4 feet!).
- It was made by a craftsman in the tribe, not as art, but to be used in ceremonies or celebrations such as the birth of a new child, a wedding ceremony, a funeral, at harvest time, to pray for rain, war time...
- This mask was actually worn on top of the head, not over the face, and combined with colorful costumes to create a very grand presence.

artistic elements:

- The African people believed that all living things had a spiritual force, all animals, natural elements, water, wind... And they would call upon these spirits at their ceremonies or celebrations. So they would often combine **animal features** with human features in their masks to call upon those spirits. In the Banda mask we see the horns of an antelope and the teeth of a crocodile.
- The masks were typically made of carved wood with metal or raffia giving them lots of **dimension**.
- **Symmetry** was used to balance the facial features.
- **Geometric shapes** and **patterning** are found throughout the design of the mask. Have the students point out shapes and patterns.

modern day examples: (ask students to think of modern day examples of using masks or dressing up...)

- Halloween, masks, dress up as animals...
- Theatre - human actors take on the roles of animals (I brought in pictures from the 'Lion King')
- Sporting events (I brought in pictures of football fans fully decked out with face paint and costumes...)

project:

- create your own mask incorporating some of the artistic elements discussed above (animal features, symmetry, dimension, geometric shapes, patterning...)
- ask students to think of an animal that best represents them and incorporate an animal feature into their mask (horns, lion's mane, crocodile or shark teeth, bird feathers or wings...)
- I supplied black tag mask, colored paper scrapes, foam geometric shape stickers, feathers...
- I supplied paper head bands to be stapled at the bottom of the mask to wear mask on top of the head (around forehead). The teacher chose not to incorporate the headbands, but rather to hang them on the wall as decor for Halloween!