



Smithsonian

National Museum of African Art

Roslyn Walker Collection

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Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
National Museum of African Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
Title:	Roslyn Walker Photographs
Date:	1990-08
Identifier:	EEPA.2021-004
Creator:	Walker, Roslyn A. (Photographer)
Extent:	14 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35 mm) 11 Photographic prints (Color, duplicates of slides; 4x6 in)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Provenance

Donated by Roslyn Walker, 2021.

Restrictions

Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Conditions Governing Use

Permission to reproduce images from the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives must be obtained in advance. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical / Historical

Roslyn A. Walker is a museum curator and expert on Nigerian art and was the director of the National Museum of African Art from 1997 to 2002. She grew up in Memphis, Tennessee and received her Bachelor's degree from Hampton University in Virginia, and several graduate degrees from Indiana University.

In 2000, under Walker's directorship, the National Museum of African Art launched the exhibition "A Concrete Vision: Oshogbo Art in the 1960s" which centered around four concrete screens by Adebisi Akanji, and other 11 artists from the western Nigerian town of Oshogbo.

Adebisi Akanji was born in Nigeria in the 1930s. He began his career as a bricklayer, a job that taught him to build with fired mud brick, cement block and mud walls coated with cement. His transition from craftsman to artist began with a contest to sculpt cement animals based on the heraldic animals found on the balustrades of Afro-Brazilian style Yoruba houses. This competition led to commissions and the development of his cement screens, which may form a wall or stand free as in a fence.

Although best known as a sculptor, Akanji is an accomplished textile artist also. His textiles show the same interest in curving lines, expressive forms and size to express importance as his screens. Although the individual figures show similarities, the textile figures float, their arrangement liberated from the framework required by the structural needs of reinforcing cement. His subjects often include characters or themes from traditional Yoruba art and oral literature, such as the drummer and the sacrifice. While some works include brilliant jewel tones, most of Akanji's textiles rely on indigo blue-the resist-dyed technique used in traditional

Yoruba adire. Akanji's free-hand figural style, however, is far removed from the repeat geometry or stenciled figures most associated with older adire cloths.

Akanji also collaborated with Susanne Wenger for 10 years on the Oshun shrine, building and sculpting many of the shrine's major elements.

In August 1999, while in Nigeria to conduct a series of workshops, Walker made a special trip to Akanji's hometown. She did not know if he was still living. Inquiries inside the National Museum of Oshogbo led her to Akanji, an elderly man in sunglasses and an embroidered robe. She had not seen him since 1975, before she returned home after a three-year stay in Nigeria. The museum has been in touch with Akanji since that visit in hopes not only of verifying the museum's conclusions about how the screens were made but also of validating his understanding of the deterioration processes, which explain the present condition of the objects.

Biographical / Historical

Jacqueline Trescott (9 May 2002). "African Art Museum Chief Retires; Roslyn Walker Cites Health Concerns". The Washington Post. Archived from the original on 9 April 2016.

"Dr. Roslyn A. Walker Named Director Of National Museum Of African Art At The Smithsonian Institution In Washington D. C." *Jet*: 34. 17 February 1997. ISSN 0021-5996. Retrieved 25 May 2012.

Jacqueline Trescott (16 January 1997). "African Art Curator to Head Museum; Roslyn Walker Pledges To Broaden Scope, Outreach". The Washington Post. Archived from the original on 9 March 2016.

Michael O'Sullivan (28 January 2000). "Oshogbo's Concrete Poetry". The Washington Post. Archived from the original on 9 April 2016.

Janice Kaplan, "African sculptor's concrete vision' results in creation of outdoor screens." Research Reports, National Museum of African Art, 2000.

Content Description

Collection includes (14) 35mm slides and (11) 4 x 6 in prints of slides except for #4 and #10. These materials relate to Roslyn Walker's trip to Oshogbo, Nigeria in August of 1999, to visit Chief Adebisi Akanji where he lived with Susan Wenger (1915-2009). During this trip, Walker asked Akanji about his work. His ongoing project at that time was with the Potters Field inside the Grove.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Sculptures

Names:

Akanji, Adebisi

Places:

Oshogbo (Nigeria)

Container Listing

EEPA 2021-004-0001: Exterior of former Extramural Department, with Adebisi Akanji's screen in foreground, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08

1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)

Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.

Language: English
English

Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Roslyn Walker, 2021.

Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.

Original title reads "#1, The building is the former Extramural Department, University of Ibadan, Nigeria and the residence of Susan Wenger (Austrian, 1915-2009), artist and priestess, founder of The New Sacred Art in Oshogbo. Adebisi Akanji's screen is in the foreground."

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Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi

Topic: Sculptures

Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0002: Closer view of Akanji's screen outside of the former Extramural Department building, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08

1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)

Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.

Language: English
English

Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Roslyn Walker, 2021.

Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.

Original title reads "#2, Closer view of the screen. Adebisi Akanji is to the far left."

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Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi

Topic: Sculptures

Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0003: Closeup of Adebisi Akanji and screen outside of the former Extramural Department building, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08

1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)

Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.

Language: English
English
Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.
Roslyn Walker, 2021.
Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.
Original title reads "#3 Close up of the screen and Adebisi Akanji."
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Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0004: Closeup of Adebisi Akanji and screen outside of the former Extramural Department building, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08

1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)

Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.

Language: English
English

Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Roslyn Walker, 2021.

Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.

Original title reads "#4, Close up of the screen and Adebisi Akanji."

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Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0005: Detail of Adebisi Akanji's screen outside of the former Extramural Department building, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08

1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)

Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.

Language: English
English

Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Roslyn Walker, 2021.

Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.

Original title reads "#5, Detail of Adebisi Akanji's screen."

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Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0006: Detail of the screen with Adebisi Akanji, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08

1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)

Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.

Language: English

English

Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Roslyn Walker, 2021.

Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.

Original title reads "#6, Detail of the screen with Adebisi Akanji."

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Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0007: Rear view of the screen with unidentified gentleman, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08

1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)

Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.

Language: English

English

Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Roslyn Walker, 2021.

Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.

Original title reads "#7, Rear view of the screen with unidentified gentleman."

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Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0008: Mbari Mbayo club/center, view from the side with a cement screen by Adebisi Akanji, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08

1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)

Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.

Language: English
English

Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.
Roslyn Walker, 2021.
Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.
Original title reads "#8, Mbari Mbayo club/center, not far from the Extramural building. View from the side with a cement screen by Adebisi Akanji."
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Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0009: Mbari Mbayo club/center, front view with a cement screen by Adebisi Akanji, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08
1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)
Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.
Language: English
English

Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.
Roslyn Walker, 2021.
Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.
Original title reads "#9, Front view of the Mbari Mbayo building showing the cement screen by Adebisi Akanji."
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Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0010: Mbari Mbayo club/center, front view with a cement screen by Adebisi Akanji, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08
1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)
Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.
Language: English
English

Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.
Roslyn Walker, 2021.
Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.
Original title reads "#10, Similar view." Front view of the Mbari Mbayo building showing the cement screen by Adebisi Akanji.

Permission to reproduce images from the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives must be obtained in advance. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0011: Detail of screen at Mbari Mbayo building, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08

1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)

Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.

Language: English

English

Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Roslyn Walker, 2021.

Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.

Original title reads "#11, Detail of the screen" at Mbari Mbayo building.

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Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0012: Adebisi Akanji and his screen at the Mbari Mbayo building, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08

1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)

Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.

Language: English

English

Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Roslyn Walker, 2021.

Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.

Original title reads "#12, Adebisi Akanji and his screen" at the Mbari Mbayo building.

Permission to reproduce images from the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives must be obtained in advance. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0013: Adebisi Akanji and his screen at the Mbari Mbayo building, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08

1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)
Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.
Language: English
English
Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.
Roslyn Walker, 2021.
Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.
Original title reads "#13, Adebisi Akanji and his screen" at the Mbari Mbayo building.
Permission to reproduce images from the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives must be obtained in advance. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.
Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)

EEPA 2021-004-0014: Adebisi Akanji and his screen at the Mbari Mbayo building, Oshogbo, Nigeria, 1999-08
1 Slides (photographs) (Color; 35mm)
Photographer: Walker, Roslyn A.
Language: English
English
Notes: Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.
Roslyn Walker, 2021.
Images indexed by negative number, with title provided by EEPA staff based on photographer's notes.
Original title reads "#14, Another detail of the screen with Adebisi Akanji" at the Mbari Mbayo building.
Permission to reproduce images from the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives must be obtained in advance. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.
Sculptor: Akanji, Adebisi
Topic: Sculptures
Place: Oshogbo (Nigeria)