

***Export/Import: Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Art,***  
November 11, 2005-January 22, 2006

These artworks tell stories of national identity emerging from trade, tourism, and the exchange of material culture such as food and fashion. They offer clues to the subtle contradictions embedded in any stereotype of national culture, and trace the complex histories underlying simple icons of cultural identity.

One may associate a place on the map with a particular culture and recognize items of everyday life, such as potatoes or tweed trousers, as symbols of that culture and its history. The artists here employ associations of this kind as narrative devices in their work to represent foreign and local perspectives. In some cases they suggest the impossibility of pristine, "authentic" culture, even in something as simple as food or clothing. What is African, for example, about African-inspired fabrics produced in Europe for the African-identified market?

Concepts of "local" and "foreign" may be seen as fluid classifications, dependent on the perspective of the artist and the viewer alike. This exhibition presents works by artists from diverse backgrounds and regions, including Central and South America, Europe, Japan, Africa, and the United States, reflecting the Museum's concerted effort to broaden and deepen its holdings of contemporary art. Collectively, the works here describe a range of cross-cultural interactions, notions of travel, and the international nature of economics and politics.

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Yinka Shonibare, MBE, British, b.1962  
*Un Ballo in Maschera (Courtiers V)*, 2004  
Three mannequins on glass bases, Dutch wax-printed cotton fabric,  
leather shoes  
Richard Brown Baker Fund for Contemporary British Art 2005.52

In *Un Ballo in Maschera (Courtiers V)*, Yinka Shonibare combines elements from both of his home cultures, Britain and Nigeria, to reflect complex historical relationships and his own dual identity. The style of the costumes is 18th-century European, but they are fabricated from cloth associated with African culture, while the cloth itself incorporates contemporary European commercial images. This brightly patterned "Dutch-wax fabric" was originally produced in Holland to imitate Indonesian batik imported from the Dutch colonies. Later manufactured by English textile companies for the West African market, it was adopted as a symbol of authentic African culture and identity both in Africa and for the African diaspora.



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This sculpture is related to a larger project, Shonibare's film *Un Ballo in Maschera*, 2004, in which these and other of his costumes were worn by a group of 30 dancers. The film's title, meaning "A Masked Ball," is borrowed from Giuseppe Verdi's 1859 opera of the same name. Verdi based his opera on the events surrounding the 1792 assassination of King Gustav III of Sweden at a masquerade ball. King Gustav is a controversial figure in the history of arts patronage, giving generously to the arts while his country endured extreme poverty. Shonibare's sumptuous dance film offers a stylized performance of the assassination as a repeating cycle of power, frivolity, and revenge.

Italo Scanga, American, 1932-2001  
*Potatoe Famine #8 (Hill and Castle)*, 1979  
Wood, reed, thorns, potatoes  
Gift of the Italo Scanga Foundation 2004.61



Italo Scanga, American, 1932-2001  
*Elephant with Birds (candelabrum)*, 2001  
Wood, brass, silver  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2003.69



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Miguel Angel Rios, Argentine, b. 1943  
*Cono Sur (Southern Cone)*, 1993  
Cibachrome; oil  
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 2004.23



David Wayne McGee, American  
*Shawn*, 2001  
Oil on wood  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2002.21



Ignacio Lang, American, b. Puerto Rico, b. 1975  
*Antenna, Looking for a Signal (Buscando un señal)*, 1999  
Color photograph  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.15.2



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On Kawara, Japanese, 1933 - 2014  
*"Dimanche" 20 Oct. 1974, "Today" Series, No. 46, 1974*  
Liquitex, newspaper, and cardboard  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2002.75



Steven Campbell, Scottish, 1953 - 2007  
*Men Insulting Nature and the Notion of Travel, 1986*  
Oil on canvas  
Richard Brown Baker Fund for Contemporary British Art 2005.70



Tania Bruguera, Cuban, b. 1968  
*Study for Poetic Justice, 2003*  
Used teabags, deer bone and glue on paper  
Walter H. Kimball Fund 2005.69



# RISD MUSEUM

Ignacio Lang, American, b. Puerto Rico, b. 1975  
*Antenna, Looking for a Signal (Buscando un señal)*, 1999  
photograph; color  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.15.1

