

at the Pitt Rivers Museum

Masks

Did You Know?

What are masks used for?

Masks have many different functions. In Britain masks are often used by people like surgeons or welders for protection. They are also used as a disguise by burglars and actors. In many cultures they are used in dances, religious ceremonies and rituals.



Where are masks worn?

Masks are not only worn on the face, they are also worn on the hip or on the neck. In New Guinea for instance they are worn on top of the head with a costume attached to them; then they can be used in a dance.



Masks and the spirit world

In many traditional West African religions people contact their ancestors in the spirit world by performing plays and wearing masks. The spirits are believed to come back to life and communicate through the person wearing the mask and help to prevent bad luck.

Mask decoration

The style and decoration of a mask depends on which people it comes from. The Ijo people of Nigeria sometimes cut their faces to make scar marks called keloids. These are considered beautiful and are copied on to their masks.



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Students' Info

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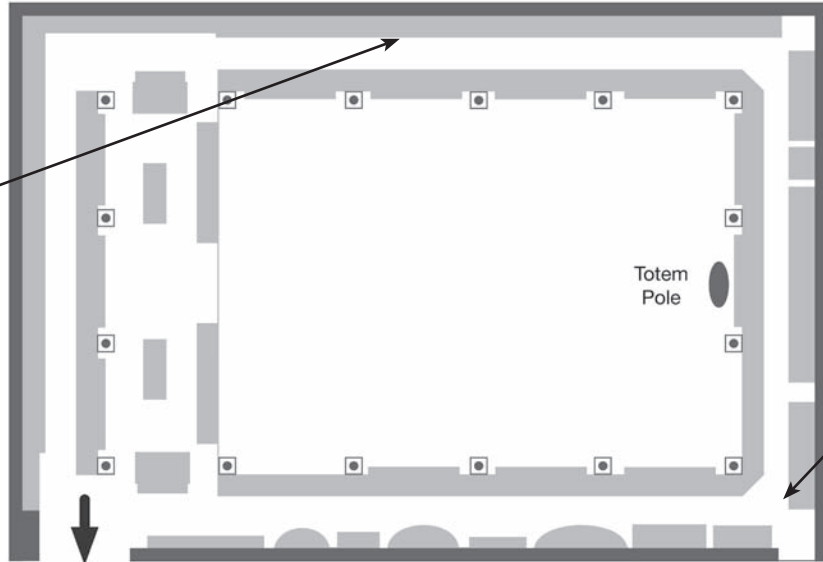
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MASKS

Map of the Pitt Rivers Museum



Body Arts

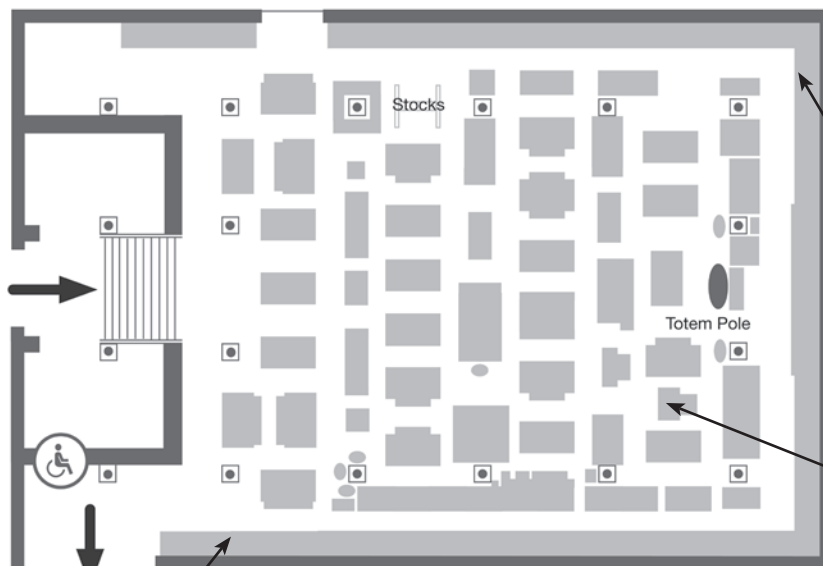


Court Art of Benin



Lower Gallery (first floor)

Where will I find the masks?
Everywhere!



West African Masks



Theatre and Dance



Court (ground floor)



The Mask displays

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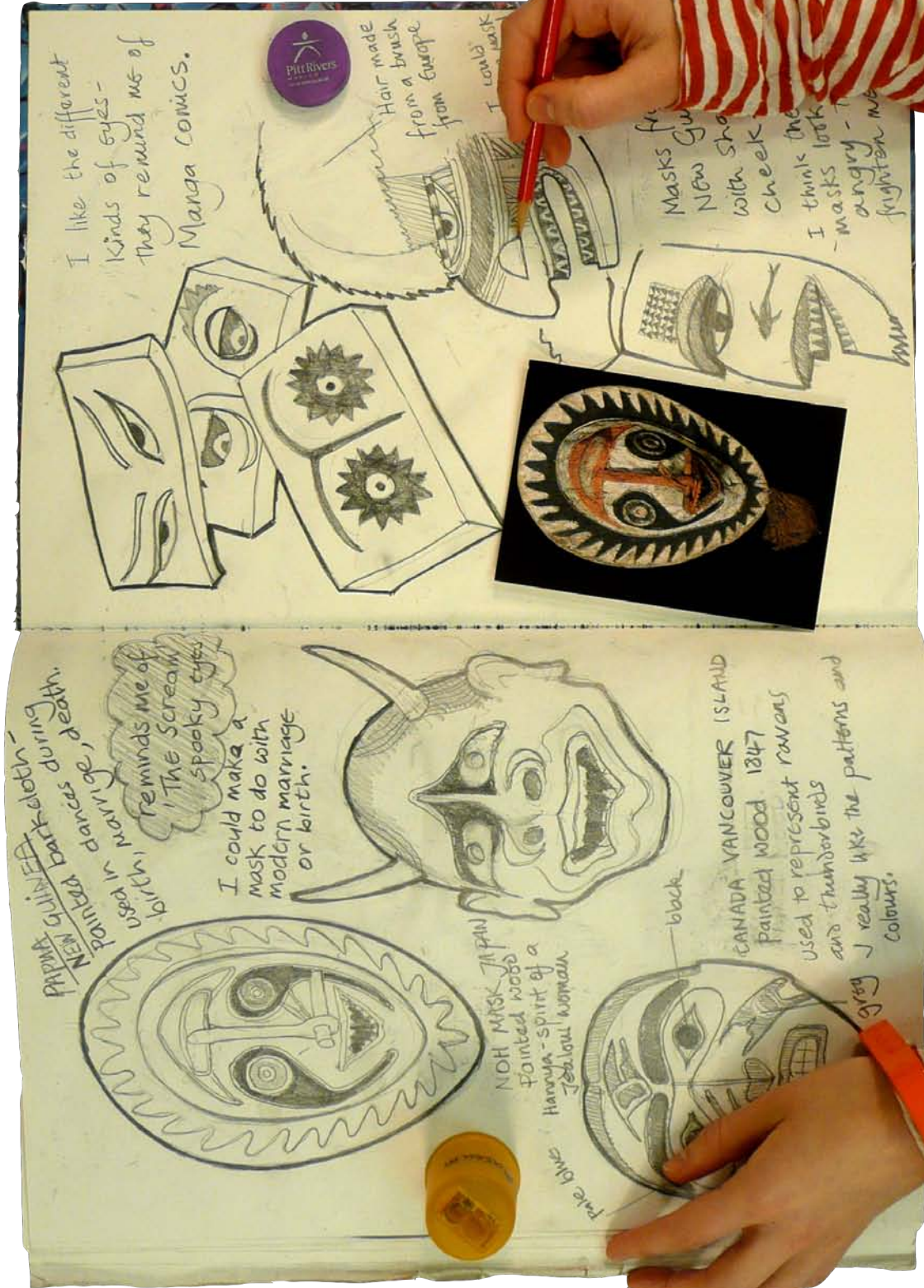
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Example sketchbook



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