

Name:
Hour:

Repousse Mask or Non-Objective Design

Repousse is a French word that means to push down or indent. For this project you will use repousse to create interesting **patterns** and **textures** on a sheet of aluminum. You will have the choice of creating a **mask** or **non-objective (or abstract) design**.

Repousse is a way to create dynamic **low relief sculpture**.

AFRICAN MASKS

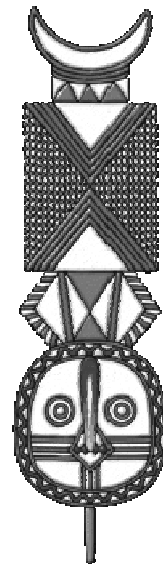


It is easy to enjoy and appreciate the bold designs and powerful visual impact of African masks. Picasso and other **Cubists** were very influenced by the simple, **abstract** features and strong patterns they saw in African masks. In addition to appreciating their artistic value, it is also important to understand the significance of African masks in African culture and customs.

In Africa, masks are **functional** (or useful) **art** that are full of symbolism.

Masks are part of religious, social, and funerary ceremonies, and often represent the spirits of their ancestors. When brought to life through movement and music, dancers are transformed by the power of the spirits held in the masks they wear. The spirit takes over and becomes part of the ritual.

Traditional African masks can be made from a number of materials including bronze, brass, copper, ivory, leather, clay, or textiles. Wood, however, is the most common material chosen for the creation of a mask. One reason for this is that it is believed that trees have a soul, so masks carved from trees will also have a soul.

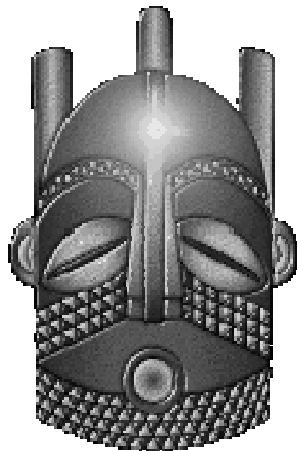


In addition to their significance in Africa, masks have played important roles in other cultures throughout the world. Burial masks were used in China, Rome, Mexico, and Egypt. Theater masks were used in China, India, Japan, Greece, and Rome. And, in various tribes throughout the Americas, ritual masks are used in ceremonies for fertility, planting, harvesting, curing illness, and combating witchcraft.

Mask DESIGN

There are a few important things to know about the design of African masks. The **shape**, **features**, and **patterns** of a mask all help depict its spirit or **personality**.

African craftspeople employ a variety of design tactics when creating a mask. A good place to start is with the overall shape. The **shape** of a mask can be oval, heart shaped, animal, human, circular, rectangular, or any combination of these. African masks almost always exhibit **symmetrical balance**.



Features of African masks are very simple and **stylized**. Features help describe the spirit of the mask by showing the audience if the mask represents courage, beauty, humor, mischief, honesty, etc. **Emphasizing** features through exaggeration will also help you portray the spirit of your mask. Think about enlarging the lips, eyes, or nose for added effect. (When you decide on the personality your mask will have, look at examples of African masks to find features that will illustrate your idea. Again, the features of African masks are **symmetrical**.)

Non-Objective DESIGN

If you choose to create a **non-objective** (or abstract) design, you will probably decide to use informal balance, or **asymmetry**.

Think about how you will break up the space. How will you use **shape** or **line** to divide the aluminum into different sections? Think about how the shapes you use will create balance.

The last things you need to consider when designing your mask or non-objective artwork are the **patterns** you will add to create visual impact. When using **repousse** to add the patterns to the metal, you will also create **texture**. (There will be templates available that you can use to create uniform patterns. It would be a good idea to look at these ahead of time to decide which will work best to emphasize your design.)

Use these boxes to create 4 thumbnail sketches of your ideas. After you've had your design checked by Ms. W-M, you will enlarge it and transfer it to the aluminum.

* Please include a minimum of 4 detailed **patterns** in your design!

When your design has been transferred to the metal, you will practice creating texture with the Repousse tools. Our final step will be to attach your mask or non-objective design to cardboard and add embellishments.

Repousse Vocabulary

- **TOOLING:** Creating a 3-Dimensional art form out of a flat sheet of metal.
- **STYLUS:** A tool used to “draw” designs and patterns on metal. The stylus allows you to emboss, or indent, the metal.
- **REPOUSSAGE:** A French word that refers to the craft of embossing metal from the back to create a **low relief**, 3-d sculpture.
- **COUNTER REPOUSSE:** After first using repousse to indent and emboss a metal surface, counter repousse is the technique of flipping the metal over and working on defining the texture further.
- **SYMMETRY:** A design that is the same on both sides (mirror image)
- **ASYMMETRY:** Informal balance/without symmetry. Details and weight of objects in composition are evenly distributed.
- **PATTERN:** A repeated shape or design.
- **TEXTURE:** How something feels.