

**The Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth,
Presents *Homecoming: Domesticity and Kinship in Global African Art*
From July 22, 2023, through May 25, 2024.**



May 15, 2023—Hanover, N.H.—The Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, presents *Homecoming: Domesticity and Kinship in Global African Art* from July 22, 2023, to May 25, 2024, featuring over 75 works drawn from the museum’s collection of African and African diaspora art. Emphasizing the role of women artists and feminine aesthetics in crafting African and African diaspora art histories, this exhibition surveys themes of home, kinship, motherhood, femininity, and intimacy in both historic and contemporary works.

“I began imagining plans for *Homecoming: Domesticity and Kinship in Global African Art* in early 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic,

a period that coincided with an uptick in conditions of and activist responses to anti-Black racism and xenophobia,” explains Alexandra Thomas, curatorial research associate at the Hood Museum of Art and curator of this exhibition. “I hope the exhibition encourages everyone to discuss the kindred themes of domesticity and kinship in their everyday lives. Who performs the labor that builds and sustains our communities and how is that reflected in the visual and material culture of the world around us?”

Artists have creatively engaged with the domestic sphere and related themes for centuries. For example, a 19th-century grass broom made by an unidentified Zulu artist is associated with the labor of the Black South African women who craft and use them for domestic work while also evoking the pan-African religious practice of spiritual cleansing. *Homecoming* affirms craftmaking as artmaking and domestic and spiritual work as creative work—undoing patriarchal definitions that seek to separate and hierarchize these categories. The exhibition will include women’s cloth garments, sculptures symbolizing motherhood and fertility, intimate representations of figures within domestic interiors, dolls and dollhouses, household tools, and more.

In many ways, *Homecoming* speaks to our current historical moment. We have mourned and survived through the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and begun to understand its lasting impact on our lives. Remote work and its gendered division of labor, the loss of certain forms of physical togetherness to social distancing necessities, and, of course, the premature loss of loved ones, are all part of a moment in which domesticity, kinship, and intimacy are widespread in the public discourse.

Examples of works in the exhibition:



Abebe, by Nigerian photographer **J. D. 'Okhai Ojeikere**, celebrates the beauty and pride of Black women's hairstyles that are widely popular in Africa and throughout the diaspora. Ojeikere has documented hundreds of these highly stylized coiffures to serve as portraits of Black women's beauty culture. Practitioners of this art form are subjected to meticulous evaluation based on the length, style, and shape of their braids, and it requires years of practice to perfect one's technique.

Mother and Son, by Haitian artist **Roland Dorcély**, depicts a mother and her child, dressed in stark white clothing, who are washing their feet in an image perhaps evocative of Haitian Vodou. In Haiti, Vodou practitioners often wear white, symbolizing purity, at ceremonies. Haitian Vodou is a blend of West African Vodun spirituality and Roman Catholicism, and the act of cleansing one's feet in a basin might allude to the Christian ritual of feet washing.



Untitled (Adire Quilt) by Nigerian artist **Nike Davies-Okundaye** is one of the many indigo textiles on display. Its geometric designs and varied shades of blue are characteristic of the West African art form. In southwestern Nigeria, Yoruba women have long created *adire*—indigo-dyed fabrics that are known to the world for their dazzling colors and intricate patterns. Historically, the dye used for these garments was sourced from local plants, but industrialized forms of the dye are now readily available, too. Generations of Yoruba women maintain the tradition of designing and wearing these indigo textiles.

The *Baby Doll* series of photographs by South African artist **Senzeni Marasela** reveals how artmaking can be entangled with the emotional processing of traumatic histories. A Black baby doll, shown against bright green grass, is captured as it unravels—or, perhaps, as it is sewn together. It is ambiguous, powerfully so, as the artist uses the image to gesture toward the uncertainty and violence of being a Black child growing up under South African apartheid. This photograph is from a series of twelve, each of which pictures the doll at a point of destruction or construction.



Masks from the African continent offer a strong political and aesthetic component to the themes of domesticity and kinship. One example in *Homecoming* is a *Gelede* mask representing Osanyin, the *orisha* (deity) of herbal medicines, surrounded by four disciples, which was made by an unidentified Yoruba artist. At *Gelede* festivals, Yoruba men perform a masquerade in honor of the significant roles women play in the community as mothers, traders, elders, and

ancestors. Blue pigment, either natural indigo or an industrialized dye called washing blue, is applied to many Yoruba sculptures, like those on this mask. The blue expresses coolness, purity, discretion, and composure. It is often associated with water deities, such as Yemoja, who is the goddess of rivers and is known as a patron deity of pregnant women.

Works in *Homecoming* will rotate throughout the year it is on view to meet the conservation needs of the various textiles, paintings, and works on paper.

Homecoming: Domesticity and Kinship in Global African Art is organized by the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, and generously supported by the William B. Jaffe and Evelyn A. Hall Fund.

RELATED PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHT

23 August, Wednesday, 12:30–1:30 pm

Exhibition Tour

Join exhibition curator Alexandra M. Thomas, curatorial research associate in African art, for a tour of *Homecoming: Domesticity and Kinship in Global African Art*.

About the Hood Museum of Art

The Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, centers art and people in teaching and learning through inclusive and robust academic, cultural, and civic engagements with art and its histories. It seeks to advance learning, care, and connections through the reach and relevance of visual art and material culture as a nexus for the exchange of ideas. With its renewed focus on serving Dartmouth's faculty and academic mission, the recently expanded facility broadens the museum's reach to students, faculty, and departments across campus, while deepening its engagement with its longtime stakeholders. It also makes a bolder statement about the significance of the arts within the life of Dartmouth and provides the arts district with an arresting front door to the Green.

About Dartmouth College

Dartmouth College educates the most promising students and prepares them for a lifetime of learning and of responsible leadership, through a faculty dedicated to teaching and the creation of knowledge. The Dartmouth model is unique in higher education: the fusion of a renowned liberal arts college and robust research university where students and faculty partner to take on the world's great challenges. Since its founding in 1769, Dartmouth has provided an intimate and inspirational setting where talented faculty, students, and staff—diverse in background but united in purpose—contribute to the strength of an exciting academic community that cuts easily across disciplines.

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Social Media:

Connect with the Hood Museum of Art on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) @HoodMuseum and using the hashtags #HomecomingExhibition and #HoodMuseum

Image Captions:

Bhasha Chakrabarti, *It's a Blue World*, 2021, used jeans, indigo-dyed handloom fabric, and thread. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth: Purchased through the William S. Rubin Fund and the Stephen and Constance Spahn '63 Acquisition Fund; 2022.61. © Bhasha Chakrabarti. Photo by Sara Jamback.

J. D. `Okhai Ojeikere, *Abebe*, 1975, gelatin silver print. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth: Gift of Robert J. Grey; 2017.55.

Roland Dorcély, *Mother and Son*, before 1957, tempera on composition board. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth: Gift of Diana J. and Professor Emeritus H. Wentworth Eldredge, Class of 1931; P.984.39.3.

Unidentified Yoruba artist, *Gelede* mask representing Osanyin, the orisha of herbal medicines, surrounded by four disciplines, early 20th century, wood, cotton, and paint. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth: Museum purchase; 167.6.24038.

Nike Davies-Okundaye, *Untitled (Adire Quilt)*, 2002, indigo dyed cotton and thread. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth: Purchased through the William B. Jaffe and Evelyn A. Jaffe Hall Fund, and through gifts from the Dickey Fund and the Leslie Humanities Center; T.2003.6. © Nike Davies-Okundaye

Senzeni Marasela, *Baby Doll*, series number 9 (from a series of 12), 2006, digital print on matte archival paper. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth: Purchased through the Charles F. Vernick 1936 Fund; 2008.8.4. © Senzeni Marasela