

# Press Release



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**For immediate release, please use any time until November 30, 2019**

High resolution images available upon request!

## **Stauth Museum opens *Wandering Spirit: African Wax Prints***

Montezuma, KS --This exhibition is a tribute to the century-old handmade designs and patterns on textiles that originated in Indonesia and were copied and industrialized by Europeans and exported to Africa. **Wandering Spirit: African Wax Prints** traces the developmental pathway of the African wax print and tells how these fabrics reflect the stories, dreams, and personalities of the people who wear them. The exhibition opens **October 22, 2019** at the Stauth Memorial Museum and will be on display until **November 30, 2019**.

The process for handmade batiks was invented in eighth-century China, then expanded to India on the coast of Coromandel. The technique was then imported to Java by traders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Batik is a Javanese word that refers to a traditional technique of wax-resist dyeing, in which a pattern is made on both sides of cotton fabric with warm liquid wax applied by a *tjanting*, a small brass cup with a spout. After the wax cools and solidifies, the cloth is dyed with a primary color and the wax is then removed, revealing the pattern where the wax had once been.

J.B.T. Préville, a Dutch cotton printing mill owner, was instrumental in developing a machine that could print imitation batiks industrially. In 1854, he unveiled "La Javanaise," a converted French printing machine that could print an imitation of the Javanese batik using resin instead of wax. Despite the technological advance, "La Javanaise" produced imperfections in the print that did not appeal to the Javanese buying public, so the European printers found themselves looking for new markets around the world. After many years of transcontinental exploratory travels and investigations, they identified Africa as the new potential market for their wax prints.

The success of the wax prints on the African scene is driven by many factors, such as the culture, taste, and desires of the African consumers. Clothing in Africa serves an important means of communication, sending secret messages and retelling local proverbs. Clothing also depicts a person's social status and position, political convictions, ambition, marital status, ethnicity, age, sex, and group affiliations. The names and stories associated with the fabrics differ from country to country and region to region. One fabric may have different names in different countries, depending on the symbolism that the consumer can read in the fabric.

The history of the African wax print is a history paved along colonial trade routes and globalization in the post-colonial era. Though not originally African, these textiles have become ingrained in African culture and society, and loved and identified as their own.

The exhibition **Wandering Spirit: African Wax Prints** is curated by Dr. Gifty Benson and organized by ExhibitsUSA/Mid-America Arts Alliance, Kansas City, MO.

The Stauth Museum will enhance this traveling exhibit by displaying **quilts** and **textiles** created by western Kansas men and women. There are so many wonderful and talented quilt and textile makers in western Kansas and this is a unique exhibit to showcase their amazing works. Traditional and nontraditional quilts as well as all types of textiles will be displayed such as: needlepoint, embroidery, tatting, knit, crochet, sewing, weaving, latch-hooking, textile art, batik, wall hangings and any other

kind of textiles. Since this is an exhibit about the art of batiks, all quilts or textiles that are created with or include batik in them will be highlighted in the exhibit.

**Wandering Spirit: African Wax Prints** is partially funded at the Stauth Memorial Museum by a grant from The Arthur and Cornelia Scroggins Foundation Fund at the Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas.

We are expecting many groups for this exhibit, so please call in advance to schedule groups of 5 or more. For more information or schedule a tour call 620.846.2527. Business hours for the Stauth Memorial Museum, 111 N Aztec, Montezuma, KS are: Tue - Sat 9-12, 1-4:30. Closed Sundays, Mondays & all major holidays. Admission is free, but donations are greatly appreciated to help with the costs to host this amazing exhibition. Check out our WEBSITE for information about this and other exciting events at the Stauth Memorial Museum at [www.stauthmemorialmuseum.org](http://www.stauthmemorialmuseum.org).

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**Exhibitsusa**



### About ExhibitsUSA

This exhibition is toured by ExhibitsUSA, a national program of Mid-America Arts Alliance. ExhibitsUSA sends more than 25 exhibitions on tour to over 100 small- and mid-sized communities every year. These exhibitions create access to an array of arts and humanities experiences, nurture the understanding of diverse cultures and art forms, and encourage the expanding depth and breadth of cultural life in local communities. For more about ExhibitsUSA, email [MoreArt@maa.org](mailto:MoreArt@maa.org) or visit [www.eusa.org](http://www.eusa.org).

### About Mid-America Arts Alliance

Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA) strengthens and supports artists, cultural organizations, and communities throughout our region and beyond. We achieve this primarily through our national traveling exhibition programs, innovative leadership development, and strategic grant making. We are especially committed to enriching the cultural life of historically underserved communities by providing high quality, meaningful, and accessible arts and culture programs and services. Each year M-AAA's programs reach one million people. We believe in more art for more people. Additional information about M-AAA is available at [www.maaa.org](http://www.maaa.org).

**Exhibition: Wandering Spirit: African Wax Prints**

**Host Organization:** Stauth Memorial Museum

**Runs:** 10/22/19-11/30/19 (5 weeks)

**Gallery Hours:** Tue - Sat 9-12, 1-4:30. Closed Sundays, Mondays & all major holidays **Location:** 111 N Aztec Street, PO Box 396, Montezuma KS 67867

**Admission:** Admission is free, donations greatly appreciated.

**Contact:** (620)846-2527 [www.stauthmemorialmuseum.org](http://www.stauthmemorialmuseum.org)