

**Art Vids for Kids**  
**April 2021**

**learning library**  
**ONLINE!**



## BEGIN TRANSCRIPT

Hi, and welcome to “Art Vids for Kids”! My name is Janet, a Museum Guide at the Dayton Art Institute. In this video, we are going to talk about an artwork made in Africa.

Let’s look closely at this artwork. How do you think it was made? You can probably tell it was carved from wood. In fact, you can see it’s still round just like a tree. What sort of tools might the carver have used?

Africa, as you may know, is a huge continent made up of 54 different countries with more than a billion people that speak more than 100 different languages. Since the continent of Africa is so big, it has almost everything: deserts, rivers and lakes, mountains, grassy plains, forests, and jungles.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the name of the country in Africa where this artwork was made. It is a diverse nation of open land, small towns and villages, and highly populated modern cities. But there are also large areas of tropical rainforest where animals like gorillas, elephants, and water buffalo roam freely. The Congo River area is home to many cultures and peoples, including the Lobala people who created this artwork.

Many artworks from Africa were made for their most important leaders or for special occasions or purposes. This piece was most likely created for the high Chieftain of a village and it would have been used at special ceremonies.

Let’s take another look. Does it remind you of something? I think it resembles an animal. This artwork is called *Slit Drum in the Form of a Buffalo*. See its curved horns? If you were standing next to this piece, you would see it is very large. From the tip of its nose to the end of its tail, it measures over 8 feet. That’s longer than most peoples’ beds! And it stands about 2 feet high. How tall are you?

The water buffalo is one of the largest and fiercest animals in the Congo River basin. You may notice that our carved buffalo is quite smooth, so it looks different from an actual buffalo. The artist may have made many creative choices when designing and making this. Do you see the decorative zigzag carved around the edges of it? Why might the artist have added this?

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Do you also notice how the long neck and stiff tail follow a very straight line? Keep looking at its back. There's something special there. Can you spot the long narrow opening that's been carved out of its top center? What might be the purpose of that?

Maybe you noticed from the title that this isn't only a sculpture of a water buffalo. It's a drum! Some call it a "talking drum," because of the special way the wood beneath that slit is carved, thicker on one side and thinner on the other, it can make many different sounds when properly struck with a mallet. It can even make sounds which resemble words in the Lobala language. And because this drum is so large, we know it could be heard from many miles away! Drumming could send news of celebrations or even warnings. How do you and your family communicate nowadays?

If you would like to explore this impressive artwork in-person, you can find it in the Bonbright Gallery of African art, Gallery 101 at the Dayton Art Institute. Thanks for watching and be sure to check back for more "Art Vids for Kids"!

## END TRANSCRIPT

Click [here](#) for full multimedia presentation.

## ARTWORKS FEATURED IN VIDEO\*

*Orthographic map of Africa with colonial borders, except Somalia.* Martin23230, [www.commons.wikimedia.org](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org)

*Mandie Anderson*, [www.mandieanderson.com](http://www.mandieanderson.com)

*Major Climate Regions of Africa*, © Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)

*Libya Tadrart Acacus*, Luca Galuzzi, [www.commons.wikimedia.org](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org)

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*Mount Kilimanjaro*, Muhammad Mahdi Karim, [www.commons.wikimedia.org](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org)

*Serengeti Landscape*, Bjørn Christian Tørrissen, [www.commons.wikimedia.org](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org)

*Newlands Forest, Cape Town*, Abu Shawka, [www.commons.wikimedia.org](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org)

*African Rainforests Store More Carbon than those in the Amazon*, Shutterstock, [www.theconversation.com](http://www.theconversation.com)

*Virunga National Park*, UNESCO, [www.commons.wikimedia.org](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org)

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*Kinshasa by Night, RD Congo*, MONUSCO Photos, [www.commons.wikimedia.org](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org)

*Rainforest*, [www.medium.com](http://www.medium.com)

*Gorilla*, [www.kesitoandfro.com](http://www.kesitoandfro.com)

*Elephant*, [www.line.17qq.com](http://www.line.17qq.com)

*Cape Buffalo*, [www.nickelodeon-movies.fandom.com](http://www.nickelodeon-movies.fandom.com)

*Domestic Asian Water Buffalo*, [www.a-z-animals.com](http://www.a-z-animals.com)

*Papua New Guinea: Slit Drum Performance*, [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

***\*Images used for educational purposes only***

## QUESTIONS?

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