

## Africa Map

These photographs were taken by Galembo on extended trips to Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Benin. She worked with translators and negotiators who introduced her to village elders and helped her get permission to photograph. She uses three different cameras when photographing her subjects. She shoots color film with a Hasselblad that is developed later in the darkroom on Ilfachrome paper, also known as Cibachrome. She also uses a 35 mm digital camera for test shows, and a Polaroid to make gifts for her subjects, including village children who show up in improvised costumes.

Most of the masquerades represented in this exhibition are religious in nature and almost always performed by men. When costumed, masqueraders take on the spirit of their characters and deities and can access traditional knowledge to impart important lessons to their community. Of those pictured, the ages range from adults to teenagers, but Galembo never knows the identity behind the masks.



## Outside Walls

*Ekpenyong Edet Dance Group, Nigeria*  
2005  
Ilfochrome

This Ekpe dance group appears around the time of the Western Christmas holidays. The ensemble can also be commissioned to appear at parties or special events. They are often associated with the Ekpo, who identify with the lion and are confrontational. Both use sticks for crowd control and to conduct the music during the performance.



*Agot Dance Group*, Etikpe Village, Cross River, Nigeria  
2004  
Ilfochrome

This dance group can appear at any time of the year. Its masquerades are often acrobatic and include performers of all ages. The elaborate crochet work is done with whatever is at hand, such as bicycle spokes or fishing hooks.



## Clockwise from the Gallery Entrance

*Akata Dance Masqueraders*, Ogoja, Nigeria  
2004  
Ilfochrome

This ritual masquerade involves a pair of performers that represent opposites. In this case, blue represents men and war, while pink symbolizes peace and the feminine.



*Jaguar style or Ekong-Itaghafon*, Calabar, Nigeria  
2005  
Ilfochrome

The men of the Calabar area, one of the most notorious slaving ports, identify especially with the fierce jaguar or leopard, as can be seen in the feline headdress in this photograph.



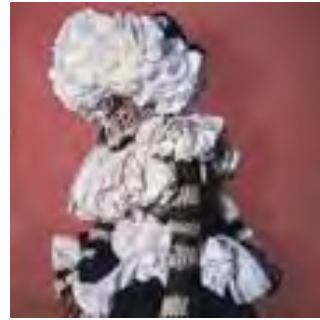
*Akata Dance Masquerade*, Cross River, Nigeria  
2004  
Ilfochrome

This masquerade is executed with pairs of performers during the harvest and funerals. The black and white furs are from animals ritually sacrificed in preparation for the event. Their outfits are sacred and not to be donned by anyone but the performers.



*Affianwan*, Calibar South, Nigeria  
2005  
Ilfochrome

Affianwan, translated as “white cat woman,” represents the goddess of beauty who speaks her own language. Like most masquerades, it is performed by men despite its feminine theme. Each section of the costume is made by folding one long piece of fabric while the crochet work is added later.



*Ringo (Big Deer) Masquerade*, Kroo Bay, Sierra Leone  
2008  
Ilfochrome

This deer-like masked character is a night spirit and associated with secret hunting societies. The appendages on his antlers and cut-outs on his costume are made of gourds.



*Awo-O-Dudu (A Spirit They Saw)*, Freetown, Sierra Leone  
2008  
Ilfochrome

This ghost-shaped draped figure often appears by surprise and summons ancestral spirits during the dry months or times of crisis to bless the village and its deceased.



*Two in a Fancy Dress*, Red Cross Masquerade Group  
Winneba, Ghana  
2010  
Ilfochrome

Unlike most of the masquerades in this exhibition, this one is secular. Fancy dress competitions are held in Ghana annually around New Year's. Each year has a theme specific to time and place. Local tailors and performers collaborate to create elaborate costumes, sometimes with European themes, as can be seen here.



*Egungun*, Adandokpodji Village, Benin  
2006  
Ilfochrome

Egun are the spirits of revered deceased kings or patriarchs. Egungun are their children who belong to both the world of the living and the world of the dead. During the masquerade, they speak but are untouchable. They exhort the audience to uphold the moral standards of the community, give warnings, relay messages, convey blessings, and cleanse the community. They have guardians who carry rods to strike anyone who tries to approach. The cloth strips seem to come to life when the Egungun whirls around to create a beneficial wind.



*You Can't Buy Wisdom at the Market*, Benin  
2006  
Ilfochrome



*Aye Loja (The World is a Market Place that we Visit)*  
*Gelede Masquerade*, Agonli Village, Benin  
2006  
Ilfochrome

These two photographs are examples of the Gelede masquerade, which is a tribute to mothers, goddesses, and female ancestors despite being performed by men. The wooden headpiece represents an animal and a human. During the ritual, each head sings in a unique voice and tells fantastic stories in an individual voice. The Gelede's purpose is to channel female power into a direction conducive to the welfare of the community.



*Ekpo*, Calabar, Nigeria  
2005  
Ilfochrome

The Ekpo, translated as “ghosts” or “ancestors,” appears around Christmas, or during times of crisis. They are meant to be frightening, and their purpose is to guide and discipline their descendants. The use of materials such as moss, sticks, and leaves associated with the earth is typically used. The most terrifying Ekpo are the lion personae who, before the imposition of a Western-style legal system, functioned as executioners.



*Banana Leaf Masquerade*, Ekong Ikon Ukom, Calabar, Nigeria  
2005  
Ilfochrome

The performers of this annual masquerade travel in groups. Banana leaves represent the spirits of the forest and are an example of the creative use of local materials.



## In African and Pre-Columbian Galleries

*Otoghe-Toghe*, Aromgba Village, Nigeria  
2005  
Ilfochrome

Animal effigies such as this fierce bull-like mask represent powerful spirits that need to be appeased. Carved wooden masks, except for those made for the tourist trade, are not as prevalent in today's masquerades as they once were. The lack of wooden mask carving can be attributed to the variety of materials available today. Wooden masks, such as the one here, are often handed down and refurbished for other masquerades.

