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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SHELDON FEATURES COLLECTION OF AFRICAN INSTRUMENTS IN GALLERY OF MUSIC

ST. LOUIS, MO –The Sheldon Art Galleries presents *St. Louis, A Musical Gateway: Africa*, October 4, 2019 – April 11, 2020 in the Gallery of Music. **An opening reception is scheduled for Friday, October 4 from 5 – 7 p.m.** Galleries are open until 9 p.m. for First Fridays in Grand Center. The Sheldon Art Galleries are open Tuesdays, Noon – 8 p.m.; Wednesdays - Fridays, Noon – 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and one hour prior to Sheldon performances and during intermission. Admission is free. For more information on exhibitions, visit the galleries' website at TheSheldon.org.



Exhibit curator Dr. Aurelia Hartenberger will present a gallery talk on Tuesday, November 12 at 6 p.m. Admission is free, reservations suggested but not required. Contact Paula Lincoln at plincoln@thesheldon.org or 314-533-9900 x37.

The second in a series that celebrates St. Louis' multicultural communities, *St. Louis, A Musical Gateway: Africa* features rare and beautiful African instruments drawn from The Sheldon's Hartenberger World Music Collection. The exhibition will feature instruments from West Africa and Central, South and Southeast Africa, and beginning in January, instruments from North Africa will be added, along with an interactive exhibit.

Africa is the world's second largest continent, containing 54 countries.

Linguists have identified at least 840 ethno-linguistic groups with more than 1,500 languages spoken. In the country of Nigeria alone, 386 different languages have been identified. The African continent is surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the south and west and the Indian Ocean to the east. The Sahara Desert dominates the upper portion of the continent. This geographic and cultural diversity extends to the music of Africa, creating a rich tapestry of sounds and instruments, many of which are explored in this exhibition.

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The music of Africa is sophisticated, ingenious and highly refined. It is the product of a long aesthetic evolution, which is grounded in the function of preserving and teaching rich histories that are passed on aurally, visually and through written texts. Music is woven into the very fabric of Africans' everyday lives through kinship, religion, economics and politics. It is a "work in progress," affected by the various dynamic cultural and political changes throughout time, but also through the originality and inventiveness of the artist.

The exhibition is curated by Dr. Aurelia Hartenberger, with the support of research consultant Dr. Jacquelyn Lewis-Harris and collections assistant Dana Lewis.

The not-for-profit Sheldon Art Galleries exhibits works by local, national and international artists in all media. Over 6,000 square feet of the galleries' spaces on the 2nd floor are permanently devoted to rotating exhibits of photography, architecture, music art and history and children's art. A sculpture garden, seen from both the atrium lobby and the connecting glass bridge, features periodic rotations and installations, and the Nancy Spirtas Kranzberg Gallery on the lower level features art of all media. The Sheldon actively supports the work of St. Louis artists in all mediums and features a dedicated gallery with museum-quality exhibits by St. Louis artists, past and present.

Image: Ngongo "Mukyeem" (Elephant) Mask, 1900s, Unknown Artist, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Wood, raffia, cowrie shells, fabric. The Sheldon Art Galleries, Hartenberger World Music Collection of Historical Instruments. Gift of Dr. Aurelia & Jeffrey Hartenberger, Karrie Bopp, Jaclyn Hartenberger and Kevin Hartenberger.

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The exhibition is made possible in part by Dr. Aurelia and Jeffrey Hartenberger.