



**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Experience*



Hamilton Collection | Baule Tribe



**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
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## DENVER AFRICAN ARTS *History*

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In mid-2021 it came to the attention of Dana Crawford that two privately owned African Art collections in the Denver area came on the market. Renowned nationwide for her historic preservation and revitalization efforts throughout Colorado, Dana at once saw the importance of keeping the collections intact in Colorado, for the benefit of the public, as an experiential learning center celebrating the influence and value of African art . Few such facilities exist in the Rocky Mountain/Midwest regions . She spearheaded a volunteer organizing team of community members to help realize the vision of such an African Arts center. By the end of 2021, they had created the Denver African Arts Center (DAAC), a 501(c) 3 organization.

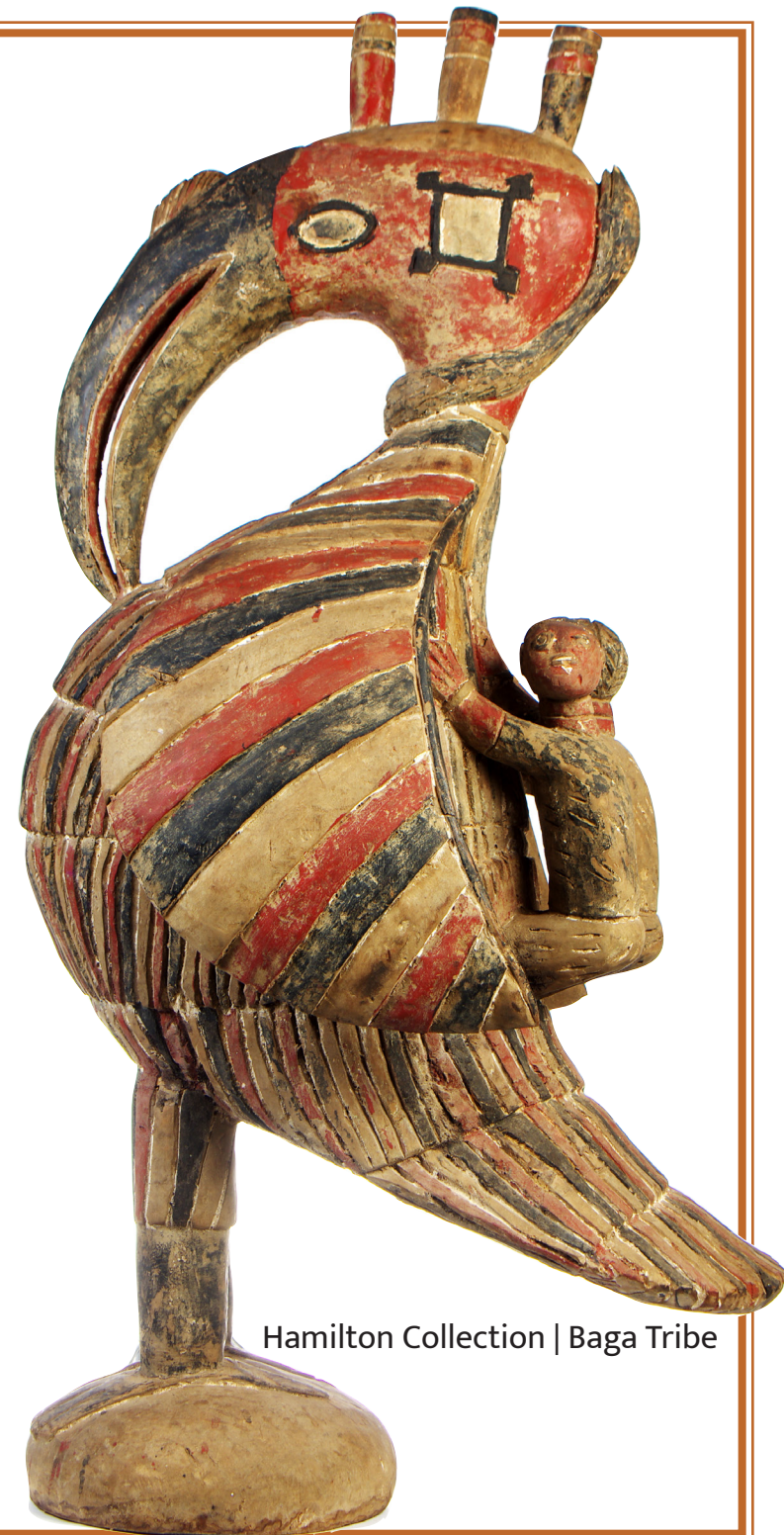
As of early 2022, DAAC's focus is raising funds to purchase, house and display the more than 900 piece foundational collection for the Center, and to develop related educational programming with partner organizations.



**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Mission*

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The Denver African Arts Collections (DAAC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to inspire and educate citizens and students of all ages in Denver, the state of Colorado and the nation by providing an opportunity to experience the beauty, power and diversity of African arts and cultures and to initiate conversations to expand the way we see ourselves, others and the possibilities for a more connected and empathic world.



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**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Vision*

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DAAC is creating a community center to exhibit African art from local collectors, and to host programs, activities and events sparked by experience of the displays. The center is intended to be a resource that will help all visitors better understand the connections of African culture and the greater African diaspora to the history and challenges of the black community in America today. It will be a vehicle for Black Americans to link with their African roots, and for all to learn about and celebrate African and African American art, history and culture.



**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Active Collection*

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The organization is pursuing options for a permanent home that will rotate displays of its own, ever evolving collection(s), as well as visiting collections. It will also have traveling exhibits, e.g., for displays at partner organizations such as educational institutions, libraries, etc. DAAC expects to be able to teach visitors about the extraordinary value, influence and contributions of African arts and culture to the world.





**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Community Input*

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The center's activities will be “of” and” by” the community and various target audiences. It will build on the broad base of collaborations Dr. Hamilton has already nurtured, seeking participation and ideas from DAAC Advisors, partner organizations (Black artists and groups, educational institutions and their students of all ages, non-profits), neighborhood organizations, civic groups, elected officials, etc. DAAC will strive to give participants a sense of ownership in creating personally meaningful experiences.

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**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Expeditionary Learning*

The center will have a strong educational focus, expressed through the conduct of participatory classes and workshops. It will offer student internships and opportunities both to be mentored and to serve as mentors. It will utilize all variations of experiential, artistic expression – art, dance, music, digital technology, etc. – to convey its message. It will provide space for artists and authors to work and perform. The intent is for these exposures to influence participants’ and visitors’ personal lives and/or their artistic and creative impulses. The success of the Center will empower other African-American collectors, artists, performers, and authors to grow their organizations and their works. The center will influence artists to include traditional and contemporary African art concepts into their works and performances. Schools will find this center a source of many experiences and resources that enhance their curriculum, deepen research and technology skills, and motivate their students.



**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Art & Cultural Center*

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The center will add a much needed and under-represented art form to the Metro area's assemblage of art venues. With few, if any, similar African Art collections located between Chicago and the West Coast, DAAC aligns well with and will enhance Denver's already burgeoning Black Arts Movement. The center expects to cultivate many more experiential events, with participants and partners, utilizing elements of the Hamilton collection and others that it will attract.

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Hamilton Collection | Luluwe Tribe





**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Place for Research*

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The center will provide research opportunities that are immersed in African and African-American art, literature and history. As noted, the center will house Dr. Hamilton's extensive library. Examples of items that are included are 1960s newspapers and magazines (Black Panther papers, Muhammad Speaks, Black Scholar, Negro Digest) and the Journal of Negro History (Carter G. Woodson) from 1916-1970. The collection includes a volume authored by Dr. Hamilton, "African People's Contributions to World Civilizations: Shattering the Myths Vol., which dispels myths about African people and their descendants and traces the worldwide African artistic and cultural influences culminating in the 21st century.



Hamilton Collection | Baule Tribe



**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Economic Development*

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The center will grow organically, hosting and creating exhibits and programming as envisioned above. As it matures, it will attract both tourists and locals. For example, in Washington, D.C, the Smithsonian African Arts Museum is a major attraction and is the fourth most visited Smithsonian Museum there. Over time, revenue-generation will increase with DAAC's reputation for substantive, original and ever-changing exhibits and projects.

Hamilton Collection | Kota Tribe



Hamilton Collection | Baumon Tribe



**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Vehicle for Equity*

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The center will utilize African art as the context for difficult and complex conversations around many topics, viewed through an equity lens. It will be a place for all people to learn and be moved to stimulate dialogues about our interconnectedness and similarities. It is DAAC's hope that people will feel a sense of participation in a place that leads people away from their ordinary lives, that entices them to embrace learning about the bigger world, and to use that knowledge to make a better, more inclusive world.



**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Collections & Exhibits*

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The Denver African Arts Center will house one of Denver's largest African Arts collections from collector, educator, and activist, Dr. Paul L. Hamilton. In addition to the Hamilton Collection, DAAC will exhibit traveling collections and local artists' works.



**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Paul Hamilton*

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Dr. Paul L. Hamilton was born in Pueblo in 1941. He is a man who has seen that city and this state through much fundamental change. Since arriving in Denver in 1959, he has pushed the city forward and thoroughly entrenched himself in the Black community. Whether through his career as an educator at every level of the school system, his time as a Colorado State Representative for Five Points, his entrepreneurial and self-improvement programs, or his collaboration with famed Denver artists, he has done and been a lot for Denver. At 80 years old, he still hopes to do a lot more. “Sharing this collection will free me in a lot of ways. I still have a lot to do, and pretty soon I can.”





## DENVER AFRICAN ARTS *Media*

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### They Still Live

Thomas “Detour” Evans Website | The Hamilton Collection  
<http://www.theystilllive.com>

An expert on the past, African art collector Paul Hamilton now looks to the future  
Rocky Mountain PBS Article | November 22, 2021  
<https://www.rmpbs.org/blogs/rocky-mountain-pbs/paul-hamilton-african-art-collection-denver/>

Paul Hamilton’s African Art Collection: Denver’s Hidden Treasure  
Denver Urban Spectrum | November 1, 2021  
<https://www.denverurbanspectrum.com/articles/576245>

One tough question for arts nonprofits: Why aren’t boards more diverse?  
Confluence Denver Article | August 8, 2018  
<https://www.confluence-denver.com/features/dei-boards-arts-080118.aspx>

Denver artist turns his home into a mini museum dedicated to Africa  
Channel 9 News | February 26, 2018  
<https://www.9news.com/article/news/local/black-history-month/denver-artist-turns-his-home-into-a-mini-museum-dedicated-to-africa/523634483>

They Still Live: Exploring African Art, Photography and Heritage  
PBS Feature | October 17, 2017  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nkxnbmv5nOw>

Upworthy with Ancestry.  
Facebook Video | July 5, 2017  
<https://www.facebook.com/Upworthy/videos/1850417481665768/?pnref=story>

The Creators of They Still Live on Making Modern Art Out of Ancient African Art  
Westword Article | June 23, 2016  
<https://www.westword.com/arts/the-creators-of-they-still-live-on-making-modern-art-out-of-ancient-african-art-8024873>

Denver Artists Weave AncestryDNA Into African Art Showcase  
Ancestry.com Article | June 21, 2016  
<https://www.ancestry.com/corporate/blog/denver-artists-weave-ancestrydna-into-african-art-showcase/>



## DENVER AFRICAN ARTS *Hamilton Collection*

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The Hamilton Collection of Traditional African Art has over 1000 statues, masks and textiles. This collection focuses on ethnic groups from West Africa to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to East Africa. Among them are: Baga, Bamana, Bamileke, Baule, Benin, Bongo, Chokwe, Dan, Dogon, Fang, Hemba, Lobi, Luba, Makonde, Nyamwezi, Senufo, Songye, and Yoruba.

Paul's interests in Africa's peoples and cultures began at the University of Denver with his first trip to Africa in 1963. However, it was during the 1980s that the collecting passion was kindled. He met the late Peter Natan, the international renowned African art dealer, collector and appraiser.

Mr. Natan mentored him in the intricacies of African art and cultures. His mentoring and encouragement generated contacts with numerous African traders and American collectors of African art. Mr. Natan later said that The Hamilton African Art Collection is one of the best he has seen in the United States.

During the last few years, Joseph Bankston, a protégée of Mr. Natan, has been a major consultant and advisor to the Hamilton Collection. Mr. Bankston is an appraiser, art dealer and collector of fine art.

Selections from the collections have been seen at the Lakewood Cultural Center, Blair Caldwell African American Research Library, and Cecil B. Moore Community Library (Philadelphia). Donations of over 30 pieces have been given to Regis University and are housed in its library's archives. Howard Dental Clinic (non-profit) received a donation of seven pieces for its fundraiser.



Hamilton Collection | Baga Tribe



**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Hamilton Library*

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This collection of about 2,000 books, magazines, newspapers, audio and videotapes, and educational items is focused on African, African Diaspora and African-American cultural and historical issues and concerns. Included are 1960's newspapers & magazines (Black Panther papers, Muhammad Speaks, Black Scholar, Negro Digest) and the Journal of Negro History (Carter G. Woodson) from 1916-1970.

African Peoples' Contributions to World Civilizations: Shattering the Myths Vol. I

This volume documents that the common myths about African people and their descendants are not only false, but African people have made major contributions throughout the world. This includes human life beginning in East and Southern Africa, Africans in the Americas thousands of years before Columbus, Africans being the generators and people of ancient Egypt, and African people greatly influencing the cultures and ideologies of the Hebrews, Greek Romans, Christianity and Islam.

The author concluded this volume with the creation of the concept of the 21st Century African Renaissance where African people are the most sought-after leaders and problem solvers in economics, politics, religion, science and social issues.





**DENVER AFRICAN ARTS**  
*Hamilton Vision*

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Hamilton’s vision for his collection and his library was to create an African and American Cultural Research Center to provide experiential activities and research opportunities that are immersed in African and African-American art, literature and history. The center would be developed around “The Hamilton Collection of Traditional African Art” and the Hamilton Library that includes thousands of African and African-American books, magazines and educational items. Another component allows participant to view and explore linkages between African and American cultures and histories through a virtual world museum using the latest technology.

The center would conduct classes and workshops, have student internships and provide space for artists, authors, and performers to work and perform. These exposures would influence participants’ personal lives and/or their artistic and creative impulses.

The goal would be to have adequate staff to enable interactive experiences, train people to be researchers, maintain the collections and technology, work with resident artists and authors, and engage the Denver community.

The success of the center would empower other African-American collectors, artists, performers, and authors to grow their organizations and their works. The center would influence artists to include traditional and contemporary African art concepts into their works and performances. Schools would find this center a source of many experiences and resources that enhance their curriculum, deepen research and technology skills, and motivate their students.

Hamilton Collection | Dogon Tribe