



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ANCESTORS IN STONE**  
*Showcasing NOMA's Akwanshi Monolith*

**NEW ORLEANS, LA** – The New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) presents *Ancestors in Stone* on view August 16, 2019 through July 27, 2020. A recently acquired akwanshi monolith from the Cross Rivers region of Nigeria forms the centerpiece of this focus exhibition, showcasing stone as a material used in ancestral veneration among West African cultures.

“This exhibition speaks to the significance of stone as both a natural element and a significant material in the honoring of ancestors,” said Susan Taylor, NOMA’s Montine McDaniel Freeman Director. “We are delighted to introduce our visitors to the akwanshi monolith, one of the newest additions to NOMA’s permanent collection.”

Among African cultures, deceased ancestors remain important members of the community, and are revered in the afterlife. These ancestors are often represented through perishable materials such as wood, mud or plant and animal matter, based upon the idea of the impermanence of ancestral presence in the realm of the living. Ancestors are venerated by surviving family and community members who ask for divine intervention from their forebears in matters related to wealth, fertility, and agricultural prosperity. After the completion of veneration rituals, such objects lose their ritual power. However, as *Ancestors in Stone* demonstrates, stone can also be used in the creation of ancestor figures, upturning the notion that the power of these ancestral representations diminishes over time. The exhibition presents the newly acquired akwanshi, along with figures and objects rendered in part or whole in stone from other regions of West Africa, suggesting the importance of stone to this and other African cultures.

**Additional Information**

[Press-approved images are available here.](#)

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#ancestorsinstone

Website: [www.noma.org](http://www.noma.org)

**About NOMA and the Besthoff Sculpture Garden**

The New Orleans Museum of Art, founded in 1910 by Isaac Delgado, houses more than 40,000 works of art encompassing 5,000 years of history. Works from the permanent collection, along with continuously changing special exhibitions, are on view in the museum's 46 galleries Tuesday through Friday from 10 AM to 6 PM, select Fridays from 10 AM to 9 PM, Saturdays from 10 AM to 5 PM and Sundays from 11 AM to 5 PM. NOMA offers docent-guided tours at 1 PM Tuesday - Sunday. The adjoining Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden features work by more than

# NOMA

85 artists, including several 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century master sculptors. NOMA's Besthoff Sculpture Garden is free and open to the public seven days a week: 10 AM to 6 PM. The New Orleans Museum of Art and the Besthoff Sculpture Garden are fully accessible to handicapped visitors and wheelchairs are available from the front desk. For more information about NOMA, call (504) 658-4100 or visit [www.noma.org](http://www.noma.org). Museum admission is free on Wednesdays for Louisiana residents, courtesy of The Helis Foundation. Children 12 and under receive free admission. Teenagers (ages 13-19) receive free admission courtesy of The Helis Foundation.

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