

MUSEUM EDUCATIONAL SITE LICENSING

M E S L

PROJECT

## Enabling educational use of digital museum collections

Digital Resources in the Humanities  
Oxford University  
July 1996

J. Trant

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**NOTE: Now [jtrant@archimuse.com](mailto:jtrant@archimuse.com)**

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## Intellectual Property Rights

- legal framework inconclusive
- issue seen as major barrier
- requires balance between rights holders and rights users

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## Rights in digital images complex

- original work of art
- photographic reproduction
- digital image
- manipulated digital image
- accompanying text

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- **Rights complex...**
  - each form may have distinct rights
  - often held separately
  - rights in one media don't transfer to another

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## Rights administration inefficient

- finding images and rightsholders difficult
- fees for using individual images high
- terms and conditions vary
- volume required for digital production problematic
- high overhead throughout the system

## MESL a response

- establish the terms and conditions for the educational use of museum images and text
- facilitate distribution of high quality information
- enable collaboration between rights holders and rights users



## MESL approach

- site license collections of images
- avoid “pay per bit”
- reasonable monitoring requirements
- effective administration
- predictable costs; no hidden charges

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## Why museums and universities?

- museums have images and information
- universities have delivery systems
- both have educational mandate
- share common culture and interests

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## 15 institution collaboration

- interdisciplinary project teams on each campus
- central coordination at AHIP
- management committee to advise
- January 1995 - June 1997

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## Participating Museums

- Fowler Museum of Cultural History at UCLA
- The George Eastman House, Rochester, NY
- The Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, MA
- The Library of Congress, Washington, DC
- The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
- The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
- The National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC

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## Participating Universities

- American University, Washington, DC
- Columbia University, New York, NY
- Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- University of Maryland, College Park, MD
- University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Dearborn and Flint, MI
- University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

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## Progress to Date

- Cooperative Agreement signed
- images selected and distributed
- deployment on each campus
- evaluation

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## Licensing Agreement

- terms and conditions from cooperative agreement
  - educational use on campus network
  - includes research, teaching, student projects
  - no redistribution
  - no commercial use
- model site license terms

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## Selection of test images

- over 8000 images distributed by fall of 96
- challenge to create coherent data sets
  - support teaching
  - work within digitization plans
  - negotiate to meet curricular needs

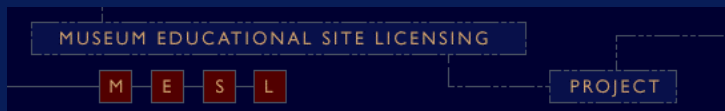
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## Data Distribution

- University of Michigan as “distribution central”
- each campus mounted entire image set
- deployment decisions based on local infrastructures

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## Text Formats

- Data Dictionary developed
  - object description as fielded text
  - unstructured texts linked
    - conservation reports
    - exhibition history
    - bibliography
- consistency major challenge

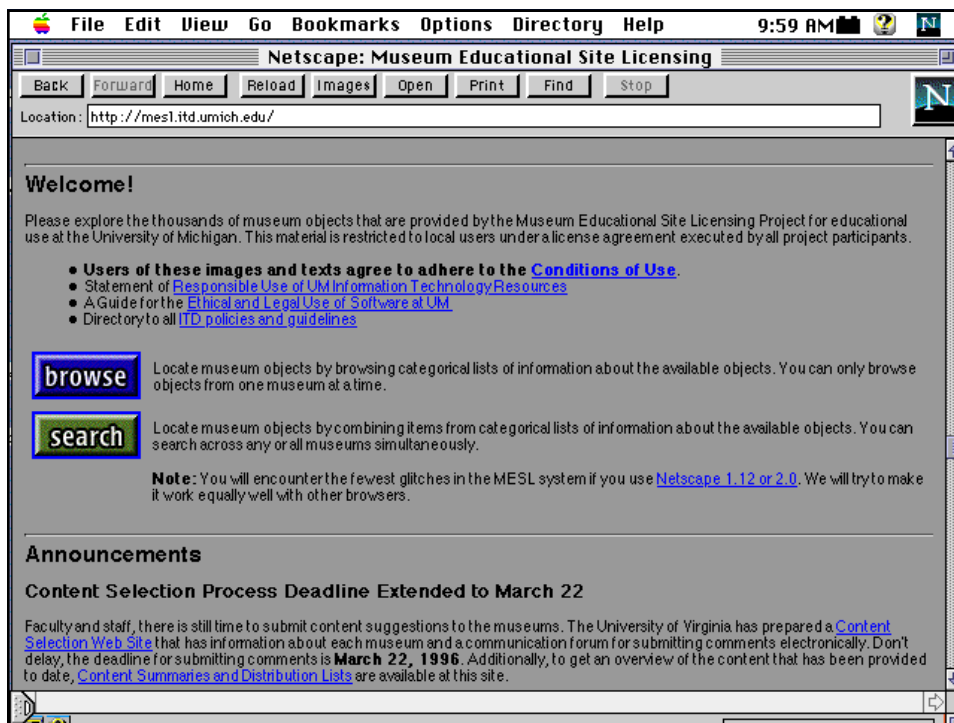
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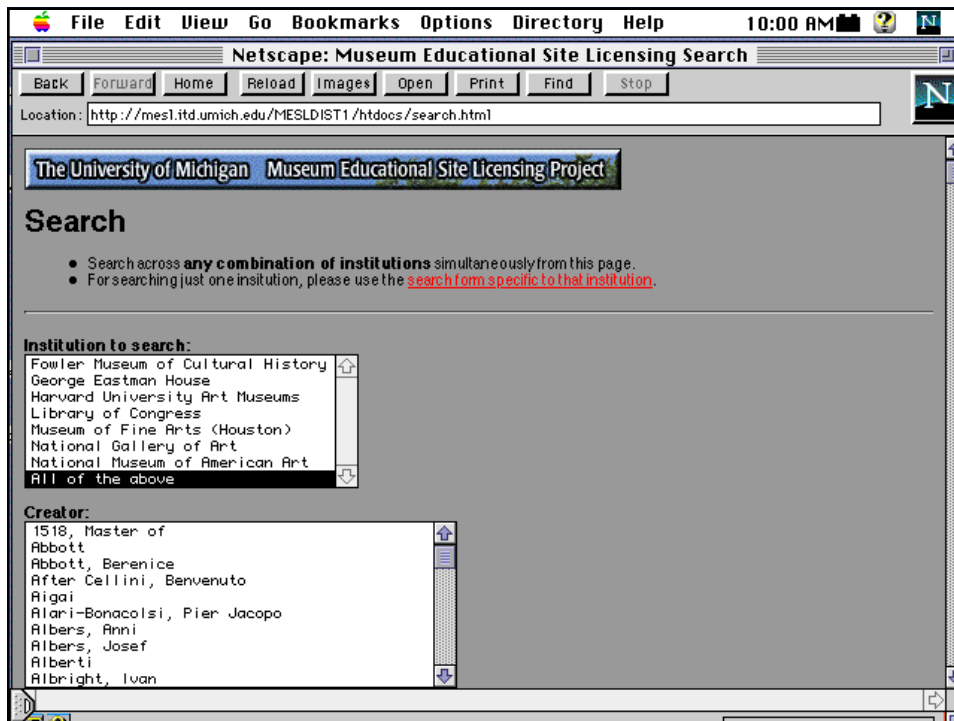
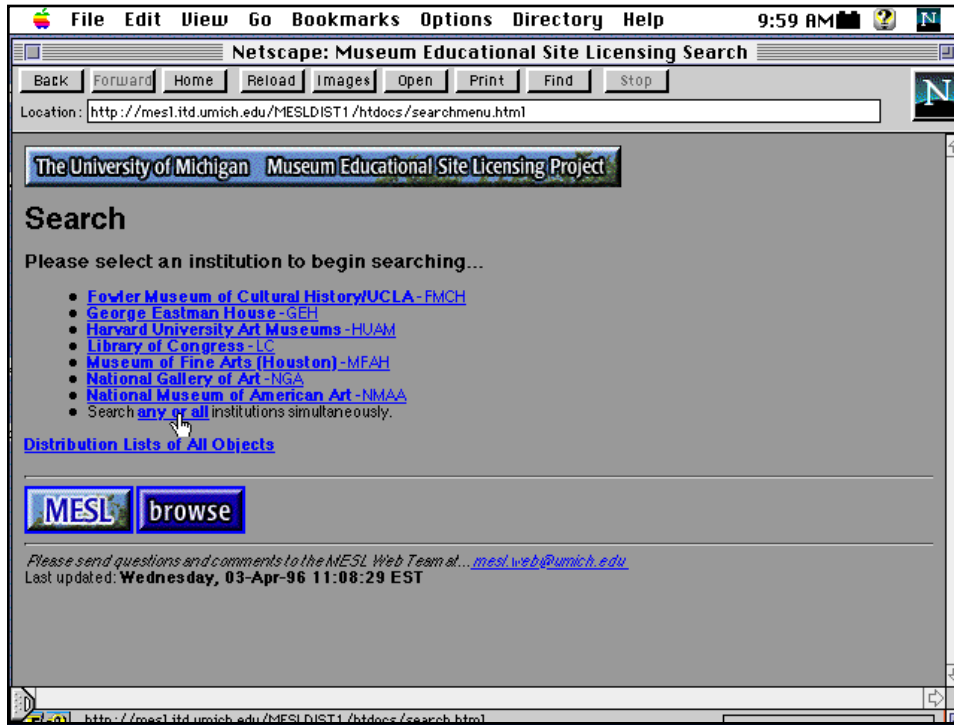
## Image Formats

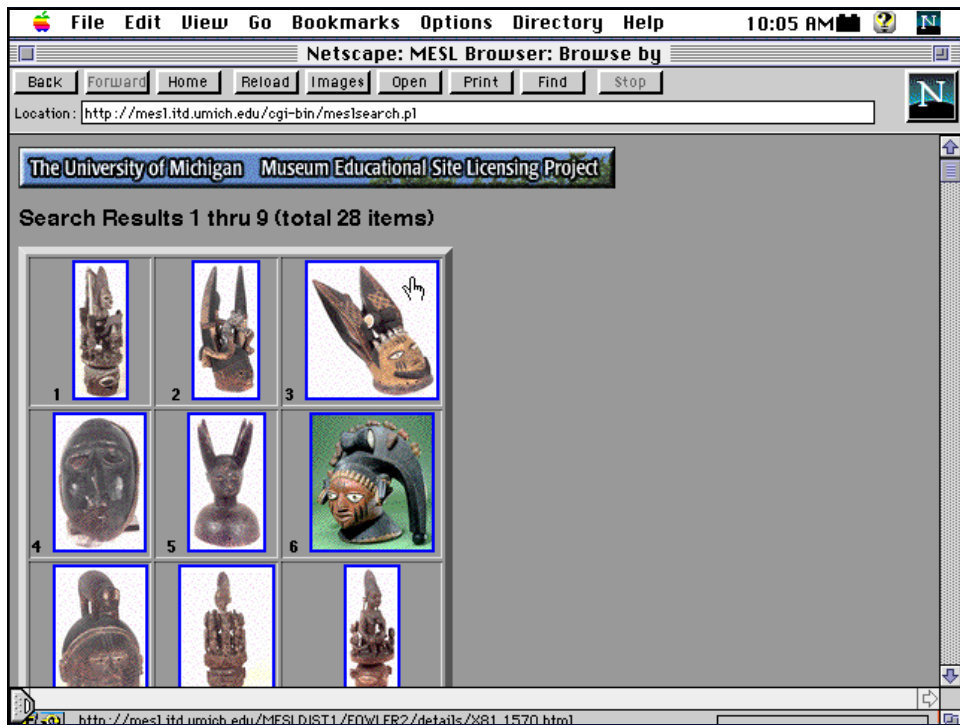
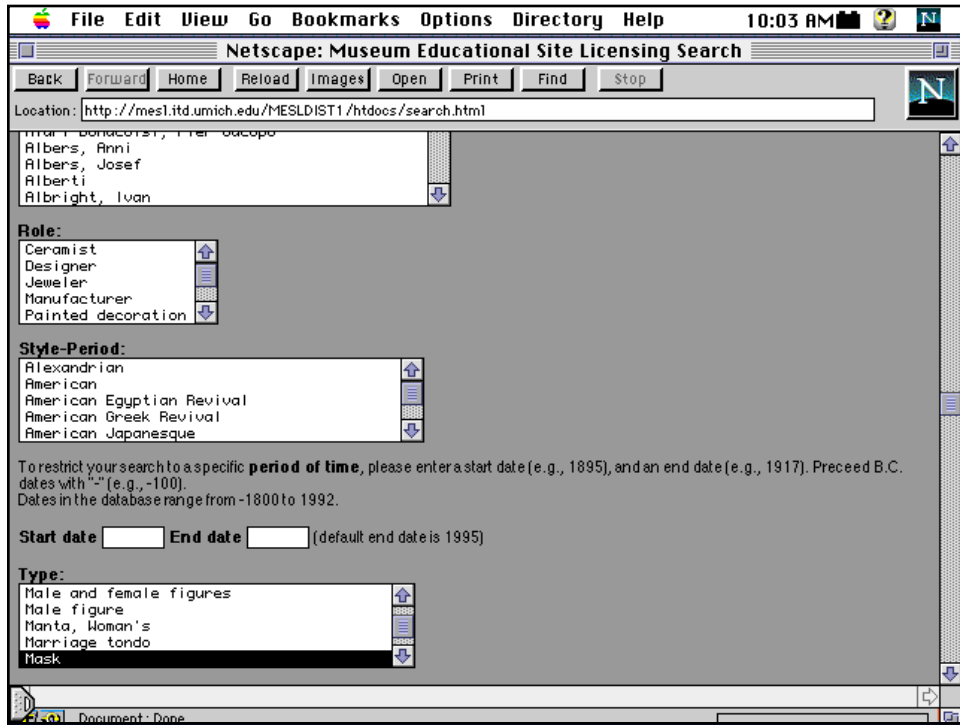
- maximum quality museums would release
  - 758 x 512 through 1536 x 1024
  - 24 bit colour
- file formats
  - JFIF with JPEG, PhotoCD, TIFF
- sites determined image delivery strategy

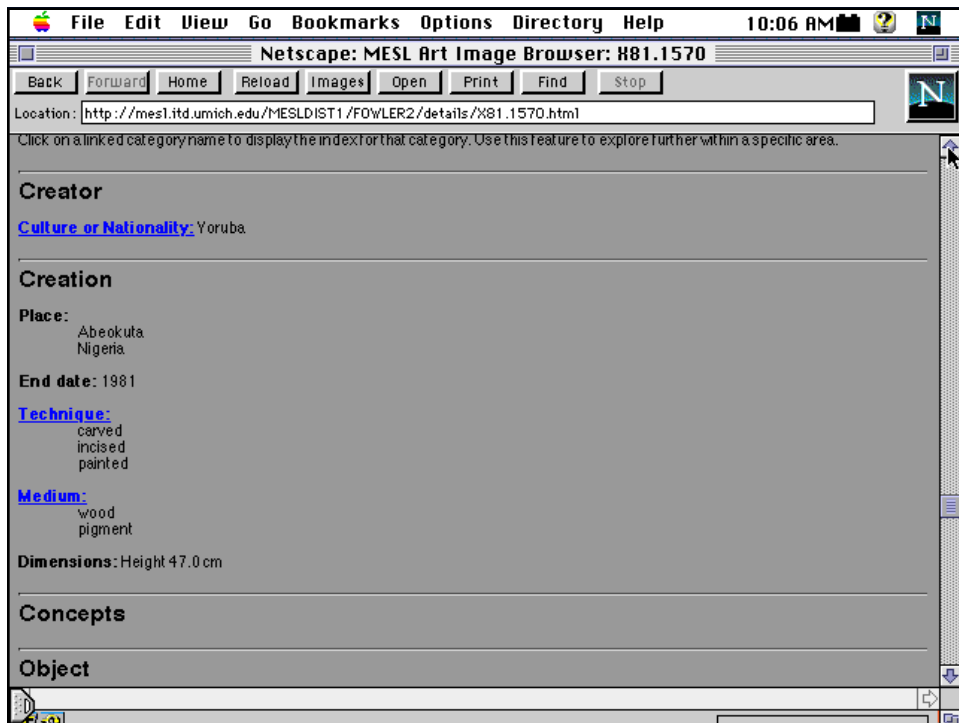
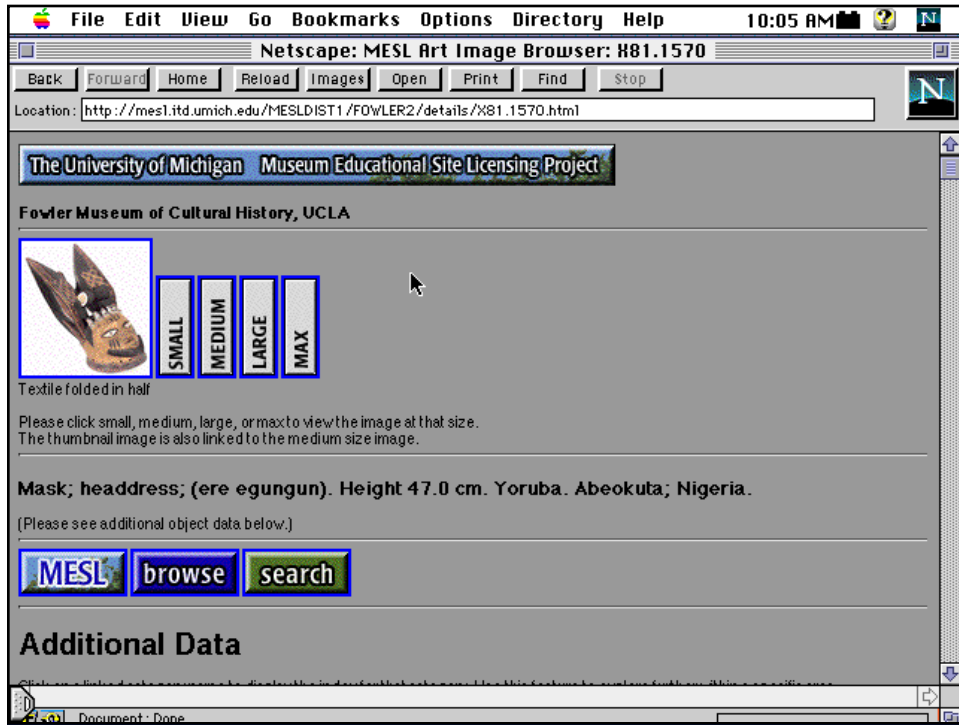
## Objectives

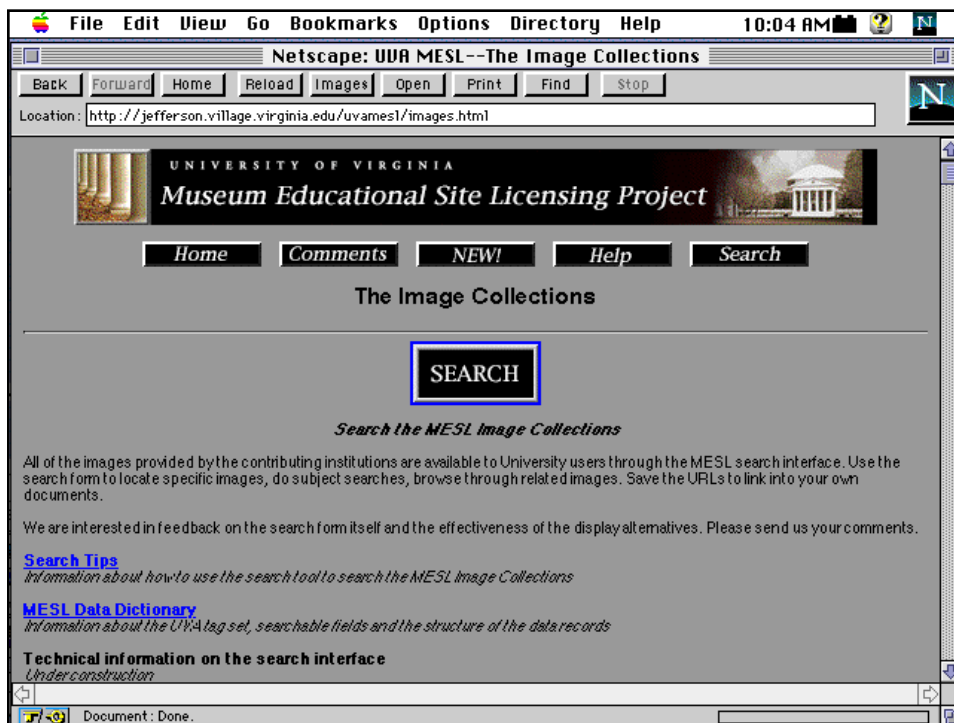
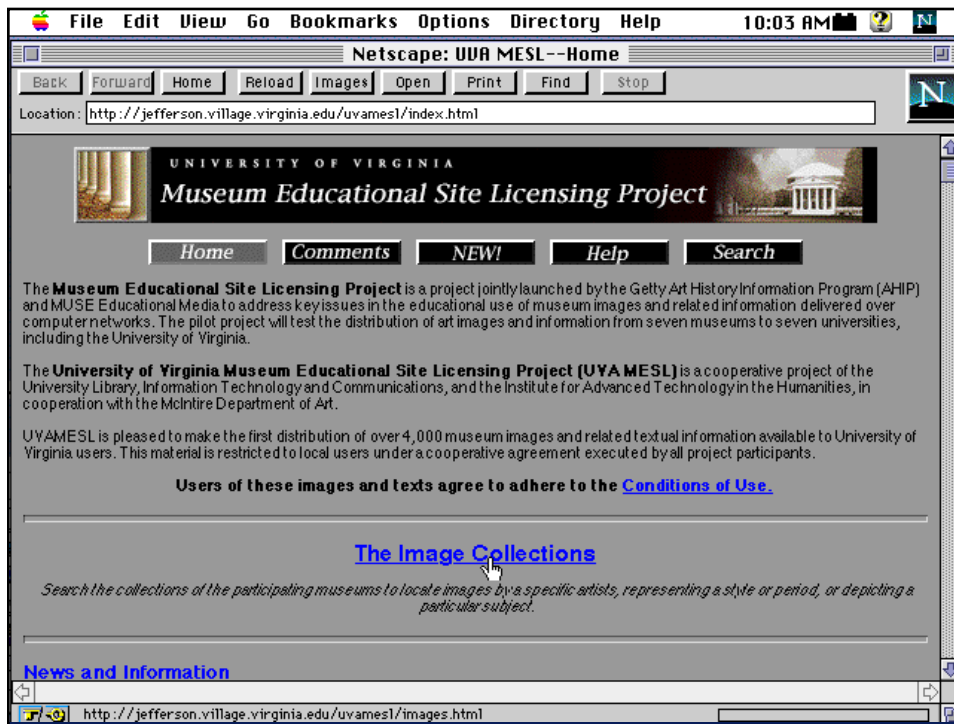
- separate content from delivery systems
- learn about issues by studying choices
- understand process of data creation and delivery
- discover where standards essential

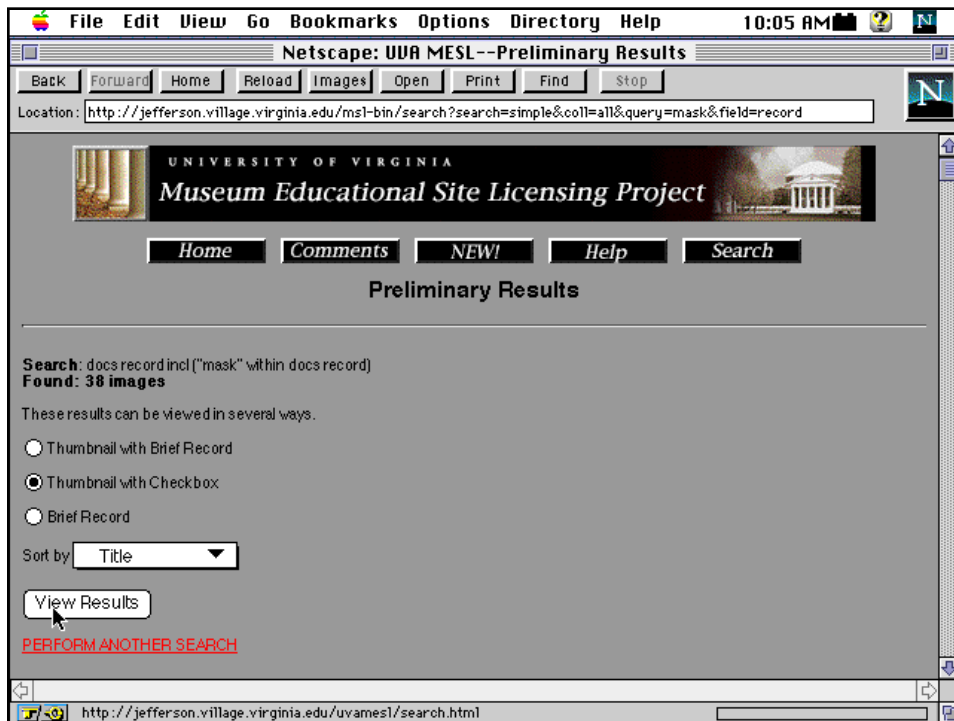
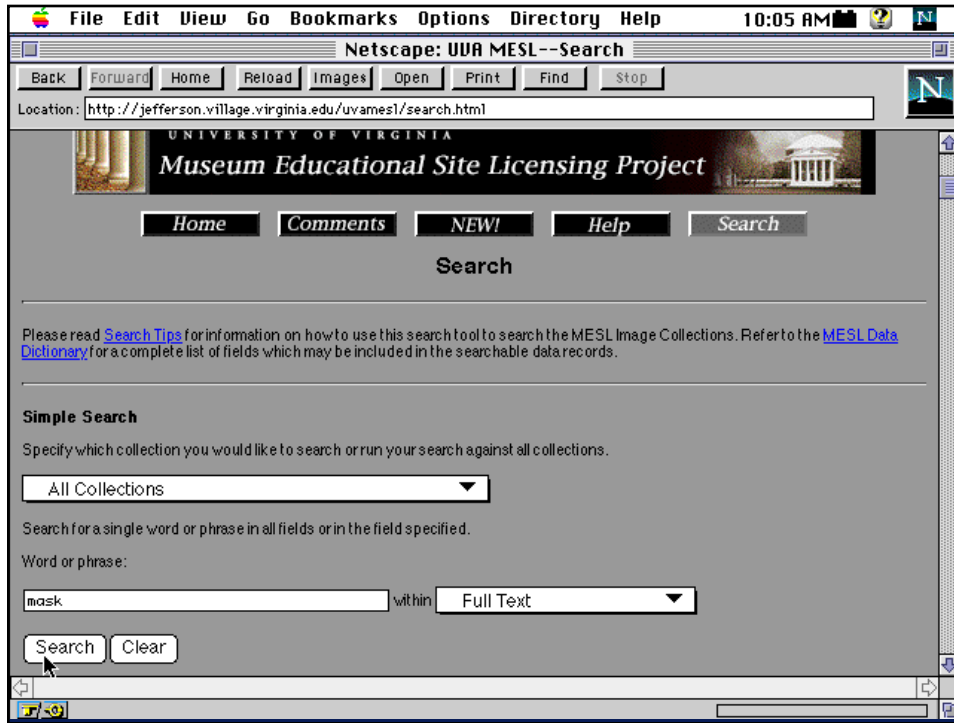


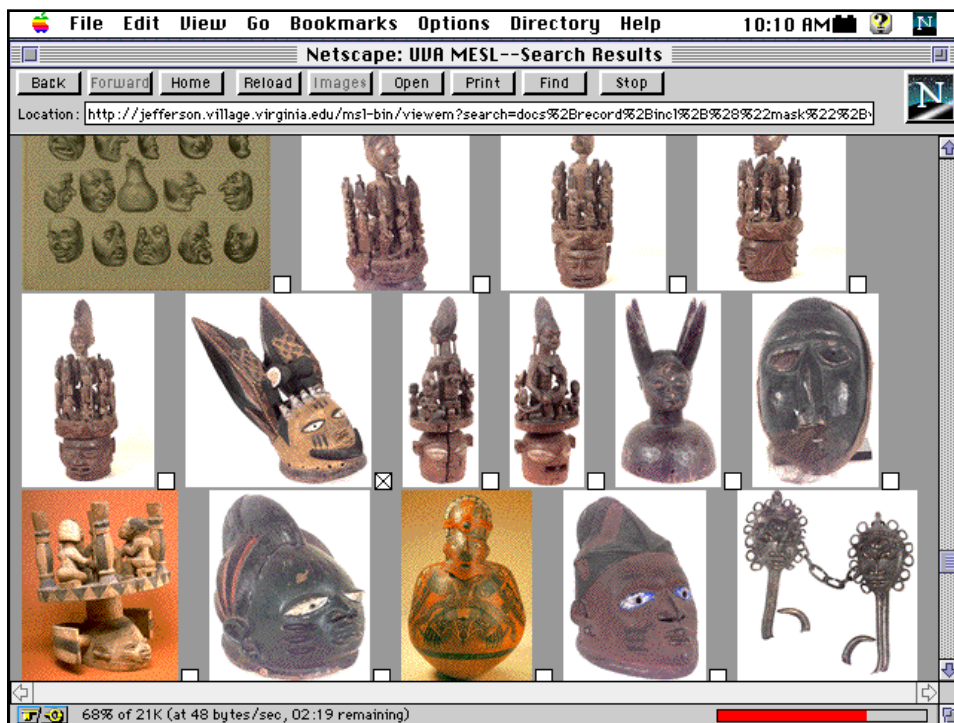
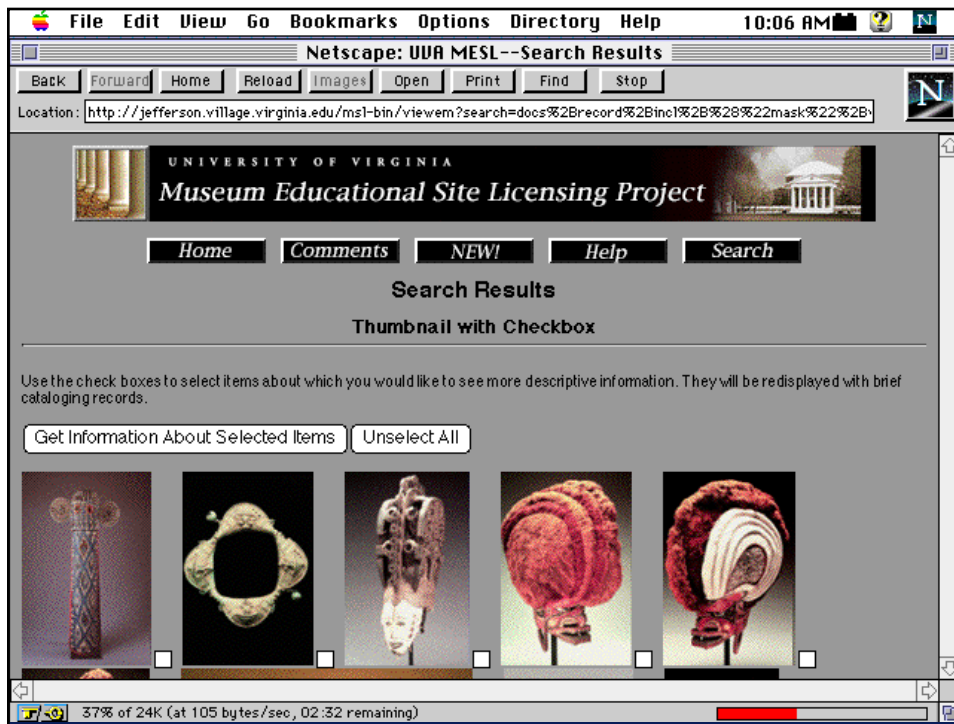












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Netscape: UVA MESL-- Search Results


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UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA  
**Museum Educational Site Licensing Project**

Home Comments **NEW!** Help Search

**Search Results**



**Title:** Mask; headdress; (ere egungun). Height 47.  
**Collection:** FOWL  
**Credit:** FMCHUCLA.X81.1570  
**Culture:** Yoruba  
**Place:** Nigeria  
[Full Record](#)

[PERFORM ANOTHER SEARCH](#)

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UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA  
**Museum Educational Site Licensing Project**

Home Comments **NEW!** Help Search

**Search Results**

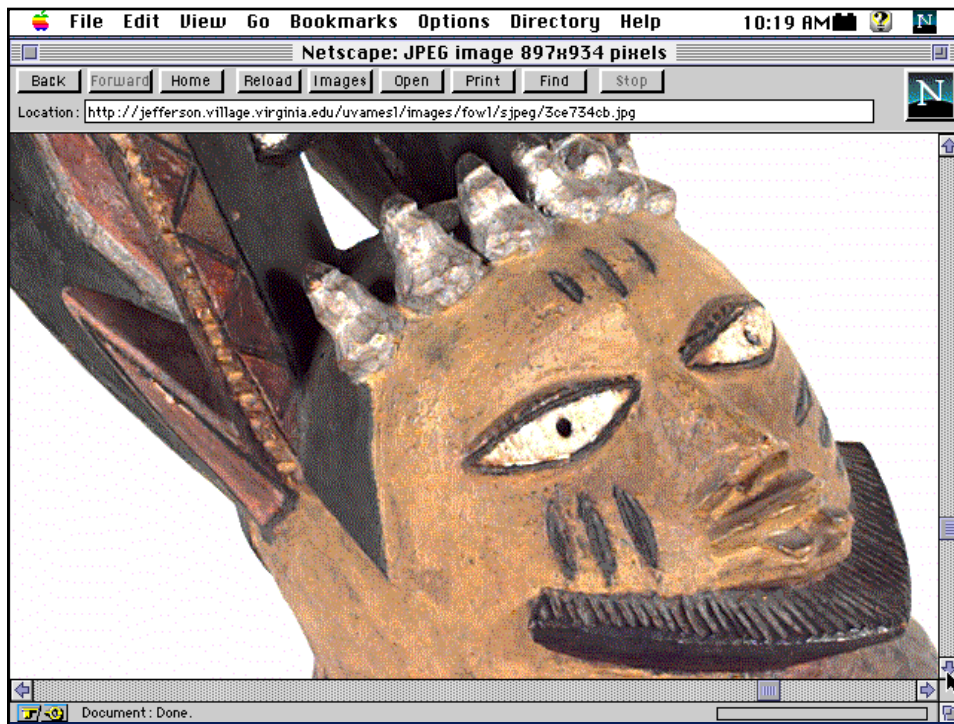
**Full Record**



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**Accession Number:** X81.1570  
**Accession Method:** PtGift  
**Collection:** FOWL  
**Owner:** Fowler Museum of Cultural History, UCLA  
**Credit:** FMCHUCLA.X81.1570  
**Culture:** Yoruba  
**Place:** Abeokuta  
**Place:** Nigeria  
**Material:** wood  
**Material:** pigment  
**Dimensions:** Height 47.0 cm  
**Image:** FOWL.3ce734cb.jpg  
**Capture:** Digital photograph using Kodak DCS420 digital camera  
**Label:** Mask; headdress; (ere egungun). Height 47.0 cm.Yoruba. Abeokuta; Nigeria.

**URL for thumbnail:** <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/uvamesl/images/fowl/thumb/3ce734cb.gif>  
**URL for full image:** <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/uvamesl/images/fowl/sjpg/3ce734cb.jpg>

[PERFORM ANOTHER SEARCH](#)



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## Uses for museum information

- teaching and research in the Humanities
  - art history, history, anthropology, cultural and religious studies
- multimedia development
  - distance learning, visual literacy, independent study, life-long learning
- information and computer science
  - image database research, image processing

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## Use on campus

- critical to success of project
- broad range of activities
  - UMD, joint studio/art history project
  - UVA, Religious Studies


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Location: <http://cti.ito.virginia.edu/~dbh5u/MIDTERM.html>



### CROSSING OVER: MASKS OF INITIATION RITES AND SECRET SOCIETIES

*A RELA 345 Exhibition by Daniel Halthcock*

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#### INTRODUCTION

Life may be interpreted as a continuous series of rites of passages during which an individual progresses from one phase to another in the cycle of life. Possibly the most important of these transitions is the passage from

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Location: <http://cti.ito.virginia.edu/~dbh5u/MIDTERM.html>

## This Mask Pacifies the Spirit of the Sacrificed Victims!

- Nkaki Mask
- Lwala (Zaire)
- Wood
- C. Roy: ART AND LIFE IN AFRICA

This male nkaki mask appears with three other masks in the ceremonies of the Ngongo society. The Ngongo society is responsible for the initiation and circumcision of young Lwalwa men. Entrance into the Ngongo society requires the sacrifice of human victims. This requirement ensures that the passage of an individual into manhood is accompanied by the passage of another individual into the spirit world. By appeasing the spirits with such an offering, the seed of the newly initiated man is blessed and assured to produce children, thus completing the cycle of life. During the ceremonies, two male nkaki masks and two cifola female masks are worn by men in dances intended to pacify the spirits of the human victims.

Each of the four performers commissions the mask from a single carver, who is often the village chief and the organizer of the ceremony. This nkaki mask is of the mvondo type. It is held steady on the wearer's face by a cord passed through the hole beneath the nose. This cord was then clamped between the teeth of the dancer. Aesthetically, this mask is remarkable for the elegant definition of the face- especially the scars near the eyes- and for the extremely fine, smooth surface.



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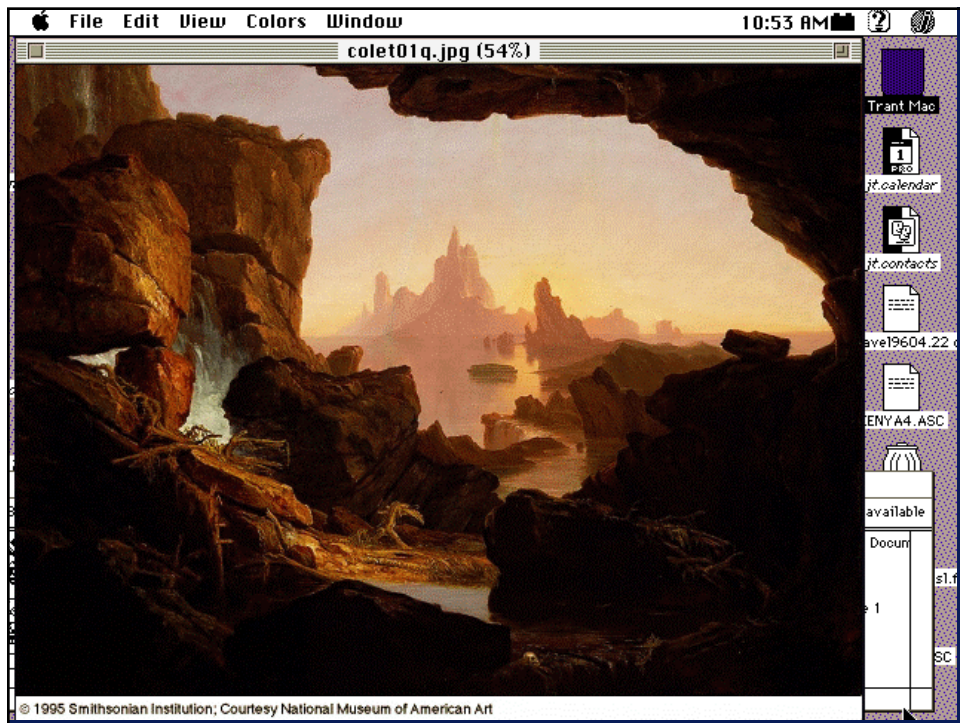
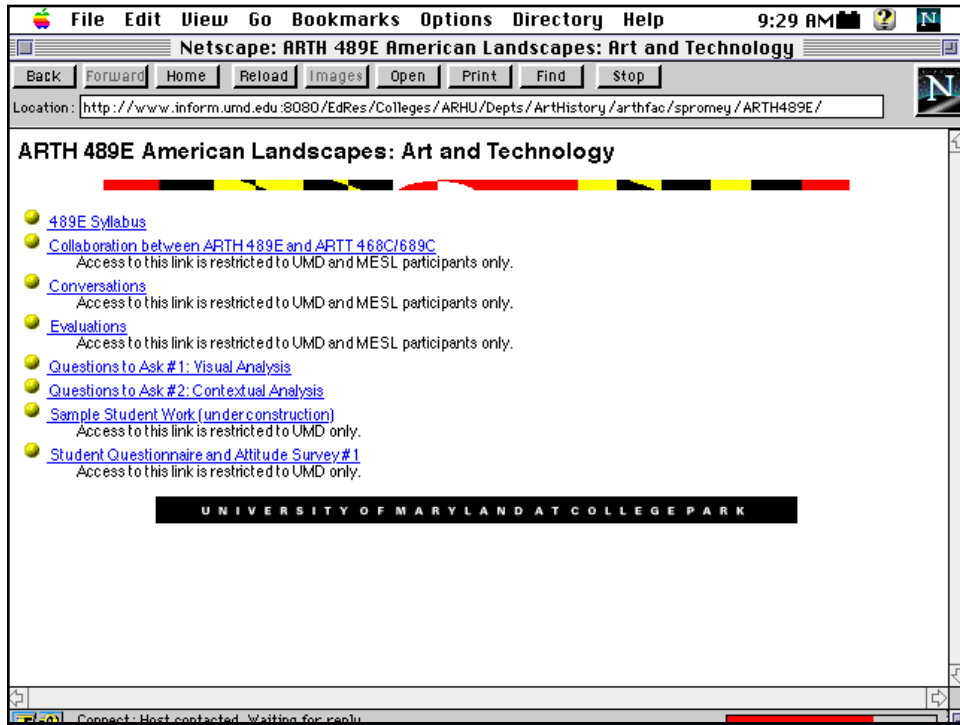
## He Swallows the Boys and Gives Them Rebirth!

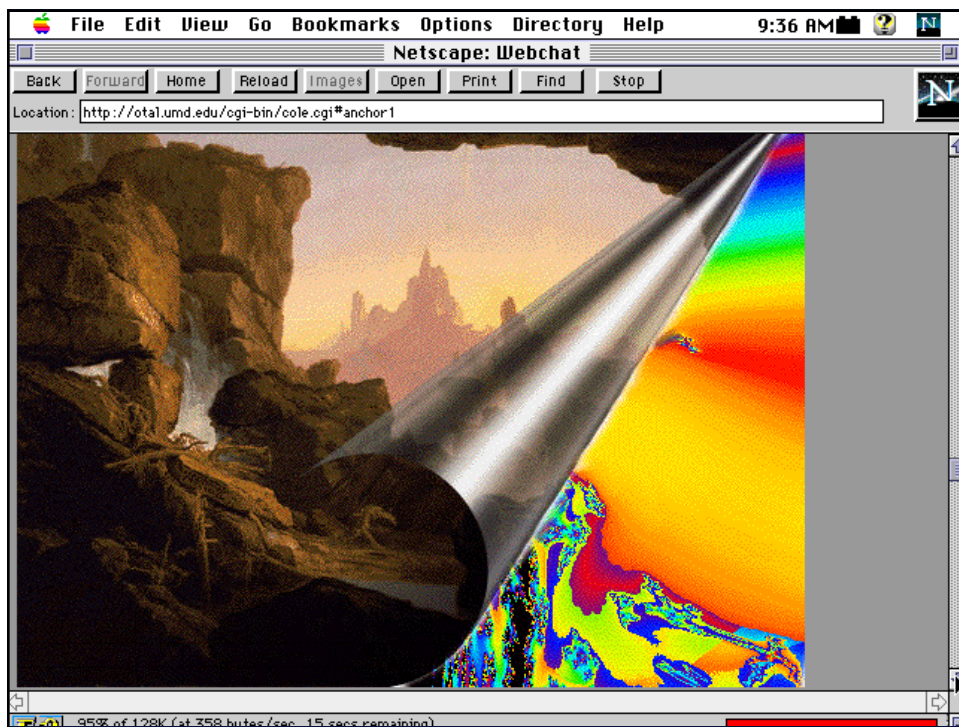
- Dandai Mask
- Toma, Bande and Kissi (Liberia Guinea and Sierra Leone)
- Wood, feathers, fiber, cloth
- Seiber and Walker: AFRICAN ART IN THE CYCLE OF LIFE

This large horizontal mask represents Dandai, the spirit of the ancestor who originated the multi-ethnic Poro society. The mask is carved from lightweight wood and is worn horizontally atop the head. A long fiber skirt attached to the mask conceals the body of the dancer. Members of the Poro society sporting this towering costume appear in public during an elaborate ceremony which marks the beginning of the male initiation process. During the ceremony, the mask begins to consume the young initiates by chewing them with its large moving jaws. Then as the music and dances climax, the youths are completely swallowed leaving behind a pool of blood. (The effect of blood is achieved by the wearer of the mask chewing cola nuts.) The youth, who are hidden under the enormous skirts of the masks are taken to the initiation camp to begin the three year initiation school. During this period, the boys learn discipline and the traditions of their people, as well as signet and the art of...



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## Evaluation

- statistics about use
- profiles of distribution systems
- assessment of interface choices
- examination of search capabilities

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## Economics

- costs and benefits of new technology
- costs of rights administration
- model self-sustaining system

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## Goals

- enable the educational use of museum digital assets
- propose a framework for the collective administration of museum intellectual property rights
- suggest a scalable system for implementation

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## Further Information

- <http://www.ahip.getty.edu/mesl>

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