



VISIT THE BMA and look for beautiful beadwork in the *Arts of Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific Islands* gallery on the ground floor.

The Three Wise Men Jimoh Buraimoh

The faces of these three men don't look anything like the face you see when you look at yourself in the mirror. Is it because these faces are divided into sections filled with brilliant colors and lively stripes and patterns? Is it because the heads seem much too big for their slender necks and narrow shoulders? Is it because their skin looks bumpy?

It may help to know that *Three Wise Men* is made entirely of tiny brightly colored glass beads. Dark outlines and stripes are drawn with black beads strung together on thread then glued to a board with strong epoxy. Loose, unstrung beads are spread out and glued down in broad areas of pure color or mixed together for a glittering effect.

Jimoh Buraimoh is an artist from the African country of Nigeria. His people, the Yoruba, believe that a person's head is the most powerful part of the body. By exaggerating the size of the men's heads and portraying them with colorful beads that recall the beaded crowns of Yoruba kings, Buraimoh is letting us know that these are men of great stature and importance. The artist has identified these three wise men as highly esteemed political leaders from three different parts of Nigeria who journeyed to London in 1960 to negotiate Nigeria's independence after many years of British rule. To see a photograph of the real Sardauna of Sokoto, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo go to <http://tinyurl.com/cgpgdl>

Challenge for Students

Compare the image of Obafemi Awolowo (on the right) with his photograph at <http://tinyurl.com/cckelx>. How close is the resemblance? Then create an unconventional portrait of yourself or a friend by dividing the face into sections. Fill the sections with colors and patterns that suit the subject.

Print the image on page 2 for your students.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART



Image Credit: Jimoh Buraimoh (Nigerian, born 1943). Detail, *The Three Wise Men*. 1991. Beads, epoxy, board. 20 x 40 inches.
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