

At the National Museum of Scotland – The Art of African Metalwork

The Art of African Metalwork continues until Sunday 25 August 2019 at National Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street

#AfricanMetalwork



Spoon of beaten brass sheet with shallow circular bowl and

flat rectangular handle ornamented with repoussé work Image courtesy of National Museums Scotland

[The Art of African Metalwork](#), a new display exploring how brass and copper were used as objects of exchange, status and power in Africa is on now.



Axe with copper celt blade driven through head of wooden handle carved in form of a woman Image courtesy of National Museums Scotland

The creation and trade of elaborate, decorated metalwork has been widespread across West and Central Africa for centuries. Objects on display range from 19th and early 20th century

currency to ceremonial weaponry and items used for personal adornment. The objects were part of a complex network of local, European and inter-continental trade.

Beaten, burnished, coiled or cast, brass and copper was used for production of significant objects of cultural value produced by highly skilled metalworkers. Highlights include cast brass weights used in the Ghanaian gold trade. Each weight was individually modelled from a wide range of subjects including miniature figures, animals and geometric forms. Also featured is a display of prestigious Congolese ceremonial blades which includes an example of a sickle knife with brass blade and handle in the distinctive Mangbetu court style.



Circular brass embossed tray featuring a female with raised hands, probably Mami Wata, surrounded by fish and lizard and cross patterned outer border Image courtesy of National Museums Scotland

Dr Sarah Worden, Senior Curator of African Collections at

National Museums Scotland said: "Created by highly skilled, specialist craftsmen, the intriguing objects on display in The Art of African Metalwork give us an insight into the complex role of brass and copper in Africa during the 19th and 20th centuries. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to display some fascinating pieces from our African collection."