

Afrikan Alphabets

**The story of
writing in Afrika**

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Nwantantay mask

(reverse, at left and front on facing page)

Bwa people, Burkina Faso

Wood, pigment

16.25 x 72 x 10 inches (41.28 x 182.9 x 25.4 cm)

Nwantantay – great plank mask primarily used from March until early May, when the rains begin. Like alphabets, the patterns on such masks are more than decorations and combine to convey stories and represent abstract concepts and complex thoughts.

The African Art Museum of the SMA Fathers, Tenafly, NJ

Gift of Steward J. Warkow, 1998

Photo: Tapiwa Muronda