

THE MASKS THAT WE WEAR!

"Man is least himself when he talks in his own person.
Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth."

Oscar Wilde



MASK OF 2020

When history looks back at the pandemic of 2020, these white & blue rectangles that hide the mouth and nose, will remain a grim reminder of these times.

Surgical Face masks as a protective measure worn by doctors, during surgery, to prevent airborne bacteria from entering a wound, first appeared at the end of the 19th century. In 1910 they were adopted by the Chinese authorities to prevent the spread of the pneumonic plague. Eight years later they turned into a global phenomenon when they were adopted as protection against the Spanish flu.

2020 saw a resurgence of masks as an essential sign of civility and concern for the community.



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January 21



Ram Sita, India:

This mask depicting Rama and Sita, is commonly used during re-enactments of the Hindu epic, Ramayana, so that characters and their respective psyches can be properly depicted. These masks often see the use of gold glitter thread and brass.



Mardi Gras, New Orleans:

Mardi Gras also known as Fat Tuesday or Carnival, is the feast before the season of Lent begins. In New Orleans, Mardi Gras parades and masquerade balls are an annual tradition that begin on January 6th and continue on weekends and weekdays until Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday which marks the start of Lent.

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February 21



Javanese Klana Bapang Mask: The Topeng dance drama of the island of Java centers around the political history of the region and are called Babad Dalem (Chronicles of the Kings) or Raket. This specific mask represents a character Klana Bapang, an aggressive but comical enemy of the national hero Panji.

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March 21

Traditional Korean Mask: Called *Tal* in Korean, these masks come with black cloth attached to the sides of the mask designed to cover the back of the head and to simulate black hair. These masks are used in cultural festivals, dances (*talnori*) and plays called *Talchum*.



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April 21



African Giraffe: African masks are usually shaped after a human face or an animal's muzzle, albeit rendered in a sometimes highly abstract form. Animal masks are believed to represent the spirit of animals, so that the mask wearer becomes a medium to speak to animals themselves.



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May 21

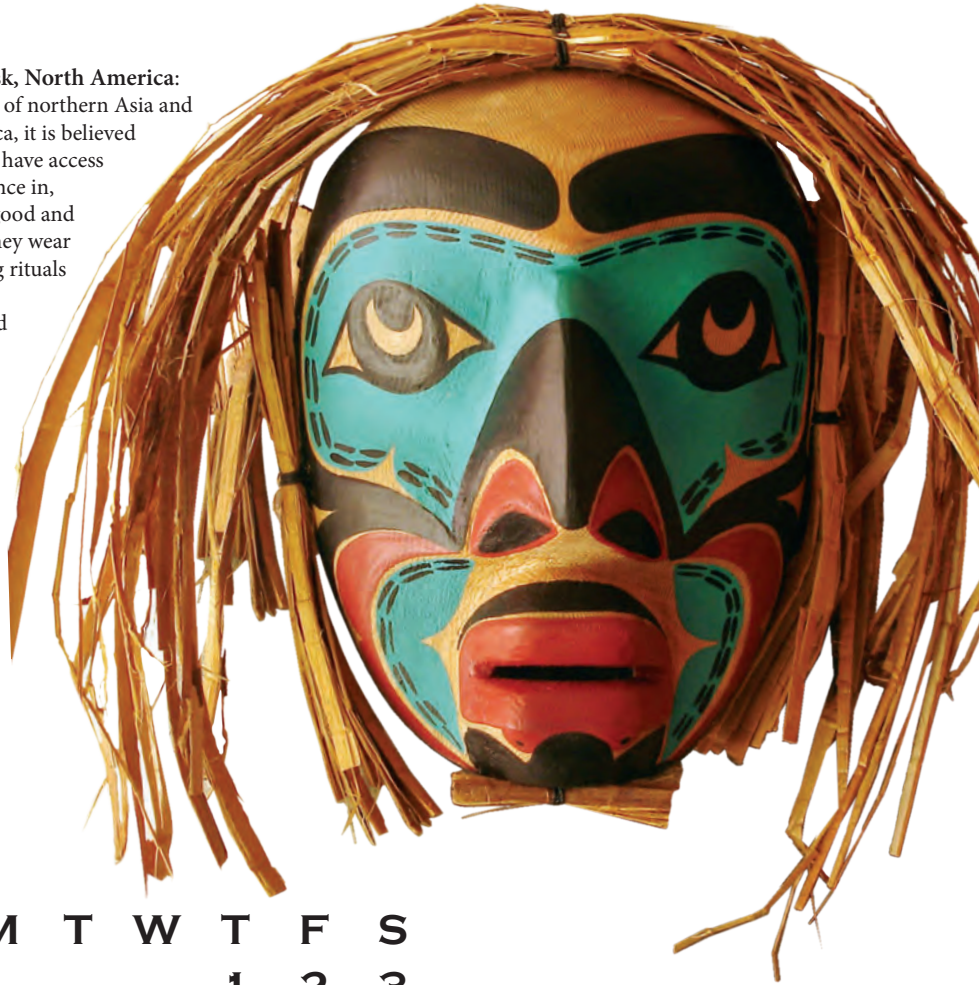
Fasnet Gschell Mask, Germany: In many parts of Swabia and Bavaria, Carnival (usually called Fasnet or Fastnet in this region of Germany) is celebrated with parades of masked clowns (Narren). Their purpose is to usher in the spring with joy and laughter.



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June 21

Shaman Mask, North America:
In some areas of northern Asia and North America, it is believed that Shamans have access to, and influence in, the world of good and evil spirits. They wear a mask during rituals and practice divination and healing.



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July 21

Kitsune Mask, Japan: Kitsune masks popularly referred to as fox masks are worn for fun during the Shinto Festival. The fox is a highly respected animal in Japan and is believed to be the messenger of *Inari* (the God associated with agriculture).



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August 21



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September 21

A Fire Devil: Raksha mask is a mask that Sri Lankans use a lot in festivals and cultural dances. Intended to ward off evil these masks are the final aspect of the Kolam ritual and are a tribute to the Rakshasas, a race that earlier ruled Sri Lanka and could assume twenty four different forms.

Carnival Mask, Venice:

The tradition of masks in Venetian Carnivals started in the 13th century when Venetians would hold celebrations and parties from December 26th till the start of Lent. The anonymity offered by the masks allowed the wearers to indulge in illicit activities like gambling and even political assassinations while dancing and partying the night away. These elaborate masks are made with gesso and are all hand painted using natural feathers and gems for decoration.



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October 21



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November 21

The Day of the Dead (Spanish: **Día de Muertos**) is a multi-day Mexican holiday to pray and remember friends and family members who have died, and helping support their spiritual journey. In Mexican culture, death is viewed as a natural part of the human cycle and not as a day of sadness but a day of celebration because their loved ones awaken and celebrate with them. In 2008, the tradition was inscribed in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.



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Kathkali Masks, India: Native to the South Indian State of Kerala, Kathakali was developed in the courts and theatres of 17th century Hindu principalities. It incorporates movements from ancient Indian martial arts and athletic traditions of South India. The traditional themes include folk mythologies, religious legends and spiritual ideas from Hindu epics and the Puranas.

December 21