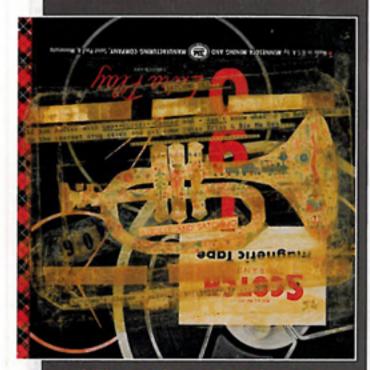


ARTTALK

PLAYING WITH SCISSORS

A trumpet is carefully cut out of a piece of wrapping paper and taped onto a Scotch-brand cassette box. Above it, the typed words: "If you suffer with Gas-Ulcers-Cancer and—don't



A '50s-era collage by Louis Armstrong.

know what to Do Next just go to the nearest drug store and get some Swiss Kriss & Bis Ma Rex." Inscribed in the space between the trumpet's curves are the words "Lucille and Satchmo."

Louis Armstrong's collage—completed in the 1950s—pays homage to his craft, to his fourth wife (Lucille Wilson), and, of course, to his sponsorship deal with Swiss Kriss herbal laxatives. It is one of hundreds of such pieces the jazz great made throughout his life, 200 of which are published for the first time in the new book Satchmo: The Wonderful World and Art of Louis Armstrong (Abrams).

The book's author, Steven Brower, who teaches design at the School of Visual Arts in New York, draws a connection between Armstrong's musical and artistic stylings. He compares the collages-made from photos, newspaper clippings, and correspondence, all attached to cassette boxes with generous helpings of tape—to jazz improvisation, ragtime as Armstrong called it. "Rag," Brower writes, is to take an existing tune and "improvise on top and around the melody to create something new." He adds that the works are, in a sense, "visual ragging." They blur the line between high and low art to tell, in the musician's words, "a little story of my own." -Rachel Wolff

Behind Man Ray's Masks

Few modern artists so brilliantly captured the dynamism of African sculpture as did **Man Ray** in the early '30s. In so doing he also influenced the course of avant-garde art. His ca. 1933 photographs of a

Bangwa sculpture from Cameroon document the way he could capture the movement and spirit of the dancing figure.

The artist's achievements not only as a photographer but also as a provocateur are celebrated in "Man Ray, African Art and the Modernist Lens." up from the 10th of this month through January 10 at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., and traveling to the University of Virginia Art Museum in Charlottesville and the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver. Organized by International Arts & Artists and curated by Wendy Grossman, the exhibition also features images by Cecil Beaton, Walker Evans, Charles Sheeler, and Alfred Stieglitz-all displayed alongside the objects photographed.

Man Ray was introduced to African art in 1914, at an exhibition at Stieglitz's 291 Gal-

lery in New York in which masks, sculptures, and utilitarian objects, shown against walls decorated with cubistic geometric motifs, were treated not as ethnographic subjects but as modern art.

In Paris, where he settled in 1921, Man Ray was impressed by the African art on the market and in the collections of his artist friends, and he soon began photographing it. For the most compelling of these photos, he had the model **Kiki de Montparnasse** rest her head on a table and hold an African mask next to her face.





Man Ray's Noire et blanche, 1926 (top), and untitled photograph, ca. 1933, of a 19th-century sculpture from Cameroon.

That image, Noire et blanche
(1926), became an icon of the Surrealist movement. Transformed by
photography, the mask, a magical
fetish, comes to life, while the
human head, passive and erotic,
looks dead. The picture popularized
so-called primitive art and brought
avant-garde photography to mainstream audiences. —Stephen May