



Mrs. Elephant
1896 Proteus float
character re-creation
Royal Artists, produced for
the Krewe of Proteus
Loaned by Royal Artists

Mardi Gras Satire: Puncturing Pomposity

Guide Recommended for 7th-12th Grade



LOUISIANA
STATE
MUSEUM

Since 1699, Mardi Gras has been celebrated in Louisiana in one way or another. Walk around the second floor of the Presbytere to learn about this fun, complex festivity. Whenever you reach the exhibit called *Satire: Puncturing Pomposity* begin to use this guide.

Mardi Gras during Reconstruction

What was happening in the South during Reconstruction? Check all that are true.

- ☐ An increase in civil rights and political participation for African Americans
- ☐ A lack of violence from white southerners
- ☐ The transition from enslaved labor to wage labor



Twelfth Night Revelers, World
of Audobon
Charles Briton, 1873
Watercolor and gouache on
bristol board
Courtesy of the Historic New
Orleans Collection 1975.117.10

Satire & Parades

Satire is subjective. It can be viewed as funny, harmful, or derogatory, depending on the audience. The first use of satire during Mardi Gras was highly racist and used by all white krewes in protest of Reconstruction.

satire

noun

the use of humor, irony, or ridicule to criticize people or events, especially in the context of politics and current events

Find these images from nineteenth century Mardi Gras parades. Describe what event each one is referring to and what the krewe's opinion of this event was.



Event:

Opinion:



Event:

Opinion:



How is Zulu different from other krewes?

What did Zulu members adopt as the look for their parade?



Sometimes, it is difficult to figure out if someone is being serious or using satire.

Some historians say that Zulu and the imagery they chose (blackface, grass skirts, etc.) was a response to the segregated society and racist tropes of the time.

According to other historians, the members of Zulu were making a satire of what?

Modern Satire

Current-day Mardi Gras parades have mostly turned away from the racism and sexism of the past. However, many krewes still use satire to comment on politics and current events in Louisiana.

Check off each event you see being satirized:

- ☐ Government response to Hurricane Katrina
- ☐ Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill
- ☐ Covid-19 Pandemic
- ☐ Power outages during Hurricane Ida

Why do you think people were inspired to make satire about the government response to Hurricane Katrina?

Ste. Inundation, Patron Saint
of Babies of Rubbermaid, and
Our Lady of the Breach, Patron
Saint of the Army Corps of
Engineers
Mark J. Sindler/Louisiana State
Museum, 2006

