

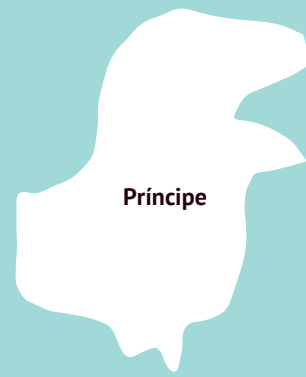
N'GOLÁ
VIII Biennial of Arts and Culture

Celebrating the Power and Beauty of African Arts and Culture

26.7–18.8.2019

SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE

SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE



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WELCOME

Welcome to N'GOLÁ, the eight Biennial of Arts and Culture in São Tomé e Príncipe, a multidisciplinary event which takes place from July 26 to August 18, 2019. For three weeks, the small island country in the Gulf of Guinea will be a vibrant hub of contemporary African culture. The Biennial of São Tomé e Príncipe was initiated by João Carlos Silva in 1995. The aim of the eight Biennial is to connect the community of São Tomé e Príncipe with artists, designers and curators from all over the African continent. The opening will be celebrated in a Festival Opening Weekend from 26–28 July.

N'GOLÁ celebrates the power and beauty of African arts and culture and the way African artists and designers contribute to the future. The event presents a self-confident generation of African artists who are now rapidly reshaping their culture and society. Their work is fierce, stylish, beautiful, imaginative, poetic, sometimes even funny and entertaining, and at the same time strongly connected to their everyday reality with all its ups and downs, to their past and to their imagined future. Participating artists come from Togo, DR Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Niger, Ivory Coast, South Africa, Senegal, Cameroon, Angola, Benin, Nigeria, and São Tomé e Príncipe.

The event is presented at several locations. The main venue 'Casa das Artes Criação Ambiente Utopias' (CACAU), or House of Arts, Creation, Environment and Utopias, features a multidisciplinary exhibition of the arts. The old plantation home Roça Agua Izé and À Baià da Bô present artists from São Tomé e Príncipe, and the ancient fortress of São Jeronimo is the stage for concerts by multiple artists.

The Festival Opening Weekend features a dynamic programme all around the island of São Tomé. At CACAU, workshops, performances, talks and a hair salon take place. A fashion performance by Sunny Dolat and the Nest Collective starts at the ocean side to end up at the Museu Nacional. The village São João dos Angolares is the décor of a festive parade by Yves Sambu and Sapeurs from Kinshasa. The restaurant Roça São João dos Angolares offers a gastronomic experience by João Carlos Silva and is the starting point of excursions to the tropical rainforest.

Join us!

“How to continue to dream about this old idea to change São Tomé e Príncipe? To transform this old slave station into a natural and cultural station, in favour of sustainable development?”

– João Carlos Silva

FOREWORD

JOÃO CARLOS SILVA

Founder and director of the Biennial of São Tomé e Príncipe

HOW? How to continue to dream about this old idea to change São Tomé e Príncipe? To transform this old slave station into a natural and cultural station, in favour of sustainable development? This question, or action, functions as a central axis for an intertwined exercise of looking at these two islands, this state, and to question the past.

How can we, at this quite difficult moment in time, after so much hardship, of leaving so many things behind, still be available to construct a new future together? How is this old laboratory of the Atlantic, place of agricultural and scientific experiences, embryonic place of African literature in the Portuguese language, able to undertake a long and reflective trip, to (re)discover its identity through a collective memory? How can São Tomé e Príncipe be integrated into the Afro-positive movement that runs throughout the continent and what is its role in this new era of AFRICA?

What is the role of the arts and culture in the transformation of São Tomé e Príncipe into a more appealing and more sustainable, more environment-friendly nation, through a citizenship that is active, participative and more responsible? And how can and should a word like HOPE continue to live in this island state? How can we use history and heritage to feed scientific and cultural tourism? And at this moment it is important to ask what the concrete contribution has been of successive editions of the BIENNIAL, during the last decades, to the COUNTRY?

Effectively, the formative and exchanging activities with visiting artists, realized during the various editions of the BIENNIAL, have been constant and the results are very visible in the quality of the group of São Tomé e Príncipe artists, which has been recognized both nationally, as internationally. Just consider the role Teia d'Arte played, especially after the second edition. Artists like Adilson Castro, Olavo Amado, Kwame Sousa, René Tavares, Geane Castro, Catita Dias, and others, had their foundation in this incredible place. A place of artistic formation, of living together on a daily basis, and of solidary friendship. Of remembering, amongst others, the contribution of maestro Seyni Gadiaga from Senegal in the education of these artists. Place of various artistic and cultural expressions, of meet-ups and 'flá vón-vón', in a really crowded place. An activity done through the excellent coordination of Fernanda Pontifice and Jorge Bom Jesus, enthusiastic, with good spirit and an attentive eye

from our beloved Isaura Carvalho. To 'FALAR de NÓS', or to 'talk about us'. And it is on this road, sometimes filled with hardship from life, that we encounter this sea of difficulties for which we had to have a big dose of creativity and imagination, enthusiasm, and willingness to engage our active citizens on a permanent base. The national and international collaborations we developed over the years helped us to concretise a significant number of works in various domains. This way of working represents our biggest, accumulated capital. And our biggest motto has been: the SOLUTION lives next door to the problem.

All this dynamic movement was installed in São Tomé e Príncipe through the provocation of other initiatives linked to the education of new generations, such as the school of the artist KWAME Sousa, and the emergence of various workshops and artistic events in different places proves this. Another example is the courageous initiative of Eduardo Malé and his BIENNIAL on the Island of Príncipe.

Now, N'GOLÁ has challenged the co-founder of DROOG in Amsterdam, Renny Ramakers, to realise the eighth edition of the BIENNIAL, including for the first time an international festival of contemporary art. And today is the perfect time to invite you all to see and get to know a considerable number of African artists of great quality. N'GOLÁ is, also for the people of São Tomé, an educational and pedagogical exercise to (re)view all dimensions of our African roots. All of Africa is like a source of inspiration. A utopian, and a positive Africa. An Africa that reinvents itself every day.

From photography to conversations and conferences about gastronomy, from multidisciplinary workshops to cultural manifestations, from active citizenship to the various heritages, from Afro-utopias to infinite dreaming. A PARTY.

The artists invited by curator Renny Ramakers are evidence of the necessary quality that is brought to São Tomé e Príncipe from South Africa, Benin, Senegal, Uganda, Niger, Angola, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Togo, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of the Congo. They form, in a multidisciplinary way, a true invasion of our collective imagination. With creativity, imagination, provocations, questioning, elegance, and some answers to the HOW.

We continue, in this edition, to practice with other forms of partnerships: we bring the production of different dimensions of the BIENNIAL to people, and external institutions to CACAU. To include, and to share the responsibility of improving each time around! We would like to prolong this dream of finding a solidary economy based in the cultural industry. Different segments, or niches are there in our hands, ready to blossom! Initiatives, in CACAU which is now (re)opened, paying tribute to Isaura Carvalho with her History Museum of São Tomé e Príncipe, and functions like the headquarter of 'all troops'.

In FACA, in Água-Izé, peripheral place where other approaches start, in À Baià da Bô in the margin of other performances, in Roça São João and in Voador-Panhá with people from the ANGOLARES sea, to celebrate AMADOR and to give wings to all dreams of Isaura.

Even the Museu Nacional, with an unprecedented fashion performance that refers to the African continent, or the concert in the ancient fortress of São Jeronimo, next to the Pestana Hotel. A BIENNIAL where the word and reading travel in a moving library to provoke new habits and attitudes towards the BOOK, to help reflect on the environment and the sustainability of our country. A BIENNIAL where, at the same time, meet-ups and informal debates happen in unlikely places. A CACAU about meeting circles of the different communities of the country. A BIENNIAL each time more inclusive and international, with a view to the growth of scientific and cultural tourism.

A very special word of gratitude towards our friend and partner Pieter van Welzen: insightful, enlightened, risk-taking, and passionate about São Tomé e Príncipe. Without this partnership, it would be very difficult to get where we are now. A word of gratitude to my friend Cees Lafeber, always present. A particular thank you to the team of CACAU: architect Paulo Daio for his boldness and professionalism in the interpretation of the many wishes in the architectural renovation of this place. At his side, always loyal and hard-working, the untiring Adilson Castro. Olavo Amado, composed, effective and a friend. To my children, some are here, some are not, who always accepted the inherent sacrifices and irresponsibilities of being a Utopist.

Finally, to all those who, directly or indirectly, helped to realise this adventure. Sponsors and supporters: thank you very much. To share and celebrate our common territories and heritages. To boldly question our raison d'être and being from São Tomé.

Dreaming is a must. Doing is possible.

João Carlos Silva (1956, São Tomé e Príncipe) is the founder and director of the Casa das Artes Criação Ambiente e Utopias (CACAU). In 1995, he initiated the Biennial of São Tomé e Príncipe. Silva is also the owner of the restaurant Roça São João dos Angolares in São Tomé e Príncipe and a well known chef on Portuguese TV.

JOURNEY TO N'GOLÁ

RENNY RAMAKERS

Curator N'GOLÁ VIII Biennial of Arts and Culture

“Working in a multitude of artistic disciplines, including photography, fashion, digital pioneering, architecture, music, moviemaking, and more, N'GOLÁ's participants cast the issues facing Africa today in a new and optimistic light. Whether through humour or unexpected twists, through poetry or fantasy, they convey an unequivocal message of autonomy, dignity and cultural significance.”

– Renny Ramakers

The invitation to curate the eighth edition of the Biennial of São Tomé e Príncipe led me on an inspiring and rewarding voyage of discovery, during which I was often deeply moved, and which has left me impressed by the power and beauty of African art and culture, as well as the vital contribution African artists and designers are making to the future of art and society. I am grateful to João Carlos Silva, the initiator and director of the Biennial, who gave me this opportunity, and to the artists, co-curators, organizers, and everyone else involved, for this experience.

It was a journey on which I embarked with an open mind, eager to find new viewpoints, new aesthetics and new proposals, while exploring relatively unknown territory. At the same time, I had a clear view of what I hoped to find, based on what I have always looked for as a curator, in whatever field or context. I have always believed in the necessity to reimagine today's world, to offer alternative perspectives, and in the power of art as a catalyst to create social change. I have always had faith in the power of social participation and critical (inter)action, and how this could contribute to a better future, and I have always looked for the beauty within this. Whatever art and design might be, or might be able to bring about, it cannot work without that certain power. I believe that beauty is at the heart of any meaningful social change, because anything else will just be a change in power.¹

Ultimately, I believe that all art and design has to transgress, to break down borders and cross boundaries. Opportunities and possibilities are found not only by considering one angle or the other, but by exploring the in-between. I am interested in what lies between dreams and nightmares, diversity and monoculture, perfection and imperfection, opportunity and threat, fluidity and fixity.

This quest for alternative narratives, for catalytic and transgressive works that embrace the power of beauty and expand our imagination, steered the development of my concept for N'GOLÁ, the VIII Biennial of Arts and Culture in São Tomé e Príncipe. And it shaped my approach to the story I wanted to tell. Additionally, I decided to focus on art and artists from sub-Saharan Africa, with the aim of strengthening the ties between the African mainland and this small African republic in the Atlantic ocean: an in-between place, of once uninhabited islands, colonized by the Portuguese from the late 15th century until 1974; a former slave trading post and colonial

1. See page 234 of 'Renny Ramakers: Rethinking Design – Curator of Change', by architecture and design critic Aaron Betsky; Lars Müller, 2019, ISBN: 978-3-0377-8569-0.

plantation, built by the labour of enslaved men and women abducted from the African continent, whose descendants are now determining its future. In making these connections, I purposefully looked for works that could strengthen a narrative that is more positive and uplifting than generally told.

A narrative, that runs counter to an image of Africa as a place of sorrow and suffering: though this image may be justified by Africa's harsh, daily realities and its problematic past, it also fixes the continent in an undesired cliché of powerlessness and lack of agency. A new narrative, which has been gaining momentum, of a dynamic, self-confident Africa, embodying strength, optimism, and hope for the future, particularly among younger generations. In the course of my search I was impressed to encounter so many African artists aiming to create a fresh take on their world through beauty, poetry, irony or a sense of humour, without ever negating its daily reality.

For me, independent of subject matter or discipline, curating an event is primarily a quest for inspiration, driven by a dissatisfaction with existing rules, norms, values and assumptions. My curative process is an intuitive one: while I start out with a clear initial question, I do not look for work to fit and illustrate a predefined concept. Each work that inspires me adds something to the narrative. This interaction with the work and vision of artists is essential: they bring me further along the path and bend it where necessary.

•

One early encounter that proved crucial for the conceptual development of N'GOLÁ was the work of Senegalese artist Omar Victor Diop, which blew me away at first sight with its absolute beauty. His portraits of historical African figures radiate style, dignity, and power, while bristling with an uncanny familiarity. Diop rewrites history, overwhelmingly and passionately. He embraces the past and the present, and then surpasses it, giving us a different perspective on what we thought we knew. Diop once said that no matter how serious the topic, the work can be fun as well, and this helps to deliver the message. This mirrors my conviction that humour can transcend cultural boundaries and social layers, cutting through differences and forming new relations.

In the flamboyant photographs of Kenyan artist Osborne Macharia, a key figure of the Afrofuturism movement, I found the in-between. His elaborately staged photographs celebrate fantasy and fiction while at the same time conveying outspoken messages about the complicated realities of African daily life. Similarly, I have always been intrigued by the Sapeurs of Brazzaville and Kinshasa, admiring them for aspiring to behave like dandy's in poverty-stricken circumstances, while often having to work for a whole year to afford

themselves one glamorous outfit. In DR Congo-based artist Yves Sambu I was happy to find a fellow admirer: not only does he make beautiful photographic series about 'La SAPE', he also stages public performances with its well-dressed protagonists. Wonderfully, Sambu proposed to stage an exclusive performance, involving Sapeurs from DR Congo, for the opening of N'GOLÁ. It is dedicated to Rei Amador, a national hero of São Tomé and Príncipe who led a revolt of enslaved Africans in 1595.

The way Togo-born, US-based musician Tabi Bonney documented a disappearing culture of adornment also resonated with me straightaway. His spontaneous decision, while travelling through Ethiopia, to photograph the beauty rituals and ornamentation of semi-nomadic tribes had nothing to do with exoticism, or an anthropological gaze. On the contrary: he saw beauty, pride, and ingenuity, shapes, colours, and textures, in short: a sense of fashion transcending time and place—which is exactly what struck me when I saw Bonney's images. And I realized that it is this sense of beauty and self-awareness that I have found—and consequently further looked for—in much of the work I have included in N'GOLÁ.

Excessive attention to appearance is often considered superficial. But I realised anew in these past few months that outward appearances can possess significance and meaning, and that fashion, style, and beauty can be vehicles of dignity and self-actualisation, sometimes even with a healing effect. What also struck me was the importance of self-representation for many African artists. A notable example is the work of Samuel Fosso, who has been challenging archetypes and codes over the past 40 years, taking the liberty to transform himself into a diverse set of personages. These can be fictional or actual, ranging from 'Liberated American Woman of the 1970s' in 1998 to, recently, 'Black Pope', but always with a deeper meaning.

Reading the book 'Not African Enough' (2017), edited by Kenyan creative director Sunny Dolat, I was immediately impressed by its optimism and self-confidence. In particular, I was struck by how its texts and images radiate a deepfelt need to shape a sovereign agenda for Africa's future, based on new perceptions of value, culture and significance, no longer burdened by colonial debris. This promptly made me invite Dolat, together with The Nest Collective founded by him, to curate the fashion presentation at N'GOLÁ. Part dawn ritual, part site-specific performance, part fashion intervention, 'In Their finest Robes, The Children Shall return' represents all 55 African nations, not to validate the borders of nation-states that were arbitrarily drawn by colonialists, but to honour the expansiveness of the continent beyond regional round-offs. In his profound essay for this catalogue, reflecting both a history and an ongoing practice of slavery, Dolat states that the presence of all 55 nations is 'a recognition of many layered, shared traumas of dehumanization,

as well as a deliberate holding of space for every country as a geographical reference to the whole land mass.’ But his presentation also signifies hope, beauty and pride: ‘Rituals open a door for us, a generation of Africans who desire a return to our highest, most dignified selves—clothed in our finest robes.’

Each and every artist involved in N’GOLÁ has given me new input, new inspiration, and new insights. I was profoundly touched by artist Joana Choumali from Ivory Coast, who, shortly after a 2016 terrorist attack on her country, had discreetly photographed the people in the stricken area with her smartphone. They were taking up their lives again, saying ‘Ça Va Aller’, ‘it’s going to be fine’, which became the title of a work in which Choumali embroidered the prints of these images as a meditative means of processing the sadness provoked by these experiences. At N’GOLÁ she shows other, equally poetic work. And I was impressed by the images and sculptures of South African artist Mary Sibande, who, with different but equally powerful means, show a similar defiance in the face of trauma by creating a new, combative female persona. In her compatriot Sethembile Msezane I found another power woman. As a protest against the ubiquitous representation of white male colonial figures on statues and monuments in the city where she lives, she climbed on a pedestal herself and stood there for four hours. In Msezane’s work I found the in-between again: as powerful as it is spiritual.

In Togo architect and anthropologist Senamé Koffi Agbodjinou I found a kindred spirit: he believes that the future of Africa lies in digital technologies which make it possible to involve people in the building process, and advocates the ‘digital vernacular’, highlighting the similarities between hacker culture and traditional African values. And I was inspired by Rwandese architect Christian Benimana, who believes in the social power of architecture, and wants to set up design schools all over Africa, so that these skills do not need to be imported from abroad.

All artists, curators, and sparring partners contributed insights and inspiration along the way. Some, like Sunny Dolat for fashion, naturally took on the role of co-curator of the N’GOLÁ project. Likewise, Nigerian artist Emeka Okereke curated the presentation at N’GOLÁ of the collaborative, multidisciplinary research project Invisible Borders, and initiated a workshop in São Tomé as part of this ongoing Trans-African road trip that questions the borders between different African countries and searches for alliances and exchanges with the people encountered along the way. Another esteemed partner with a deep knowledge of what is happening in Africa, is Design Indaba from Cape Town, organiser of the acclaimed eponymous yearly conference, who will co-programme the talks in the opening weekend. And Biennial director Joao Carlos Silva curated an exhibition on the work of Santomense artists at Roça Agua Izé.

This process of creative encounters led to this edition of the Biennial. Each of the participating artists and curators, in his or her unique way, articulates an inspiring version of a future Africa. Building on the strength and richness of their respective histories, the victories as much as the hardships, they express hope, pride and positivity.

N’GOLÁ’s opening programme is conceived as a festival, filled with workshops and performances, followed by an exhibition of three weeks. The programme stimulates public engagement, not only by offering new perspectives and appealing to the imagination, but also by directly involving the audience: visitors to the Biennial as much as the people on several parts of the islands, and the participating artists.

Working in a multitude of artistic disciplines, including photography, fashion, digital pioneering, architecture, music, moviemaking, and more, N’GOLÁ’s participants cast the issues facing Africa today in a new and optimistic light. Whether through humour or unexpected twists, through poetry or fantasy, they convey an unequivocal message of autonomy, dignity and cultural significance.

Am I, who lives and works in The Netherlands, fit to pursue such an endeavour? Maybe not, but in all humility, I offer my quest for the in-between, for beauty within social change, as a contribution to ongoing debates. As I was inspired, so do I hope others to be.

Renny Ramakers (1946, The Netherlands) is an Amsterdam based art historian. She is co-founder and director of Droog, the renowned experimental design initiative from the Netherlands that started in 1993 as an anti-statement; a down to earth design mentality with a human touch that opposed the high style and form-based world of design. Today, Ramakers works as an independant curator, critic, writer and lecturer, and initiates projects worldwide, often reaching beyond the realms of design.

“In their Finest Robes, the Children Shall Return ambitiously requests the representation of every single country on the Continent, not so that it may validate some of these budding industries or the borders of nation-states that were arbitrarily drawn by colonialists; but to be intentional about honouring the expansiveness of the continent beyond regional round-offs.”

– The Nest Collective

IN THEIR FINEST ROBES, THE CHILDREN SHALL RETURN

The Nest Collective

Part dawn ritual, part site-specific performance, part fashion intervention, *In their Finest Robes, the Children Shall Return* begins with a Mediator who stands at the interface of Land and Sea, seeking absolution and safe passage in a triumvirate of negotiation:

‘Will you release them?’ the Mediator asks of the Sea.

‘Will you let them through?’ the Mediator asks of the Land.

‘Will you forgive us?’ the Mediator asks of the Children.

‘The African continent was bled of its human resources via all possible routes. Across the Sahara, through the Red Sea, from the Indian Ocean ports and across the Atlantic.’¹ Together with the colonial enterprise and apartheid, the dehumanisation and violation of black bodies by slavery has been and still is a principal element of racial hierarchy and supremacy. Warriors, technicians, tailors, merchants, artists, blacksmiths, healers and many, many more were taken from their families in Africa, and repurposed as the forced, unpaid labour that undergirds a massive part of modern civilisation.

There are, suitably and deservedly, numerous guilts associated with the far-reaching legacy of the slave trade. Society has a shameful history of denial and recrimination. In *In their Finest Robes, the Children Shall Return* attempts to unbind one of these guilts, a subtle tension over our complicity in the trade—the shame of the peoples of the Continent, who gave away, abducted and stole their children as part of the deplorable trade. Can there ever be forgiveness between the people who profited from the trade and the lost children? Can the Sea ever forgive us for using it to transport uprooted, unwilling souls away from everything they had ever known and loved? Can the Land ever forgive that it was made the enforced site for the spilling of blood, and the looting of a people? Can the Children and their descendants ever forgive the unimaginable horror they experienced on the slave ships and the centuries of violence that awaited them on the other side?

‘You sold us!’ a rightfully embittered refrain, echoed in the hearts and minds of the descendants of diaspora Africans, reminds us all of an embattled subject seldom addressed by the Continent’s leaders and people (excepting moments such as the 1999 visit of Benin’s

1. M'Bokolo, E. 1998. The impact of the slave trade on Africa: <https://mondediplo.com/1998/04/02africa>

President Mathieu Kérékou, who visited a Baltimore church and fell to his knees during an apology to African Americans for Africa's role in the slave trade).

São Tomé and Príncipe, historically one of several slave trading posts owned by Portugal, and through which thousands of slaves passed through, provides a stage upon which to reflect on a moment, a contemporary re-telling, re-membling and re-visiting of one of 'the greatest tragedies in the history of humanity in terms of scale and duration.'²

55+1: Counting Countries, Counting Peoples

The disaggregation of the Continent into its constituent nations remains important: the insistent historical and contemporary portrayals of Africa as a place, a country and even a Thing has allowed for the often-harmful contextualization of millions of people into one homogenous entity, convenient for political, economic, social and cultural generalisations. At the same time, nation-state divides neither encompass true African ethno-lingual diversity, nor represent the interests of thousands of tribes. The community and the country remain at odds, each competing to be the space of first belonging and loyalty for African people.

Modern discourse on African fashion often cherry-picks a handful of countries to represent the entire continent. One may use a trade lens to justify having Lagos, Johannesburg, Nairobi, Dakar and Accra appear over and over in texts about African fashion as the cities are considered the 'fashion capitals' of Africa, to the continuous disregard and erasure of the budding industries in the other 50 countries.

In their *Finest Robes*, the *Children Shall Return* ambitiously requests the representation of every single country on the Continent, not so that it may validate some of these budding industries or the borders of nation-states that were arbitrarily drawn by colonialists; but to be intentional about honouring the expansiveness of the continent beyond regional round-offs. The presence of all 55 nations is a recognition of many layered, shared traumas of dehumanization, as well as a deliberate holding of space for every country as a geographical reference to the whole land mass.

The additional one (+1) is the African diaspora, considered the sixth region of Africa alongside the North, South, East, West and Central regions. The diaspora—represented all over the world—consists of around 170 million people of African descent,³ who have varied historical, political, social and cultural ties to the Continent, and whose ancestors have moved from Africa to the rest of the world in multiple different circumstances, waves and dispensations, at

2. A quote attributed to French historian Jean-Michel Deveau.
3. Map, The Six Regions of the African Union - West Africa Brief: <http://www.west-africa-brief.org/content/en/six-regions-african-union>

4. Bradford, Lawrence, 2013. Modern Day Slavery in South East Asia: Thailand and Cambodia: <http://investvine.com/modern-day-slavery-in-southeast-asia-thailand-and-cambodia/>
5. Bales, Kevin, 1999. Disposable People. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
6. Helmore, E. Over 400,000 people living in 'modern slavery' in US, report finds: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/19/us-modern-slavery-report-global-slavery-index>
7. AFP, 2017. African migrants sold as 'slaves' for \$200 in Libya: <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/african-migrants-sold-as-slaves-in-libya-71066-5886812-5hy4xoz/index.html>
8. The Global Slavery Index: 2018 Findings: <https://www.globallslaveryindex.org/2018/findings/highlights/>
9. UN General Assembly 68/237, December 2014, with the wider theme 'Recognition, Justice and Development': <https://www.un.org/en/events/africandecentdecade/documents.shtml>

different times in world history. They most certainly include the descendants of those who were forcibly removed from Africa by slavery. The descendants of slaves may have tangible links to their communities of origin, such as the small community of Afro-Colombians in Palanque, Colombia, who speak an old dialect of Yoruba. Some can be profoundly isolated, like the small fishing village in São João dos Angolares, São Tomé, whose language nobody around them can understand or trace. Most diasporic existence is somewhere in the middle, peppered by a number of facts, but mostly defined by gaps and questions. The diaspora also consists of the numerous immigrants who have since left the Continent in the 20th and 21st centuries, under another host of modern-day circumstances, to build new lives.

Contemporary slavery, renamed 'human trafficking', is now a multibillion-dollar industry with estimates of up to \$35 billion generated annually.⁴ Today, a slave can be bought for just \$90.⁵ It has been reported in 2018 that slavery in wealthy Western societies is much more prevalent than previously known—in particular in the United States and Great Britain—which have 403,000 and 136,000 slaves respectively.⁶ Sub-Saharan Africans trying to get to Europe through Libya have been abducted and sold through slave markets.⁷ In Mauritania—the last country to abolish slavery in 1981—it is estimated that 20 percent of its population of 3 million are enslaved as bonded laborers.⁸ Slavery, therefore, is not the ghost of humanity's past that many would prefer to think of it as.

2019 is almost halfway through what the United Nations have declared the 'International Decade for People of African Descent.'⁹ It is still immeasurably difficult to narrate the nuances of a brutal history that continues into the present day, without stripping it of its many complicated and tragic truths, and in turn their unpredictable and troublesome legacies. While the mere passage of time has helped societies—such as Portugal, France, Netherlands, Spain, the United States and nations of the Arab World—that were perpetrators in this crime to conveniently reframe themselves in a different and more virtuous light, as well as whitewash their histories, young Africans cannot wait for them to get to the moral and spiritual place where they are able to accept responsibility for their crimes and seek true absolution. The multiple actual and psycho-social fractures, gaps and resentments caused by slavery cannot be dealt with comprehensively using formal and structural mechanisms alone.

Rituals open a door for us, a generation of Africans who desire a return to our highest, most dignified selves—clothed in our finest robes.

The Nest Collective is a multidisciplinary Kenyan squad working with film, fashion, visual arts and music, co-founded in 2012 by independent fashion curator and creative director Sunny Dolat, N'GOLÁ's curator of fashion.

PERFORMANCES

WHAT I WANT TO LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE

STEPHEN TAYO (1994, NIGERIA) AND
JAN HOEK (1984, THE NETHERLANDS)

'What I want to look like in the future' underlines the power of the individual and of a child's imagination. It is the title of the campaign image for N'GOLÁ, shot by Nigerian photographer Stephen Tayo and Dutch photographer Jan Hoek.

During the Festival Opening Weekend, the campaign image is extended into a video clip, where children from São Tomé e Príncipe can select their visionary wardrobe and share their hopes and ideas of the future.

Stephen Tayo and Jan Hoek, What I want to look like in the future, 2019.





IN THEIR FINEST ROBES, THE CHILDREN SHALL RETURN

SUNNY DOLAT (1988, KENYA) & THE NEST COLLECTIVE

Independent fashion curator and creative director Sunny Dolat stages a fashion performance with high symbolic value: 56 fashion designers, one from every country of the African continent and from the diaspora, will each provide a look for one of 56 models scouted in São Tomé. Together, they participate in a performance connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the city of São Tomé, starting at dawn.

A central inspiration was a speech in 2018 by Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo, who declared 2019 'The Year of Return for Africans' in the diaspora, claiming that 'the time is right' for people of African descent to make the journey back. Noting that former slave trading post São Tomé e Príncipe seems to have lost its connection with the mainland, Sunny Dolat aims to symbolically reconnect the small island country with the rest of the vast African continent through this pan-African fashion performance.

By presenting unique designs from all 55 African countries and one look to represent the diaspora, at N'GOLÁ, Dolat aims to show the diversity and richness of Africa and African fashion, and thereby underline that there is not, and has never been, one singular African look or style. Dolat: 'Even a failure to gather all 55 countries into one space for the installation will still be such a great success. For me the biggest success has been the attempt, the ambition. The thing I am refusing to be a part of, from now onwards, is to present designers from only six countries and then say, "This is what African fashion looks like." If I am doing anything for Africa, it will be all 55 countries, or nothing. I would like to set that standard.'

A selection of these fashion items is presented at the exhibition in CACAU, together with a video of the fashion performance by Noel Kasyoka.

ENIGMA: A TRIBUTE TO REI AMADOR

YVES SAMBU (1980, DR CONGO)

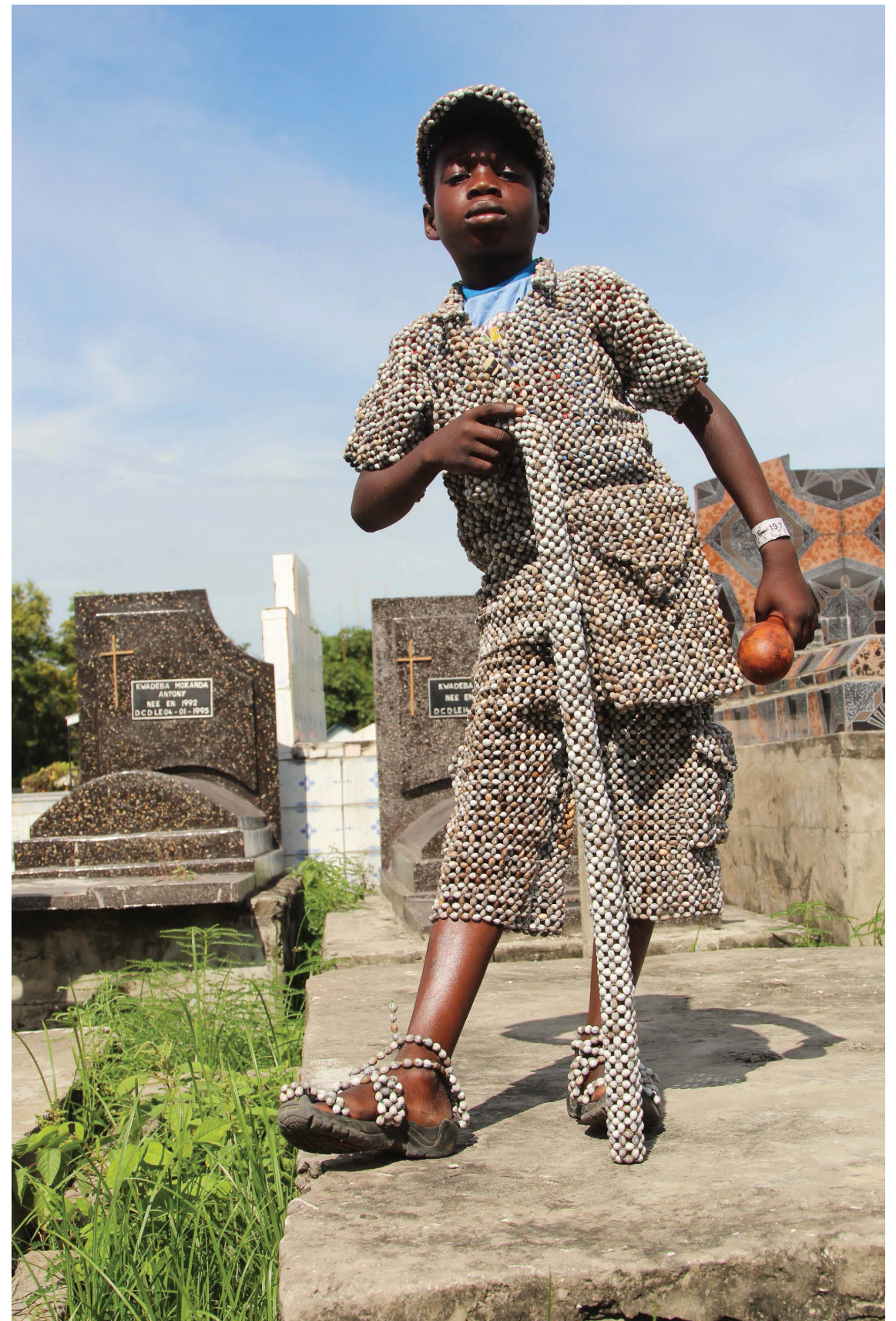
'Enigma' is Yves Sambu's ongoing project of conceptual research and creation in various socio-historic contexts. One of his goals for the Enigma project is to meet people and communities that maintain artisanal and spiritual practices, collecting facts about their societies, quotations, fables, humour, the irony of legendary stories, the national news and even Fake news.

For Enigma in São Tomé, Sambu was inspired by Rei Amador, a national hero of São Tomé e Príncipe. As the story goes, on 9 July 1595, Amador, one of the enslaved Angolares living in the south of São Tomé island, led a famous uprising against the Portuguese which was joined by enslaved people from other parts of São Tomé e Príncipe. After winning the battle, Amador, supported by his followers, proclaimed himself King of São Tomé e Príncipe. Rei Amador ruled the country until 4 January 1596, when he was captured, sent to prison, and executed by the Portuguese. Amador's rebellion is one of the first of this importance ever undertaken in Africa against the transatlantic slave trade: an important moment in African history.

With a performance created especially for N'GOLÁ, Yves Sambu wants to pay tribute to Rei Amador and his fight against oppression, as well as to the fight against oppression in general. The scarcity of information about Amador, and the fact that he was a self-proclaimed king, stimulated Yves Sambu to initiate a ritual of royal coronation and to create for this occasion a traditional and imperial costume. This costume is made of vegetable beads, as a symbol of the folklore of Bantu people, and with small glass beads found in tribute costumes of the people of East and Southern Africa.

The royal costume forms the centrepiece of a festive parade on Friday 26 July, at sundown, accompanied by singing and dancing Sapeurs from Kinshasa who travelled to São Tomé for this occasion. The people of São Tomé are invited to join. The final destination of this performance is the ritual of dressing the statue of Rei Amador in the town of São João de Angolares. A video of the performance is shown at the exhibition in CACAU.

Yves Sambu, Red Armony Triptic, from the series Vanitas, 2010-2017. Photography, 80 x 100 cm.



SALOONI

KAMPIRE BAHANA (1987, UGANDA) AND
DARLYNE KOMUKAMA (1984, UGANDA)

Salooni is a multidisciplinary art project that explores the politics woven through and straightened out of black women's hair. Two of its founding members, Kampire Bahana and Darlyne Komukama, will present a pop-up hair salon at N'GOLÁ where visitors can have their hair done, work with other people's hair and have their portrait taken. A multimedia installation featuring photography and film provides more background to the Salooni project.

The four Ugandan women who created Salooni treat African hair as a science, culture and art, studying everything from traditional hairstyle patterns to braiding as an act of resistance among slaves. Through short films, live art performances, theatre and photography, Salooni presents the ways in which historical memory and ways of being are woven into the nap of black peoples' hair. Their aim is to address negative notions about Afro-textured hair, the legacy of a period on the African continent when beauty standards were dictated by white culture. Salooni notes that, even now, Ugandan school policies dictate that 'black students aren't allowed to grow their hair because it's seen as an expression that you are untameable.'

Salooni: 'It is our contribution to a conversation that black women have been having, now more frequently online with the natural-hair-movement, but also one that our mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers had with one another and continue to have with us. The styles, strategies and practices of hair care passed down across time and migrations. Today, this gives black girls not only a history of our hair, but a science of survival in a white supremacist world, as well as a glimpse of our potential futures.'



FUTURELAB/AFRICA

JEPCHUMBA (1984, KENYA)

Digital artist, curator and designer Jepchumba's podcast series 'Futurelab/Africa' is dedicated to the culture of technology in Africa. For this occasion, her podcast takes the form of a live performance. Jepchumba states: 'The internet is rife with discussions about African futurism and Afrofuturism. Unfortunately, the discussions are often not nuanced enough to take into consideration that indeed the future is African'.

Through her podcast, Jepchumba aims to address these topics and further spread the word about the future of Africa, hoping to nurture the curiosity of young people in Africa by inviting them to use their imagination and think creatively 'with reckless abandon'. The show is a call to explore African modes of science and technology outside lab spaces and innovation labs. Jepchumba wants to find answers to the question what technology, science, nature, the environment and experimentation really mean in the context of African people's lived realities.

Jepchumba: 'The podcast series is also designed to explore new forms of audio storytelling, bearing in mind Africa's rich history with radio. To this day, radio by far is the dominant mass medium in Africa. Unfortunately, audio storytelling is largely unexplored in digital media outside the music industry.'



Jepchumba, Futurelab/Africa, 2019.

MUSIC

N'GOLÁ presents two festive evening programmes filled with concerts by artists from the African continent and the diaspora, taking place at Fortinho de São Jerónimo in the gardens of the Hotel Pestana São Tomé, on Saturday, July 26 and Saturday, August 10.

CONCERT BY BLINKY BILL (KENYA)

Bill Ochieng Sellanga is a singer-songwriter, beatmaker, and producer known as Blinky Bill, a name that refers to an Australian cartoon about an environmentalist koala he used to watch when he was young. Blinky Bill is one of the four members of the Kenyan art and music collective Just a Band. His music is a mixture of electronic music, futuristic African beats, funk and hip hop. The music video to his song 'Atie', directed by Kenyan artist Osborne Macharia, is presented in the central exhibition. He is also involved in Macharia's video 'No Touch Am' and he wrote the music for the movie Rafiki by Wanuri Kahiu, both on show in the exhibition.



Photo by Maxime de Bolivier

CONCERT BY TABI BONNEY (1977, TOGO, BASED IN U.S.A)

Togo-born, Washington, D.C.-raised musician, director and photographer Tabi Bonney is the son of Itadi Bonney, an afro-funk musician popular during the 1970s in Togo and West Africa. Bonney achieved recognition in the Washington metro area with his radio singles 'The Pocket' and 'Doin It' which featured Raheem DeVaughn. He has directed and produced commercials and music videos for several brands and artists, including friend and fellow D.C. associate Wale. Now Los Angeles-based, Bonney's visual content has won awards at Toronto Film Festival and has aided campaigns for Adidas, DC Tourism, Alaffia, Tidal and more. Recently, he presented a series of striking photographs called 'Le Bon Voyage', that celebrate the Surma, an Ethiopian ethnic group. A selection of these photographs is presented at the exhibition in CACAU.



DJ SET BY KAMPIRE BAHANA (1987, UGANDA)

As one of East Africa's most exciting DJs and a core member of Kampala's Nyege Nyege collective, Kampire's vibrant sets have taken her to Burkina Faso, Reunion Islands and festival stages like Sonar, Barcelona, Unsound, Krakow and Over the Border, Tokyo. Her mixes have been featured on Resident Advisor, Le Mellotron, Radar Radio and Crack Magazine. Kampire Bahana is one of the four women who founded Salooni, a multidisciplinary art project that explores the politics woven through and straightened out of black women's hair. They present a pop-up hair salon at CACAU during the opening weekend.



Photo by Darilyne Komukama

Photo by Vera Marmelo

CONCERT BY VALETE (PORTUGAL)

Keidje Torres Lima—professionally known by his artist name Valete—is a hip-hop artist, born in Portugal with strong Santomense roots. He has enjoyed critical success in his home country of Portugal. His second album Serviço Público was named as one of the best Portuguese hip hop albums of 2006 by the critics. He is considered to be the only political rapper in Portugal.



DJ SET BY JOSEMAR (SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE)

Josemar is a dj from São Tomé e Príncipe. On both July 27 and August 10, he will perform at Fortinho de São Jerónimo.



GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCE

JOÃO CARLOS SILVA (1956, SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE)

João Carlos Silva is not only the founder and director of the CACAU cultural centre and the Biennial of São Tomé e Príncipe, he is also the owner of the restaurant Roça São João dos Angolares in São Tomé e Príncipe and a TV chef on Portuguese TV.

In the restaurant Roça São João dos Angolares, an extraordinary gastronomic experience is hosted on the evening of Friday, 27 July and the afternoon of Sunday, 28 July. Visitors are able to explore all the rich flavours the island has to offer, with a multiple course dinner that offers an excellent fusion of traditional Santomense and contemporary cuisine.

Santomense food is characterised by time-consuming specialities. The culture of slow, simple pleasures filters into the nation's cuisine. 'On São Tomé, happiness transforms everything we do, even the flavour of our food,' João Carlos Silva states.



Photo by Inês Gonçalves



Roça São João dos Angolares, photo by Joan Doyer

WORKSHOPS

Emeka Okereke, Borders of road Blocks, Ore Benin expressway, 2012. Courtesy Invisible Borders, The Trans-African Project.

HISTORY IS PRESENT: ARTICULATING TIME AND THE NARRATIVES IN BETWEEN

EMEKA OKEREKE (1980, NIGERIA, LIVES AND WORKS BETWEEN LAGOS AND BERLIN)

As part of N'GOLÁ, in the week before the opening, Emeka Okereke organised an exclusive workshop called 'History is Present: Articulating Time and the Narratives in Between'. He invited writers, filmmakers and photographers from São Tomé to take part. The workshop focused on the immediate history, reality, and environment of São Tomé, with an emphasis on interacting with the people of the island.

The participants created new works in line with the aims of Okereke's 'Invisible Borders, The Trans-African Project', which he founded on the urgency of addressing gaps and misconceptions that emerged from borders dividing the 54 countries of the African continent. The project's core activity is the 'Trans-African Road Trip', which brings a dozen artists, including photographers, writers, filmmakers and performance artists together. They collectively travelled across Africa, developing photographic and video works and texts that address the notion of the border and the theme of separation between countries on the African continent, while at the same time reflect on their interactions with local artists, cultural operators and residents.

The results of the workshop are presented at the exhibition in CACAU as part of the Invisible Borders presentation.



CREATE A 3D PRINTER

SÉNAMÉ KOFFI AGBODJINOU (1980, TOGO)

Architect and anthropologist Sénamé Koffi Agbodjinou, together with his colleague Yabido Prosper, member of the WoeLab community, conducts a workshop during the opening weekend about co-manufacturing a 3D-printer from e-waste, called 'Tavio'. The results of the workshop are presented at the exhibition, together with a video.

Koffi is the founder of 'L'Africaine d'Architecture', a collaborative research platform that focuses on issues of architecture and the African city. He is an advocate of the 'digital vernacular', which builds on the similarities between hacker ethics and the values of traditional African societies. Bringing these two together, he proposes a new type of 'smart cities': building cities together with their citizens by using new digital technologies. Koffi is also the founder and catalyst behind WoeLabs, a network of Togolese grassroots tech hubs working to equalize access to technology, through which he has helped launch a dozen shared companies of the #siliconvillage group. Part of this programme is '3DprintAfrica', which aims to bring rapid prototyping technologies into schools and cyber-cafés, with the aim to prevent Africa being left behind in the 'Next Industrial Revolution'.

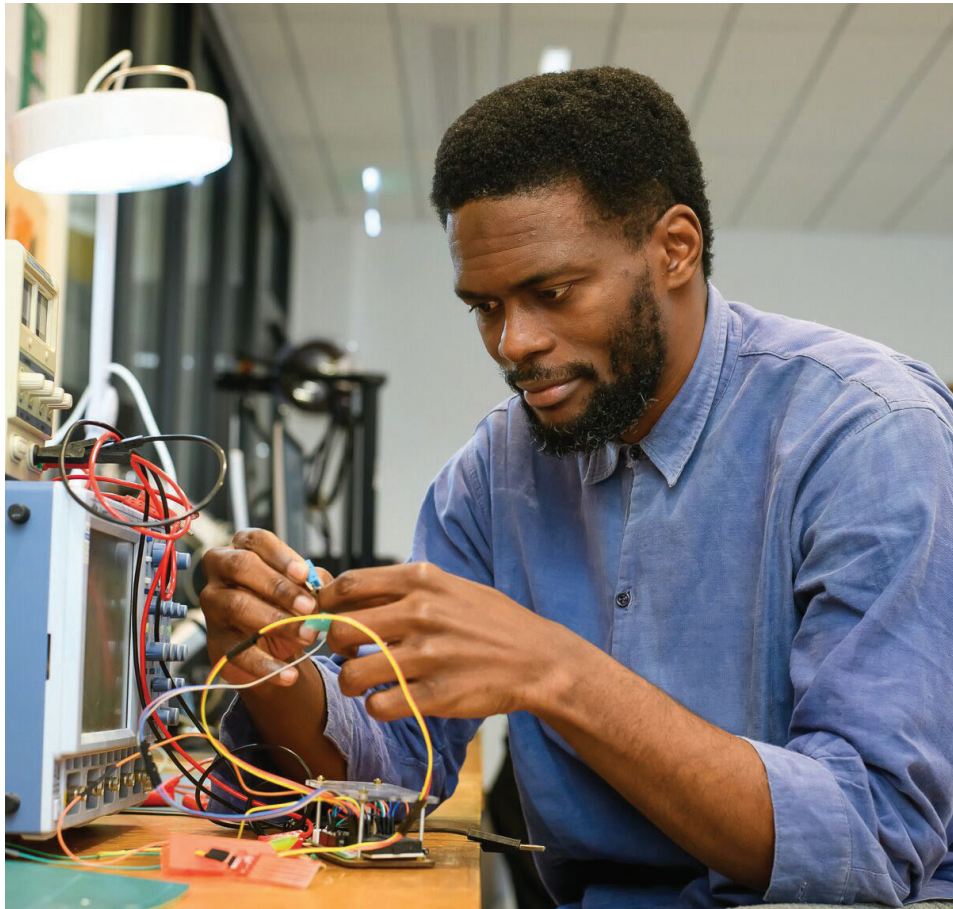


Photo courtesy Sénamé Koffi Agbodjinou

AGUA GRANDE

NIKKIE WESTER (1989, THE NETHERLANDS)

Nikkie Wester was asked in 2015 as part of Studio Droog, Amsterdam, to participate in the redesign of the CACAU building. To create a 90-metre-long curtain destined for its interior, Wester taught twenty-five women and men in the town of Neves the skills of dyeing and weaving banana leaf fibres, a waste material abundantly available on the island. After completion of the curtain, the weavers can use these skills for other economic activities. A section of the curtain is on show in CACAU during the Biennial.

The curtain depicts the flora and fauna of São Tomé e Príncipe, combined with the text of a poem dear to Santomense, 'Lá no Água Grande' by Alda Espírito Santo, which describes women laughing and singing while beating and cleaning clothes by the riverside. Likewise, the weavers sing while they work. The banana leaf fibres are dyed in collaboration with local organization Uê Tela, with pigments from local plants and minerals, including an indigo plant used for this purpose for the first time.

Nikkie Wester: 'Textiles are pure cultural heritage. From the moment we are born to the moment we die, we are surrounded by textiles. Throughout our lives, textiles express our personality, culture, feelings and opinions. A fact that is shared all over the world.'



Nikkie Wester, Agua Grande, since 2015. Photo by Dario Pequeno Paraiso.

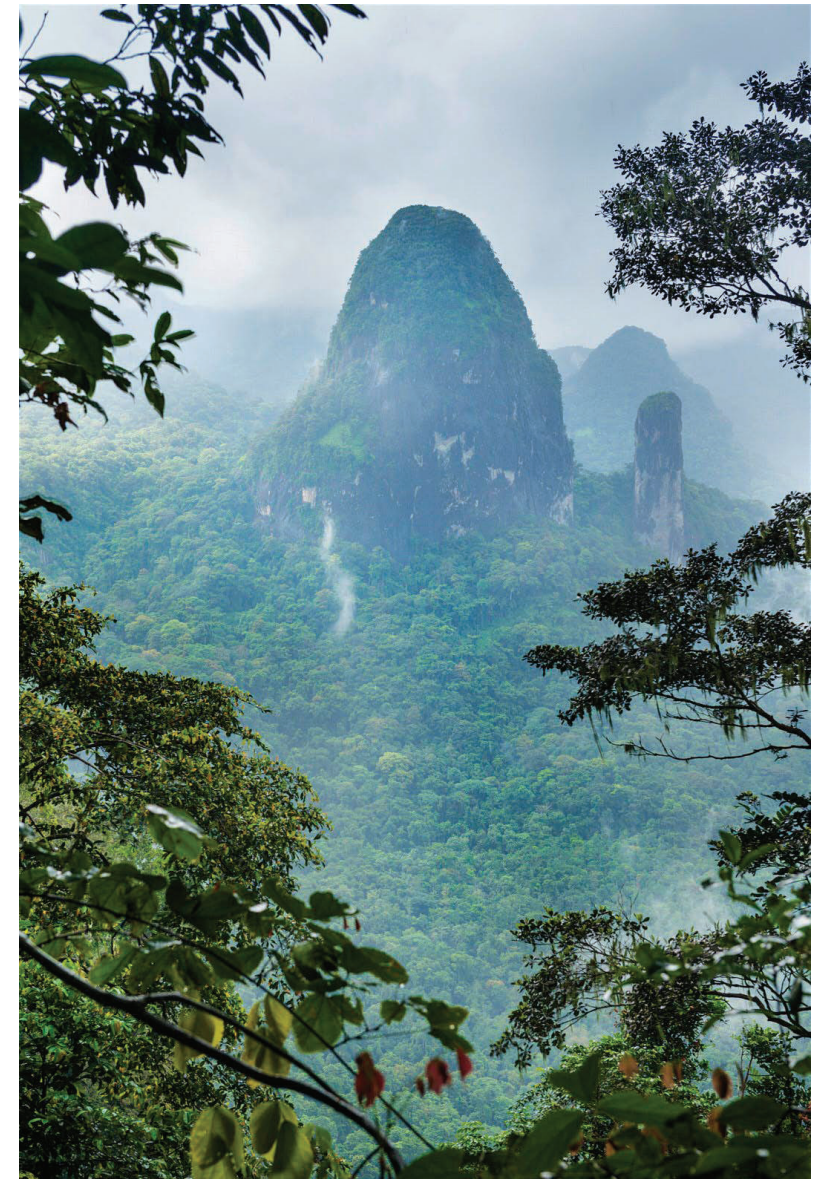
RAINFOREST EXCURSION

Father and son' João Dias Pai and João Dias Filho appear through the mist © Justin Foulkes / Lonely Planet

The level of biodiversity on São Tomé e Príncipe is one of the highest in the world, with many species occurring nowhere else. A rainforest excursion during N'GOLÁ offers the opportunity to explore this unique environment.

The wildlife of São Tomé and Príncipe is mainly to be found in the rainforests, which covers almost three quarters of the total area of the island of São Tomé. The islands' famous birds include the world's largest sunbird, the smallest ibis and large seabird colonies. Besides, there are seven extraordinary amphibian species and about 895 species of extraordinary vascular plants to be found on the island.

Find out more about this extraordinary and biodiverse island, and all its flora and fauna, by participating in the excursion to the tropical rainforest.



TALKS

TALKS IN COLLABORATION WITH DESIGN INDABA

In collaboration with Design Indaba, N'GOLÁ hosts a series of talks during the opening weekend, providing a platform for artists to give their views on creative innovation, and offering an informal meeting place for exchange of dialogue and ideas.

Bringing together participants from across the African continent, Design Indaba inspires the visitor to think about a better future through art, design and creativity. Some recurring tendencies have appeared in the work of many of the artists participating in N'GOLÁ: digitalisation, the expression of identity and the next generation of Africa. The talks will offer visitors the opportunity to delve into conversations surrounding these topics.

The voices of artists are important in gaining an understanding of the currents that run through the exhibition and performances of N'GOLÁ. Design Indaba has selected a handful of artists from different backgrounds and perspectives to share their expertise.

EXHIBITION IN CACAU

Sammy Baloji, The Tower, 7th street, quartier, industrial municipality of Limete, 2015.
Courtesy the artist and Axis Gallery, NY.



THE TOWER: A CONCRETE UTOPIA, 2016 SAMMY BALOJI (1978, DR CONGO) & FILIP DE BOECK (1961, BELGIUM)

In the video 'The Tower: A Concrete Utopia', a man who goes by the name of 'Docteur' offers a guided tour of the building site of a remarkable tower, situated in the municipality of Limete, Kinshasa (DR Congo). Docteur is the owner and initiator of this tower, on which construction started in 2003. The camera follows him, dressed in a blue doctor's uniform, as he leads the viewer through his rambling concrete edifice while explaining his designs and ambitions for the tower with a mixture of pride and wit.

Realising his building without the help of professional architects, Docteur modelled it after the Forescom tower, one of the early landmarks of Belgian colonial urban design. Built in 1946, this was Kinshasa's—then still named Leopoldville—first skyscraper, and one of the first high-rise buildings in central Africa. With this movie, Baloji and De Boeck comment on the degradation of colonial infrastructure and explore the ways in which the city continues to reformulate these earlier propositions.

De Boeck: 'It embodies new ideas of possible futures, and as such, the tower materially translates and emblematically visualizes colonialist ideology of progress and modernity. The new utopian vision, still in process, illustrates the various ways in which the colonialist legacy continues to be reformulated and reassembled today.'



MASS Design Group, Maternity Waiting Village, Kasungu, Malawi, 2015. Photo by Iwan Baan.

ARCHITECTURE WITH A MISSION

CHRISTIAN BENIMANA & MASS DESIGN GROUP (RWANDA)

Christian Benimana believes that architecture is never neutral: it either heals or hurts, projecting its values far beyond a building's walls, into the lives of people. MASS Design Group, purposefully set up as a non-profit practice, chooses to research, build, and advocate for architecture that promotes justice and human dignity. To them, architecture is 'not just about building design, but also about the implementation of a dignifying process that creates long-term impact.'

In 2016, Benimana set up the African Design Centre in Rwanda. With this field-based apprenticeship, set to be the 'Bauhaus of Africa', he wants to strengthen design knowledge on the African continent. Benimana strongly believes the next generation of architects should be educated in Africa and hopes to set up several more African Design Centres. His long-term aim is to have building skills developed on the continent, to replace the now common practice of bringing them in from abroad. The African Design Centre, working closely with MASS, advocates a more sustainable building practice that makes innovative use of local materials and technologies, and builds what it designs.

Each project is based on a central idea, such as: 'How can a hospital building better heal its patients, and how can the structure of a school help its students learn?' For example, the Maternity Waiting Village in Malawi (2015) helps reduce maternal mortality by providing shelter and a community for women in the last months of pregnancy. In this project, women took part as builders and were also invited to add decorations. The recently completed Ruhehe Primary School (2018) was designed by African Design Centre's first cohort of fellows, following a model for Rwandan public education established earlier by MASS in their design for Mubuga Primary School, to create a comfortable, healthy, and playful learning environment.



MASS Design Group and African Design Centre, Ruhehe Primary School, Ruhengeri, Rwanda, 2018. Photo by Iwan Baan.





Tabi Bonney, *Le Bon Voyage–Brooklyn*, 2018. Photography, 98 x 123 cm.

LE BON VOYAGE–BROOKLYN, 2018

TABI BONNEY (1977, TOGO, BASED IN U.S.A.)

Early 2018, rapper Tabi Bonney travelled to Ethiopia with a friend to study its coffee culture. In the valley of the Omo River, in southwest Ethiopia, Bonney encountered the Surma people, groups of semi-nomadic cattle herders whose lifestyle is under threat due to severe drought. Plans to develop the area through building dams and creating national parks offer promise for improvement, but also pose a potential threat to the livelihood of the group, and to their way of life.

The Surma people are known for their elaborate body paint, scarification, and majestic lip discs, which denote beauty and status, particularly for women. Bonney's encounter with their disappearing culture made him take up the camera to create this multi-dimensional document.

'It was not my intention to shoot,' Bonney says. 'Upon staying in the Omo Valley and meeting the people, I saw them as my African brothers and sisters. With it being my first time in East Africa, I realised how similar we all are. Whether it be Africans on the continent or African Americans in the States, I saw familiar personalities, facial expressions, energy. It made me realise that we are all truly the same worldwide.'

With these photographic series, Tabi Bonney celebrates Surma culture with a contemporary and universal sense of appreciation. As he explains, 'I shot these portraits from a beauty and fashion aspect. I saw richness and ingenuity, where others may have seen something else. I saw that our people—no matter what circumstances, social status, or where we are in the world—have the ability to make the most out of even a little.'

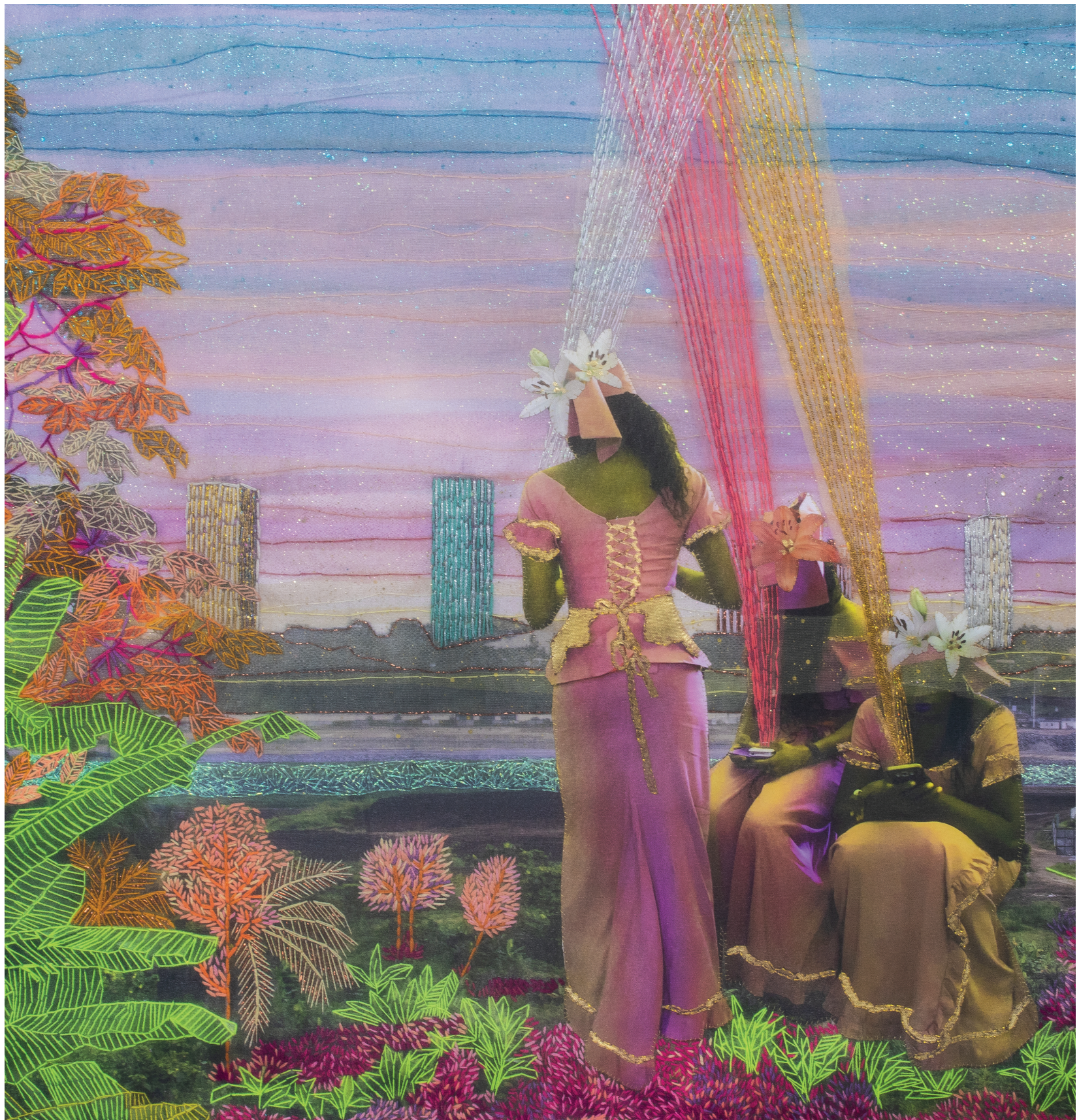
ALBA'HIAN, 2018

JOANA CHOUMALI (1974, IVORY COAST)

Alba'hian in Agni language—from the Akan people in Ivory Coast—means the first light of day. Every morning, between 5 and 7am, Joana Choumali wakes up, walks outside, and observes and photographs everything that reveals itself in the early light of dawn: the landscape, the streets, the buildings, the people.

Gradually, this has become her daily routine, a ritual of introspection that accompanies her wherever she goes, but especially in Africa. Afterwards, she adds several layers of collage, embroidery, quilting and photomontage to the photographic prints, as well as other pictures taken during those walks. This takes her several weeks for each piece.

With her delicate works, Choumali wants to bear witness to the energy of the African continent, to the way people shape their lives, and keep on going whatever happens to them. At the same time, they represent a journey into her inner life.



Joana Choumali, Les Demoiselles d'Honneur, from the series Alba'Hian, 2018. Photography on canvas, embroidered, 80 x 80 cm. 49



Justin Dingwall, *Grazia*, from the series *Albus*, 2013.
Photography, 119 x 79,3 cm. Courtesy ARTCO Gallery, Germany.

Justin Dingwall, *RUBY II*, from the series *A seat at the table*, 2018.
Photography, 119 x 79,3 cm. Courtesy ARTCO Gallery, Germany.



ALBUS, 2013
A SEAT AT THE TABLE, 2018
JUSTIN DINGWALL (1983, SOUTH-AFRICA)

With his 'Albus' portraits, Justin Dingwall seeks to inspire a public debate on the taboo subject of albinism in Africa. Throughout the continent, people living with albinism are frequently discriminated against and subjected to superstition and violence. In many parts of Africa, magical powers are attributed to people with albinism, who are sometimes even killed for their much sought-after body parts.

For Dingwall his highly stylized portraits are 'not about race or fashion, but about perception, and what we subjectively perceive as beautiful.' He wanted to 'create a series of images that resonate with humanity and make people question: what is beautiful? To me diversity is what makes humanity interesting and beautiful.' In this, Dingwall chooses a different approach to portraying albinism to that of Sarah Waiswa, also included in the N'GOLÁ exhibition, who emphasizes their position of outcasts in society—in a highly stylized way.

In 'A Seat at the Table' Dingwall features model Moostapha Saidi who lives with the condition of vitiligo, which makes the skin lose its pigment. Because of his appearance, growing up was difficult for Moostapha, Dingwall says, but things have changed: 'Through these challenges he has gained strength and confidence from looking so different. He no longer sees his vitiligo as a hindrance, but as something precious and unique.'

DIASPORA, 2014-2016

OMAR VICTOR DIOP (1980, SENEGAL)

With his 'Diaspora' series, Omar Victor Diop pays homage to notable Africans who played important roles in 16th to 19th century Europe, Asia, the Americas, or the Middle East, but by now have largely been forgotten. Referencing the style of the original paintings, engravings, and photographs of these historical figures, Diop brings them back to life in elaborately staged portraits, using himself as a model. Through this, Diop intends to create 'a reinvented narrative of the history of black people, and therefore, the history of humanity and of the concept of freedom.'

One example is Jean-Baptiste Belley (July 1746–August 1805), a native of Senegal and a former slave from Saint-Domingue in the French West Indies, who during the French Revolution became a member of the National Convention and the Council of Five Hundred of France. Another is Don Miguel De Castro, an emissary of Congo who in 1643 or 1644 travelled to The Netherlands via Brazil, with two servants, as part of a delegation sent by the ruler of the province of Sonho to find a resolution to an internal conflict in Congo.

Each historical African character holds a contemporary football accessory: a foot resting on a football, a boot dangling over a shoulder. With these additions, Diop highlights the paradoxes they share with European football heroes of today, who can still be targets for outright racism: 'Football often reveals where society is in terms of race.'

Omar Victor Diop, Jean-Baptiste Belley (1746 – 1805), from the series Diaspora, 2014-2016. Photography, 120 x 80 cm. Courtesy MAGNIN-A Gallery.

Jean-Baptiste Belley (1746 – 1805)
Original painting by Girodet





Sunny Dolat, Salt Of The Earth, 2019.

IN THEIR FINEST ROBES, THE CHILDREN SHALL RETURN, 2019

SUNNY DOLAT (1988, KENYA) & THE NEST COLLECTIVE

Independent fashion curator and creative director Sunny Dolat co-founded The Nest Collective in 2012, a multidisciplinary Kenyan squad working with film, fashion, visual arts and music. During the opening weekend, Dolat and the Nest Collective staged a fashion performance, together with 56 fashion designers, one from every country of the African continent and one from the diaspora.

A video of this performance, made by Noel Kasyoka, is presented at the exhibition, together with items and accessories from these designs. With these unique designs from each of all 55 African countries and one look to represent the diaspora, Dolat aims to show the diversity and richness of Africa and African fashion, and thereby underline that there is not, and has never been, one singular African look or style.



**TATI, THE LIBERATED AMERICAN
WOMAN OF THE 70'S, 1997
EMPEROR OF AFRICA, 2013
BLACK POPE, 2017**

SAMUEL FOSSO (1962, CAMEROON)

Born in Cameroon, Samuel Fosso lived in Nigeria as a child during the Biafra war until he was forced to flee to Bangui, Central African Republic. He now works in Paris and is a French citizen; he lives both in Bangui and Aba, Nigeria. In the 1970's, aged thirteen, he started making self-portraits to finish up rolls of film, sending them as evidence of his wellbeing to his grandmother who stayed behind in Nigeria. Fosso has continued to create his imaginatively staged self-portraits for the past forty years, initially only for himself, until they were discovered by a photography curator and shown at the first Bamako Biennale in 1994.

Fosso portrays iconic or historical figures that often represent a comment on Africa's present or past, such as "The Liberated American Woman of the 70's", "Emperor of Africa" and "Black Pope". His series are not to be seen as messages, but as pure works of art that enlarge the boundaries of existence for every human being. By continually transforming himself into different characters, Samuel Fosso wants to make people question identity, history and representation.

Samuel Fosso: 'Taking pictures is for me a way of liberating myself from the sufferings of childhood, from illness, war, everything. I always believed that my life would be pushed aside by other people's lives, but photography has given me a second life. It's made all lives possible for me.'

Samuel Fosso, Tati, the Liberated American woman of the 70's, 1997. Photography, 100 x 100 cm.
Samuel Fosso, Black Pope, 2017. Photography, 239 x 180 cm.
Courtesy Jean Marc Patras, Paris

Samuel Fosso, Emperor of Africa, 2013. Photography 124,5 x 124,5 cm.
Courtesy Jean Marc Patras, Paris





BODA BODA MADNESS, 2018
BOBBIN CASE & JAN HOEK (1991, UGANDA /
1984, THE NETHERLANDS)

Fashion designer Bobbin Case and photographer Jan Hoek jointly created the project 'Boda Boda Madness' for the motor taxi drivers of Nairobi. The drivers add striking features to their vehicles to distinguish themselves from the competition and strengthen their appeal to customers, turning their motors into true artworks on wheels.

Their colourful appearances caught the attention of Jan Hoek and Bobbin Case, who soon realised that the drivers had forgotten about their own outfits in the creative process. They pointed out to the taxi drivers: 'There is still something missing, your clothing!'

So they picked seven motor taxi drivers and together with them designed special outfits that match their motors, with fashion designer Bobbin Case taking the lead. Jan Hoek photographed the drivers in the Kenyan landscape, following his usual method of involving his models in the process, letting them decide exactly how they wished to be pictured. Now, these taxi drivers are driving around in Nairobi in the most extraordinary outfits.

'Boda Boda Madness' is on view in an outdoor exhibition at CACAU, accompanied by a soundscape.



Samantha Mugatsia and Sheila Muniya in Rafiki, 2018.
Directed by Wanuri Kahiu.
Courtesy Big World Cinema.

RAFIKI, 2018

WANURI KAHIU (1980, KENYA)

Wanuri Kahiu's latest film 'Rafiki', meaning friend, tells the story of love and friendship between two young Kenyan girls, named Kena and Ziki, amidst family and political pressures around the issue of LGBT rights in Kenya. The film was based on 'Jambula Tree', the award-winning short story by Monica Arac de Nyeko.

After noticing the lack of African films with love stories about young people, Kahiu decided the time was right for romantic contemporary African movies: 'I live in Nairobi which is a very cosmopolitan city. We have friends who are gay, everyone knows someone from the LGBT community. We wanted to tell this story to honour our friends, because everyone has the right to fall in love.' In 2018, Rafiki was the first Kenyan feature film to be invited to the Cannes Film Festival, but it was banned in Kenya.

Kahiu aims to present an alternative to stereotypically negative images of the African continent by telling stories of Africans living a cheerful and thriving existence. As she puts it: 'Africa is so often portrayed as hurt or dying or sad or broken. We believe that Africa is joyful and full of pride and respect and hope.' To achieve this aim Kahiu co-founded Afrobubblegum, a media collective dedicated to supporting 'fun, fierce and frivolous' African art.

Bodys Isek Kingelez, Projet pour le Kinshasa du troisième millénaire, 1997.
Wood, cardboard, paper, metal, various materials, 100x33x352 cm.
Courtesy Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain Paris.



KINGELEZ: KINSHASA UNE VILLE REPENSÉE, 2003

A FILM BY DIRK DUMON (1943, BELGIUM)

The late sculptor Bodys Isek Kingelez (DR Congo, 1948-2015) was known for vibrant sculptures of imagined buildings and cities, made of everyday materials and found objects, such as card board, paper, tape, packaging, plastic, soda cans, bottle caps, and other commonplace materials.

Kingelez's fantastic, utopian sculptures reflect his dreams for his country, his continent, and the world. They present an optimistic alternative to his own experience of urban life in the city of Kinshasa. Kingelez aimed at making the world a better place through his work, as he proclaimed in his manifesto: 'Thanks to my deep hope for a happy tomorrow, I strive to better my quality, and the better becomes the wonderful.'

Kingelez' work and legacy is represented here by the film 'Kingelez: Kinshasa, A City Rethought', made by Belgian documentary filmmaker Dirk Dumon in 2003.

Produced by PIKSA 2003 © 2018 Dirk Dumon.

REGIONAL MARKET IN DANDAJI, NIGER, 2018

MARIAM KAMARA (1970, NIGER), ATELIER MASŌMĪ

In rural Niger, markets run on a weekly basis, allowing sellers to move from village to village all week long to offer their products. With a rapidly increasing population, the village of Dandaji needed a more permanent structure for its weekly market—currently organised around an ancestral tree—to secure the sale of goods, promote commerce in the area and provide a comfortable central public space for its inhabitants.

The new market, built on a slightly elevated plane, stays on the same site. To provide solar and thermal protection to the vending spaces underneath, atelier masŏmĭ designed a colourful metal canopy of overlapping shading elements. The whimsical structure complements the colourful goods on display, while protecting patrons from the scorching sun. The compressed-earth brick stalls help to cool the space, while the canopy's alternating heights stimulate the air flow throughout. The market gradually steps down to the site of the old tree, now shaped as a real public space, with seating and rest spaces for all to gather around.

Mariam Kamara: 'We sought to create an infrastructure that would be very visually appealing, that the villagers would be proud of, and that would consequently attract more commerce to the area. Ultimately, a main goal of the project is to create a space that projects a sense of confidence and aspirations for the future in the users themselves by way of a dramatic upgrade from the market's initial wood and straw structures.'





Lola Keyezua, Fortia, 2017. Photography, 90 x 60 cm.

FORTIA, 2017

LOLA KEYEZUA (1988, ANGOLA)

Lola Keyezua's work is driven by a desire to change the often-prejudiced narrative about Africa, and contribute to change through her art. Most of her work revolves around the black female body and different minority groups, with the aim of empowering these people through representation and beautification.

Keyezua's series 'Fortia' seduces the eye of the viewer with the image of a strong beautiful woman in a red dress, but the actual story is told through the masks. These were designed and made by men who have lost one or more limbs, just like Keyezua's father, who lost both his legs from diabetes before passing away when she was still a young girl.

Keyezua initially created 'Fortia' as a way to honour her father whom she remembers as a strong man, but it grew into a tribute to 'each person that battles with an emotional reaction to physical disability, and to empower them.' In Angola, a man without legs is no longer considered a man. Keyezua wants to counteract this negative perception and create an empowering narrative instead. 'The force that I found in this group of physically disabled men is what I wanted to portray in each mask.'

Keyezua uses the same mixed mixture of photography, collage and masks in her new work 'Noirceur'. 'Noirceur' celebrates motherhood, and more specifically the mother who does not follow the traditional pattern of motherhood established by the patriarchal system. It celebrates women who challenge patriarchal ideology, and as such aims to portray the rise of African feminism.



MAGADI, 2017
NO TOUCH AM, 2017

OSBORNE MACHARIA (1986, KENYA)

Osborne Macharia's style of photography is a strong representative of the Afrofuturism genre, which he considers 'a powerful platform to convey, through storytelling and social inclusion, important messages on topics such as equality, inclusion, gender abuse, ivory poaching, female genital mutilation, albinism, dwarfism, minority groups, and care for the elderly.'

Macharia's photo series 'Magadi' shows a group of former female circumcisers living in the vast salty plains of Lake Magadi, Kenya, who abandoned their former practice and took up ethnic fashion as an alternative livelihood. 'They now shelter young girls escaping early marriage, teaching them fashion skills such as styling, design, print work, and modelling for both local and international runways,' explains Macharia.

In 'No Touch Am' Macharia turns herbalists and animal charmers of the Hausa tribe from the Northern State of Katsina, Nigeria, into stylish protectors of the forest, rangers in fancy suits with a monkey or hyena at their side. 'The wild animals they once domesticated and used as domestic pets, a tradition passed down from their ancestors, are now expert trackers. Now both man and beast roam the forests at night, seeking illegal firewood harvesters while protecting indigenous flora.'

These personages also feature in two video clips Macharia directed for Kenyan musician Blinky Bill, who gives a concert at N'GOLÁ: 'No Touch Am', featuring Nneka, and 'ATIE', featuring Mitya, both co-directed with Andrew Mageto.

Osborne Macharia, No Touch Am, 2017. Photography, 230 x 170 cm.



Osborne Macharia, Magadi, 2017. Photography, 230 x 170 cm.



KALETA/KALETA

EMO DE MEDEIROS (1979, BENIN, LIVES AND WORKS IN COTONOU, BENIN, AND IN PARIS, FRANCE)

Multidisciplinary artist Emo de Medeiros' video installation 'Kaleta/Kaleta' pays tribute to the tradition of Kaleta, invented by Afro-Brazilians returned to Benin after the famous Malê slave revolt of Salvador de Bahia in 1835. Kaleta is a unique mix of Brazilian carnival, American Halloween, and local mask traditions. Born from the slave trade, Kaleta is anything but a lament: it is a tribute to human resilience and resistance, but also to cultural resilience, since the tradition is passed on by children.

Kaleta is performed by young boys gathered in small bands during the Christmas and New Year period. They go from house to house, dancing and playing makeshift instruments in exchange for small tips. The musicians never wear masks, and their percussive instruments are generally made out of reused material (cans, bottles, pieces of metal, etc.). The dancers are always masked and never talk. They communicate only through gestures and only respond individually and collectively to the name of 'Kaleta'.

Emo de Medeiros belongs to a generation of Africans who are more interested in the future of the continent than its past, and are using memory, history and tradition as fundamental elements of this outlook on the future. Some of Emo de Medeiros' work relies on developing 'performative installations' that turn visitors into active participants, making them co-creators of the art work. The three-screen video installation Kaleta/Kaleta incorporates hundreds of audio and video bits that can be infinitely recombined. Its music incorporates many genres created by the African diaspora, from percussions of Benin, Brazil or Cuba to House music and Nigerian Afrobeatz.

SOLITUDE, 2016
WATER BODIES–ISINQUMO I, 2018
SETHEMBILE MSEZANE (1991, SOUTH AFRICA)

Sethembile Msezane's work includes performance, photography, film, sculpture, and drawing. She focuses on spirituality, commemoration, and African knowledge systems. After having moved to Cape Town from Soweto, Msezane felt she did not belong in her new hometown, whose public monuments and statues, meant to represent her national identity, only depicted white male colonial figures. 'In all of this I could not see anything African; I could not see anything that was women. I could not see anything that was like my mother and my aunts, or women that I knew. So for me, it was a task of reclaiming histories that had been omitted from public spaces. That's how I came to perform and use my body.'

The powerful image of Msezane's 'Chapungu–The Day Rhodes Fell' during the 2015 student protests at the University of Cape Town quickly went global: after standing on a pedestal for just under four hours, she raised her winged arms at the exact moment Cecil Rhodes' statue was lifted away. For 'Solitude', Msezane embodied the spirit of Solitude, a slave rebellion leader in 19th century Guadeloupe, as a living sculpture in Dakar on a strip overlooking Gorée Island, the largest slave trading centre on the African coast between the 15-19th century.

Msezane asks the question, 'How do we begin to humanise ourselves in spaces and on grounds that have been fertilised by bloodshed?', reflecting on mending the spiritual tear that came with the looting of land that carries the bones, memories, rituals and traditions of African ancestry. The photograph 'Water bodies–Isinqumo I' shows Msezane floating on water in a boat, accompanied by her spirit embodiment. The image is part of a body of work that presents surreal dreamscapes in which the artist experiences psychic encounters with her own self and with her ancestors.



INVISIBLE BORDERS TRANS-AFRICAN PROJECT

EMEKA OKEREKE (1980, NIGERIA, LIVES AND WORKS BETWEEN LAGOS AND BERLIN)

Visual artist and writer Emeka Okereke is the founder and artistic director of 'Invisible Borders, The Trans-African Project'. This initiative aims to address the gaps and misconceptions created by frontiers dividing the countries of the African continent.

The project's core activity is the 'Trans-African Road Trip', wherein a dozen artists, including photographers, writers, filmmakers, and performance artists collectively travel across Africa to explore and participate in various photographic events, festivals and exhibitions. During stops along the way, the artists develop photographic, video, and text works that address the notion of the border and the theme of separation between countries on the African continent, while at the same time reflecting on their interactions with local artists, cultural operators and residents.

In 2018, the Invisible Borders group embarked on its eighth edition of the Trans-African Road Trip. The route this time was Lagos, Nigeria to Maputo, Mozambique. The journey was divided into two batches. So far, the Batch A artists have completed a journey from Nigeria to Rwanda while traversing such countries as Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Batch B of the project is scheduled to take place at some later date in 2020.

The exhibition of Invisible Borders at N'GOLÁ will feature selected photographs, writings, and a film installation from recent Invisible Borders Trans-African Road Trips. The works on display are renditions of reflections on the eventualities of the road—stories, encounters, experiences—lived by artists who took part in the journey. The artistic trans-African road trip passed through countries, towns, villages, and trans-African highways between Lagos, Nigeria and Maputo, Mozambique within a period of 95 days, from August 20 to November 23, 2018. The outcome of this project is a feature-length documentary film, which will be screened at N'GOLÁ.

Besides the exhibition and film component, there is a presentation of the outcome of an 8-day workshop with photographers, writers and filmmakers, led by Emeka Okereke as part of the Invisible Borders Trans-African Project's presence at N'GOLÁ.



VANITAS, 2010-2017
YVES SAMBU (1980, DR CONGO)

Ever since having to traverse one as a child, on the way to the fields with his grandmother, cemeteries have held a morbid fascination for Yves Sambu: 'whenever I pass through that fateful place, I am scared, haunted by a dreadful fear.' Yet he discovered that they are also 'a place of refuge, a peaceful place of requiem, for some people,' including the 'Sapeurs', or members of SAPE (Société des Ambianceurs et Personnes Élégantes), the Congolese movement of elegantly dressed men. On 10 February of every year, the Sapeurs of Kinshasa meet at Gombe cemetery to commemorate Stervos Niarcos, the king of SAPE, who died in 1995. This inspired Sambu to create the series 'Vanitas'.

As Sambu describes, Sapeurs identify and distinguish themselves through distinctive (real or fake) brand clothes. They see SAPE as a religion, *kitende*, which revolves around respect for oneself, respect for the body, the importance of purity, beauty and harmony. To them, SAPE is a form of non-violent resistance against the dreary poverty of their lives. Cemeteries emphasise not only the movement's religious aspect, but also its challenging and provocative opposition against an urban environment in decline. Sambu sees the Sapeurs as artists and finds that their 'vanity' creates a very contemporary *vanitas*.

For the opening weekend of N'GOLÁ, Sambu created a ritual to honour Rei Amador, a national hero of São Tomé, with a specially made royal costume carried by a parade of singing and dancing Sapeurs from Kinshasa. A video documents this performance.





Mary Sibande, *I'm A Lady*, 2009. Photography, 90 x 60 cm.

I'M A LADY, 2009
SILENT SYMPHONY, 2010
A TERRIBLE BEAUTY IS BORN, 2013
MARY SIBANDE (1982, SOUTH AFRICA)

With her photographs and sculptures Mary Sibande explores the construction of identity in a postcolonial South African context and beyond. In the series 'Sophie' she presents an iconic image of a strong, powerful and combative woman in a blue housekeeper costume. The figure is moulded after Sibande herself and can be seen as her alter ego. This work draws energy from the long history of female domestic workers, during apartheid and post-apartheid. Sibande's works celebrate the hard work, strength, love, hope, and imagination that carried so many black South African women—her mother, grandmother, and great grandmother included—through apartheid in South Africa. Most of her female relatives were working as maids for white families in South Africa.

Next, Sibande created the figure 'High Priestess', which could be described as Afrofuturistic: the woman is now dressed in a purple costume, festooned with all kinds of bells and whistles. From that moment onwards, the housemaid becomes a new, powerful persona who will determine her own future, thereby rewriting history and creating alternative paths and perspectives.

'We witness Sophie as the High Priestess becoming the space between two realms', Sibande explains, 'between the past and future, between what has been and what could be—she is fleeting, a personification of mystery and spirit which is unknown to the rational world.'

Sao my love,

Dear Sao,
Queen of dreams,
island full of beans,
mole on angel face.

Dearest Tome,
Queen of Kings,
Sweet juicy earth.

Principe my love,
accept my dirty kiss,
my trash on your bed.
Just for a night.

my tears deep in your soul,
one night in your arms.
to save our love.

"Plastic Trees" as Content,
Virtual visual forest for Context,
Just a little mental sculpture for lovers.

IN LOVE WITH SÃO, 2019

PASCAL MARTHINE TAYOU (1966, CAMEROON, BASED IN BELGIUM)

Multidisciplinary artist Pascale Marthine Tayou is known for creating large-scale installations that combine various mediums and are assembled from a diversity of materials and found objects. He combines harvested materials of African origin with elements from Western tradition and mass culture. The works often address the topic of travel, and explore questions of migration, identity and culture.

With the wall installation 'In Love with São', Tayou builds on his well-known 'Plastic trees' made from branches and plastic bags. The installation is accompanied by a poem about São Tomé. The beauty of the image contrasts with the negative associations evoked by the plastic bags. Tayou sees a plastic bag as the trademark of globalisation, omnipresent in shops, houses and also in nature. Plastic is a symbol of consumerism, waste and pollution, but increasingly also for refugees who risk their lives hoping for a better life, with all their belongings held together in a plastic bag.

Pascale Marthine Tayou, In Love with São, 2019.

Pascale Marthine Tayou, Plastic Tree, 2014. Branches and plastic bags. Variable dimensions
Courtesy the artist and GALLERIA CONTINUA, San Gimignano / Beijing / Les Moulins / Habana
Photo by Ela Bialkowska





STRANGER IN A FAMILIAR LAND, 2016

SARAH WAISWA (1980, UGANDA, BASED IN KENYA)

Sarah Waiswa's photographic series 'Stranger in Familiar Land' examines the persecution of people living with albinism in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Tanzania, it is believed that people with albinism possess magical powers, and they are hunted for their body parts. People fear what they do not understand, so people with albinism continue to be exposed to ridicule and persecution. In this series, the backdrop is formed by the Kibera slum in Nairobi, which is a metaphor for Waiswa's own turbulent vision of the outside world. The series illustrates the life of a person with albinism who is forced to face challenges, emanating from the sun, but mainly from society itself.

While Justin Dingwall, whose portraits of people with albinism are also included in the N'GOLÁ exhibition, places his subjects on a metaphorical pedestal by focusing on their beauty, Sarah Waiswa deliberately decides to portray her subject as an outcast in society. In addition, the artist seeks to express how a sense of not belonging has caused her subject to wander and exist in a dreamlike state, floating between harsh daily realities and her own constructed safe space.

Sarah Waiswa: 'I want to illustrate the plight of various social issues on the continent, in a contemporary and non-traditional way. I aim to help change the narrative on Africa by generating dialogue on developing issues as they happen. I am passionate about creating visual poetry and telling stories in the most organic and creative way possible.'

EXHIBITIONS IN ROÇA AGUA IZÉ AND À BAIÀ DA BÔ

CURATED BY JOÃO CARLOS SILVA

FINDING N'GOLÁ

In the old plantation home Roça Agua Izé, south of the city of São Tomé, and in À Baià da Bô, an exhibition is presented, curated by João Carlos Silva, founder and director of the Biennial. Three artists from São Tomé e Príncipe—René Tavares (1983), Kwame Sousa (1980), and Eduardo Malé (1973)—present works of photography, video and sculpture, specially created for this occasion, that deal with themes such as environmental problems, identity, and the history of the country. The focus of their work is on the community of Angolares, a village in the south of São Tomé. It is believed that this town was established by the survivors of a shipwrecked Portuguese slave ship, who became the first inhabitants of the islands. Later they chose their own leader, Rei Amador, who today is a national hero of São Tomé e Príncipe.

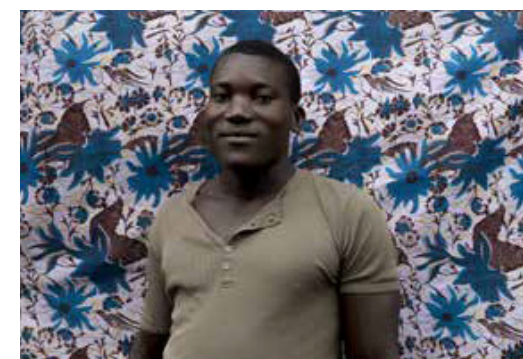
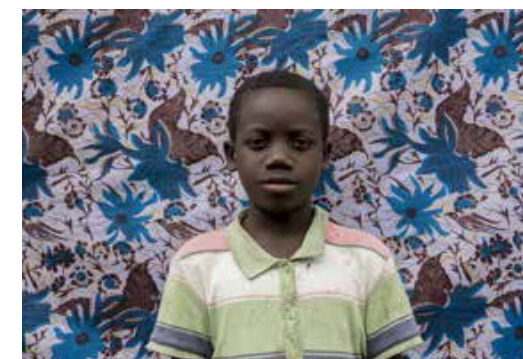
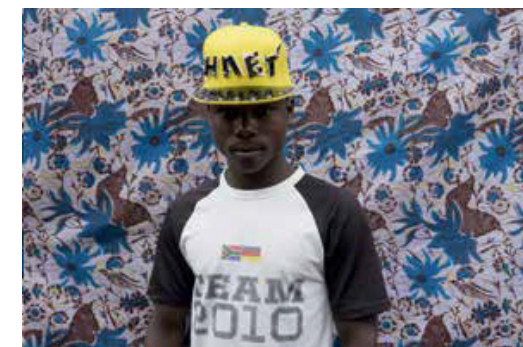
CHADA PORTRAIT, 2019

RENÉ TAVARES (1983, SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE)

In his work, René Tavares reflects upon his experience of displacement and modern resettlement within the postcolonial context. For the 'Chada Portrait' series, René Tavares travelled along São Tomé island coast, between several Angolar fishing communities, portraying them as descendants of the first settlers on the island. Reflecting on the island's colonial history, Tavares aims to capture the origin of the people of N'Golá, from the continent of Africa to the island of São Tomé.

Tavares links this story to the hypothetical shipwreck of a slave boat, The Seven Stones, on the south side of São Tomé. The survivors, who contributed to the settlement of the islands, were named Angolares (Angels). Fishing formed a great source of wealth for the Angolares, who created a type of architecture using local materials, that has persisted over time. The Chada Portrait series idealises the perspective of local migration, seeking in Angolar history.

Next to these portraits, in an audio visual installation, the artist explores the sense of connection between the Angolar communities through their convivial way of life, seeking out the traditional and specific aesthetics of these communities. Tavares: 'The project consists of exploring points on the island where the Angolares communities were formed, created in this process of migration that we call Chada, making a connection between the different spaces of "disembarkation": the familiar fragmentation of this local migration.'



René Tavares, Chada portrait, 2019. Fotografia, 60 x 85 cm.



Kwame Sousa, O Guardião, 2019. Oil on canvas, 90 x 100 cm.

Kwame Sousa, Ing Obô, 2019. Oil on canvas, 85 x 95 cm.



O REINO ANGOLAR A ORIGEM, 2019

KWAME SOUSA (1980, SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE)

Kwame Sousa sees the visual arts as human, social and economic development capital: a source of self-esteem, vertical solidarity and social cohesion, favouring the emotional perception of belonging to an identity, self-knowledge, freedom of speech and intercultural dialogue as social values. His most recent work, 'O Reino Angolar a Origem', Origin of the Angolar Kingdom, researches and traces the largely unknown origin of the Angolares, a group of Santomense people with a distinctive culture and language of their own.

Sousa speculates that the Angolar people might have come to São Tomé as 'free travellers in search of new lands, in a transcendental overseas journey lasting several centuries', settling on the island as 'children of the earth, carrying histories of their origin into a contemporary world.' Through his creative and investigative process, Sousa finds traces of that origin in the ceremonial acts and masks of the Angolares: 'The strong and marked traits of the masks that are exposed on days of celebration refer to an abstract and almost isolated image, a self-portrait as it were, almost documentary.'

As Sousa describes, the mask is an important element of the cultural identity of each ethnic group on the African continent, demonstrating the richness and abstract complexity of its cultural heritage. 'The mask seeks to capture the essence of the spirit, not its actual physical traits; therefore, it uses distortions of real facts to create the imaginary.'

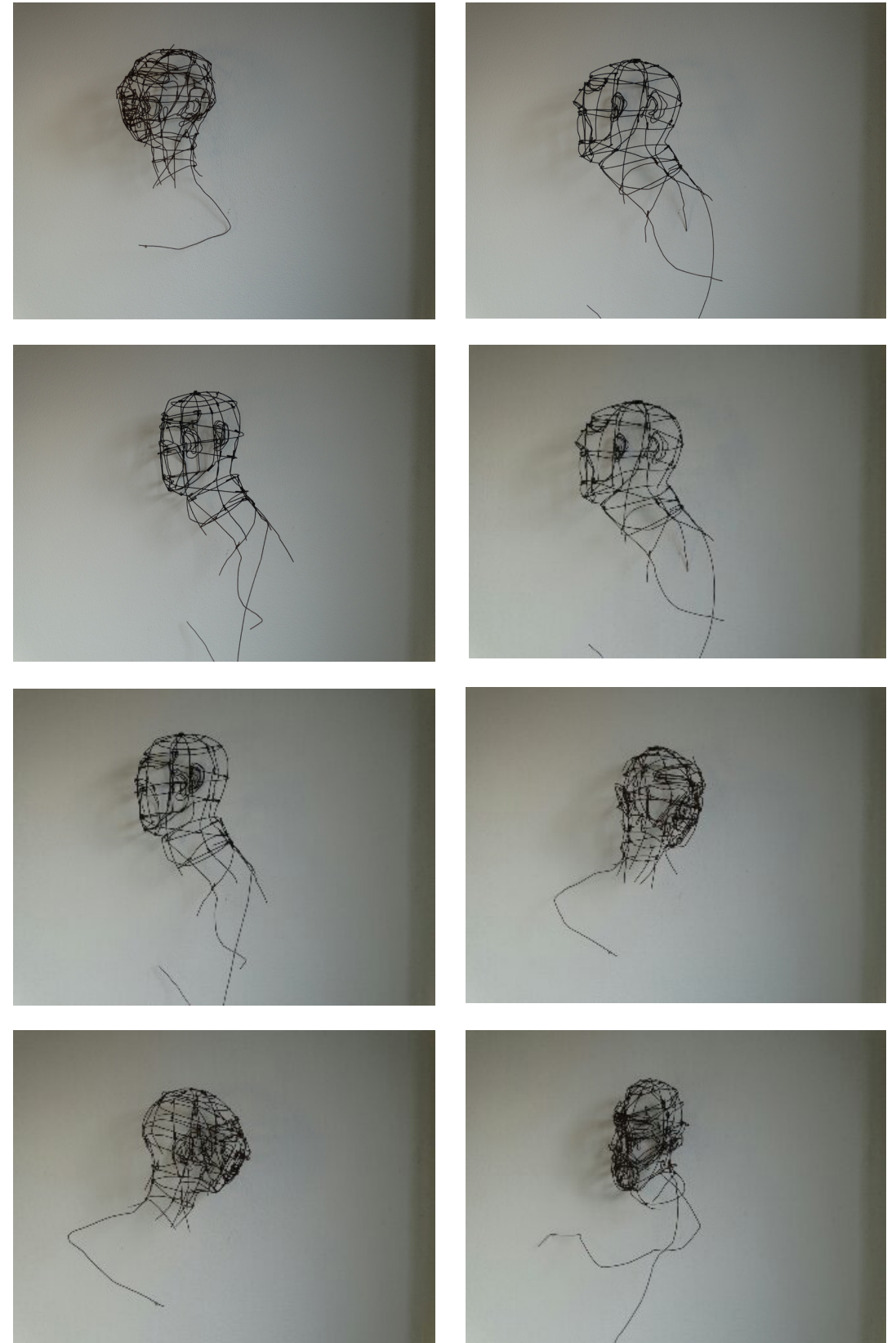
N'GOLÁ WORLD PEOPLE

EDUARDO MALÉ (1973, SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE)

Eduardo Malé examines how external, environmental, and social conditions influence our body and our behaviour. In the project 'N'GOLÁ World People' Malé shows an alternative approach to figurative sculpture by transforming stillness into movement, presented in a video sculpture.

Malé's multimedia work has a strong philosophical dimension, while being sensitive, mysterious, and at very tangible at the same time. With his work Malé aims to raise awareness of a the problem of solid urban waste, and the serious environmental problems that threaten our oceans, seas, forests and cities, and have a direct impact on people's lives. The islands of São Tomé e Príncipe are his main concern. The video sculpture N'GOLÁ World People aims to reverse this picture.

Working between São Tomé e Príncipe and Portugal, Malé often selects subjects from the nature. Made of copper wire, burned wire and galvanized wire, twirled together with objects collected from Gamboa beach (São Tomé e Príncipe), the linear profiles and silhouettes aim to capture the flow and vibrancy of human thinking. 'True beauty resides in thought: beauty is in constant motion and networks are built from linked threads that emerge from thoughts.'



Eduardo Malé, N'GOLÁ World People, 2019.

BIOGRAPHIES



SÉNAMÉ KOFFI AGBODJINOU TOGO

Architect and anthropologist Sénamé Koffi Agbodjinou (1980, Togo) is the creator of 'L'Africaine d'architecture', a collaborative research platform for issues of architecture and the African city. Koffi is also founder and catalyst of WoeLabs, a network of Togolese grassroots tech hubs aiming to 'make everyone equal in the face of technology', where he helped launch the dozen shared companies of the #siliconvillage group. In 2017, Koffi was admitted to the Ashoka Foundation's prestigious fellowship programme for social entrepreneurs.



Photo by Dieter Telemans

SAMMY BALOJI & FILIP DE BOECK DR CONGO / BELGIUM

Photographer Sammy Baloji (1978, DR Congo) works in Lubumbashi and Brussels, and has exhibited in Amsterdam, Paris, Brussels, Bilbao, Cape Town and Bamako. Having graduated in literature and human science at the University of Lubumbashi, he first worked as a cartoonist. Later he specialised in video art and photography. Recurrent themes in his work are ethnography, architecture and urbanism, focusing on the exploitation of man and environment in the Congolese urban landscape.

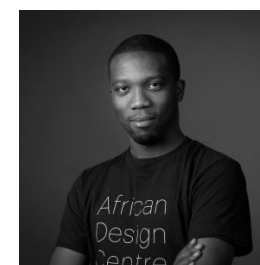
Anthropologist Filip De Boeck (1961, Belgium) is Professor of Anthropology at the Institute for Anthropological Research in Africa (IARA), a research centre based at the University of Leuven. De Boeck is actively involved in teaching, promoting, coordinating and supervising research in and on Africa. Since 1987 he has conducted extensive field research in both rural and urban communities in DR Congo, leading to several articles, books, exhibitions and films on these subjects.



Photo by Dartyne Komukama

KAMPIRE BAHANA UGANDA

Kampire Bahana (1987, Uganda) is one of East Africa's most exciting DJ's and a core member of Kampala's Nyege Nyege collective. Bahana's vibrant sets have taken her to Burkina Faso, Reunion Island and festival stages like Sonar, Barcelona, Unsound, Krakow and Over the Border, Tokyo. Her mixes have been featured on Resident Advisor, Le Mellotron, Radar Radio and Crack Magazine.



CHRISTIAN BENIMANA & MASS DESIGN GROUP RWANDA

Christian Benimana (Rwanda), holds a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP) of Tongji University in Shanghai, China (2008). In 2010 he joined MASS, and today he is the programme manager of their Rwanda offices. Benimana has been involved with design/build projects, development initiatives, operational and administration leadership at MASS, as well

as teaching at the architecture school of the former Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST). He currently chairs the Education Boards of both the Rwanda Institute of Architects and the East African Institute of Architects, and leads the implementation of the African Design Centre, a field-based apprenticeship that is set to be the Bauhaus of Africa. He is particularly interested in the innovative use of materials and technologies for sustainable designs.

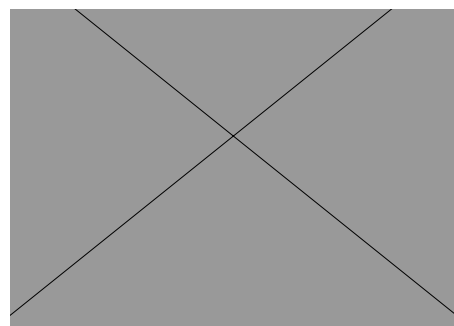


Photo by Maxime de Bolivier

BLINKY BILL KENYA

Musician, DJ and producer Blinky Bill, born Sellanga Ochieng (Kenya), is a founding member of Kenyan electronic music and art collective Just a Band with whom he has released three albums. He is an alumnus of the US State-funded music programme One Beat Music in 2013. He has been included in the 2018 Yerba Buena Centre of the Arts YBCA100, a list of 100 people shifting culture and creating change. His debut album 'Everyone's Just Winging It and Other Fly Tales' came out in October 2018.



TABI BONNEY TOGO/U.S.A.

Togo-born, Washington, D.C.-raised musician, director and photographer Tabi Bonney (1977, Togo, based in U.S.A.), is the son of Itadi Bonney, an afro-funk musician popular during the 1970s in Togo and West Africa. Bonney achieved

recognition in the Washington metro area with his radio singles 'The Pocket' and 'Doin It' which featured Raheem DeV Vaughn. He has directed and produced commercials and music videos for several brands and artists, including friend and fellow D.C. associate Wale. Now Los Angeles-based, Bonney's visual content has won awards at Toronto Film Festival and has aided campaigns for Adidas, DC Tourism, Alaffia, Tidal and more.



JOANA CHOUMALI IVORY COAST

Visual artist and photographer Joana Choumali (1974, Ivory Coast), studied graphic arts in Casablanca (Morocco) and worked as an art director in an advertising agency before embarking on her photography career. Her work includes conceptual portraits, mixed media and documentary photography, focusing on Africa and on what she, as an African, learns about the innumerable cultures around her.



JUSTIN DINGWALL SOUTH AFRICA

Johannesburg-based photographer Justin Dingwall (1983, South Africa) has an eye for the unusual, a passion to explore avenues less travelled, and the desire to create images that resonate with emotion. Dingwall has exhibited

extensively both locally in South Africa and internationally. He has been selected for various awards, including: SA Taxi Foundation Art Award 2015, Sasol New Signatures 2014, and International Photography Awards (IPA) 2013.



Photo courtesy MAGNIN-A Gallery.

OMAR VICTOR DIOP SENEGAL

Multimedia artist Omar Victor Diop (1980, Senegal) developed an interest for photography and design at an early age, essentially as a means to capture the diversity of modern African societies and lifestyles. The success of his first conceptual project 'Fashion 2112, le Futur du Beau,' featured at the biennial photography exhibition Rencontres de Bamako in 2011, encouraged him to dedicate his career to photography. Working as a visual artist as well as a fashion and advertising photographer, Diop enjoys mixing his photography with other art forms such as costume design, styling and creative writing.



SUNNY DOLAT & THE NEST COLLECTIVE KENYA

Independent fashion curator and creative director Sunny Dolat (1988, Kenya) co-founded The Nest Collective in 2012, a multidisciplinary Kenyan squad working with film, fashion, visual arts and music. The Nest Collective started out as a gathering place for young and emerging creators in Nairobi who were interested in the intersections

between poetry, feminism and queer theory, design and technology. In 2017, Sunny Dolat was creative director of the book 'Not African Enough', that asserts the right of African designers and artists to step out of the narrow confines of what the world considers to be African. It presents a collection of words and images from emerging Kenyan designers who are contributing to the shifting aesthetic of the country.



Photo by Jorge Herrera

SAMUEL FOSSO CAMEROON

Photographer Samuel Fosso (1962, Cameroon, lives and works in Paris, France, Central African Republic and Nigeria) has worked for most of his career in the Central African Republic. Born in Kumba, Cameroon, as the son of Nigerian parents, Fosso grew up in Afikpo, his ancestral home, until 1972, when he was forced to flee to Bangui in the Central African Republic in the wake of the Nigerian Civil War. His work consists of self-portraits adopting a series of personas, often commenting on the history of Africa. In 1994, Fosso became known abroad when he won the first edition of African Photography Encounters in Bamako, Mali, the most important photography festival in Africa. He won the Prince Claus Award from The Netherlands in 2001. His work is significantly represented in the largest museums worldwide, such as Centre Pompidou (Paris), MoMA (New York), Tate (London), prestigious private collections as the Artur Walther Foundation, and corporate collections which both Samuel Fosso and Jean Marc Patras are contractually not allowed to mention.



BOBBIN CASE & JAN HOEK

UGANDA / THE NETHERLANDS

Avant-garde fashion designer Bobbin Case (1991, Uganda, based in Nairobi, Kenya), creates imaginative costumes and dreams of designing clothes for major film and music productions. Bobbin won the Upcoming Kenya Fashion Designer of the year 2016-2017 award and was selected for the same award in Uganda and at the Swahili Fashion Week. Several of his collections appeared in ELLE magazine and on the BBC TV channel.

Amsterdam-based artist, photographer and writer Jan Hoek (1984, The Netherlands) is attracted to the beauty of outsiders worldwide and always keen to collaborate intensively with people that normally are overlooked, with the aim of creating a new image together. In Hoek's universe the 'normal' people are the strangers and the outsiders are the rulers of the planet. Hoek's work has been shown at Foam (Amsterdam), Unseen Festival (Amsterdam), Photoville (New York), Fomu (Antwerp), and Lagos Photo (Lagos).



JEPCHUMBA KENYA

Digital artist, curator and designer Jepchumba (1984, Kenya) has been listed by Forbes as one of the 20 Youngest Power Women in Africa and named by the Guardian as one of Africa's Top 25

Women Achievers. A digital cultural ambassador, Jepchumba founded African Digital Art, a collective where digital artists, enthusiasts and professional seek inspiration, showcase their artists and connect with emerging artists. She promotes the growing culture of art and technology in Africa and is passionate about creating unique digital experiences, solutions and strategies.



WANURI KAHIU KENYA

Film director, producer, and author Wanuri Kahiu (1980, Kenya) has received several awards and nominations for the films she directed, including Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Picture at the 2009 Africa Movie Academy Awards, for the dramatic feature film 'From a Whisper'. Her second feature film 'Rafiki', based on the short story 'Jambula Tree,' premiered at Cannes 2018 and was nominated for the Queer Palm. She is also the co-founder of Afrobubblegum, a media collective dedicated to supporting African art.



MARIAM KAMARA NIGER

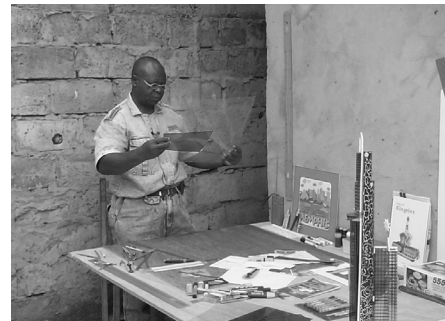
Architect Mariam Kamara (1970, Niger), grew up in Niamey, the capital of Niger. After having trained and worked as a software developer in the U.S., she obtained a master's degree in architecture from the University of Washington, and in 2013 became a founding member of united4design, a global collective of architects working on projects in the U.S., Afghanistan and Niger. This led to

her founding Niamey-based architecture and research firm atelier masōmī in 2014. Using a mix of ancient techniques and modern technology, her architectural practice aims to design spaces that have the power to elevate, dignify, and provide a better quality of life. Mariam Kamara aims to discover innovative ways of doing so, while maintaining an intimate dialog between architecture, people, and context. She believes design to be as crucial as politics and economic development. 'For me, vernacular architecture is about understanding our traditional techniques and rebooting them so that we can make new things.'



LOLA KEYEZUA ANGOLA

Photographer Lola Keyezua (1988, Angola) studied at the Royal Academy of Arts in the Hague, The Netherlands, and has now returned to live and work in Luanda, Angola. She calls herself a storyteller who uses art as a communication tool. Keyezua's work addresses individual stories, expressed in films, paintings, poems and sculptures. She is driven by a desire to change the often-prejudiced narrative about Africa, and to contribute to change through her art.



BODYS ISEK KINGELEZ DR CONGO

The sculptor and artist Bodys Isek Kingelez (1948–2005, DR Congo), was mainly known for

his models of fantastic cities. Born in a small traditional village, he started working as a restorer of traditional masks in his twenties. In his free time, he created 3D urban models inspired by the city of Kinshasa. He became known when his work was presented in 1989 at the exhibition 'Magiciens de la Terre' in Paris, where he came into contact with the international art world for the first time. In 1992, he started creating his utopian cities, which since then have been presented in exhibitions in Europe and North America, including at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and documenta XI in Kassel.

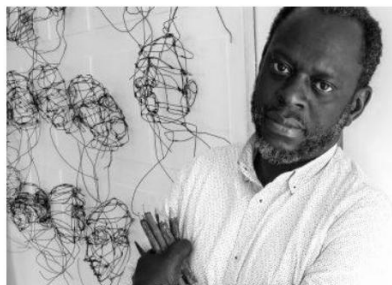


OSBORNE MACHARIA KENYA

Self-taught photographer and digital artist Osborne Macharia (1986, Kenya) was born and raised in Nairobi. His work focuses primarily on themes of Afrofuturism in culture, identity, and fictional narratives. His photographic style creates a powerful platform to convey important messages on topics like gender abuse, ivory poaching and victims of war-torn regions in Africa. He places his work within the genre of Afrofuturism, which he defines as 'an artistic repurpose of the post-colonial African narrative through integrating historical elements, present culture and future aspirations of people of colour by using narrative, fantasy and fiction to highlight African identity.'

Photo by Bico Maccoins

Photo by Catello Verde



EDUARDO MALÉ SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE

Eduardo Malé (1973, São Tomé e Príncipe) studied at the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria in Portugal. Next to his artistic practice he teaches and develops courses and workshops for young people in Portugal and São Tomé e Príncipe. He creates paintings, sculptures and video works, and intends to change the way of thinking of the Sãotomeans in a positive way.



EMO DE MEDEIROS BENIN / FRANCE

Multidisciplinary artist Emo de Medeiros (1979, Benin) lives and works in Cotonou, Benin, and Paris, France. Emo de Medeiros works with a wide range of media, including sculpture, video, photography, performance, electronic music, drawing, interactive devices, performative installations, painting and connected objects. His work hinges on a single concept he calls contexture, a fusion of the digital and the material, of the tangible and the intangible, exploring hybridizations, interconnections and circulations of forms, technologies, traditions, myths and merchandises. It also rests on the new perspectives and conversations happening in a novel space: the current context of the post-colonial, globalized and digitalized world of the early 21st century. The focus of his research encompasses transcultural spaces and the questioning of traditional notions of origin, locus or identity and their mutations through non-linear narratives.



SETHEMBILE MSEZANE SOUTH AFRICA

Multidisciplinary artist Sethembile Msezane (1991, South Africa) lives and works in Cape Town. Using an interdisciplinary practice encompassing performance, photography, film, sculpture and drawing, Msezane creates commanding works heavy with spiritual and political symbolism. The artist explores issues around spirituality, commemoration and African knowledge systems. She processes her dreams as a medium and poses questions about the remembrance of ancestry. Part of her work has examined the processes of mythmaking which are used to construct history, calling attention to the absence of the black female body in both the narratives and physical spaces of historical commemoration.



EMEKA OKEREKE NIGERIA

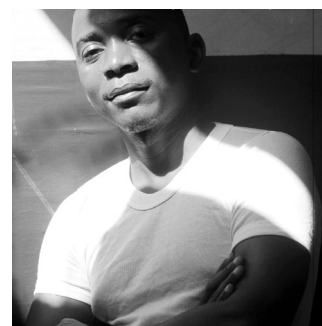
Nigerian visual artist and writer Emeka Okereke (1980, Nigeria) lives and works between Lagos and Berlin. In 2015, his work was exhibited at the 56th Venice Biennale in the context of an installation titled 'A Trans-African Worldspace'. Okereke is the founder and artistic director of 'Invisible Borders, the Trans-African Project', an artist-led initiative that addresses gaps and misconceptions posed by frontiers dividing the 54 countries of the African continent. Okereke's work oscillates between

diverse media. He employs photography, video, poetry and performative interventions in the exploration of one overarching theme: that of borders. Another aspect of his artistic practice lies in the intersection between art-making and pedagogy, specifically, lecturing and project organising—coordinating artistic interventions that promote exchanges cutting across national and international platforms. In 2018, Emeka Okereke was conferred France's insignia of Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres (Knight in the Order of Arts and Letters) by the Ministry of Culture of France.



SALOONI UGANDA

The multidisciplinary art project 'Salooni' is created by four Ugandan women (Kampire Bahana, Darlyne Komukama, Aida Mbowa, Gloria Wavamunno) who aim to posit black hair practices as systems of knowledge that pass on culture and survivalist strategies from generation to generation. Through short film, live art performances, theatre and photography, they present the ways in which historical memory and ways of being are weaved into the nap of black peoples' hair.



YVES SAMBU DR CONGO

Educated as a painter, Yves Sambu (1980, DR Congo) decided to devote himself to photography and video soon after graduating in 2007. Together with fellow students, he formed the SADI collective, a group characterised by social consciousness and action. Sambu's work is based on the dynamic evolution of man and the social

integration of men and women in the city. He addresses cohabitation issues which demand respect for each other's differences in point of view, conviction, and way of being. For him, not only the artistic result is important, but also the process and the approach.



MARY SIBANDE SOUTH AFRICA

Mary Sibande (1982, South Africa) is based in Johannesburg, and uses painting and sculpture depicting the human form to explore the construction of identity in a postcolonial South African context. Her art aims to critique stereotypical depictions of women, particularly black women. For many years her work has exclusively revolved around a servant character named Sophie. Sophie's life is collected and presented through a series of human scale sculptures, moulded on Sibande herself.



KWAME SOUSA SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE

Kwame Sousa (1980, São Tomé e Príncipe) is a self-taught artist. In 2014 he participated in the Architecture Biennale in Venice and at the Lisbon Cinema Festival with the video 'Moinga House', a project in collaboration with artists René Tavares. Sousa is also teacher at Atelier M, the art school of São Tomé. He creates installations, paintings and sculpture, in which he aims to challenge general societal standards.



RENÉ TAVARES SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE

René Tavares (1983, São Tomé e Príncipe) lives and works between Lisbon and São Tomé. He studied at the School of Fine Arts in Dakar, Senegal, and at the École de Beaux Arts de Rennes, France, before graduating in Lisbon. His work reflects on his own experience of displacement or dislocation within the postcolonial context. Lately, his work has taken on a sociopolitical component, focusing on everyday life in Africa and in particular São Tomé.



STEPHEN TAYO NIGERIA

Stylist and street style photographer Stephen Tayo (1994, Nigeria) lives, works and draws inspiration from in Lagos. He developed an early eye for fashion, while growing up in the quiet neighbourhood of Ikorodu, in Lagos State. Tayo regards fashion as more than just as a way to dress, but as a way to live. His sitters are usually active participants in the process; they perform along with Tayo and often set the tone of the picture. 'The clothing you wear says a lot about unity and love', Tayo says. With his photography, he captures people and their surroundings; Nigeria's community and family traditions, such as coordinating outfits for special occasions and celebrations.



PASCALE MARTHINE TAYOU CAMEROON / BELGIUM

Multidisciplinary artist Pascale Marthine Tayou (1966, Cameroon, based in Belgium) began his career as an artist in the 1990s. Ever since, he has had exhibitions in Cameroon, Germany, France, and Belgium, among others. His work combines various media and seeks to artistically redefine postcolonial culture and raise questions about globalisation and modernity. He is associated with the Douala-based 'doual'art' association, which helped to introduce the artist to the international scene. Tayou's first works focused on drawing and sculpture that expressed societal problems such as AIDS. More recently, he combines popular visual cultures and social realities through improvisational styles to construct installations that depict post-colonial African lifestyles and contemporary social, political and cultural realities across countries.



VALETE PORTUGAL

The Portuguese-language political hip hop artist Keidje Torres Lima (Portugal), known by his artist name Valete, has enjoyed critical success in his home country of Portugal. Valete was born in Lisbon, but he has strong family roots in São Tomé. He began listening to rap music in 1991,

Background : Old School, 2008, paper, chalk, iron, 120,5x180,5x2 cm. Courtesy the artist and GALLERIA CONTINUA, San Gimignano/Beijing/ Les Moutins/Habana. Photo by Ela Bialkowska

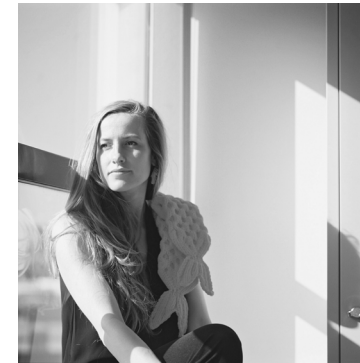
Photo by Vera Marmelo

later encountering artists like Nas, Krs-one and Racionais MC's. His second album Serviço Público was named as one of the best Portuguese hip hop albums of 2006 by the critics. It was selected as the second-best national album by the listeners of the Hip hop radio show Suburbano on Coimbra's university radio, RUC. He is considered to be the only political rapper in Portugal.



SARAH WAISWA UGANDA

Documentary and portrait photographer Sarah Waiswa (1980, Uganda, based in Kenya) has a strong interest in exploring identity on the African continent, particularly the New African Identity. After receiving both her sociology and psychology degrees and working in a corporate position for a number of years, she decided to pursue photography full time. Her desire is to illustrate the plight of various social issues on the continent in a contemporary and non-traditional way, aiming to change the narrative on Africa by generating dialogue on developing issues as they happen. Waiswa sets out to create visual poetry while telling stories in the most organic and creative way possible.



NIKKIE WESTER THE NETHERLANDS

Dutch conceptual designer Nikkie Wester (1989, The Netherlands) has a great passion for textiles. She is committed to keeping craftsmanship alive and sees it as her goal to design our future heritage together. With Studio Nikkie Wester, she develops concepts, textiles for interiors and textile products. She does this in collaboration with architects, interior architects and graphic designers, together they create 'Future Heritage'.

COLOPHON

N'GOLÁ VIII Biennial of Arts and Culture São Tomé e Príncipe 26 July–18 August 2019

Locations: CACAU, Roça São João dos Angolares, Fortinho de São Jerónimo, Roça Agua Izé, À Baià da Bô

Biennial of São Tomé e Príncipe

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Roça São João dos Angolares

Founder and director

João Carlos Silva

Casa das Artes Criação Ambiente e Utopias (CACAU)

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