

## Bodys Isek Kingelez

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Born 1948, Kimbembele Ihunga, Democratic Republic of Congo  
Died 2015, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

In the hands of Bodys Isek Kingelez, the African metropolis becomes an urban utopia. After graduating from secondary school, Kingelez made Kinshasa his home in 1970. Over the next seven years, he studied part time, supporting himself through teaching. During these years, Kinshasa had become a sprawling, chaotic, anarchic city that was falling apart. Kingelez, highly aware of this, dedicated himself aesthetically, politically, and poetically to questioning the human condition, and after 1977, he began to experiment with assembling fantastic structures that offered a redemptive vision for the city. Since 1985, Kingelez has entirely concentrated on what he calls "Architectural Modelism". For Kingelez, this project is one of regeneration: "Art is superior knowledge, a vehicle for individual renewal in improving the general well-being", he stated.

He has created hundreds of models from found materials in which paper, cardboard, and plastic are used to construct the present, the future, and the hopes of an African regeneration. After 1992, he started imagining entire cities. These colossal works are made up of buildings -some playful, some imposing, some utterly fantastic- that are incorporated into a carefully conceived urban grid. Avenues, parks, waterways, stadiums, and monuments are also part of Kingelez's meticulous vision. Together these elements fulfill all the functions of an ideal metropolis that the artist would like to see built. His first city was called Kimbembele Ihunga, to honour his native village, his dead father and his mother, who still lives there.

About the works *Ville Fantôme* (1995), *Kinshasa: Project for the Third Millennium* (1997), *The City of the Future* (2000), he noted: "I wanted my art to serve the community that is being reborn to create a new world, because the pleasures of our earthly world depend on the people who live in it. I created these cities so there would be lasting peace, justice and universal freedom. They will function like small secular states with their own political structure, and will not need policemen or an army."

The current exhibition "Bodys Isek Kingelez: City Dreams" at Museum of Modern Art in New York (until January, 1st, 2019) is a true consecration of this visionary and utopian artist.

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2018

Bodys Isek Kingelez: City Dreams, MoMA, New York, USA

2005

Perspectives 145 : Bodys Isek Kingelez, Nina and Michael Zilkha Gallery, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Etats-Unis

2003

Bodys Isek Kingelez, Centre culturel Wolu-Culture, La Médiatine, Bruxelles, Belgique

2002

Bodys Isek Kingelez, Munich Villa Stuck, Germany  
Curator : André Magnin, Yilmar Dziewior

2000-2001

Bodys Isek Kingelez, Kunstverein Hambourg, Germany  
Curator : André Magnin, Yilmar Dziewior

1996

D'autres Ajouts d'Été, Bodys Isek Kingelez, MAMCO Contemporary and Modern Art Museum, Geneva, Switzerland

1995

Bodys Isek Kingelez, Cartier Fondation for Contemporary Art, Paris, France  
Curator : André Magnin

1992

Bodys Isek Kingelez, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2015-2019

Making Africa, A Continent of Contemporary Design, Travelling Exhibition  
14 Mar 2015 - 13 Sep 2015 Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany  
30 Oct 2015 - 21 Feb 2016 Guggenheim Bilbao, Bilbao, Spain  
22 Mar 2016 - 28 Aug 2016 CCCB Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain  
01 Oct 2016 - 17 Jan 2017 Kunsthal Rotterdam, Rotterdam, Netherlands  
15 Oct 2017 - 07 Jan 2018 High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia  
03 Feb 2018 - 06 May 2018 Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, New Mexico

14 Oct 2018 - 13 Jan 2019 Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, USA

2017

Art/Afrique : le nouvel atelier \_ The Insiders : a selection of works (1989 to 2009) from the Jean Pigozzi collection of contemporary African Art, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France  
On aime l'art...!! Un choix d'Éric Mézil parmi les oeuvres de la Collection agnès b., Collection Lambert en Avignon, France

2016

Vivre !!, Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris, France  
Regarding Africa: Contemporary Art and Afro-Futurism, Art Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel  
Making Africa - A Continent of Contemporary Design, CCCB, Barcelona, Spain

2015/2016

Beauté Congo - 1926-2015 - Congo Kitoko, Fondation Cartier, Paris, France  
One More Time, Mamco, Geneva, Switzerland  
2050 Une brève histoire de l'avenir  
2016 - Palazzo Reale, Milan, Italy  
2015 - Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels

2015

Making Africa : A Continent of Contemporary Design, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany, Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain  
AFRIKA, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark  
(im)possible! Artists as Architects, Marta Herford (Gehry galleries), Herford, Germany

2014

Ici l'Afrique / Here Africa, Château de Penthes, Genève, Suisse  
Luminós/C/ity. Ordinary Joy: From the Pigozzi Contemporary African Art Collection, Ethelbert Cooper Gallery of African & African American Art, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA

2014

Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE

2013

The Alternative Guide to the Universe, Hayward Gallery, London, UK

2012

Six Yards Guaranteed Dutch Design, Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, Netherlands

2011/2012

Mondes inventés, Mondes habités, MUDAM, Luxembourg

2012

Postmodernism, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

2011

JapanCongo, Magasin Grenoble, France

2010

Dreamlands, Pompidou Center, Paris, featuring Bodys Isek Kingelez's amazing model city "Ville Fantôme"

2010

African Stories, Piasa, Paris, France  
Marrakech Art Fair, Marrakech, Morocco

2009/2010

Africa : Una nuova storia, Complesso del Vittoriano, Rome, Italy

2007/2008

Why Africa?, Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, Turin, Italy

2006/2007

100% Africa, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain

2006

Aller / retour. L'Afrique, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, Spain

2005

Arts of Africa, Grimaldi Forum, Monaco, France

2005

African Art Now : Masterpieces from the Jean Pigozzi Collection, Museum of Fine Art Houston, Houston, USA

2004/2005

Arti & Architettura 1900/2000, Genova Palazzo Ducale, Genoa, Italy

2004

Africa Remix, Art contemporain d'un continent (travelling exhibition)  
24 July 2004 - 7 Nov 2004 Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf, Germany  
10 Feb 2005 - 17 April 2005 Hayward Gallery, London, England  
15 May 2005 - 20 Aug 2005 Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France  
Feb - May 2006 Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan

2004

Je m'installe aux abattoirs, La collection d'art contemporain d'Agnès b., Les Abattoirs, Toulouse, France

2004

Les Afriques, Tri Postal, Lille, France

2003

The American Effect, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA

2003

Transferts, Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium

2003

Transferts, Centre d'art contemporain de Woluwe-Saint-Lambert, Bruxelles, Belgique

2002 - 2003

Afrikanische Reklamekunst (L'art et la pub en Afrique), Iwalewa-Haus, Universität Bayreuth, Germany

2002

Documenta XI, Kassel, Germany

2002

Sao-Paulo Biennial, Sao-Paulo, Brazil

2001

Bodys Isek Kingelez, Ludwig Museum, Cologne, Germany

2000

Musée International des Arts Modestes, Sète, France

2000

Sydney Biennial, Sydney, Australia.2000

Vision du Futur, Grand Palais, Paris, France

2000

Zeitwenden, Kunsterhaus.Vienna, Austria

1999

Zeitwenden, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany

1999

Art-Worlds in Dialogue, Ludwig Museum, Cologne, Germany

1999

1 Monde Réel, Cartier Fondation for Contemporary Art, Paris, France

1999

The 1999 Carnegie International, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, USA

1998

Unfinished Story, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA

Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago. Chicago, USA

1998

Africa Africa, Tobu Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan

1997

Africus, Johannesburg Biennial, Johannesburg, South-Africa

1997

Projects 59 : Architecture as Metaphor, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

1997

Kwangju Biennial, Unmapping the Earth, "Becoming", Kwangju, South-Korea

1996

Wall and Space. Reality and Utopia, Bodys Isek Kingelez Architectural Visions

Oksnehallen, Copenhagen, Denmark

1996

Neue Kunst Aus Africa, Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt, Berlin, Germany

1995

Big City, Serpentine Gallery, London, Great-Britain

Curator : André Magnin

1993

Home and the World Architectural Sculpture by two African Artists, The Museum for African Art, New York, USA

1992

Out of Africa, Saatchi Gallery, London, Great Britain

Curator : André Magnin

1991-1992

Africa Hoy-Africa Now

Moderno Art Center, Las Palmas Gran Canary Island, Spain

Groningen Museum, Netherland

Contemporary Art Center. Mexico City, Mexico

Curator : André Magnin

1989

Magiciens de la Terre, Georges Pompidou Center, La Grande Halle de la Villette  
Paris, France

#### FAIRS

2017

Art Paris Art Fair, Grand Palais, Paris, France

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

2015

Paris

Beauté Congo 1926-2015 Congo Kitoko (catalogue), Editions Fondation Cartier,