

## Calixte Dakpogan

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Born in 1958, Pahou, Benin  
Lives and works in Porto Novo, Benin

Calixte Dakpogan's Vodun heritage is intrinsic to his work. Born to a family of blacksmiths, he grew up in the Goukoumé district of Porto Novo, Benin, a district dedicated to Ogun, the god of iron. Ogun is the principal divinity worshiped by the Dakpogan family. The tradition of metalworking has been carried from father to son since their ancestor Sabgo Ayato worked as a blacksmith in the royal court of King Toffa. The abundance of car wreckages in Porto Novo has provided Calixte Dakpogan with an inexhaustible source of materials. He began to use scavenged car parts to create standing figures, following directly in the tradition of Fon statues made from scrap iron in the early nineteenth century. In 1992, he was commissioned to create a series 100 of these works for Ouidah 92: The First International Festival of Vodun Arts and Cultures. Their contribution remains on permanent display. Today, after an interval of one and a half centuries, the relationship between Fon sculptures and the work of Dakpogan transcends purely visual or technical aspects, being intimately related with the creative process. Since 1990, Calixte has worked independently, using salvaged metallic and plastic elements to create anthropomorphic figures and masks. A gas tank becomes a body or headlights become teeth. Two formless segments become a recognizable personage. His creations, full of talent, humour, and stories, are imbued with a contemporary imagination and an astounding inventiveness

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2020-2021

Welcome home II, MACAAL, Marrakech

Ex-Africa, Musée du Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, Paris, France

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 (curators: Suzanne Pagé, Angéline Scherf, Ludovic Delalande, scientific exhibition council: André Magnin)  
Gaia à travers ses miroirs, Villa des Arts, Rabbat, Maroc (for the event L'Afrique en Capitale)

2016

Essentiel Paysage, Al Maaden Art Gallery, Contemporary African Art Center, Marrakech, Morocco

2015

1:54 Contemporary African Art fair, New York, USA

2014

1:54 Contemporary African Art fair, London, England

MASKS, JGM Galerie, Paris, France

2011

Riad Al Maaden, Marrakech, Morocco

Reconfiguring an African Icon: Odes to the Mask by Modern and Contemporary Artists from Three Continents, Metropolitan Museum, NY, USA

2010

African Stories, Ancienne Banque du Maroc, Magnin-A, Marrakech, Morocco (curator: André Magnin)

ARTPARIS+GUESTS. André Magnin & Leridon Collection, Grand Palais, Paris, France

2009

Africa ? Una nuova storia, Complesso del Vittoriano, Roma, Italy (curator: André Magnin)

2007/2008

Why Africa ? La collezione Pigozzi, Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, Torino, Italy (curator: André Magnin)

2006/2007

100% Africa, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain (curator: André Magnin)

2005/2006

African Art Now: Masterpieces from the Jean Pigozzi Collection (curator: André Magnin)

Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of African Art, Washington DC, USA

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA

2005

Arts of Africa, The Contemporary collection of Jean Pigozzi, Grimaldi Forum, Monaco, Principauté de Monaco (curator: André Magnin)

2000

Fait Maison, Musée International des Arts Modestes, Sète, France

Lyon Biennale d'Art Contemporain (5) Partage d'Exotismes, Lyon, France

1998/1999

Forjar el Espacio: La Escultura Forjada en el siglo XX  
Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas, Spain  
IVAM, Centre Julio González, Valencia, Spain  
Musée des Beaux-Arts et de la Dentelle de Calais, Calais, France  
Triennale der Kleinplastik (7): Afrika-Europa, Les Écoles philosophiques, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Südwest LB Forum, Stuttgart, Germany  
Bénin-Bénin, Gisteren-Tussen-Morgen, Van Reekum Museum, Apeldoorn, Netherlands

1997

Lumière Noire, Château de Tanlay, Centre d'art contemporain, Tanlay, France

1995

Johannesburg Biennale (1), Africus, Johannesburg, South Africa

1994/1995

Otro país: escalas africanas,  
Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas, Spain  
Fundacion La Caixa, Palma de Mallorca, Spain  
Palau de la Virreina, Barcelona, Spain

1993

Ouidah 92. The First International Festival of Vodun Arts and Cultures, Ouidah, Benin

1992

Dakar Biennale (1) Dak?Art 92, Dakar, Senegal

## SOLO SHOWS

1991

Calixte Dakpogan, Centre Culturel Français, Cotonou, Benin

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

2017

Essentiel Paysage - Artistes Contemporains Africains face à l'environnement, catalogue d'exposition, Fondation Alliances, Musée MACAAL, sous la direction de Brahim Alaoui, p. 147

## Collections

### PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

C.A.A.C. The Jean Pigozzi Collection, Geneva, Switzerland  
Collection Fondation Alliances, Marrakech, Morocco  
Collection Farida et Henri Seydoux, Paris, France  
Collection Gervanne et Matthias Leridon, Paris, France