



Joseph Obanubi, *Dusk II (No Man's Land)*, 2018

“WHAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF”

March 24th - April 7th 2020

Online / ARTSY

“WHAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF”

MAGNIN-A Gallery is proud to present its first online exclusive exhibition, *WHAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF*¹. Throughout the following weeks, we will share several online exhibitions to continue sharing the works of our artists with you. This first exhibition brings together 6 artists from 5 different countries: Pierre Bodo, Rodrigues Armando Mabunda, Abu Bakarr Mansaray, Fabrice Monteiro, Joseph Obanubi and Monsengo Shula. Through different narratives, these artists have a common interest in exploring the visual representations of science fiction and futurology. Somewhere between truth and fiction, they all question their societies, myths, hopes, and dreams.

In the tradition of “popular painting”, Monsengo Shula and Pierre Bodo share a utopic and dreamlike vision of our future, which is, however, paradoxically impacted by environmental damage and the omnipresence of technology. Thanks to a colorful and joyful aesthetic, they laugh about that uncertain future. Nonetheless, they subtly illustrate universal concerns while inserting visual references specific to Congolese society.

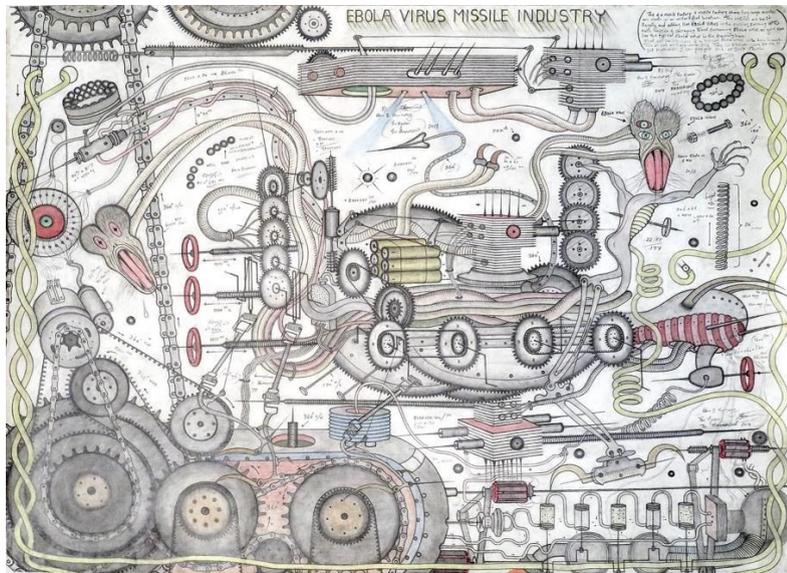
Fabrice Monteiro’s *Waxology* series (co-produced with MISWudé) is a re-invention of an African aesthetic identity. The body jewellery pieces, made from wax-dyed cotton fabric, evolve into sculptures. The role of wax is essential in this series - as a product of colonial expansion, it has been associated with African’s visual identity since the beginning of the 20th Century. The wax sculptural jewels are worn by models covered with Kaolin, a white clay used in West Africa for different purposes, such as medicine, cosmetics, and even ceremonial acts. By combining these visual elements linked to African identity, and by isolating them onto futuristic silhouettes, Monteiro wishes to propose a re-examination of what is generally regarded to be “African visual identity”. These photographs remind us of the anthropological studies from the 18th and 19th centuries, and how visual elements were used to create a falsified or staged representation of cultural identities.

Joseph Obanubi, in his photo-collages, explores identity, fantasy, and a mix of reality and delusion within the context of globalization. He considers his work to be “visual bricolage” - a (re)constructing of different subjects, taken from their original context into a new one, where their pre-existing meanings are replaced with a new line of thought. His approach is surrealistic and Afro-futuristic, providing an alternative way of seeing everyday things.

Abu Bakarr Mansaray, from Sierra Leone, is inspired by the popular Central African practice of creating decorative objects and toys out of iron and wire. He combines this technique with his academic knowledge of science and engineering, to build functional, futuristic machines. He creates both practical and extravagant contraptions that can produce fire, water, light, sound and more. Mansaray makes preparatory drawings for his studies in coloured pencil and ballpoint pen, annotating them with commentary and calculations, much like the scientific drawings from the Renaissance. His works confront the viewer with a disrupting question: could these machines save us or destroy us?

¹ courtesy of Joseph Obanubi

ABU BAKARR MANSARAY



Ebola Virus Missile Industry, 2017
Coloured pencils and ballpoint pen on paper, 120 x 150 cm

"I am an artist making creations without limitation. I do drawings, paintings, sculptures...I also invent machines for my own use at home and sometimes for other people."

Born in 1970, Tongo, Sierra Leone

In pursuing a career as an artist in Sierra Leone, one of the poorest countries in Africa, Abu Bakarr Mansaray made it a point to draw attention to the problematic situation of his homeland, which suffered under the consequences of a recent civil war. After leaving school in 1987, he settled in Freetown, where he became a passionate autodidact, studying all aspects of practical science and engineering. He revived a technique popular in Central Africa of manufacturing decorative objects or toys out of wire and iron. He elaborated this technique with his scientific knowledge, to build futuristic machines that could produce fire, light, air, water, cold, motion, and sound.

Mansaray's preparatory drawings also stand as independent artworks. These studies consist of sketches and diagrams, annotated with calculations and commentaries in pencil, ballpoint pen, and crayon. "I like making strange, complicated drawings and designing intricate machines inspired by scientific ideas that are at times beyond the human imagination (for example, the machines I designed called *Hell Extinguisher* and *Nuclear Telephone Discovered in Hell*). I want people to feel the power of creation." Undoubtedly, the economic, political and social situation in Sierra Leone, which was left in ruins after the civil war of the 1990s, has shaped Mansaray's imagination and the inspiration. In 1998 he managed to escape his country under extremely difficult circumstances. His work, however, continues to bear witness of the horrors of this war.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2015: 56^{ème} Biennale de Venise, *All the world's futures*, Venise, Italie

2014: *Here Africa*, Musée des Suisses dans le Monde, Genève, Suisse

2010
ARTPARIS+GUESTS. André Magnin & Leridon Collection, Grand Palais, Paris, France
ACM, Mansaray, Rigo 23 & Volyazlovsky, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, États-Unis

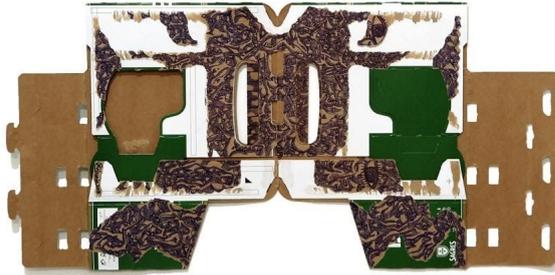
2009: *Africa? Una nuova storia*, Complesso del Vittoriano, Rome, Italie

2006: *100% Africa*, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Espagne

2005/2006
African Art Now: Masterpieces from the Jean Pigozzi Collection, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, États-Unis

2004/2007: *Africa Remix*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

RODRIGUES ARMANDO MABUNDA



Somador da rua, 2018
Ballpoint pen on packaging cardboard, 27 x 55 cm

Born in 1985, Maputo, Mozambique

At the age of 15 he started working while still studying. He did not finish secondary school and took a series of jobs, such as a vendor in a local market, or repairing cars, among others. Rodrigo is a self-taught artist. He begins drawing on A4 sheets, but it is the discovery of the box as a more creative medium for his drawings that marks his debut as an artist.

Residencies :

May - June 2018 - Artistic Residence in Óbidos (Portugal)

October – December 2019 – Artistic Residence in Venice (Italy)

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2020 : *Eyes, doors and tribal marks*, Akka Project. Dubai

2019
Arco Lisboa. Lisboa. Portugal
Exploring the in Between, Akka Project Venezia. Italy
Os Mabundas, Centro Cultural Camões. Maputo. Mozambique

2018
World Art Dubai, Dubai
Walking the Line – When Everything Begins. Akka Project. Dubai
Núcleo de Arte. Maputo. Mozambique
Joburg Art Fair. Johannesburg. South Africa
Xitiko Ni Mbaula. Roda Viva. Lisbon. Portugal
Tokyo International Art Fair. Tokyo. Japan
Redimensão. Galeria 1834. Maputo. Mozambique

2017 : *Colecção Crescente*. Kulungwana Gallery. Maputo. Mozambique

JOSEPH OBANUBI



Dusk II (No Man's Land), 2018
Inkjet print, 35 x 35 cm – Edition of 5

Born in 1994 in Lagos, Nigeria
Lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria

Joseph Obanubi is a Lagos-based visual artist, employing multimedia in his artistic practice. He studied graphic design at the University of Lagos, Nigeria where he obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees in 2015 and 2017 respectively. With a background in advertising and graphic design, his works explore identity, fantasy, a mix of reality and delusion within the context of globalization. He considers his work to be "visual bricolage" - a (re)constructing of different subjects, taken from their original context into a new one, where their pre-existing meanings are replaced with a new line of thought. His approach is surrealistic and Afro-futuristic, providing an alternative way of seeing everyday things. His goal is to give new insight into ways of seeing things, especially the ones in unusual places that lie around us.

"My work reconstructs fragments found in the everyday experiences adopting digital/photo montage/immersive techniques that mix reality and delusion. I consider my work to be a visual bricolage - a (re)construct of different subjects taken from their original context into a new one."

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2019

AKAA Also Known as Africa Fair,
Carreau du Temple, Paris, France
1-54 Art Fair London, Somerset
House, London, United Kingdom
Passport, Lagos Photo Festival,
Lagos, Nigeria
Impart Artist Fair, Lagos, Nigeria
On and On, Lagoon Gallery,
University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos,
Nigeria
Arthouse Affordable Art Auction,
Arthouse Contemporary, Kia
Showroom, VI - Lagos, Nigeria

2018

TIME HAS GONE, Lagos Photo
Festival, New Alliance Française at
Mike Adenuga Center, Lagos,
Nigeria

Nigerian Pop Culture, Polartics,
Lagos, Nigeria

FABRICE MONTEIRO



Untitled #2, 2014, Waxology
Canson Infinity Platine Fibre Rag 310gr, 50 x 50 cm - Edition of 10

Born in 1972 in Namur, Belgium
Lives and works in Dakar, Senegal

Fabrice Monteiro is an Agouda, the descendant of Brazilian slaves with Portuguese names. His background is multicultural: he was born in Belgium, grew up in Benin, and now lives and works in Dakar, Senegal. Monteiro worked as a model for around a decade before becoming a photographer in 2007, after meeting the New York based photographer Alfonse Pagano. Photography came naturally to him. As a professional model, he had become aware of the complexity of the composition, the lighting and the posture. From behind the lens, Fabrice Monteiro's images are at the intersection between photojournalism and fashion photography.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2020

Alpha Crucis: African Contemporary Art, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway
Good as Gold: Fashioning Senegalese Women
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC, USA
Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington, DC, USA

"The diversity of my origins is my first source of inspiration. Relations between Africa and Europe have constantly fluctuated between attraction and rejection, empowerment and denial, recognition and anger. They have never been indifferent. The history of the African-European people over the last centuries, that I have inherited the complexity, is my main source of inspiration".

2019

The Prophecy, Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, Wisconsin, USA

SEEDS for Future Memories

Villa Romana, Florence, Italy
IFA Gallery, Berlin, Germany

2018

In Their Own Form, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Dak'Art, *L'heure Rouge*, Palais de Justice, Dakar, Sénégal

Songes d'hier, rêveries du présent, MuPho (Musée de la photographie de Saint-Louis), Saint-Louis, Sénégal

2017

Afro-Tech and the Future of Re-Invention, Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund, Germany

Back Stories, Mariane Ibrahim, Chicago, Illinois, USA

2016

African Art against the State, Museum of Art, Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, USA

MONSENGO SHULA



La ville du Futur, 2016
Acrylic on canvas, 94 x 117 cm

Born in 1959, Nioki, Democratic Republic of the Congo
Lives and works in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

As the majority of "popular" artists from Kinshasa, Monsengo Shula's artistic talent was apparent from an early age. Shula started drawing at the age of 15 as the assistant of his cousin, the well-known Moke, godfather of Congolese popular painting and a colourist master. Moke, as many painters within the tradition of popular painting, believed that the artistic representations of everyday life were to be critical, condemn political unfairness, bring awareness and educate the population: "Painters are useful, because they say out loud what others think to themselves".

Shula distinguishes himself from the other "popular painters" such as Moke, Chéri Samba, Chéri Chérin. His characteristic combination of colours gives his paintings an unrealistic or fantastic effect, overcoming and going beyond reality. His more recent paintings shed a light on global societal issues such as global warming, international policy and the relationship of mankind with technology.

"The world is changing, and I didn't want to stay stationary. I created a new style because, if the world evolves, why not the artist too?"

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2018: *Congo Stars*, Kunsthhaus Graz, Austria

2015: *Beauté Congo - Congo Kitoko*, Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art, Paris, France

2013: *KIN-BABI*, Galerie Cécile Fakhoury, Abidjan, Ivory Coast

2011: *JapanCongo, Double regard de Carsten Höller sur la collection de Jean Pigozzi*

Le Magasin, Grenoble, France
The Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, Russia
Palazzo Reale, Milan, Italy

2009: *Africa Arte Contemporanea*, JZ Art Gallery, Milan, Italy

2007: *Le Congo d'aujourd'hui et de demain*, Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

2005: *Peinture Populaire du Congo et Haïti*, Museum of Haïtien art, Port-Au-Prince, Haïti

PIERRE BODO



Oxygène, 2015
Acrylic on canvas, 123 x 150,5 cm

Bodo is one of the founders and key proponents along with Moke and Chéri Samba of what has come to be known as the Congolese School of people's painting. Their works state their belief in the capacity to create art that can change the course of history. Pierre Bodo chooses to paint anything and everything that he has seen or experienced, creating artworks as chronicles, pamphlets, manifestos or advice. His goal is anything but self-centred: he is a people's painter. One of Bodo's main themes was the "Ndoki Zoba" (sorcery), convincing viewers to abandon this practice of sorcery. In 1980, he converted to Christianity, and joined the Pentecostal church. He became one of the most passionate pastors of "world evangelism," convinced that it had changed his life.

In the early 1990s, Bodo improved his style considerably so as to be able to express his personal ideas and have more impact. He states: "My goals being the improvement of life and of visible things; to share my dreams of a better world." Thereafter he dealt with symbolic or fantasy subjects, creating an imaginary world born from his dreams. "I express everything that happens to me, so that I am no longer focused on specifically African topics and can address the entire world." The titles of his works; *River of Delights*, *Ignorance*, *Love*, *The Source of Life* and, in the context of this digital exhibition, *Oxygène*, clearly reflect his beliefs and aesthetic aims.

"My goals being the improvement of life and of visible things; to share my dreams of a better world. I express everything that happens to me, so that I am no longer focused on specifically African topics and can address the entire world."

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2017: *On aime l'art...!!*, Collection Lambert, Avignon, France
Gaïa à travers ses miroirs, Villa des Arts, Rabat, Morocco

2016: *Essentiel Paysage*, Al Maaden Art Gallery, Contemporary African Art Center, Marrakech, Morocco
Le grand orchestre des animaux, Fondation Cartier, Paris, France

2015
Beauté Congo – 1926-2015 – Congo Kitoko, Fondation Cartier, Paris, France
The Fantasy Factory, A perspective on the Ouidah Museum Collection, Fondation Zinsou, Benin

2011: *JAPANCONGO*
Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, Russia
Magasin Grenoble, France
Palazzo Reale, Milan, Italy

2007/2008: *Why Africa?*, Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, Turin, Italy
"Popular Painting" from Kinshasa, Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom