



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Havemos de Voltar (We Shall Return)*, [Film Still], 2017

Single-channel film, 17'30"

© A courtesy of the artist and Jahmek - Contemporary Art, Luanda.

Press release

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CHINA ↔ AFRICA

4 March - 18 May 2020

Gallery 0, Museum, Level 4

Thirty years after « The Magicians of the Earth », fifteen years after « Africa Remix », five years after « Multiple Modernities from 1905 to 1970 » and following on from the exhibitions devoted to Wifredo Lam, Latiff Mohidin and, most recently, Ernest Mancoba, the Centre Pompidou continues to explore the history of non-Western contemporary art, with a special focus on the ties between China and Africa. Should the China and Africa connection be seen as a form of total emancipation from colonialism or as the expression of a new relationship based on domination? The China ↔ Africa exhibition examines the real and imaginary spaces resulting from this dialogue, which were first constructed within a framework of Marxist ideology and colonial and then de-colonial history. Yet it is also an implicit interrogation of Western history, as it relates to these regions.

At the turn of the 20th century, W. E. B. DuBois, the Pan-Africanist American thinker, advocated the idea that Asia could forge the pathway for worldwide racial liberation. As an echo to this belief, we have witnessed an increasingly strong tie between China and Africa, which has been established through political, ideological, and to a large extent, economic interests. This Afro-Asian meeting of two principal regions of the Global South sheds light on the urgency to shift away from the colonial and Western frameworks of representation. Yet, what new realities have been developed from this transcultural encounter? What mobility, public realms, or forms of expression have emerged? And what Utopian or dystopian projections have come to light?

In media partnership with



This exhibition is an attempt to reveal and rethink the phenomena rooted in this Sino-African encounter, from the shared imagery of struggles to the configuration of a transcultural or globalized identity. It questions certain economic trends (through the works of François-Xavier Gbré, Pratchaya Phinthong and Yonamine) and the social transformations born out of this relationship (Wang Bing, Anawana Haloba, Marie Voignier), and propels the unleashing of critical imagination (Cui Jie, Musquiqui Chihying, Kiluanji Kia Henda, Binelde Hyrcan).

François-Xavier Gbré and Kiluanji Kia Henda place the Sino-African theory in the context of Marxist and colonial histories. For Gbré, the fractured narrative of the Bamako swimming pool, built in 1969 by the USSR for the first African games, which never took place and later renovated by the Chinese, became an account of a shift in geopolitical influence. In Henda's film installation, a stuffed antelope in Luanda Museum of Natural History, which is also a symbol of Angolan national identity, recounts its condition as an ethnographic artefact that is simultaneously suffused with the consternated memory of the civil war and with the Chinese presence today.

The exhibition also considers how economic cooperation can be an influential force on the cultural spheres as well as the notion of national identity. Musquiqui Chihying positions the history of Sino-African relations as a starting point – the archaeological discovery of Ming-era coins in Kenya – to highlight the current boom of Chinese built cultural institutions in Africa. Yonamine and Pratchaya Phinthong adopt a conceptual and critical approach to the Chinese presence as an economic and symbolic transaction, one that is reinvested in a relational space devoted to questions and appeasement.



Marie Voignier, *Na China*, 2019

HD film
© Les Films du Bilboquet
© Adagp, Paris

The films of Marie Voignier and Wang Bing, on the other hand, provide a personal layer to the macro narrative of this transcultural relationship. While Voignier turns her observational lens on a community of Cameroonian shopkeepers on Guangzhou, Wang's film is a reflection of the daily lives in Lagos via his encounter with a Nigerian who travels frequently to China for business opportunities. This more personal sentiment also permeates Anawana Haloba's installation, which manifests itself as a poetic restitution of a railway line in Zambia constructed by the Chinese workers, in the form of a filmic, literary, bodily and audio choreography.

The interweaving of critical engagements from the past and the present here also leads to speculations of the future. In this context, the potentials, as well as the failures and alternatives to various forms of economic cooperation are utilised as connections to explore the socio-political realm. In her paintings, Cui Jie employs the images of Chinese telecommunication signal towers in Africa as a way to open up an imaginary space of control and prosperity. And Musquiqui, together with Elom 20ce and Gregor Kasper, propose a new currency that could become an alternative to the transnational and controversial CFA franc, whereas Binelde Hyrcan is inspired by the legendary flight of the Chinese dignitary Wan Hu to reflect on the shortcoming of the Angolan space policy.

The artists invited by the Centre Pompidou for this exhibition are not only African or Asian. Many of them regularly collaborate with the institution, and some are already represented in the collection of the Musée National d'Art Moderne. Together, their works evoke the central concern of «China ↔ Africa», which aims to question the legacy of colonialism reconfigured by post or neo-colonial political and economic alliances.



Exhibited artists

Kiluanji Kia Henda

born in 1979 in Angola, lives and works in Lisbonne and Luanda.

Musquiqui Chihying

born in 1985 in Taipei, lives and works in Berlin and Taipei.

Binelde Hyrcan

born in 1983 in Luanda, lives and works in Luanda.

Cui Jie

born in 1983 in Shanghai, lives and works in Beijing.

François-Xavier Gbré

born in 1978 in Lille, lives and works between Paris and Abidjan.

Annie Anawana Haloba

born in 1978 in Livingstone, lives and works in Oslo.

Wang Bing

born in 1967 in Xi'an, Province of Shaanxi, China, lives and works in China and in France.

Marie Voignier

born in 1974 in Ris-Orangis, France, lives and works in Paris.

Yonamine

born in 1975 in Angola, works in Harare.

Pratchaya Phinthong

born in 1974, lives and works in Bangkok.



Appointement

Press opening

Tuesday 3 March, 11h – 13h

Guided tour by Alicia Knock from 11h30

Practical information

The Exhibition

China ↔ Africa

4 March – 18 May 2020

Gallery 0, Museum, Level 4

Exhibition curators **Alicia Knock** and **Yung Ma**,
curators at the Musée national d'art moderne

Production manager **Cathy Gicquel**

Scenographer-architect **Pascal Rodriguez**

The Centre Pompidou

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Opening times and Admissions

Every day from 11am to 9pm, except Tuesdays and May 1st
€14, reduced €11 / Free for those under 18. Young people
under 26*, teachers and students at schools of art, drama,
dance and music and members of the Maison des artistes
may visit the Museum for free and buy tickets for exhibitions
at the concessionary rate. Free admission for Centre
Pompidou members.

Reservations and print-at-home tickets on :

www.billetterie.centrepompidou.fr

* Nationals of Member States of the EU or the European Economic Area aged
18-25. Valid the same day for the Musée National d'Art Moderne and all
exhibitions.

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#ExpoChineAfrique

At the same time

Yuan Jai

5 February – 27 April 2020

Museum, salle Focus, Level 5

Mutations / Créations #4

26 February - 20 April 2020

Gallery 4, Level 1

Wols

4 March – 18 May 2020

Museum, Galerie d'arts graphiques, Level 4

Christo et Jeanne-Claude

Paris!

18 March – 15 June 2020

Gallery 2, Level 6