

Press release

Group Exhibition

An exhibition by SEPTIEME Gallery and 31 Project Gallery



31 Project x SEPTIEME *In communion*

KWAKU YARO
MARIAMA CONTEH
CHARLOTTE YONGA
LÉONARD PONGO
COURAGE HUNKE

SEPTIEME Gallery and 31 Project are delighted to present an exhibition conceived and curated in collaboration, combining the work of four artists. The exhibition will take place in the Parisian space of SEPTIEME Gallery.

Info

Dates: June 20th to July 20th 2024

Opening: June 20th 2024, 6–9 pm

Location: SEPTIEME Gallery, 31 rue de l'Université, 75006 Paris, France

31 Project x SEPTIEME

In communion

Communion – of ideas, feelings, souls or spirits – brings people together at a time when individuals need to rethink their relationship with the world.

From June 20th to July 20th, the 31 Project and SEPTIEME galleries are collaborating on an exhibition featuring a communion of visions through the work of five artists: Mariama Conteh, Courage Hunke, Léonard Pongo, Kwaku Yaro and Charlotte Yonga.

By creating the opportunity to experiment together with a form of cross-disciplinary practices, 31 Project and SEPTIEME aim to make their profession resonate with cohesion and sisterhood.

Communion, as an alliance of thoughts and feelings, generates community and strengthens each of its constituent entities. It cements ensembles, creating the human mesh necessary for all natural, material and spiritual productions. This is what each of the artists in this exhibition seeks to explore in a variety of meaningful media.

Mariama Conteh's work draws her inspiration from her genealogy and that of her community, whether friendly, familial, intellectual or artistic, exploring intimate and collective memory; while Courage Hunke's works, through a process of superimposing multiple amalgams of plastic and paper bags from his environment, form a collective allegory of memory. Léonard Pongo, as a photographer, addresses the idea of communion around a grandiose ode to Congolese natural landscapes, imbued with a sense of magical beauty. Kwaku Yaro portrays the pride and resilience of his community in the working-class Labadi district of Accra, through patchworks of recycled bags sewn onto traditional mats, which are used by the Ghanaian, and more broadly West African community, to host the highlights of their lives: sleeping, praying and eating. Finally, Charlotte Yonga's photographic and drawing work focuses on individuals and their territories; tinged with a documentary tradition, she explores the links between community and environment.

Léa Perier Loko and Clémence Houdart

Biographies

KWAKU YARO

Kwaku Yaro is a contemporary artist based in Labadi Accra. He is an autodidact and has worked with a number of institutions including Alliance Française d'Accra. Yaro has also had a solo exhibition in the African Regent Hotel in Accra which also resulted in growth in the interest in his works, both locally and internationally. He has also been involved in a number of group exhibitions with Efie Gallery in Dubai and Phillips Auction House in London. He is a member of the Artemartis collective in Accra.

MARIAMA CONTEH

Born in France in 1998. She lives and works in Paris. Mariama Conteh's work draws on her genealogy and that of her community, whether friendly, familial, intellectual or artistic. She explores both personal and collective memory. Mariama Conteh sees her painting as a staging from which she extracts characters and situations from her personal photographic archives as well as images from the world of entertainment and globalized culture. The body is central to her work, unfolding in its sexuality, beauty, identity and transformations.

Mariam Conteh is also a performer, extending her explorations of the body to the drag world in which she evolves and with which she experiments on stage. This practice feeds her pictorial research and shapes her vision. She inscribes her work within a collective reflection on diasporic practices, notably within the Transplantation collective in Paris. After studying at Sciences Po Paris and Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, she is currently completing her studies at the Beaux-Arts de Cergy in France. She exhibited with the Supramare gallery in Marseille in 2022. Between 2020 and 2023, she was part of the Transplantation collective's exhibitions in Paris. This year, her work is presented at A known space Exarcheia in Athens, and at the 31 Project gallery in Miami for the Untitled art fair and in Lisbon for ARCO art fair.

Selection



KWAKU YARO

Earth Is Our Home
153x219 cm
Woven nylon and burlap on polymer
2024



MARIAMA CONTEH

Les vacances
120x120 cm
Oil on canvas
2024

Biographies

CHARLOTTE YONGA

Franco-Cameroonian artist Charlotte Yonga takes a close look at individuals and territories. Her approach, impregnated with dramaturgy, inherits a certain documentary tradition and is permeated by questions linked to the notion of individuality subjected to delocalization and to North-South cross-views. The subjects she depicts, mostly “ordinary” people captured in specific contexts, are central and confront the viewer. In an alchemy that realistically combines strength and fragility, Charlotte portrays tangible personalities in all their complexities.

Charlotte is a graduate of the École Nationale Supérieure d’Art de Paris-Cergy (ENSAPC). During her studies, she developed a particular interest in the portrait and progressively chose the photographic medium. Then, in an effort to shift the way she looks at her subjects, she explored the expressive qualities of other media, such as video and sound. Charlotte has also been drawing for many years, an intimate work that she has shown very little. Her drawings, made with felt pens and coloured pencils, are “therapeutic sketches” and stem from the unconscious. Her work has been shown at the Circulations Festival, Paris Photo at the Grand Palais, the Museum of Le Havre, M.Bassy Hamburg in Germany, the Project Space of the Casablanca Biennale in Morocco, at LagosPhoto Festival in Nigeria and Fondation H in Madagascar.

COURAGE HUNKE

Courage Hunke (Ghanaian, b. 2000) is a visionary artist whose work bridges the realms of consumer culture and the profound ephemerality of existence. With an unyielding passion for redefining the boundaries of art, Courage explores unconventional mediums to convey messages of beauty, sustainability, and memory.

At the core of Courage’s art lies the innovative process of fusing paper with repurposed merchandise plastic bags through heat-pressing. This unique technique transforms everyday objects into imprints of life experiences and memories. Courage’s art pieces are not merely reflections of aesthetics; they represent the transient nature of existence, echoing the wisdom found in the natural world, where time and space constantly evolve, serving as profound meditations on the choices of consumers and the collective responsibility we bear for the environment. In a world dominated by disposability, his work offers a powerful counternarrative, calling on viewers to reflect on their habits, cherishing the beauty and the teachings of nature.

With every piece, he invites one to reevaluate their place in a world where art, environment intertwine in a mesmerizing dance of consciousness. Courage lives and works in Accra and is a member of the Artemartis collective.

Selection



CHARLOTTE YONGA

Angélique, Saint Liguairé, Niort
Pigment print on paper
photo Rag Hahnemühle
2021



COURAGE HUNKE

Rahman and Ali
26x24 cm
Image Transfer on Recycled Paper
2023

Biographies

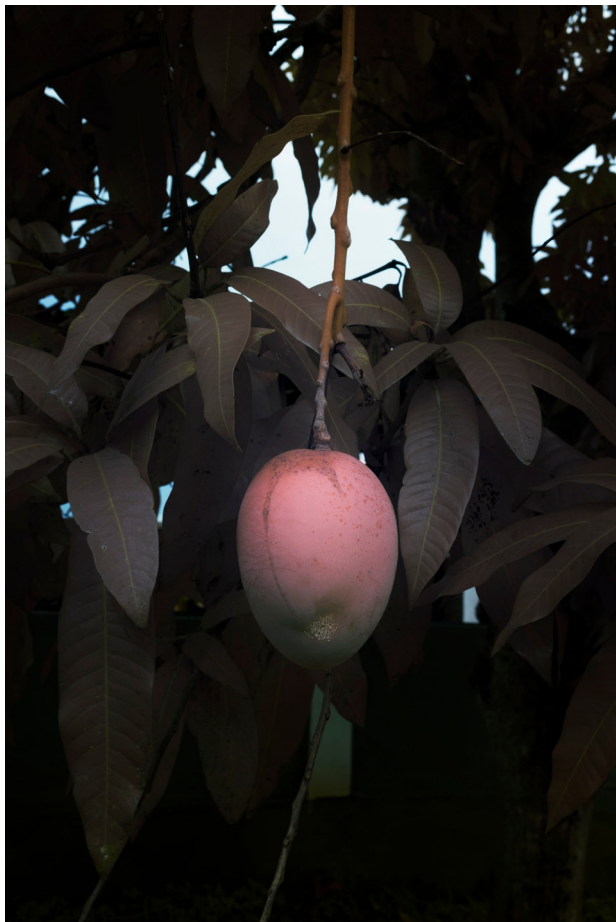
LÉONARD PONGO

Born in 1988 in Belgium. He lives and works between Bruxelles, Belgium, and Kinshasa, Congo DR. Léonard Pongo is a visual artist and photographer. He sees photography as a tool to reappropriate his Congolese culture and documents the daily life of the big cities in Congo as with his project, *Uncanny*. This project won him several international awards. He now focuses on exploring the diversity of the DRC's landscapes and offers allegorical imagery of the country, imbued with a sense of magical beauty and mystical power. This long term series is called "Primordial Earth".

Léonard Pongo's work has been published worldwide and presented in numerous exhibitions, including *IncarNations* at the Bozar Center for Fine Arts (Bruxelles, 2019), curated by Kendell Geers and Sindika Dokolo, and the 3rd Beijing Photography Biennale at the CAFA Art Museum. He was chosen as one of PDN's 30 New and Emerging Photographers to Watch in 2016.

He is a recipient of the 2017 Visura Fellowship, the 2018 Getty Reportage Fellowship and participated in the 2018 Joop Swart Masterclass. *Primordial Earth*, his latest project, was presented at the Lubumbashi Biennale and the *Rencontres de Bamako* where it was awarded the "Prix de l'OIF". In 2021, he presented a solo exhibition at Bozar Brussels. In 2022, he exhibited at the 31 PROJECT gallery during the exhibition "I, myself, am the sun" curated by Liz Gomis. In the same year, Mu.Zee in Oostende, Belgium, devoted a solo exhibition to him. He was also a participant in the Black Rock residency in Dakar (SN), founded by Kehinde Wiley. In 2023, he published his first monographic catalog, "The Uncanny", with Gost Editions, and took part in the exhibition "A world in common: contemporary african photography" at London's Tate Modern.

Selection



LÉONARD PONGO

Forbidden fruit, série "Primordial Earth"
60x40 cm
UV printing on translucent Plexiglas
2019

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