

EXHIBITION

RETURN: Encounter with contemporary Africa – Group Show

Atelier, Nantes, France

27 May 2021 - 20 Jun 2021



Kendell Geers, AFROPUNK, 2017 © THE ARTIST

Raised in the aftermath of the African independence movements, the return of objects of African heritage looted during the colonial period to their countries, has been a recurring issue. It has now taken on a new momentum following E. Macron's speech in Ouagadougou in 2017 which aimed to create new relations with Africa.

RETURN, the title given to the exhibition carries a symbolic dimension which can be seen through the prism: Memory, Restitution and Transmission. Nine artists of African and French origin share the same outlook on their common history through a wide range of expression and esthetics.

The artworks – some of which were created especially for this exhibition – highlight the main questions that are emerging from the debate on the future of the looted African heritage. The artists ponder over the actual status of the ancient cultural objects from Africa kept in museums or in Western private collections, their provenance and the methods of conservation and display. Their questioning extends to the mechanisms of oppression and exploitation brought about by the Atlantic slave trade, to the process of acculturation, and the illegal traffic and merchandizing of African cultural heritage.

The artists contribute to the reactivation of the material and immaterial heritage, by means of its reappropriation and its transmission, in order to contribute to the act of restitution and reconnection. In doing so, the artists involved highlight the necessity for the RETURN which in turn, will give young people access to their own cultural heritage.

With Sinzo Aanza, Dimitri Fagbohoun, Pelagie Gbaguidi, Kendell Geers, Fred Guillet, Jems Koko Bi, Ives Apollinaire Pèdé, Hervé Youmbi, Amina Zoubir

Curators: Melanie Vietmeier and Sylvain Djache Nzefa

This exhibition is proposed by Les Anneaux de la Mémoire and La Maison de l'Afrique à Nantes in collaboration with the City of Nantes.

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