Sammy Baloji

Biography
Sammy Baloji was born in 1978 in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Lives and works in Brussels and Lubumbashi.

Sammy Baloji was born in 1978 in Lubumbashi. He holds a bachelor degree in literature and social sciences. He was working as a cartoonist when he received a formal training in photography from Simon Mukunday and Marie-Françoise Plissart. Since 2005, Baloji has been exploring the memory and history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His work is an ongoing research on the cultural, architectural and industrial heritage of the Katanga region, as well as a questioning of the impact of the Belgian colonization. His use of photography archives enables him to manipulate time and space, thus comparing old colonial narratives to contemporary economic imperialisms. His work is like a single story in loop in which the same mistakes, the same injustices and the same traumas repeat themselves around the world. His videos and photography series highlight how identities are shaped, transformed, perverted and reinvented. His critical look on contemporary societies are warnings about how cultural clichés continue to shape collective memories, thus allowing social and political power games to keep on dictating human behaviors.

Baloji participated to the Bamako African Photography Encounters in 2007, the Lyon biennale in 2015, the Venice biennale in 2015, PhotoQuai festival at the Quai Branly Museum in Paris in 2015, and Documenta XIV in 2017. He has exhibited at the Royal Museum of Central Africa in Tervuren, the Kunstmuseum aan zee in Oostende, the Tate Modern in London, the Africa Center in New York and the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in Washington DC. He received several awards including from the Prince Claus Foundation in The Netherlands, the Bamako African Photography Encounters and the Dakar biennale. He won the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative in 2014.

Sammy Baloji is a co-founder of the Picha Encounters, a photography and video biennale in Lubumbashi.

Major exhibitions
2019  Affective Utopia, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, France
2018  Kinshasa Chroniques Urbaines, Musée International des Arts Modestes (MIAM), Sète, France
African Metropolis, una città immaginaria, MAXXI, Rome, Italy
Festival La Gacilly-Baden Photo, Baden, Germany
Arracher quelques bribres précises au vide qui se creuse, Galerie Arts & Essai, Rennes, France
2017/16  Urban Now : City Life in Congo, Sammy Baloji and Filip de Boeck, WIELS, Contemporary Art Center
Brussels/Open Society Foundations, New York, USA/The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada
2017  Diaramas, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
Documenta 14, Athens/Kassel, Greece/Germany
Afriques Capitales, La Villette, Paris, France
802, That is where, as you heard, the elephant danced the malinga. The place where they now grow flowers, Galerie Imane Farès, Paris, France
2015  La vie moderne, Biennale de Lyon , France
All the world’s futures - Curator: Okwui Enwezor, Venice Biennial, Venice,Italy
Personnes et les autres - Curator: Katerina Gregos, Belgian Pavilion, Venice Biennial, Venice,Italy
2014  The Divine Comedy. Heaven, Hell, Purgatory revisited by Contemporary African Artists, MMK, Frankfurt

Major collections
Centre national des arts plastiques, CNAP, Paris - France
Musée du Quai Branly, Paris - France
Musée des Confluences, Lyon - France
Frac Poitou-Charente, Angoulême, France
The Walther Collection, Ulm, Germany
Kunstmuseum aan zee, MuZee, Oostende, Belgium
Fondation Sindika Dokolo, Luanda, Angola
Fondation Zinsou, Ouidah, Benin
Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington D.C, USA
Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, VA, USA
U S Dept. of State, Art in Embassies Collection, USA
Sammy Baloji  
Photography / Video  

Education

2005 School of Arts and Design, Strasbourg, France  
2003-05 University of Lubumbashi, Lubumbashi, DRC, Information Sciences and Communication  
2000-03 University of Lubumbashi, Lubumbashi, DRC, Arts and Humanity, Computer Sciences and Communication

Exhibitions / Festivals

2019 On Trade-Off: Green Gold (Carte blanche to Picha asbl), Galerie Imane Farès, Paris, France  
Affective Utopia, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, France  
Kinshasa Chroniques Urbaines, Musée International des Arts Modestes (MIAM), Sète, France  
African Metropolis, una città immaginaria, MAXXI, Rome, Italy  
Divide and Conquer in Three Stages, Solo-exhibition, Framer Framed, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Festival La Gacilly-Baden Photo, Baden, Germany  
Daegu Photography Biennial, Daegu, South Korea  
Arracher quelques briques précises au vide qui se creuse, Galerie Arts & Essai, Rennes, France

2018 Urban Now: City Life in Congo, Sammy Baloji et Filip de Boeck, The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada  
Dioramas, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France  
Documenta 14, Athens/Kassel, Greece/Germany  
Afrique Capitales, La Villette, Paris, France  
Urban Now: City Life in Congo, Sammy Baloji and Filip de Boeck, Open Society Foundation, New York, USA

2017 Why Not Ask Again: Arguments, Counter-arguments, and Stories, 11th Shanghai Biennale chief curator: Raqs Media Collective  
Congo Art Works Peinture populaire, curated by Sammy Baloji and Bambi Ceuppens, Bozar, Brussels, Belgium  
Urban Now: City Life in Congo, Sammy Baloji and Filip de Boeck, WIELS, Contemporary Art Center Brussels, Belgium  
Boz That is where, as you heard, the elephant danced the malinga. The place where they now grow flowers., Galerie Imane Farès, Paris, France

2016 Après Eden, The Walther Collection, Maison Rouge, Paris, France  
La vie Moderne, Biennale de Lyon, curated by : Ralph Rugoff and Thierry Raspail Lyon, France  
Africa, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark  

2015 Beauté Congo, Fondation Cartier pour l’Art Contemporain, Paris France  
Beautys, Tierisch, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland  
All the World’s Futures, Venice Biennial, Curator Okwui Enwezor, Venice, Italy  
Personne et les autres, Belgian Pavilion - Venice Biennial, Curator Katerina Gregos, Venice, Italy  
Beautys/Tierisch, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur  
Visibles/Invisibles - L’Afrique urbaine et ses marges, Fondation Blachère, Apt, France  
Spatial Stories: Topographies of Change in Africa, Center for Visual Art, Denver, USA  
Odyssées Africaines, Le Brass, Brussels, Belgium  
Hunting and Collecting at Mu Zee - Mu. ZEE Kunstmuseum aan zee  
The Divine comedy, Heaven, Hell, Purgatory revisited by Contemporary African Artists, Curated by Simon Njami, at the MMK Museum Für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt/Main  
«When Harmony went to Hell» Congo Dialogues: Sammy Baloji and Seeley Harris, Autograph ABP, London, UK

2014 154, Contemporary African Art Fair, Galerie Imane Farès, London, UK  
Present Tense, Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal - Paris, France  
Distance and Desire: Encounters with the African Archive. Part II: Contemporary Reconfigurations, The Walther Collection Project Space, New York, USA  
Kolwezi, Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg, (KVS), Brussels, Belgium  
The Beautiful Time in Lubumbashi: Photography by Sammy Baloji, Museum for African Art, New York, USA  
Smithsonian Museum of Natural History’s Focus Gallery, Washington D.C., USA - Curator: Bogumil Jewsiewicki  
Environment and Object in Recent African Art, Middlebury College Museum of Art, Vermont, USA  

2013 Environment and Object in Recent African Art, Anderson Gallery, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, USA  
Infinite Balance, Museum of Photographic Art, San Diego, USA  
Congo Farwest, Artists in Residence: Sammy Baloji and Patrick Mudekereza, Royal Museum of Africa, Tervuren, Brussels, Belgium  
ARS II, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland  
Possible Cities, Africa in Photography and Video. Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Haverford College, PA, USA  
Artist Residency, Royal Museum for Africa, Tervuren, Brussels, Belgium  
Environment and Object in Recent African Art, Frances Young Tang Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY, USA
2010 Mémoire, ALE School of Fine Arts & Design of the Addis Ababa University, in the framework of the first edition of ADDIS FOTO FEST, Ethiopia
Performance and projection in collaboration with Pytshens Kambilo and the women of Makuwacha, Festival des Accroche-Cœurs, Angers, France
Mémoire Allez Congo! in collaboration with the Prince Claus Fund, Vlaams Cultuurhuis: De Brakke Grond, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Mémoire, Dilston Grove in partnership with Autograph ABP, London, UK
Events of the Self: Portraiture and Social Identity, The Artur Walther Collection, New York, USA, curator: Okwui Enwezor

2008 Mémoire, MC2A (Cultural Migration Aquitaine Africa), Bordeaux, France
U.M.H.K., 2008, 14’ (video), Union Minière du Haut Katanga [Mining Union of Upper Katanga], Invideo (International Exhibition of video and cinema beyond), Milan, Italy
Mémoire, Festival « The Messenger », Cultuurcentrum, Bruges, Belgium
Mémoire, Blachère Foundation, Apt, France
Mémoire, Ifa Gallery, Berlin, Germany
Mémoire, Getxophoto, Festival International de la Photo Gexto, Spain
Vues de Likasi, Piché, Dating image, Indoor Star, Lubumbashi, DRC
Mémoire, Museum of Fine Arts in Yokohama, Japan
Mémoire, Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie, Fez, Morocco
Mémoire, Art Brussels, Belgium
Vues de Likasi, French Cultural Center, Kinshasa, DRC

2007 Mémoire, 7th Rencontres Africaines de la Photographie, Bamako, Mali
Mémoire, Photoquai 2007, First World Views Biennial, Quai Branly Museum, Paris, France
Vues de Likasi, Cultural Center Franco-Mozambican Maputo, Mozambique
Mémoire, Yambi, La Botanique, Brussels, Belgium
Mémoire, Théâtre Le Tarmac de la Villette, Paris, France
Vues de Likasi, CAPE07: Contemporary African Culture, Iziko South African Museum, Cape Town, South Africa
Avenida Vladimir Lenine, Documentary Film Festival, Maputo, Mozambique, Franco-Mozambican Cultural Center, Maputo, Mozambique
Festival International du Film d’Aubagne, Aubagne, France

The Dialogue Series: iii. Dinozord Festival d’Avignon, Aix-en-Provence, France, Springdance Festival, Utrecht, The Netherlands
Mémoire, Festival of African cinema, Apt, France

2006 Mémoire, Maison des sciences de l’homme, Paris, France
Mémoire, photographs, KVS, Royal Flemish Theater, Brussels, Belgium
The Dialogue Series: iii. Dinozord, Kisangani, DRC, Crowned Hope, Vienna, Austria, KVS, Brussels, Belgium Lubumbashi Wantashi Exhibition of 10 photographs of the city of Lubumbashi, “When Africa is exposed in pictures”, staged in four venues in the 20th arrondissement, Paris, France
Vues de Likasi, La Cambre Architecture, « Traces », Espace d'Architecture de la Cambre, Brussels, Belgium

Awards
Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative with Mentor Olafur Eliasson
2012 Shortlist, Prix Pictet
2012 The Spiegel prize, Patrick De Spiegelaere Fund
2009 Shortlist, Prix Pictet
2008 Prince Claus Award
2007 Africa Price for Creation, Creative Work of a Young Photographer and Image Award

The Jean-Paul Blachère Foundation. African Photography Biennial in Bamako, Mali
Musée des Confluences, Lyon - France
Collections

Fondation Alliance, Casablanca, Morocco
Frac Réunion, Piton Saint-Leu, Réunion
Frac Poitou-Charente, Angoulême, France
The Walther Collection, Ulm, Germany
Kunstmuseum aan zee, MuZee, Oostende, Belgium
Fondation Sindika Dokolo, Luanda, Angola
Fondation Zinsou, Ouidah, Benin
Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington D.C, USA
Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, VA, USA
Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Statoil Art collection, Oslo, Norway
U S Dept. of State, Art in Embassies Collection, USA
Centre national des arts plastiques, CNAP, Paris - France
Musée du Quai Branly, Paris - France