

Sammy Baloji

Portfolio

Imane Farès

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Works: courtesy of the artist and Imane Farès, Paris



Photo: Kevin Faingnaert

Sammy Baloji (b. 1978)

Lives and works between Lubumbashi and Brussels

Since 2005, Sammy Baloji has been exploring the memory and history of the Democratic Republic of 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 Belgian colonization. His use of photographic archives allows him to manipulate time and space, comparing ancient colonial narratives with contemporary economic imperialism. His video works, installations and photographic series highlight how identities are shaped, transformed, perverted and reinvented. His critical view of contemporary societies is a warning about how cultural clichés continue to shape collective memories and thus allow social and political power games to continue to dictate human behaviour. As he stated in a recent interview: “I’m not interested in colonialism as nostalgia, or in it as a thing of the past, but in the continuation of that system.”

He started in September 2019 a PhD in Artistic Research titled “Contemporary Kasala and Lukasa: towards a Reconfiguration of Identity and Geopolitics” at Sint Lucas Antwerpen. A Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, he has received numerous awards, distinctions and fellowships including the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. In 2019–2020, he was a resident at the Académie de France à Rome - Villa Médicis. Sammy Baloji co-founded in 2008 the Rencontres Picha/Biennale de Lubumbashi.

His recent solo exhibitions include *Echoes of History and Shadows of Progress* at the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST), Athens (2025); *Goldsmiths CCA* (2024); *K(C)ongo, Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues. Subversive Classifications* at Palazzo Pitti, Florence (2022); *K(C)ongo, Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues* at Beaux-Arts de Paris (2021); *Sammy Baloji, Other Tales* at Lund Konsthall and Aarhus Kunsthall (2020); *Congo, Fragments d’une histoire* at Le Point du Jour, Cherbourg (2019); *A Blueprint for Toads and Snakes* at Framer Framed, Amsterdam (2018); *Sven Augustijnen & Sammy Baloji* at Museumcultuur Strombeek (2018); *Urban Now: City Life in Congo*, with Filip de Boeck, at *The Power Plant*, Toronto, and WIELS, Brussels (2016–2017); and *Hunting and Collecting* at Mu.ZEE Kunstmuseum aan Zee, Ostend (2014). He has also participated in major international biennials and festivals, including the 35th Bienal de São Paulo (2023), the Architecture Biennale of Venice (2023), the 15th Sharjah Biennial (2023), the Sydney Biennial (2020), documenta 14 (Kassel/Athens, 2017), the Lyon Biennial (2015), the Venice Biennial (2015), and the Photoquai Festival at the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris (2015).

Sammy Baloji opened a solo exhibition in April at Kunsthall Extra City in Antwerp, and is also participating in the Venice Biennale, notably in the Pavilion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In July, he will take part in the Rencontres de la photographie in Arles. In September 2026, he will open a solo exhibition at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, followed by a group exhibition at the MUCIV – Museo delle Civiltà in Rome in December 2026. In 2027, his work will be presented at the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Zurich, the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) in Montreal, and the Vienna Secession in Vienna.

Classification III: Art from Zaire, 100 Masterworks from the National Collection, Cult staff

2026

Bronze sculpture

200cm x 35cm x 45cm

In collaboration with Christof De Hertogh and Art Casting

Edition of 3 + 1AP

The sculpture is based on a work from a Congolese collection that was assembled during the rule of Mobutu Sese Seko. Following Belgian Congo's independence in 1960 and the Western-backed assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba in 1961, Mobutu seized power in 1965. Renaming the country Zaire, he promoted an ideology of "authenticity", a return to pre-colonial African identity that instrumentalised culture. His state-driven policy folklorised Congolese culture and demystified art objects, recasting them as symbols of a unified nation embodied by Mobutu. During his thirty-year rule, this rhetoric served to consolidate his authority while maintaining strong alliances with Western governments.

Exhibition:

61st Venice Biennale, May—November 2026



Classification I: Collezione di Arti e Culture Africane del Museo delle Civiltà, Idolo Arcaico dei Bamba (?)

2026

Bronze sculpture

240cm x 80cm x 90cm

Edition of 3 + 1AP

In collaboration with Christof De Hertogh and Art Casting

The sculpture is based on a work from the former "Luigi Pigorini" National Prehistoric and Ethnographic Museum, in Rome. Objects from the Kingdom of Kongo that entered European collections between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries first landed in cabinets of curiosity: eclectic assemblages of natural specimens, artworks and exotic items that represent the marvels of the world. Later, following the broader logic of coloniality, these artefacts were collected in ethnographic museums that studied 'other' cultures from a position of Western superiority. The work's reference sculpture was in fact shown at the 1922 Biennale di Venezia in a separate section titled *Mostra di Scultura Negra* (Exhibition of Black Sculpture), an early display of African art in the biennial that cast it as evolutionarily "primitive" in relation to European art.

Exhibition:

61st Venice Biennale, May—November 2026



Classification II: Notes Analytiques sur les Collections Ethnographiques du Musée du Congo, Tome I. – Fascicule II. La Religion, Fétiches (figures) nr. 535

2026

Bronze sculpture

130cm x 50cm x 60cm

In collaboration with Christof De Hertogh and Art Casting

Edition of 3 + 1AP

The sculpture is based on a sculpture catalogued between 1902 and 1906 in what was then called the Belgian Museum of the Congo, another ethnographic institution, established under Leopold II in 1898. Leopold's brutal colonisation of Congo sparked widespread suffering as well as the looting of art objects by colonial forces and their confiscation by Catholic missionaries.

Exhibition:

61st Venice Biennale, May—November 2026



Essay on Colonial Classicism and 'Others'

2026

16 prints

Silk screens and UV print on Heritage 315 gsm

Each print 80cm x 80cm

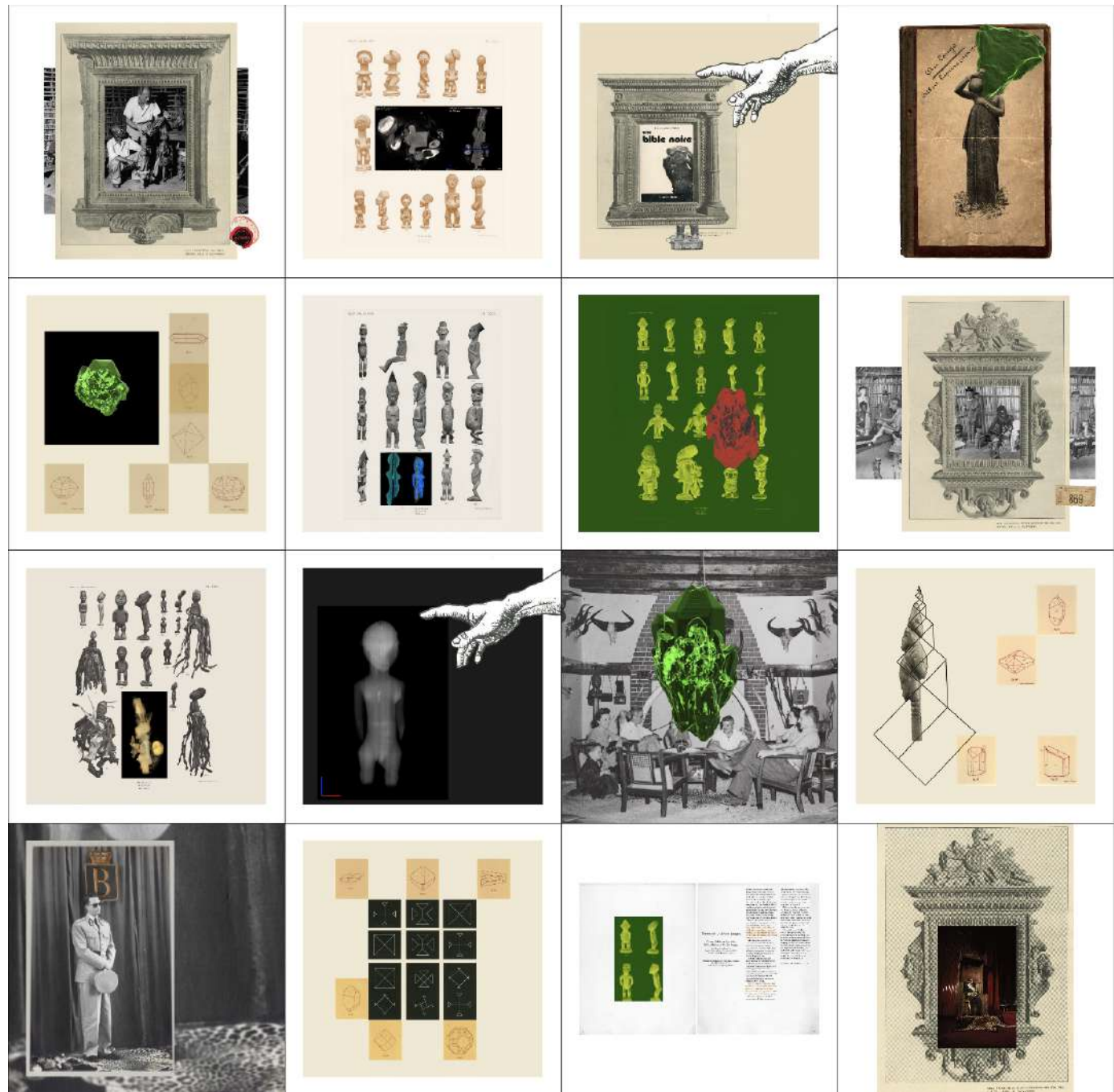
In collaboration with MASEREEL - centre for contemporary art, Kasterlee (BE), Nancy La Rosa and Wood4Art / Frédéric Lefebvre

Edition of 5 + 2AP

Essay on Colonial Classicism and 'Others' presents a series of sixteen collages that mingle portraits of King Baudoin of Belgium and Mobutu; covers, pages and photographs of objects from ethnographic catalogues; and Baloji's diagrams of mineral crystals and scans of Congolese objects held in ethnographic museums. Scanning these sculptures, Baloji argues, is a kind of scientific voyeurism; the information that it reveals cannot compensate for the loss of meaning when they were removed from their context.

Exhibition:

61st Venice Biennale, May—November 2026



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Seeing Katharina

2026

Tapestry in cotton and a mix of recycled yarns

350 X 250 cm

In collaboration with Silvana de Bari

Produced at B&T Textilia

With the support of the Vlaamse Gemeenschap, departement Cultuur, Jeugd & Media

Edition of 3 + 1AP

While being in Antwerp in 1521, the German artist Albrecht Dürer (1471 – 1528) made a drawing that is considered as one of the first depictions of a Black woman in Western art. Katharina, twenty years old at the time her portrait was taken, was more than likely an enslaved servant to João Brandão, the commercial representative of the Portuguese king. The presence of both Katharina and Brandão in Antwerp mark the city as a global harbour and headquarter of the 16th century colonial enterprise.

In *Seeing Katharina*, Katharina appears not as the demure young woman Dürer portrayed, but as a noble woman dressed in a fine gown. She stands proudly, framed by velvet drapes that reveal another tapestry inspired by 16th-century Flemish tapestries. For this setting, Sammy Baloji was inspired by Venetian palazzi interiors, with their typical namesake floor. In a fictitious provocative or activist gesture, Katharina holds in her hands a small emblem of the historic Kongo Kingdom.

Exhibitions:

Kunsthal Extra City Antwerp (Belgium), April 2026—August 2026

Upcoming:

Pavillon of the Democratic Republic of Congo (61st Venice Biennale of Contemporary Art), May—November 2026



Rethreaded Indies

2025

343 cm x 461 cm

Wool, cotton and linnen

In collaboration with Cécile Fromont

Textile design by Silvana de Bari

Production by Textiellab, Tilburg

Supported by the Mondrian Prize

Edition of 3 + 1AP

Rethreaded Indies is an artwork co-authored by Sammy Baloji and Cécile Fromont. It is a tapestry that draws from the visual language of textile arts in early modern Europe and Kongo, and from the archive documenting the role and standing of the central African kingdom in the Atlantic world. It is a spirited response to the colonial ideologies of the 17th and 18th century French Old Indies series with a scrupulously documented set of historical images centering Africa and Africans and putting to work an eloquent formal mix of Kongo and European designs. Produced in the Netherlands in the TextielMuseum's TextielLab in the Spring of 2025 using a technologically recreated Gobelins technique, the *Rethreaded Indies* is a powerful reclaiming of the history presented from a strongly biased perspective in the Old Indies.

(text by Cécile Fromont)

The work is based on a gravure made by Olfert Dapper in 1668. Garcia II Nkanga a Lukeni a Nzenze a Ntumba (Garcia Afonso) rules the Kingdom of Kongo from 1641 – 1661. When a Dutch fleet invaded and captured the Portuguese colony of Luanda, Garcia sent his armies south to support the Dutch troops, in accordance with a long-standing pact between the Kingdom of Kongo and the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands. This alliance, originally proposed by King Pedro II of Kongo in 1622, aimed to expel the Portuguese from Angola. In 1642, an official Dutch delegation was received at the Kongolese court. This visit is what is illustrated in this engraving.

Exhibitions:

Framer Framed, Amsterdam (Holland), October 2025—January 2026

Kunsthal Extra City Antwerp (Belgium), April 2026—August 2026

Upcoming:

Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus (Ohio), September 2026—February 2027



Série II B: Cnestis Lescauwaetii De Wild, Herbarium Horti Botanici Bruxellensis

2025

Copper sculpture; print laminated on Dibond

28.7 x 44.5 cm

46,2 x 30,3 x 4 cm (framed)

Unique

Production of copper sculpture by Beau Disundi

Exhibitions:

SAVY Contemporary Berlin (Germany), November 2025—

January 2026

Kölnischer Kunstverein (Germany), May 2026—July 2026



*Série II: Eriosema psoraleoides, Herbarium Horti
Botanici Bruxellensis*

2025

Copper sculpture; print laminated on Dibond

28.7 x 44.5 cm

46,2 x 30,3 x 4 cm (framed)

Unique

Production of copper sculpture by Beau Disundi

Exhibitions:

SAVY Contemporary Berlin (Germany), November 2025—
January 2026

Kölnischer Kunstverein (Germany), May 2026—July 2026



Série II D, m'Bota: Millettia Versicolor, Herbarium Horti Botanici Bruxellensis

2025

Copper sculpture; print laminated on Dibond

28.7 x 44.5 cm

46,2 x 30,3 x 4 cm (framed)

Unique

Production of copper sculpture by Beau Disundi

Exhibitions:

SAVY Contemporary Berlin (Germany), November 2025—

January 2026

Kölnischer Kunstverein (Germany), May 2026—July 2026



Série I A, *Parabanda et Paraganza: Crossopteryx febrifuga*, Herbarium Horti Botanici Bruxellensis 2025

Copper sculpture; print laminated on Dibond

28.7 x 44.5 cm

46,2 x 30,3 x 4 cm (framed)

Unique

Production of copper sculpture by Beau Disundi

Exhibitions:

SAVY Contemporary Berlin (Germany), November 2025—
January 2026

Kölnischer Kunstverein (Germany), May 2026—July 2026



*Série II E, Desmodium Velutinum, Herbarium Horti
Botanici Bruxellensis*

2025

Copper sculpture; print laminated on Dibond

28.7 x 44.5 cm

46,2 x 30,3 x 4 cm (framed)

Unique

Production of copper sculpture by Beau Disundi

Exhibitions:

SAVY Contemporary Berlin (Germany), November 2025—

January 2026

Kölnischer Kunstverein (Germany), May 2026—July 2026



Vernonia Smithiana, *Herbarium Horti Botanici
Bruxellensis*

2025

Copper sculpture; print laminated on Dibond

28.7 x 44.5 cm

46,2 x 30,3 x 4 cm (framed)

Unique

Production of copper sculpture by Beau Disundi

Exhibitions:

SAVY Contemporary Berlin (Germany), November 2025—

January 2026

Kölnischer Kunstverein (Germany), May 2026—July 2026



*Tsompe: Abrus precatorius, Herbarium Horti
Botanici Bruxellensis*

2025

Copper sculpture; print laminated on Dibond

28.7 x 44.5 cm

46,2 x 30,3 x 4 cm (framed)

Unique

Production of copper sculpture by Beau Disundi

Exhibitions:

SAVY Contemporary Berlin (Germany), November 2025—
January 2026

Kölnischer Kunstverein (Germany), May 2026—July 2026



Untitled series

2015

Embossed copper plates

60 × 42.5 cm

Produced in collaboration with the Eric van Hove / Fenduq workshop, Marrakech

Unique

This series forms part of a research project initiated by Sammy Baloji in 2015. While exploring the archives of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium, he became interested in photographs documenting scarification practices in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While scarification is embedded in systems of cultural codes that indicate an individual's status within a given social context, ethnographic photography froze these motifs as exotic and assigned them fixed tribal classifications.

Sammy Baloji sought to reconnect with these images by linking them back to the bodies of the people concerned. He began by scanning a selection of them, then altered the focus and framing, removing the colonial context. He subsequently printed these photographs in a format close to the size of an adult torso. He then experimented with transferring the photographic motifs onto copper bas-reliefs. In collaboration with the metalworking workshop of artist Eric van Hove in Morocco, this transfer is achieved by hammering the motifs through the images, thus imprinting them onto the underlying copper plates. Both materials—the photograph and the copper—are profoundly transformed by this process.

The process itself evokes scarification, in that it inscribes a cultural code onto a (metallic) surface. As in many of Sammy Baloji's works, copper—one of the minerals that has shaped the mining history of the Katanga region for centuries—is used here as an artistic material. It is transformed through collective action and shaped by the craftsmanship of Moroccan artisans, highlighting a cultural practice whose significance extends far beyond its aesthetic dimensions. The copper plates are presented without plinths or frames, emphasizing their status as remnants of a working process: neither finished works in themselves nor mere residues destined to disappear after use. They are shown as material testimonies of a process of reappropriation. Originating from colonial archives, the reconnection to these cultural traditions and their transmission occur, in Sammy Baloji's work, through transformation.

Exhibitions:

EMST Athens (Greece), April 2025–February 2026

Kunsthalle Mainz (Germany), October 2023–February 2024



Still Kongo II
Still Kongo III
Still Kongo IV

2024

Engrave wooden frames with prints glued on dibond

150 x 150 cm

Unique

Comprising five large black and white prints presented in specially designed frames of Afzelia wood, *Still Kongo I-V* is a work that considers the connections between extraction, territorial appropriation and Belgian Art Nouveau. The prints are made from digital scans of medium format photographs dating from 1958-1959. Each of the original photographs represents an aerial view of dense forest area in Yangambi and were selected from a collection of 403 photographs that document 5000km² of tropical rainforest in the Congo. Baloji sourced these images from the archives of The Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA) in Tervuren, near Brussels. Not only do they evidence the central role that aerial photography played in the colonial project, not least for surveying and mapping territories, but they also index the extreme ecological damage done by logging and resource extraction in Yangambi.

The elaborate wooden frames encasing these photographs utilise forms from Belgian Art Nouveau. This movement in architecture and design, which gained widespread public recognition at the International Exposition of 1897 in Tervuren, was popularly known as 'Style Congo' at the time of its emergence and utilised Congolese motifs and materials, such as Afzelia, the tropical hardwood used in this work. Coinciding with King Leopold II's brutal exploitation of Congo, Belgian Art Nouveau has subsequently been identified as 'Imperial Modernism' by art historian Debora Silverman. Through its combination of photograph and frame, *Still Kongo* illuminates how Belgian Art Nouveau was underpinned materially, economically and aesthetically by resources and forms taken from the Congo.

Exhibitions:

CCA Goldsmith, London (UK), September 2024-February 2025

Upcoming:

Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus (Ohio), September 2026–February 2027



Still Kongo V

Still Kongo I

2024

Engrave wooden frames with prints glued on
dibond

150 x 150 cm

Unique



Triga Mark III (1)
Triga Mark III (2)
Triga Mark III (3)
Triga Mark III (4)
Triga Mark III (5)

2024

Installation of prints on prepared paper

62,4 x 62,4 cm (each)

Unique

Triga Mark III, a series of five prints on prepared photographic paper, highlight Baloji and Monaville's interest in a more global understanding of May 1968. Three of the prints reproduce fragments of stills from a 1961 Russian documentary called *Proud Son of Africa* (including one from 30th June 1960, the day the Congo achieved independence from Belgium), about the assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. The others incorporate photographs of students who were committed to radical politics and dreamed of a socialist revolution in the Congo of the mid-1960s. The prints themselves have been produced through a complex and collaborative printing process developed by Ilan Weis. First, Hahnemühle Harmony photographic paper was prepared with white paint and varnish. Next, the different colours were added and protected with a waterproofing spray before the black and white photographs were printed. After the first print had dried, a second version was printed covering 28% of the black levels to reinforce the contrasts and depths of the image. This process of layering, of working with representation and abstraction, reflects Baloji's commitment to finding new visual forms to think about the historical meaning of radical ideas and movements.

Exhibitions:

EMST Athens (Greece), April 2025–February 2026



Série I A, Bijebié: *Cambretum Camporum*,
Herbarium Horti Botanici Bruxellensis

2024

Metal wire and copper foil sculpture; print glued on Dibond,
framed

44,5 x 28,7

Unique

Goldsmith CCA (October 4, 2024 — January 12, 2025)



Aequare. The Future that never was
2023

The installation includes:

- The Extracted Pavilion*: the model on a special plinth
- Panorama Atmosphérique, 1935; Drawing, 1935; L'illustration Congolaise nr. 146, 1933*: 3 framed archive images
- Defining Comfort and Designing Comfort: 2* displays containing a selection of books and archives (200 x 50 x 120 cm each)
- Aequare. The Future that never was*: video, sound, colour, 21'04" (edition 1/5)
Ed of 5 + 1 AP (edition 1/5)
Variable dimensions
Unique

For the installation *Aequare. The Future that never was* specifically produced for the International Architecture Exhibition in Venice curated by Lesley Lokko, Sammy Baloji and Twenty Nine Studio present a copper reinterpretation of the "Pavillon Atmosphérique" imagined by architect Henri Lacoste for Brussels World's Fair in 1935. Originally designed to illustrate the cultural characteristics in an exotic vision of Congo, this luxurious building, which was intended to be built on the Heysel plateau in Brussels, never saw the light of day. By reproducing the structure of this building, Sammy Baloji gives a physical representation of this little-known colonial exhibition.

18th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, *The laboratory of the Future*.
Photo: Andrea Avezzu





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Aequare. The Future that never was

2023

Video, sound, colour

21'04"

Ed de 5 + 1 AP

Edition disponible: 1/5

The film *Aequare. The Future that never was* (2023), shown during the Biennale, will also be on view at the gallery from this September. By shedding light on the world's second largest rainforest around Yangambi, the artist interrogates the legacy of colonialism and the ecological destruction it has caused. By showing this specific territory around the equatorial forest and the Yangambi Science Center (INEAC), Sammy Baloji also reveals a dissonance with this environment which results from "the acclimatization, scientific control and territorial appropriation of Africa by Western colonists," and suggests the vital nature of this region in reducing humanity's carbon emissions.





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Shinkolobwe's abstraction

2022

Installation composed of 15 screen-printings
on 250g white mat coated paper (laminated on
3mm Dibond) Each print: 89 x 89 cm
Full installation: 500 cm x 300 cm
Edition of 5 + 2 AP

For Sharjah Biennial 15, Baloji presents *Shinkolobwe's abstraction* (2022), an installation comprising of historical documents and archive-based evidences of the competing interests of the Soviet Union and the United States to gain access to the Belgian Congo uranium in the 1940s and 50s in Shinkolobwe, the largest uranium resource in the world. In this work, the artist presents collected materials from CArCoB in Brussels and the private collection of historian Pedro Monaville which provide a historical reconstruction of the involvement of the Union Minière du Haut Katanga—the Belgian union company that up to the late 1960's controlled the Congolese mining industry—in the making of the atomic weaponry. It parallels this history of resource exploitation with the generation of student activists, whose revolutionary thinking to decolonise the country is charted in Moanville's recent book *Students of the World*. *Shinkolobwe's abstraction* recomposes the crystallographic geologic studies of the region into coloured abstracted forms, which are also mirrored in the documentary materials of the student struggles.



*...and to those North Sea waves
whispering sunken stories (I)*

2021

Metal and glass terrarium containing various tropical plants, potting soil, clay pebbles

223,8 x 230 x 129,6 cm approx.

Unique

Exhibition view: Sammy Baloji at Beaufort 21, Zeebrugge

*...and to those North Sea waves
whispering sunken stories (II)*

2021

Metal and glass terrarium containing various tropical plants, potting soil, clay pebbles, and sound

230 x 273 x 307 cm

Unique

Exhibition view: Sammy Baloji at In Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres, 2021.
Photo © Birger Stichelbau

...and to those North Sea waves whispering sunken stories (I) & (II)

Part. I

Only a few kilometers from the dike in Knokke-Heist is the sea bank 'de Paardenmarkt'. After the First World War, no less than 35,000 tons of German ammunition were dumped at this site, leading to a particularly precarious situation since the invisible munition dump will slowly become a toxic threat to underwater ecosystems.

The little-known dumping operation can be seen as a striking analogy with the role of the Democratic Republic of Congo during WWI. As a colonial power, Belgium decided to deploy only a few Congolese soldiers on the European front, but led larger troops in the Congo. Historical accounts of the Great War never say a word about these colonial troops. Just like the ammunition dump, official monuments or ceremonies simply obscure their presence completely. Seeking to complete this history, artist Sammy Baloji found the biography of Albert Kudjabo, one of the thirty-two Congolese men who fought in Europe during WWI. Kudjabo was captured by the German army, and was « studied », seen merely as a « scientific phenomenon » because he was black. Baloji found fragments of recordings made by the German military of their examination of Kudjabo. These are the only audio recordings of a soldier from WWI.

All these shadow histories crystallize subtly in Baloji's sculptures. Indeed, the structure of *... And to Those North Sea Waves Whispering Sunken Stories* was inspired by the 'Wardian case', a glass transport case that was used to protect exotic plants during maritime shippings from the former colonies to Europe. The sculpture's shape evokes that of Congolese minerals, while the plants it houses are those exiled from the same country. The temporary protective case has parallels with the temporary protective solution of the sea dump. The work gives a voice back to forgotten traces from the past, but also emphasizes their effects in a global world and the active attempts at making things forgotten.

Part. II

Central to the installation in the In Flanders Fields Museum is a terrarium with tropical plants. It is a modern version of the 'Wardian case' in which living plant material were transported to Europe during the colonial period. These plants, transposed from one cultural context to another, are here put into perspective with the Congolese men who arrived in Belgium with their enslavers and later joined the Belgian army at the beginning of the war. One of them was Albert Kudjabo, a Congolese man who spent four years in German captivity.

We not only see him, but also hear his voice on a sound recording made by German scientists in March 1917 (courtesy of the Lautarchiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin).

...and to those North Sea waves whispering sunken stories (I)



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...and to those North Sea waves whispering sunken stories (II)



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Johari - Brass Band

2020

© Grand Palais, photo Didier Plowy

Sousaphone

Copper, brass, steel

316 x 200 x 155 cm

Horn diameter: 155 cm

Unique

French Horn

Copper, brass, steel

266 x 226 x 124 cm

Horn diameter: 124 cm

Unique

Commissioned by the Rmn - Grand Palais, these two sculptures were designed for the pedestals of the facade of the Grand Palais, on the Champs-Élysées-Clemenceau side. Taking the shape of a Sousaphone and a French horn, they are inspired by the musical instruments abandoned after the defeat of the French expeditionary force in Louisiana in the 19th century, and later recovered by slaves to create the Brass Bands.

These two monumental copper sculptures are scarified by the artist, echoing traditional Congolese practices eradicated by the colonial presence. They are placed into metal structures that evoke the form of minerals from Katanga, a Congolese province with a wealth of natural resources that have been over-exploited by international companies since 1885. Johari – Brass Band is a triumphant symbol of Africa's reappropriation of its own history

Production: Estelle Lecaille, Twenty Nine Studio, Bruxelles. Design & Production: Ismaël Bennani & Orfée Grandhomme, Bruxelles. Making: Jean-Daniel Bourgeois, Bruxelles, Dinanderie Clabots, Dinant



Memory is like stagnant water in that it can only operate when activated. Such activation is neither factual nor historical. It is triggered by another mechanism, a shock such as the image of the “accidental encounter, on a dissecting table, of a sewing machine and an umbrella” proposed by Lautréamont. In the present case, let’s imagine for a moment that the “umbrella” is the colonized person, the “sewing machine” the colonizer, and the “dissecting table” history. Indeed, colonization was this radical fracture that modified the memory mechanism of those who endured it. It is a fracture in the sense that an external memory was superimposed on the original memory. The result of the encounter is that everything, including certainties, becomes muddled because the memories of all the actors involved in this drama have become an intractable jumble. Memory has become a ruin on which all kinds of subjectivities can be projected. There, there is no lost paradise or theory of origins, but only imaginary constructs. And when one embarks on a re-construction effort, as Sammy Baloji does, it is not to build something identical (which is impossible) but to pave a new form of representation. “I think I had the idea of the two sculptures because I needed to question history. How do we represent representation and what mechanisms do we create to speak about it? Is representation merely human morphology? What are its underlying writings, in other words its identity mechanisms?”².

That is the essential question the artist was faced with when he was about to accomplish a memory act that would represent. As he has said, he understood at once the limits of figuration that are often attached to this type of object and the importance of metaphorization. Come to think of it, it obviously operates on several plans. The first is the material chosen to embody his concepts, i.e. copper and music. Copper has a double meaning. As any musician would confirm, it refers to a category of wind instruments (brass instruments), but it is also a raw material that was exploited for a long time in the Congo by local people

¹ Lautréamont, *Les chants de Maldoror*, in *Lautréamont, Œuvres complètes*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, wn° 218, 2009 [1869]

² Sammy Baloji during the conference “Des sculptures publiques pour qui ? Pour quoi ?” (Public sculptures for whom? For what?) organized by the Grand Palais, moderated by Chris Dercon, with Yves Le Fur, Simon Njami and Dominique Taffin, 7 December 2020

who were practically enslaved. The music is that of the brass bands that appeared in New Orleans in the early 19th century and were particularly thriving in the Congo Square neighborhood. “The idea was to find an interesting element that could provide a temporal analysis that would go beyond a mere intervention on the Grand Palais’s empty pedestals. I wanted to refer to the history of these brass bands, which I discovered through the archives of William Shepard, an African American missionary who arrived in the Congo in the 1890s to contribute to the emancipation of his Congolese brothers. But what I found to be even more interesting is that Shepard also created a brass band movement in the Congo, and I found an image of a group of Congolese musicians with drums and saxophones.”³ We are here at the center of what Pierre Verger called the “ebb and flow”⁴, i.e. the way history goes back and forth and revisits in cycles the meaning of the values and symbols it carries. Baloji would agree with me that the trigger was not so much the discovery of Congo Square, which could represent a fictitious Africa, than this archival image of Congolese people marching with drums and saxophones, thus imprinting on the local culture an external element, which comes back with a boomerang effect. (...)

Sammy Baloji has, through a phenomenological shift, given a conscience to an object that would otherwise have appeared trivial. “Image is the way in which an object appears in consciousness, or indeed a certain consciousness gives itself a certain object.”⁵ Isn’t it the best definition of history considered in its full subjectivity? Isn’t it an illustration of our unique experience in front of an object that, mixing multiple references, suddenly becomes a polysemy? We cannot reduce history to the obviousness of its manifestation, but to the subjectivity of our gaze, says Sammy Baloji through this public artwork. Baloji’s work is a *mise en abyme* that combines contradictory discourses. (...)

—Simon Njami, December 2020

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Pierre Verger, *Trade relations between the Bight of Benin and Bahia from the 17th to 19th century*, [1968]

⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary* [1948]



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*K(C)ongo, Fragments of
Interlaced Dialogues
Subversive Classifications*
Palazzo Pitti, Florence
April 26 - June 26, 2022
Sept. 6 - Nov. 27, 2022

Photos © Gallerie Degli Uffizi

[next pages]

Gnosis

2022

Site specific installation including maps
printed on forex (images courtesy of

Afriterra) and fiberglass globe

Made in collaboration with Traumnovelle
(Brussels, Belgium)

Globe: 260 cm (diam.)

Unique

The Crossing

2022

Woven wool

Made in collaboration with Traumnovelle

8829,10 x 70 cm

Unique

K(C)ongo Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues: Subversive Classifications is an exhibition conceived specifically for the Andito degli Angiolini as a new and extended chapter of Sammy Baloji's ongoing reflection on and dialogue with a series of artefacts and archives dating back to the Kingdom of Kongo and that had arrived in Europe between the 16th and 17th centuries.

Marked with motifs inspired by those decorating the oliphants, *The Crossing* is an elaborate 88 meters long wool carpet that guides the visitor throughout these « interlaced dialogues » which form the basis of the exhibition. The copper and bronze wall-sculptures from the series *Negative of Luxury Cloth* and the weaving loom titled *Goods Trades Roots* are also marked by geometric patterns, recalling the precious raffia textiles that arrived in Italy through Portuguese merchants between the 16th and 17th centuries.

Inspired by Cosimo's Hall of Geographical Maps at Palazzo Vecchio, the immersive installation *Gnosis* further explores the concept of the Wunderkammer, of which many objects came from future colonies. Similarly, the sculptures displayed on the Uffizi storagerack were collected in the Congo while it was a Belgian colony, before being acquired by the Museo di antropologia e etnologia dell'Università di Firenze at the beginning of the 20th c., and later exhibited at the *Scultura Negra* exhibition of the XIII Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia in 1922.

Baloji thereby contextualizes these Renaissance collections of mirabilia and naturalia and the emergence of modern anthropological and ethnographic museums in Italy. The classification systems of these museums revealed the exoticized and racialized perspective through which the African continent was presented in the age of empires as underlined by philosopher V. Y. Mudimbe in his seminal book *The Invention of Africa* (1988).

The exhibition highlights a « subversive » facet of the historical accounts around Kongo artefacts. In line with contemporary cultural perception and values, Baloji's research goes beyond modern exoticizing and ethnographic classifications which can be considered as consequences of both the transatlantic slave trade and the Scramble for Africa of the late 19th century.



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*K(C)ongo, Fragments of
Interlaced Dialogues*
Personal exhibition, Beaux-Arts
de Paris
June 10 - July 18, 2021

The exhibition brings together two groups of works: on the one hand, a group of drawings and objects made from motifs borrowed from Kongo fabrics, weavings made of raffia fiber, emblems of social prestige intended for royalty and nobility.

From the details of their geometric patterns were produced a set of drawings and a series of transfers on bronze plates. The artist was particularly interested in the patrimonial trajectory of these objects: initially integrated into the collections of the Cabinets of curiosities of the first Roman museums of the Renaissance, they were transferred in the 19th century to museums of ethnography. Through a group of engraved and painted wooden panels, the artist also revisits the use of these same motifs by the colonial museum of Tervuren - founded at the very end of the 19th century near Brussels - where they served as decorative elements within an Art Nouveau architecture.

On the other hand, a selection of tapestries that are part of the famous tentures des Indies, woven since the end of the 17th century by the Royal Manufacture of Gobelins. They are based on the works of two painters who lived in the West Indies at the time of the Dutch colonization of northeastern Brazil and depict exotic landscapes where the daily life of the Indians and black slaves is depicted amidst abundant fauna, or local diplomatic events such as the visit of ambassadors from the Kongo Kingdom sent to Brazil in 1643. Both these groups of works, whether by the artist or borrowed from art and history collections, testify to the complexity of a history of exchanges, transactions and exploitation. They show the contextual and institutional effects of a narrative written by Europe, which saw them alternately take on the roles of diplomatic devices, works of art, ethnographic artifacts or mere decorative elements.



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Goods Trades Roots

2020

Weaving loom in Afzelia wood

Weaving in copper acrylic and cotton
yarns

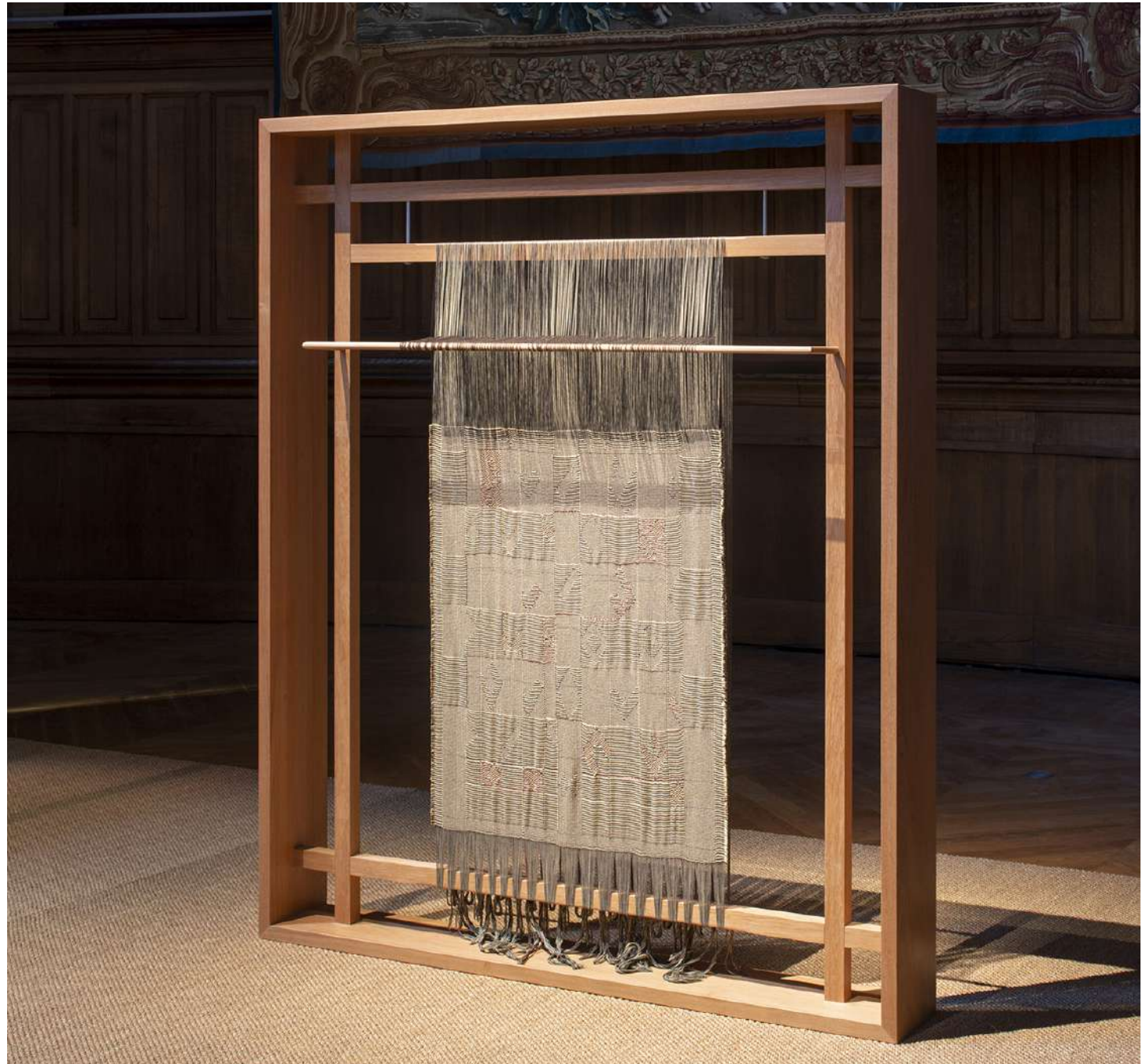
Inspired by a «M'fuba» mat made of fibre of
screw pine from the Vili culture (Kongo),
in the collections of the Anthropology
Dept. of the National Museum of Natural
History, Smithsonian. Collected by Carl
Steckelmann in 1892. Inv. No. 165321

Made in collaboration with Estelle
Chatelain

195 x 162 x 12 cm

Unique

Exhibition view: Sammy Baloji, Beaux-Arts
de Paris, 2021. Photo © Martin Argyroglo



Hobé's Art Nouveau Forest and Its Lines of Color

2021

Installation of four wood panels and acrylic paint on canvas

In collaboration with Inès Di Folca, Elena Valtcheva, Orféé Grandhomme & Ismaël Bennani, Jean-Christophe Lanquetin

210 x 300 x 1 cm, 250 x 200 x 1 cm, 210 x 200 x 1 cm, 240 x 280 x 1 cm

Unique

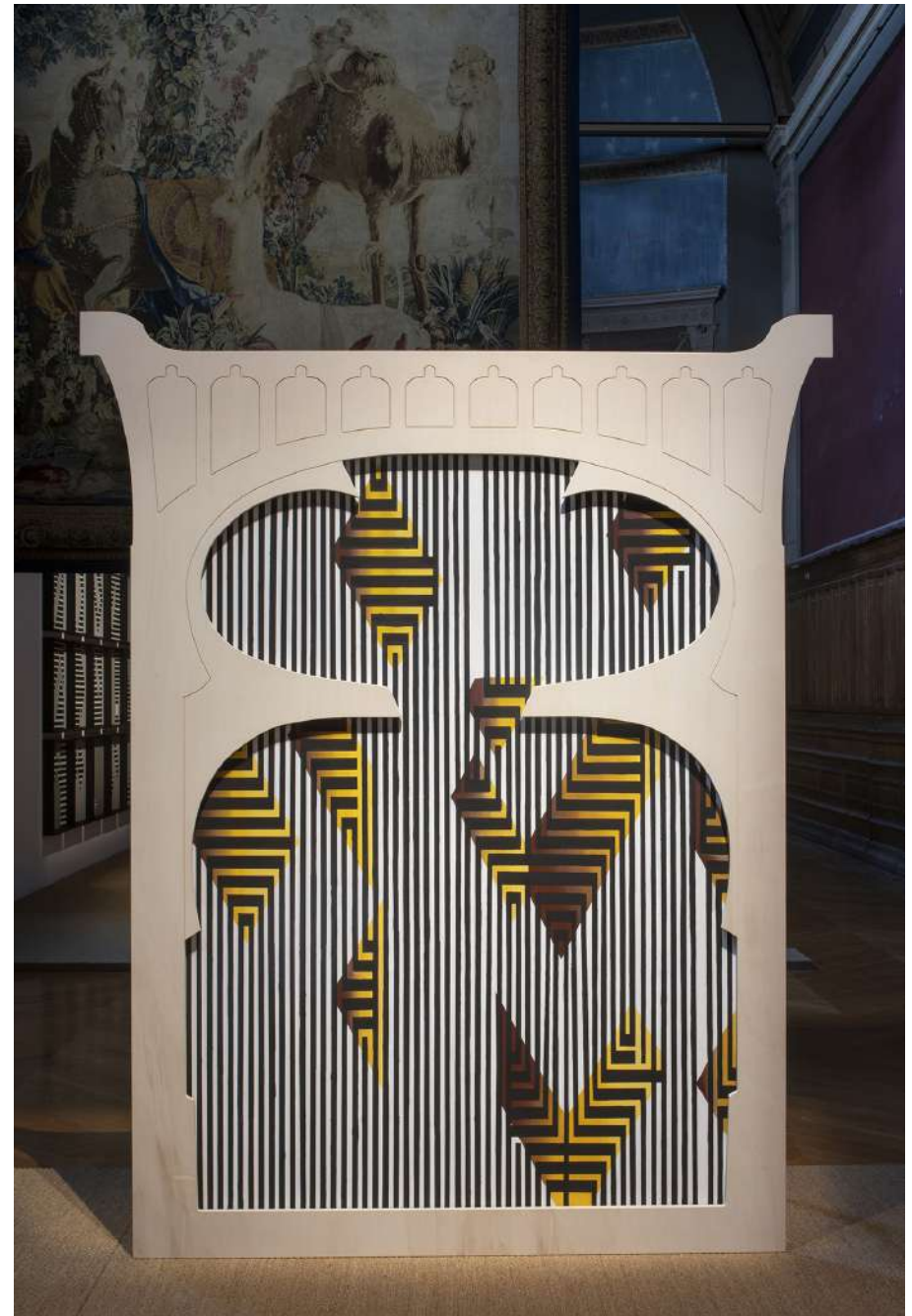
Exhibition views: Sammy Baloji, Beaux-Arts de Paris, 2021. Photo © Martin Argyroglo

"Scientific papers report that not only was Belgian Art Nouveau strongly influenced by Congolese art, but also that it integrated materials (wood, copper, ivory) from the Congo into its creations. Moreover, the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, before its renovation, presented its collections in an Art Nouveau décor that integrated Kongo fabrics into the walls and furniture, to the point that they no longer appeared as such.

I question this scenography by reproducing the display in which Kongo patterns are integrated, which I reinterpret with the colors used by W.E.B. Du Bois in the diagrams he presented at the Negro Exhibition during the 1900 Universal Exhibition in Paris, to evoke the social condition of Black Americans. The idea is to divert the ethnographic reading that one could have had of these works by emphasizing the modern aspect of these ancient practices".

—Sammy Baloji





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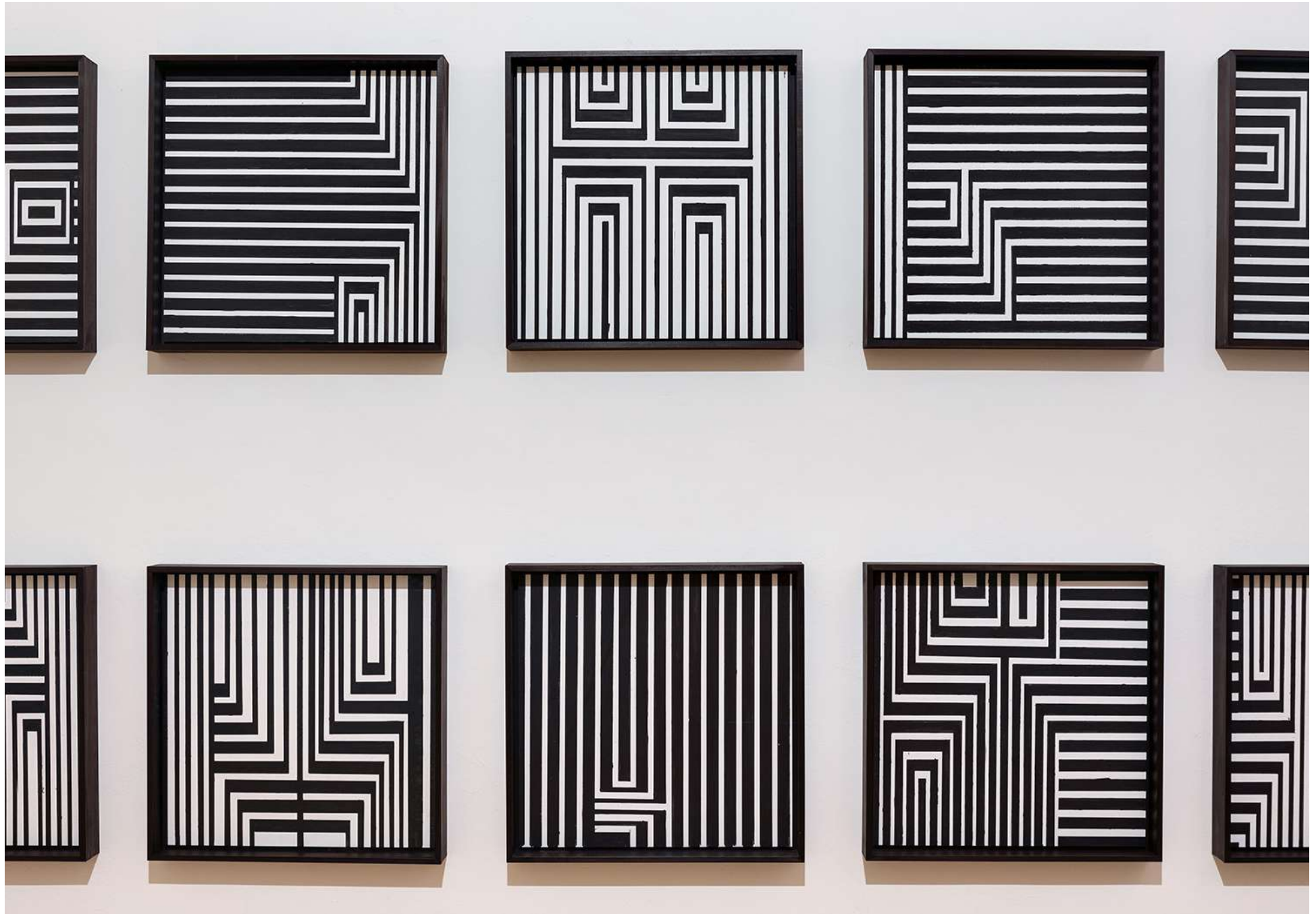
Mfuba's Extract - Wunderkammer
(Work in Progress)

2020
Acrylic painting on paper
72 x 72 cm (each)
Banners
Unique
Collection Frédéric de Goldschmidt,
Brussels

Installation view: French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici, 2020. Photo © Daniele Molajoli

Sammy Baloji's research project at the Villa Medici explores the politico-religious and commercial exchanges that were established between the Kongo Kingdom, Portugal and the Vatican from the sixteenth century onwards, exchanges that were, moreover, largely reinforced by the transatlantic slave trade. The research in Italy is a continuation of the work exhibited at Documenta 14, *Fragments of Interlaced Dialogue*, where Baloji is already weaving a series of narratives by combining archives and objects on the dissemination and reappropriation of knowledge and the complexities of the construction of Congolese society deeply marked by the effects of colonization. It consists of drawing a parallel between the Kongo objects that arrived in Rome around the sixteenth century by Jesuit missionaries, and which later entered the collections of the Museo delle Civiltà, and, as a result, the creation of art history from a Eurocentric perspective dating back to the Renaissance.





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Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues, 2017 - ... Copper Negative of Luxury Cloth Kongo Peoples; Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo or Angola, Seventeenth-Eighteenth Century

[details on the following pages]

Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues is a research project that Baloji started in 2015, inspired by the exhibition 'Kongo: Power and Majesty' at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. This incredibly well researched exhibition brought together, for the first time, many artefacts originating from the Kingdom of Kongo, most of them usually scattered across European museums and various ethnographic collections, disconnected from the complexity of their origins.

The Kingdom of Kongo (1390–1914) was a territory corresponding to today's northern Angola, the western part of DRC, the Republic of the Congo and the southernmost part of Gabon. This kingdom entered into contact with the Portuguese in 1483, when the navigator Diogo Cão landed at the mouth of the Kongo river in search of trading opportunities. Since then and until the period of colonisation in the nineteenth century, there was an intense exchange of precious objects between Kongo and European powers, often travelling as diplomatic gifts between equal regents. The most popular objects were oliphants (carved ivory hunter horns) and textiles (cushions and carpets) made from the fibres of the raffia palm. These were all decorated with designs consisting of geometric friezes. These started to appear in many European syncretic artistic productions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which demonstrates the stylistic influences between the two continents.

Among the many objects on show at the Met—testifying to power relations radically different from those of exploitation and slavery in the better known nineteenth century—there were also some on loan from museums in Sweden and Denmark. (...) For his installation at the Neue Galerie in Kassel during Documenta 14 in 2017 Baloji used some of these luxury objects, both physically and conceptually. He took high-resolution photographs of the refined fabrics and used them to create copper negatives, which he exhibited next to the originals. These inauthentic yet newly dignified forms were an attempt to reanimate the submerged technical knowledge of the Kingdom of Kongo.

After the initial success of the Kongo objects at various European courts the underlying expertise was lost, because of colonisation and the brutal enslavement of the local population under Belgian rule. Baloji's choice to replicate these objects in bronze underlines the continuous exploitation of Kongo under different forms throughout history. At the same time he suggests that these geometric threads from the past might prefigure the binary code behind the functioning of electronic components, thus referencing the use of coltan today.

—Matteo Lucchetti, in *Sammy Baloji: Other Tales*, introduction, 2020

*Fragments of Interlaced
Dialogues, 2017 - ... Copper
Negative of Luxury Cloth Kongo
Peoples; Democratic Republic of
the Congo, Republic of the Congo
or Angola, Seventeenth-Eighteenth
Century*

2020

Bronze

The original cushion cover made in raffia,
first inventoried 1670, is kept at the
Kungliga Samlingarna, Sweden

64,5 x 63 x 0,9 cm

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

Photo © Orfée Grandhomme



*Fragments of Interlaced
Dialogues, 2017 - ... Copper
Negative of Luxury Cloth Kongo
Peoples; Democratic Republic of
the Congo, Republic of the Congo
or Angola, Seventeenth-Eighteenth
Century*

2020

Bronze

The original cushion cover made in
raffia, first inventoried 1737, is kept at the
Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen

52,3 x 51,3 x 0,9 cm

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

Photo © Orfée Grandhomme



*Fragments of Interlaced
Dialogues, 2017 - ... Copper
Negative of Luxury Cloth Kongo
Peoples; Democratic Republic of
the Congo, Republic of the Congo
or Angola, Seventeenth-Eighteenth
Century*

2020

Bronze

The original cushion cover made in
raffia, first inventoried 1737, is kept at the
Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen

62 x 50,3 x 0,9 cm

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

Photo © Orfée Grandhomme



[from left to right]

*Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues,
2017 - ... Copper Negative of Luxury Cloth
Kongo Peoples; Democratic Republic
of the Congo, Republic of the Congo or
Angola, Seventeenth-Eighteenth Century*
2017

Bronze

The original cushion cover made in raffia, first
inventoried 1709, is kept at Polo Museale di Lazio,
Museo Preistorico Etnografico Luigi Pigorini,
Rome

80,6 x 77,1 x 0,9 cm

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

*Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues,
2017 - ... Copper Negative of Luxury Cloth
Kongo Peoples; Democratic Republic
of the Congo, Republic of the Congo or
Angola, Seventeenth-Eighteenth Century*
2017

Bronze

The original cushion cover made in raffia, first
inventoried 1876, is kept at Polo Museale di Lazio,
Museo Preistorico Etnografico Luigi Pigorini,
Rome

73,5 x 100,4 x 0,9 cm

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

*Réserves de l'Institut des Musées
Nationaux du Congo, Kinshasa. Vues des
poteries mortuaires de l'empire Kongo et
des faïences européennes troquées aux
XVe- XVIIIe siècles*

2017

Digital inkjet print on Epson bariet gloss 285 gr

110 x 165 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Fragments of Interlaced
Dialogues, 2017 - ... Copper
Negative of Luxury Cloth Kongo
Peoples; Democratic Republic of
the Congo, Republic of the Congo
or Angola, Seventeenth-Eighteenth
Century*

2017

Bronze

The original cushion cover made in raffia,
first inventoried 1876, is kept at Polo
Museale di Lazio, Museo Preistorico
Etnografico Luigi Pigorini, Rome

73,5 x 100,4 x 0,9 cm

Edition of 3 + 1 AP



*Fragments of Interlaced
Dialogues, 2017 - ... Copper
Negative of Luxury Cloth Kongo
Peoples; Democratic Republic of
the Congo, Republic of the Congo
or Angola, Seventeenth-Eighteenth
Century*

2017

Bronze

The original cushion cover made in raffia,
first inventoried 1709, is kept at Polo
Museale di Lazio, Museo Preistorico
Etnografico Luigi Pigorini, Rome

80,6 x 77,1 x 0,9 cm

Edition of 3 + 1 AP



Exhibition view: Sammy Baloji, Beaux-Arts de Paris, 2021. Photo © Martin Argyroglo



*Kasala, The Slaughterhouse
of Dreams or the First Human,
Bende's Error*

2019

Installation includes:

- a hunting horn with scarifications of the coppersmith Guido Clabots in Dinant, Belgium. Copper, variable dimensions
- two mirrors with photos of Hans Himmelheber and X-ray topograms of a power figure acquired by him. UV print of glass, brass frame, 202 x 85 cm (each)
- a reproduction of an archival photograph from the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren.
- an interactive application on a tactile flat screen.

Collection Museum Rietberg Zürich

Work commissioned by the Museum Rietberg Zürich for the exhibition Congo as Fiction.

Exhibition view: © Museum Rietberg Zürich, photo: Rainer Wolfsberger

In his installation entitled *Kasala: The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human, Bende's Error*, internationally renowned artist Sammy Baloji refers to Hans Himmelheber in that he asks questions about the way colonial collections and archives should be treated: what happens to objects from Africa that have been torn from their cultural context when they land in museums in the northern hemisphere? How legitimate is it to reveal the inner life of the statuettes? How can the objects find their voice again? Are there other forms of memory?



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of Dreams or the First Human,
Bende's Error*

2019

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- an interactive application on a tactile flat screen.

Collection Museum Rietberg Zürich

Work commissioned by the Museum Rietberg Zürich for the exhibition Congo as Fiction.

Exhibition views for the 22nd Biennale of Sydney (2020), Cockatoo Island.

Presented at the 22nd Biennale of Sydney with assistance from the Flemish Ministry of Culture. Photograph: Zan Wimberley.



*Kasala, The Slaughterhouse
of Dreams or the First Human,
Bende's Error*

2019

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Exhibition views for the 22nd Biennale of Sydney (2020), Cockatoo Island. Presented at the 22nd Biennale of Sydney with assistance from the Flemish Ministry of Culture. Photograph: Zan Wimberley.

- interactive application on a tactile flat screen:

Ed. 1/2 : Rietberg Museum, Zurich

Ed. 2/5 : CNAP, Paris



*Kasala, The Slaughterhouse
of Dreams or the First Human,
Bende's Error*

2019

Installation includes:

- a hunting horn with scarifications of the coppersmith Guido Clabots in Dinant, Belgium. Copper, variable dimensions
- Two mirrors with photos of Hans Himmelheber and X-ray topograms of a power figure acquired by him. UV print of glass, brass frame, 202 x 85 cm (each)
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Collection Museum Rietberg Zürich

Work commissioned by the Museum Rietberg Zürich for the exhibition Congo as Fiction.

Zürich, photo: Rainer Wolfsberger



*Kasala, The Slaughterhouse
of Dreams or the First Human,
Bende's Error*

2020

HD video, colour, sound

31 min 40 sec

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Exhibition view for the 22nd Biennale
of Sydney (2020), Cockatoo Island.
Presented at the 22nd Biennale of Sydney
with assistance from the Flemish Ministry
of Culture. Photograph: Zan Wimberley.



*Kasala, The Slaughterhouse
of Dreams or the First Human,
Bende's Error*

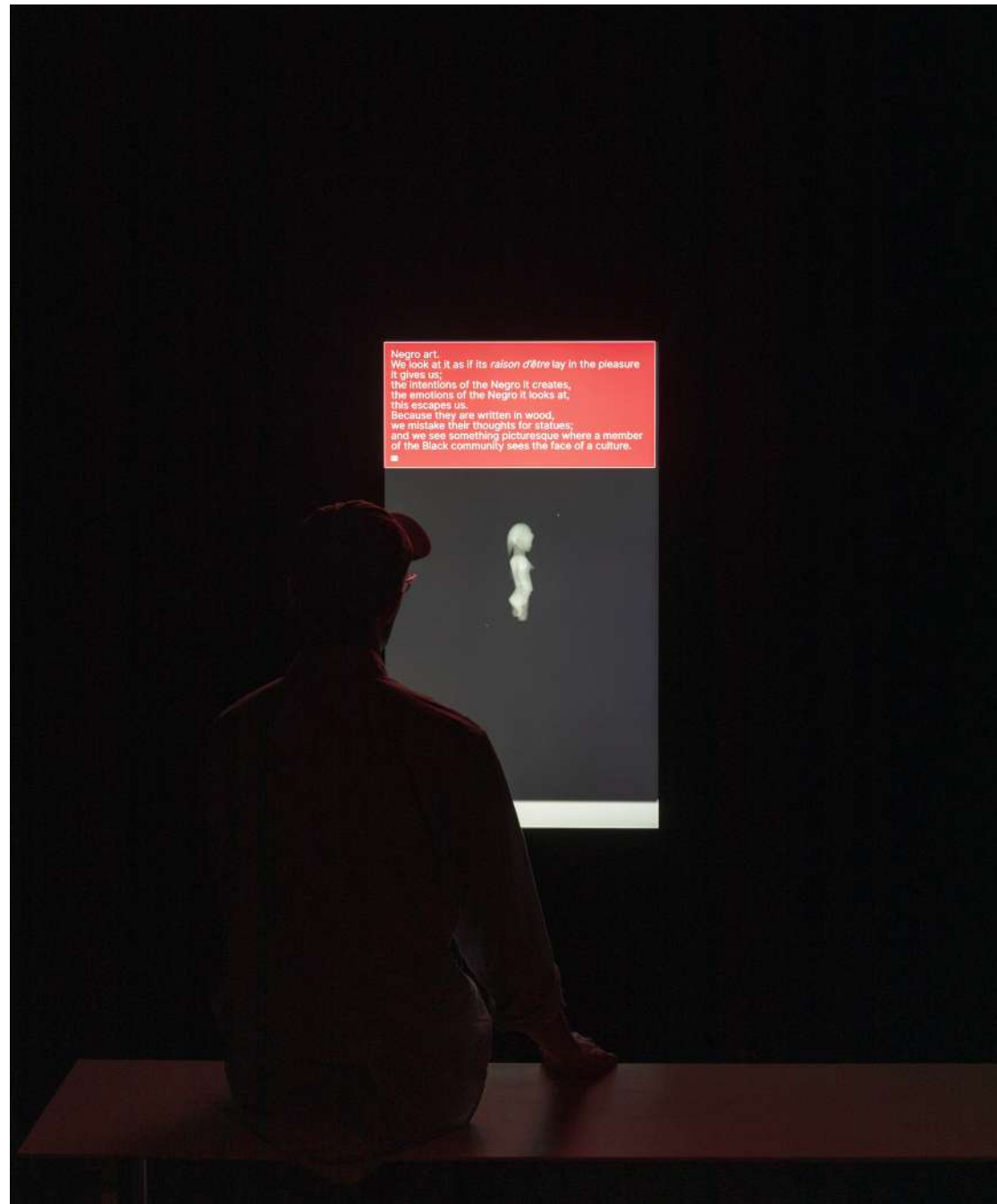
2020

Application on interactive digital
touchscreen 4K UHD iiyama 49" ProLite
Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5: Museum Rietberg, Zürich

Ed. 2/5: Cnap, Paris

Work commissioned by the Museum
Rietberg Zürich for the exhibition Congo
as Fiction - Art Worlds between Past and
Present, 2019



Series: *Kasala, The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human, Bende's Error*
2020

UV Prints on mirrors 4 mm,
American cases in polished
brushed brass

Various dimensions
Editions of 5 + 1 AP

The series' starting point is Sammy Baloji's critical questioning of German ethnologist Hans Himmelheber's (1908-2003) photographic archives, which include pictures collected in 1939 during a trip to the Congo, then a Belgian colony. These photographs, which are today conserved in Zurich, are considered novel from an ethnographic perspective because Himmelheber was interested in the Congolese people as creative individuals.. In a series of collages on mirror discreetly referencing divinatory nkisi figures, which place viewers in front of their reflection, Sammy Baloji associates some of [Himmelhueber's] photographs with images generated by X-Ray scanner of various objects from the ethnologist's collection.

In this series that furthers this analysis into present times, Sammy Baloji superimposes on a selection of photographs by Himmelheber digital models of minerals from Katanga. He thus combines the destructive impact of mining in Congo with the history of colonial collecting and signals the aspiration to absolute control enabled by the digital technologies used by museums.

—Lotte Arndt

Hans Himmelheber, The long building of the circumcision camp can be seen behind the mask, DR Congo, Pende region, 1939, scan of the inside of a Songye power figure, and your reflection in the mirror, 2020

2020

from the series *Kasala, The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human, Bende's Error*

UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case in polished brushed brass

205.2 x 84.2 x 3 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5: Collection Jom, Dakar





Exhibition views: Sammy Baloji, *Kasala, The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human, Bende's Error*, Imane Farès, Paris, 2020. Photo © Tadzio

*Hans Himmelheber,
Himmelheber's boots and tipoye
bearer, DR Congo, Lele region,
January 1939, scan of a Dioptase
from Tantara mine, and your
reflection in the mirror, 2020
2020*

from the series *Kasala, The
Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First
Human, Bende's Error*
UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case
in polished brushed brass
51.2 x 71.2 x 3 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 2/5 : Victoria and Albert Museum,
London



Hans Himmelheber, Masked
figure and men, DR Congo,
Pende region, 1939, scan of a
Chalcopyrite from Kipushi mine.
And your reflection in the mirror,
2020

2020

from the series *Kasala, The
Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First
Human, Bende's Error*

UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case
in polished brushed brass

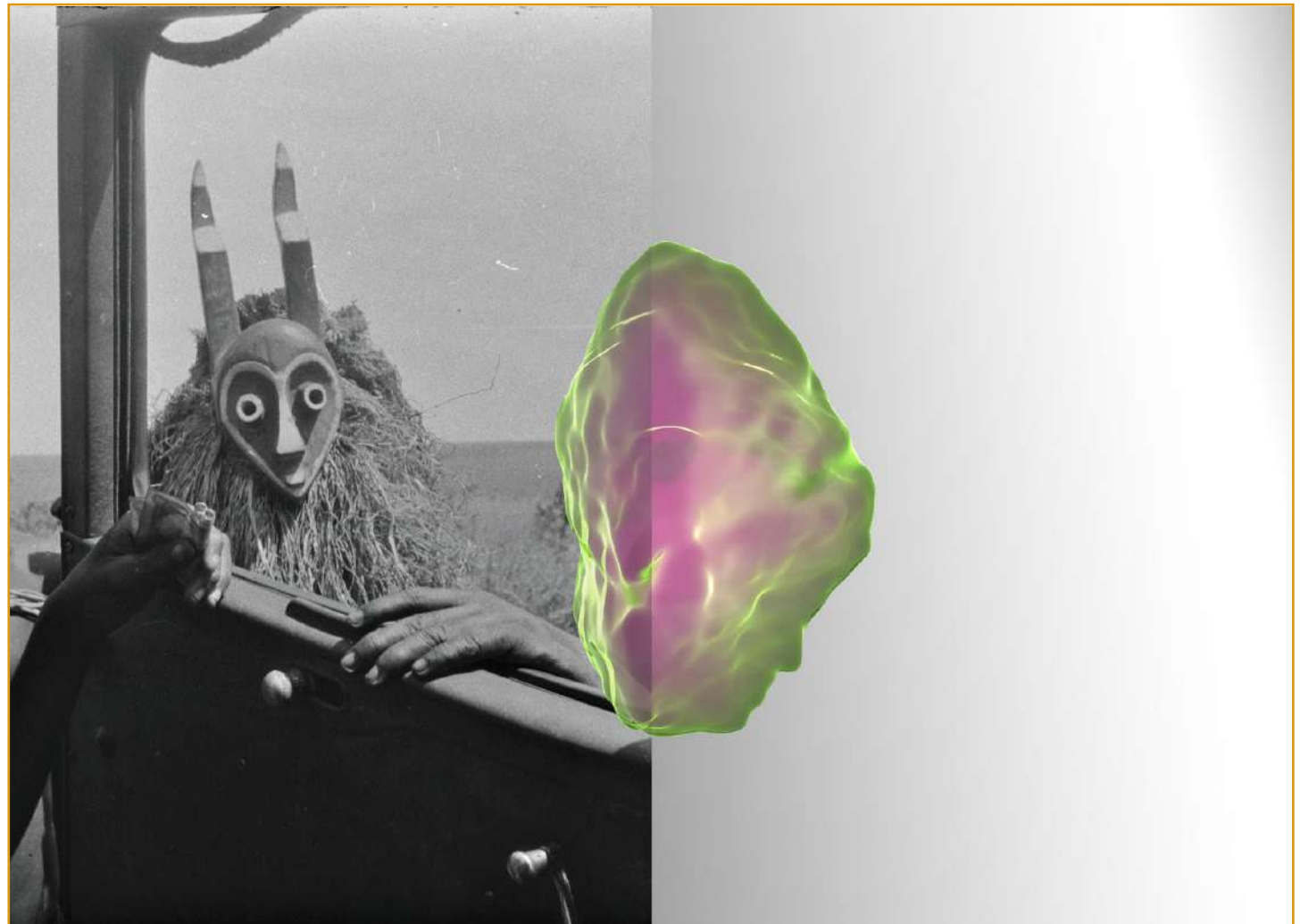
51.2 x 71.2 x 3 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 2/5: Victoria and Albert Museum,
London

Ed. 3/5: Frac Bretagne, Rennes

Ed. 5/5: Fotomuseum, Antwerp



*Hans Himmelheber, Man with
mask, DR Congo, Luluwa region,
1939, scan of a Chalcopyrite from
Kipushi mine, and your reflection
in the mirror, 2020*

2020

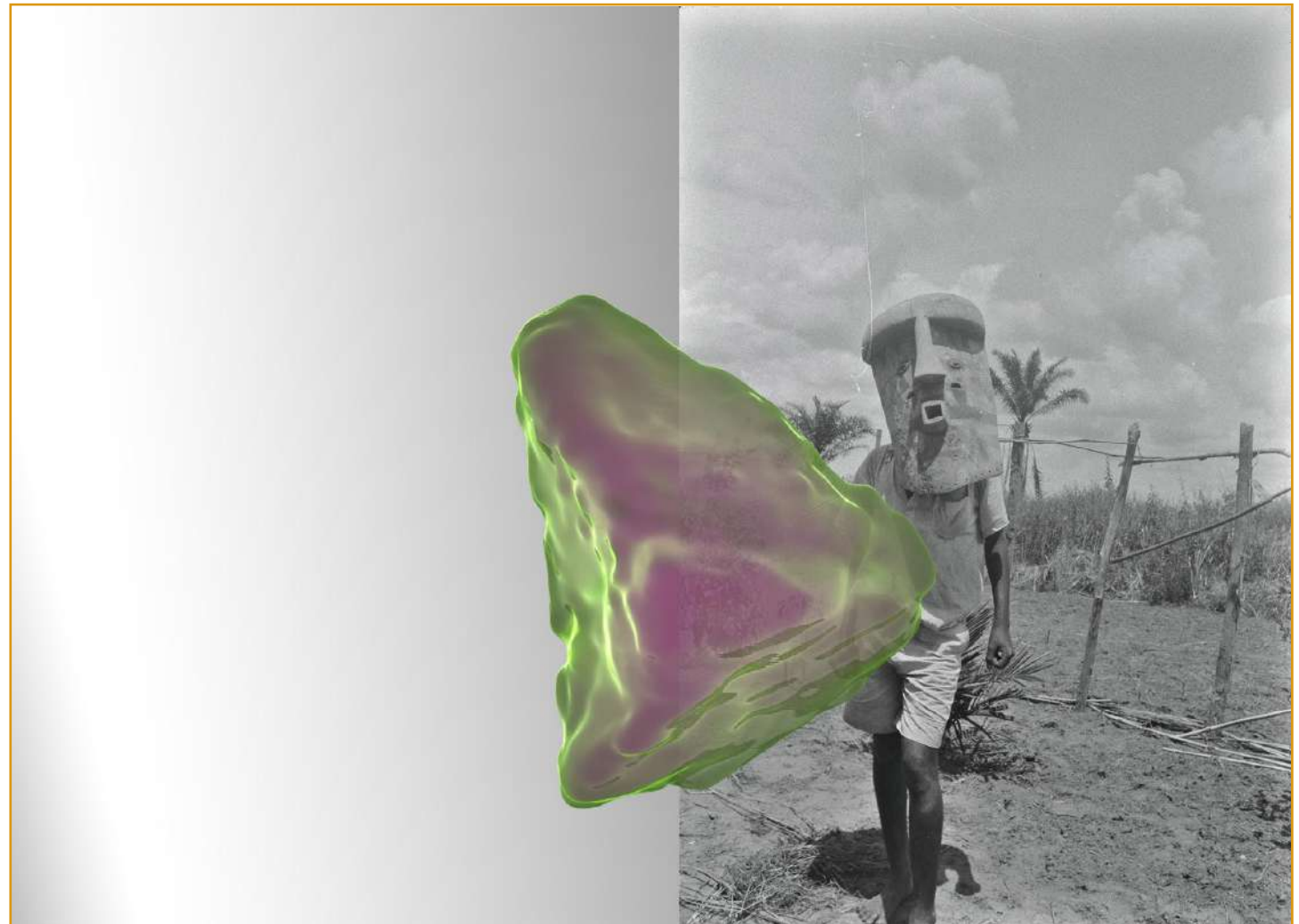
from the series *Kasala, The
Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First
Human, Bende's Error*

UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case
in polished brushed brass

51.2 x 71.2 x 3 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 2/5: Collection Jom, Dakar



Hans Himmelheber, *Woman, DR Congo, Luluwa region, 1939, scan of a Citrine from Lwena mine.*

And your reflection in the mirror, 2020

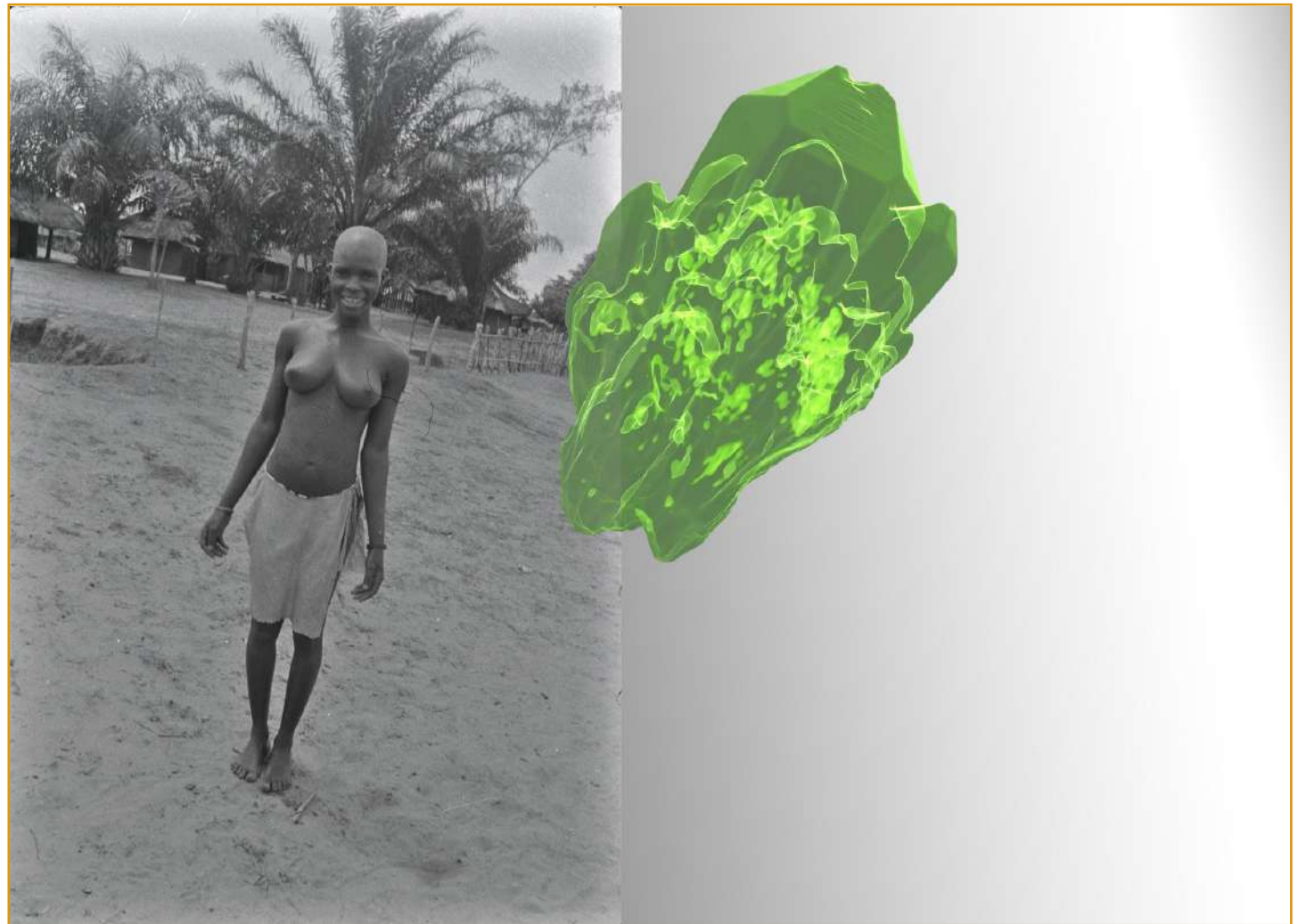
2020

from the series *Kasala, The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human, Bende's Error*

UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case in polished brushed brass

51.2 x 71.2 x 3 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Hans Himmelheber, Monument,
DR Congo, Kinshasa, 1938, scan of
a Chalcopyrite from Kipushi mine.
And your reflection in the mirror,
2020*

2020

from the series *Kasala, The
Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First
Human, Bende's Error*

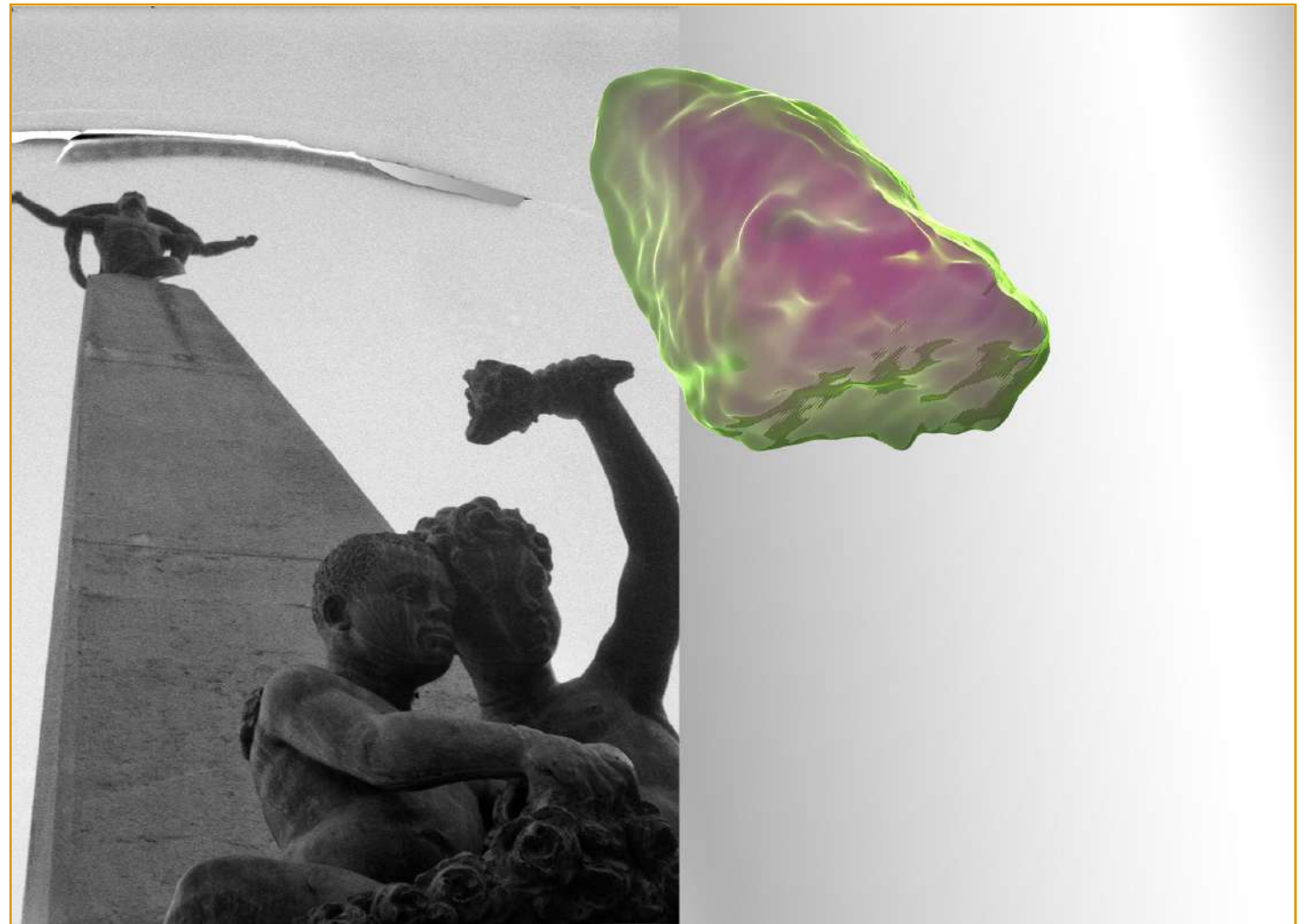
UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case
in polished brushed brass

51.2 x 71.2 x 3 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5: Collection Jom, Dakar

Ed. 2/5: Fotomuseum, Antwerp





Exhibition view: Sammy Baloji, *Kasala*, *The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human*, *Bende's Error*, Imane Farès, Paris, 2020. Photo © Tadzio

Hans Himmelheber, Figure on the roof of Himmelheber's car, DR Congo, Luluwa region, 1939, scan of a Diopside from Tantara mine. And your reflection in the mirror, 2020

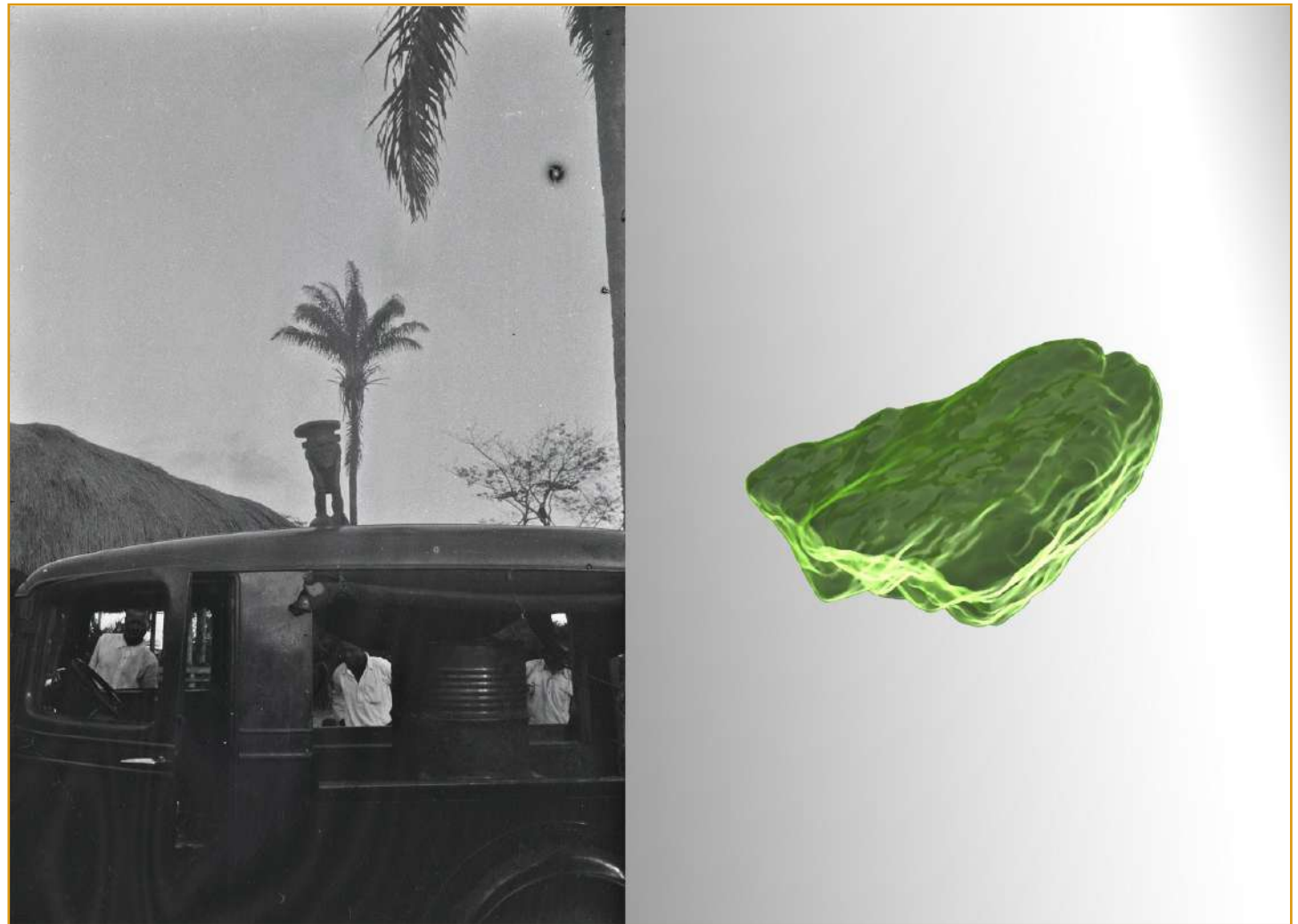
2020

from the series *Kasala, The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human, Bende's Error*

UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case in polished brushed brass

51.2 x 71.2 x 3 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Hans Himmelheber, Performance of a mbuya mask with leaves and raffia costume, DR Congo, Pende region, 1939, scan of a Dioptase from Tantara mine, and your reflection in the mirror, 2020

2020

from the series *Kasala, The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human, Bende's Error*

UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case in polished brushed brass

51.2 x 71.2 x 3 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP





Exhibition view: Sammy Baloji, *Kasala*, *The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human*, *Bende's Error*; Imane Farès, Paris, 2020. Photo © Tadzio

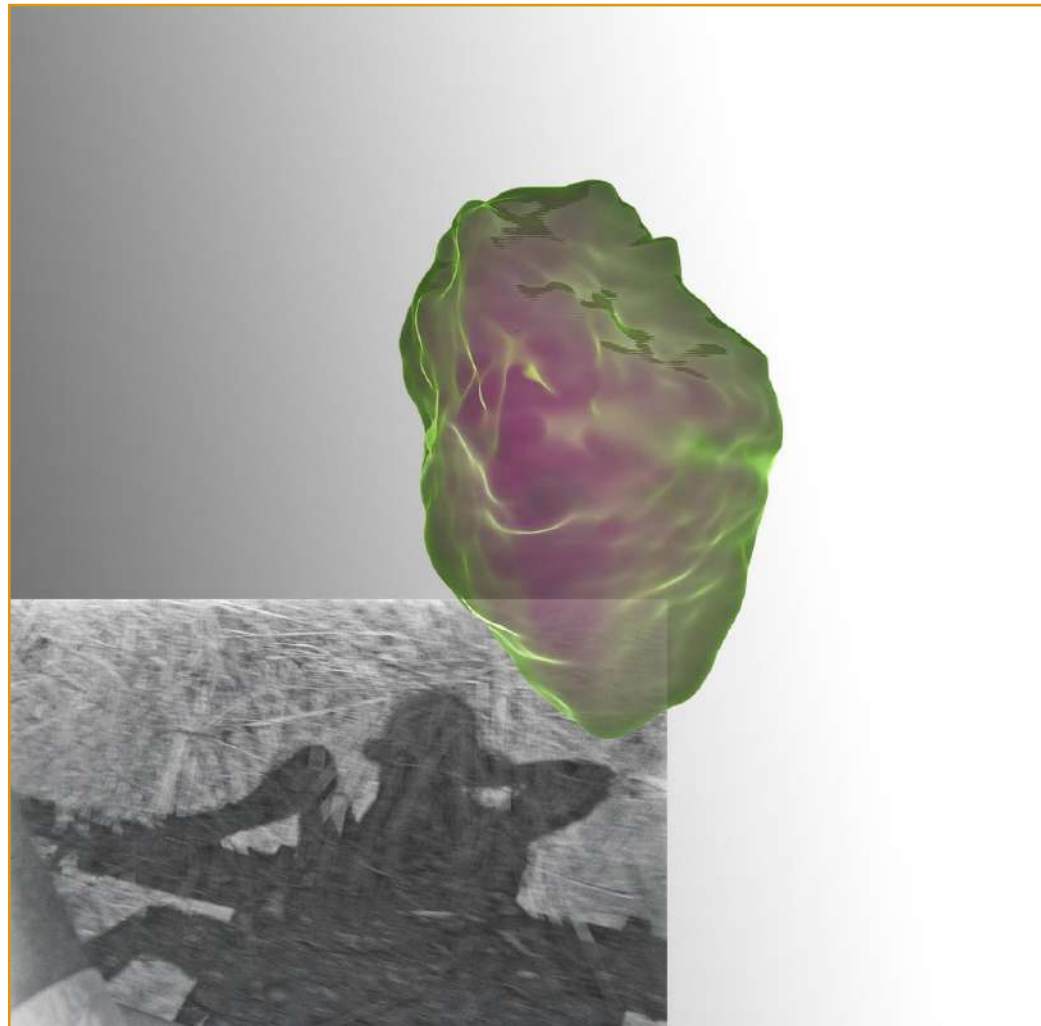
Hans Himmelheber, Portrait of his shadow, DR Congo, Kingulu, June 18, 1938, scan of a Chalcopyrite from Kipushi mine, and your reflection in the mirror, 2020

2020
from the series *Kasala, The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human, Bende's Error*

UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case in polished brushed brass

51.2 x 51.2 x 3 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Hans Himmelheber, Masked
figure with beak and crown of
feathers, munyinga, DR Congo,
Byombo region, May 20-22 1939,
scan of a Chalcopyrite from
Kipushi mine, and your reflection
in the mirror, 2020*

2020

from the series *Kasala, The
Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First
Human, Bende's Error*

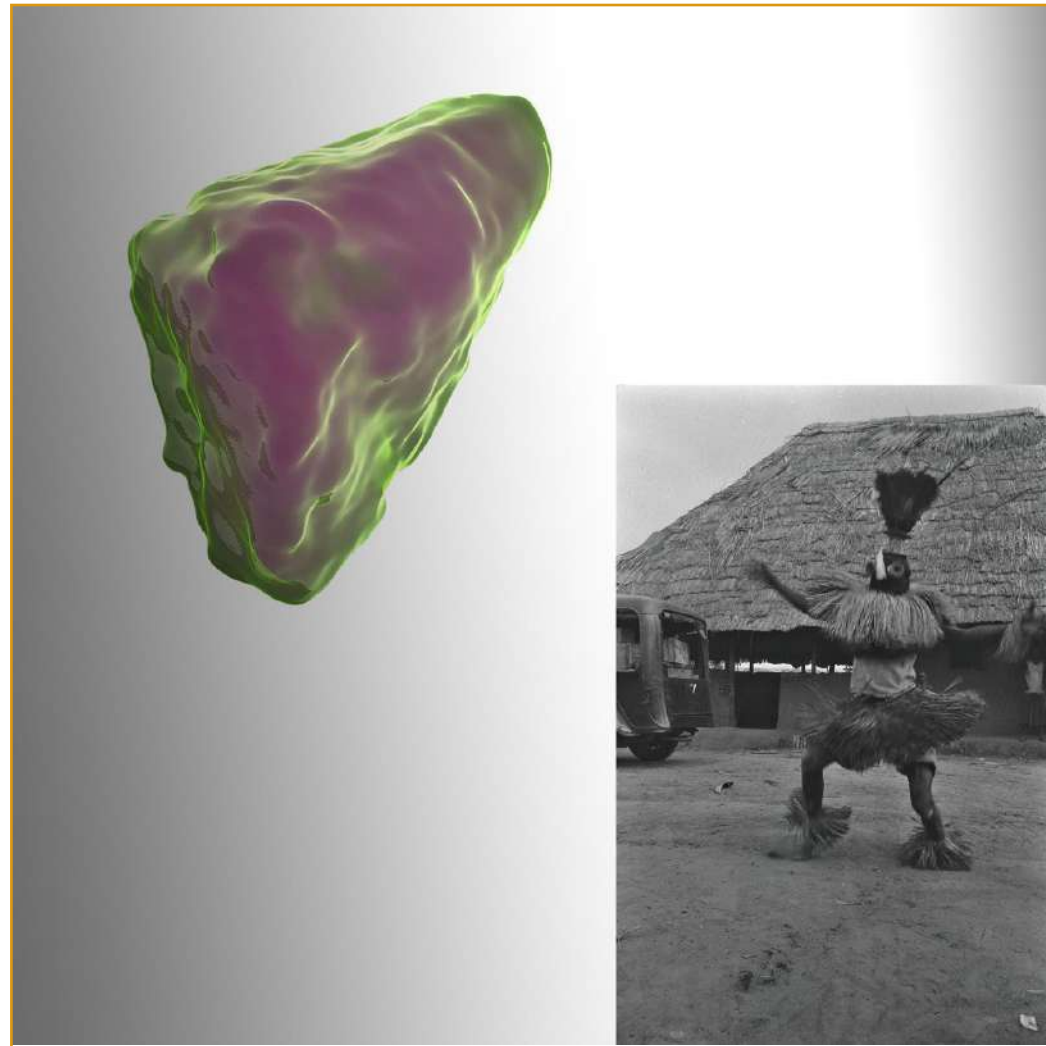
UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case
in polished brushed brass

51.2 x 51.2 x 3 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5 : Collection Jom, Dakar

Ed. 2/5 : Fotomuseum, Anvers



Hans Himmelheber,
Photographed from the tipoye,
DR Congo, Yaka region, January
1938, scan of a Diopside from
Tantara mine, and your reflection
in the mirror, 2020

2020

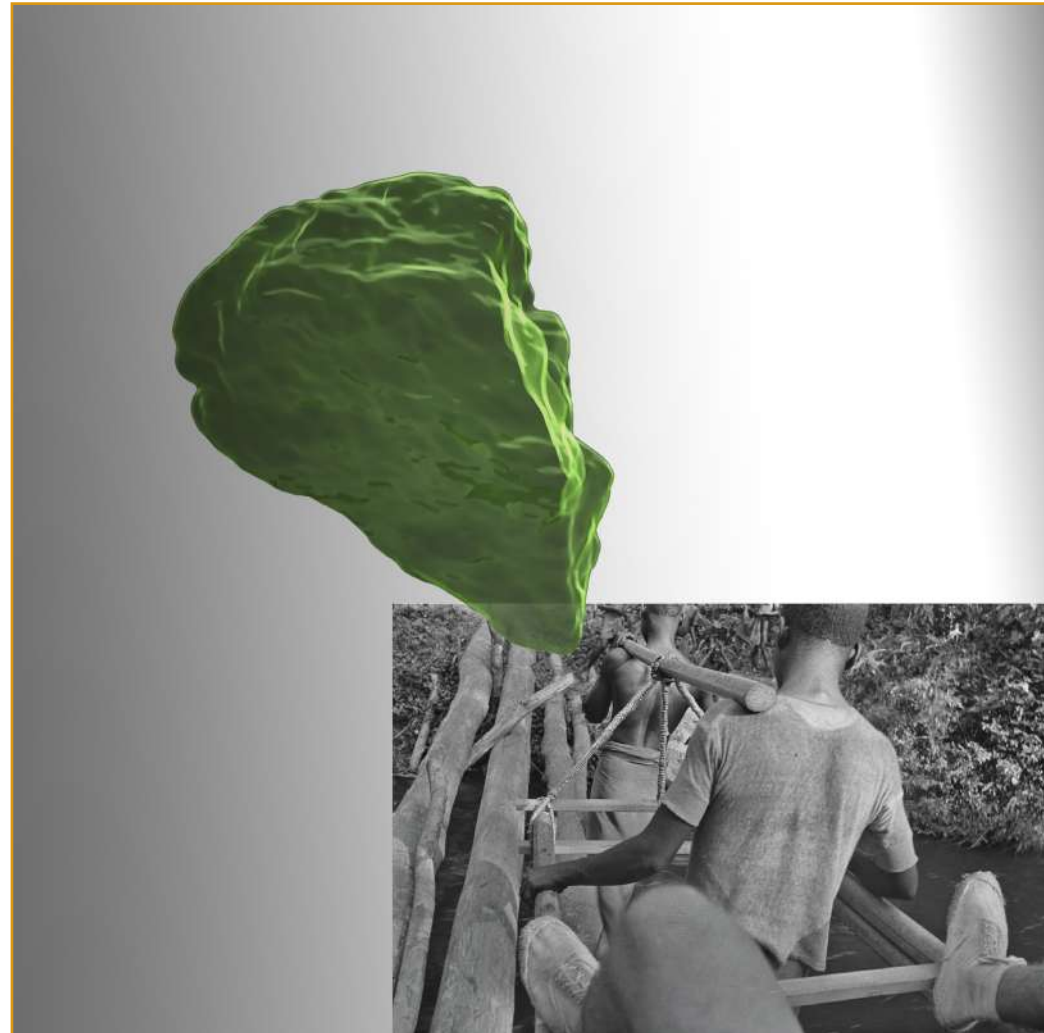
from the series *Kasala, The
Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First
Human, Bende's Error*

UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case
in polished brushed brass

51.2 x 71.2 x 3 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 2/5: Fotomuseum, Antwerp



*Hans Himmelheber, Man with
mask, DR Congo, Basaka-Mpasu,
10.4.1939, scan of a Dioptase from
Tantara mine, and your reflection
in the mirror, 2020*

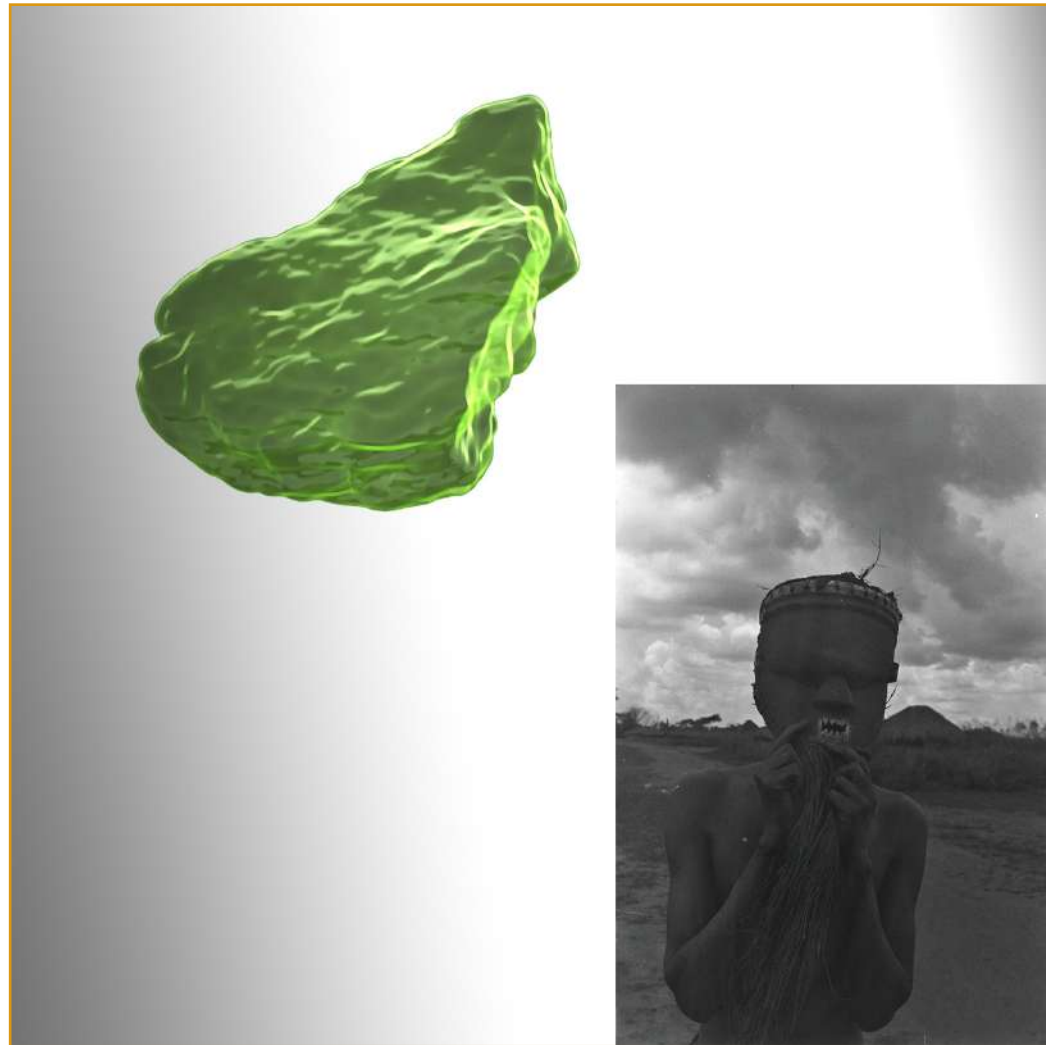
2020

from the series *Kasala, The
Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First
Human, Bende's Error*

UV Print on mirror 4 mm, American case
in polished brushed brass

51.2 x 51.2 x 3 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Exhibition view: When I State that I Am an Anarchist, PLATO, Ostrava, 2022.
Photo © Martin Polak



Exhibition view: This Is Not Africa, Unlearn What You Have Learned, ARoS, Aarhus, 2021.
Photo © ARoS



Untitled

2018

41 mortal shells, interior plants

Variable dimensions

Exhibition view: Notre Monde Brûle, Palais de Tokyo, 2020. Photo © Aurélien Mole

"I am not interested in colonialism as an event of the past, but rather as a continuation of a system. I have been living in Belgium since 2010, and yet I have never seen an exhibition about the two world wars that mention the involvement of Africa and their consequences on the African continent. However, many African workers were forced to produce copper to make bombs. African soldiers died in Tanzania and Rwanda. But everything is still only seen from one point of view. So I'm putting together stories that we usually try to separate." During the two World Wars, the exploitation of copper in the mines of Katanga increased considerably due to the production of shells. The casings of these shells, often engraved by Poilus, can now be bought on many resale websites. They testify to a popular practice in Belgium consisting in using them as decorative objects or as pots of consistani flowers. Here, Sammy Baloji places plants originating from the mining areas of Katanga which are nowadays frequently found in botanical gardens and European shops. This installation marks the return of the material to its territory of origin, while not ignoring the complex, and at first forceful, paths of their circulation.

Exhibitions (selection):

- *Sammy Baloji, Other Tales*, Lund Konsthall & Aarhus Kunsthall, 2020
- *Notre Monde Brûle*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2020.
- *Congoville*, Middelheim Museum, Antwerp, 2021
- *EUROPA, Oxalá*, MUCEM, Marseille, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisboa, Royal Museum for Central Africa / AfricaMUSEUM, Tervuren, 2021-22









A Blueprint for Toads and Snakes

2018

Installation includes:

- *Chura na Nyoka (The Toad and the Snake)*

Wood & canvas

360 cm x 360 cm (front); 120 cm x 250 cm (back)

- *Kasaiian Paintings*

Selection of 138 portraits from Father Verbeek's collection of popular paintings, digital photography print on paper

46 x 63,4 cm (each)

- *Map of the Native City*

Printed on Ekoplex wood with original writing in red

200 x 200 cm

Unique

Collections KANAL Foundation, Brussels

Installation views: Framer Framed, 2018. ©

Framer Framed / Eva Broekema

Lund Konsthall, 2020. © Daniel Zachrisson

Exhibitions:

- *A Blueprint for Toads and Snakes* (solo exhibition), Framer Framed, Amsterdam, 25 June - 26 Aug, 2018

- *Sammy Baloji. Other Tales* (solo exhibition), LundsKonsthall, 15 Feb - 24 May, 2020

- *Sammy Baloji. Other Tales* (solo exhibition), 21 Aug - 1 Nov, 2020

- Beaux-arts de Paris, 3 Dec, 2020 - 17 Jan, 2021



A Blueprint for Toads and Snakes
2018

The exhibition *A Blueprint for Toads and Snakes* presents the work of artist Sammy Baloji, whose practice deals with the cultural, social, architectural and industrial heritage of his home country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

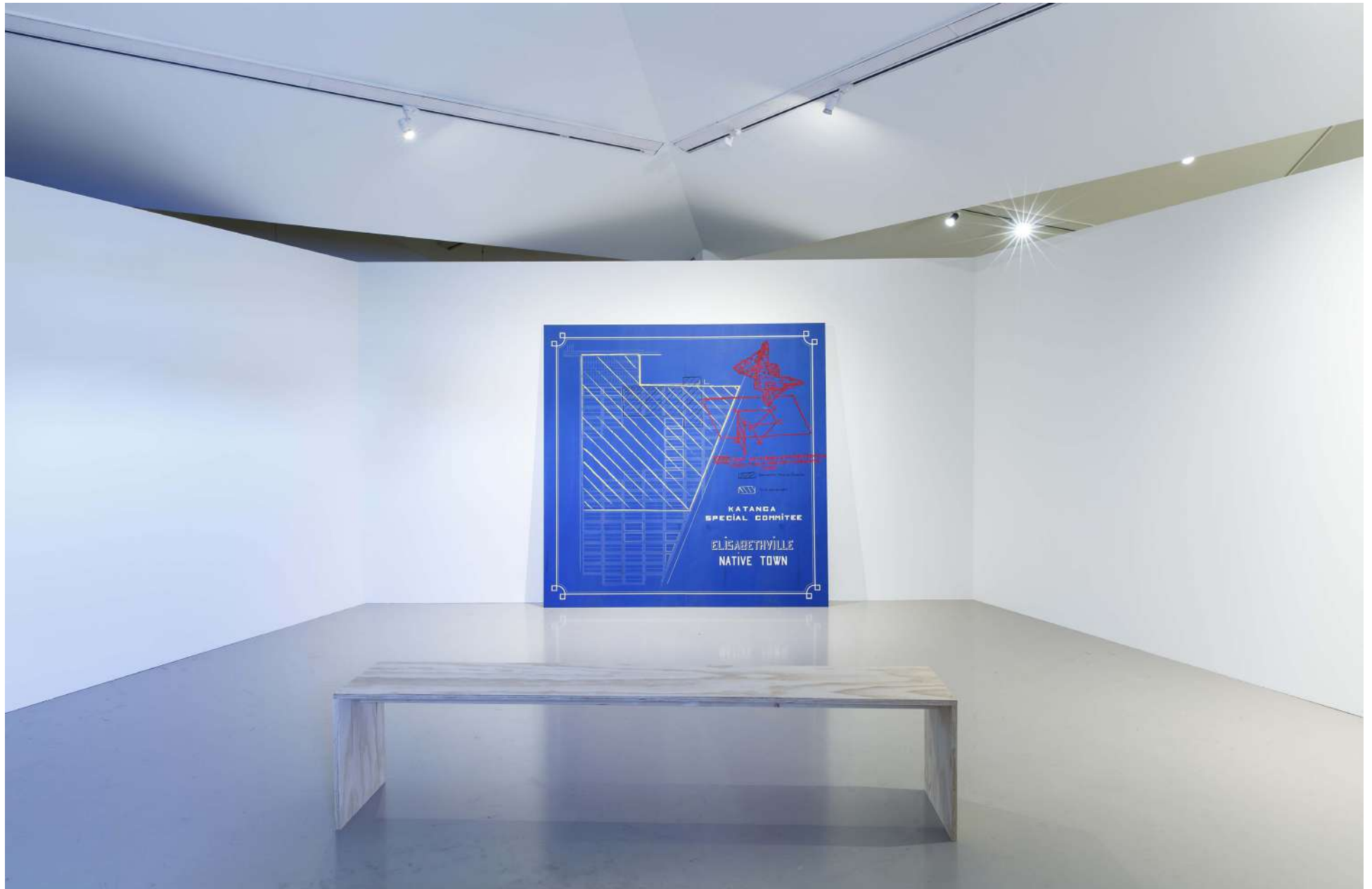
With a background in photography, Baloji has developed a research-based practice in which archival material and cultural artefacts inform his work. By way of his art, he explores the histories, present-day realities and contradictions inherent to the formation of Congo in general, and its south-eastern province Katanga in particular: the resource-rich region which contains staggering amounts of mineral deposits. In some peculiar coincidence, over the past centuries every time an international demand for a specific material occurred, Congo turned out to possess significant amounts of it, whether it be ivory in the Victorian era, rubber when the inflatable tire was invented, copper in industrial times, uranium during the Cold War, alternative power during the oil crisis of the seventies, and coltan in the current days of mobile communication.

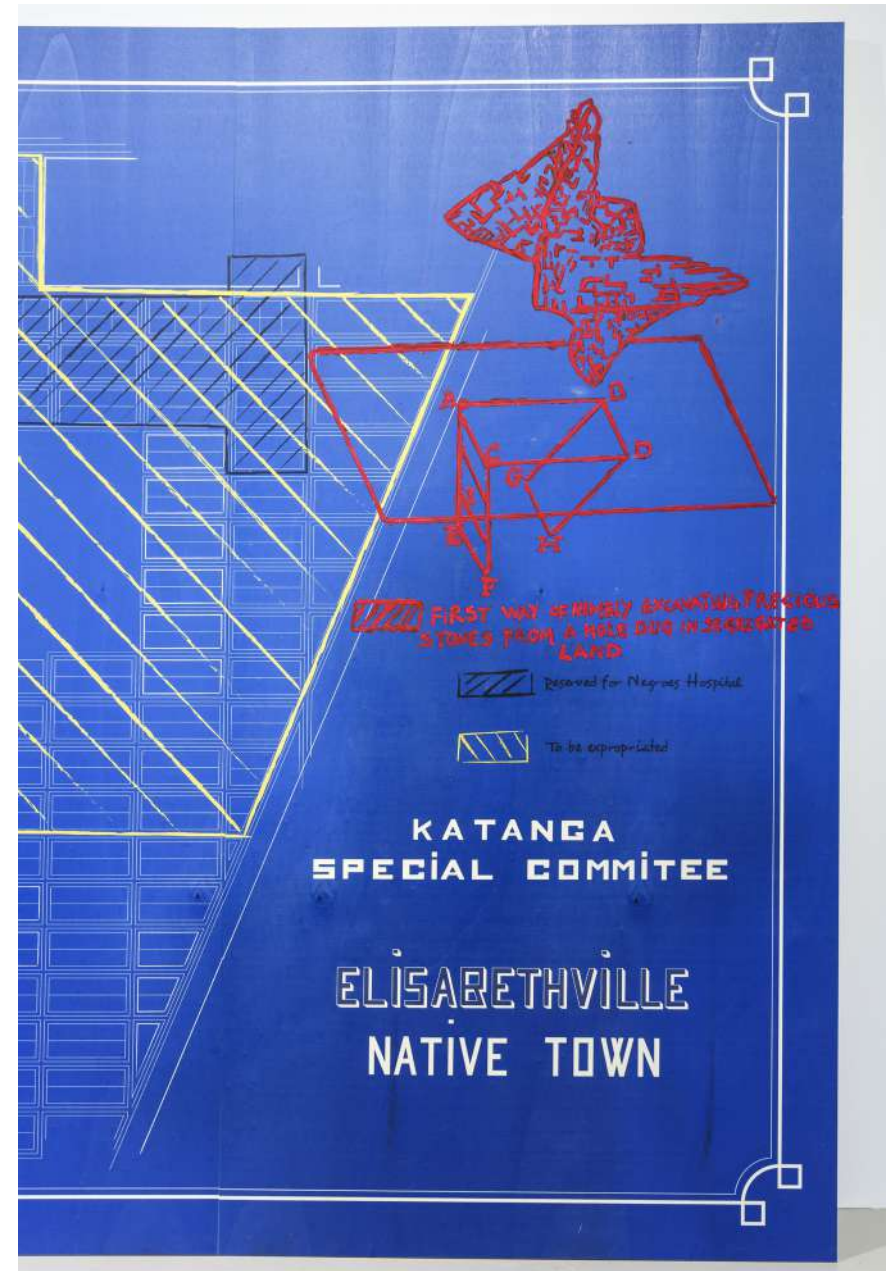
Central to the exhibition is the theatrical play *Chura na Nyoka (The Toad and the Snake)*. It was commissioned by the Belgian colonial regime and written in 1957 by the Congolese and Katanga native Joseph Kiwele (1912-1961). Kiwele created cultural incentives that supported syncretism and the forced adaptation of cultures (...) Kiwele's play *Chura na Nyoka* tells the story of a toad and a snake, who are unable to maintain a friendship due to their inherent biological differences. Sammy Baloji links its metaphorical message of racial segregation to the blueprint and urban planning of the 'native city' of the mining capital Lubumbashi.

—Vincent van Velsen, curator









Tales of the Copper Cross Garden

2017

Installation includes:

- *Les petits Chanteurs à la Croix de Cuivre*

Black-and-white photograph

4 strips of wallpaper, archival photograph

courtesy Royal Museum for Central Africa (Tervueren).

Variable dimensions, human scale

- Reproduction of a commemorative medal

Copper engraving

11,5 cm x 8,5 cm

Monsignor de Hemptinne 1876 - 1958,

Apostolic Prefect of Upper Katanga 1910-

1932, Apostolic Vicar of the Haut Katanga

1932-1958. Private Collection, Belgium

- Katanga coins in 1 and 5 franc denominations, 1961.

Patinated bronze

Variable dimensions

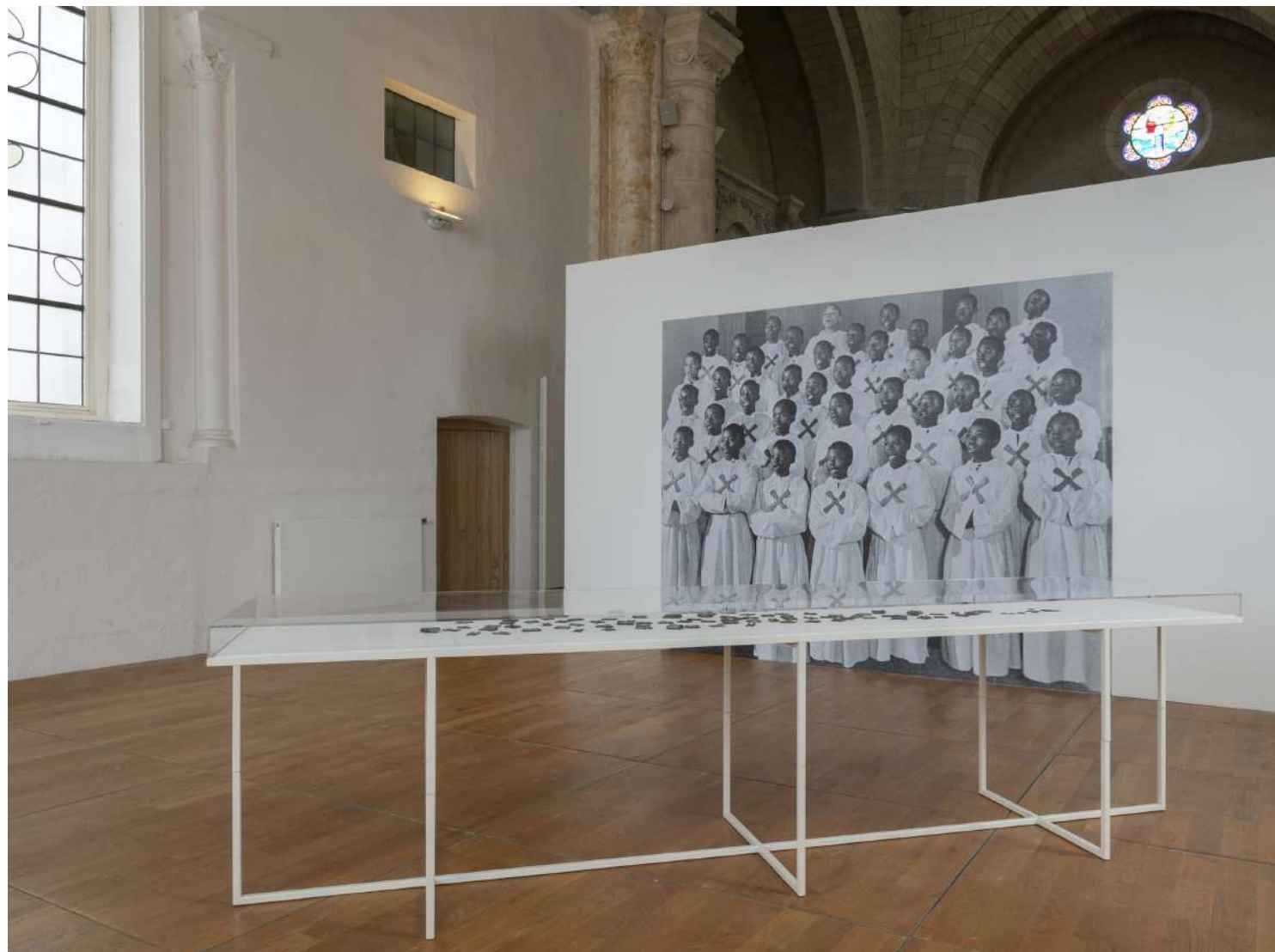
80 cm x 120 cm

Variable dimensions

Edition 2 + 1 AP

Exhibition view: Traversées, Poitiers, 2019.

Photo © Sébastien Laval



Tales of the Copper Cross Garden
2017

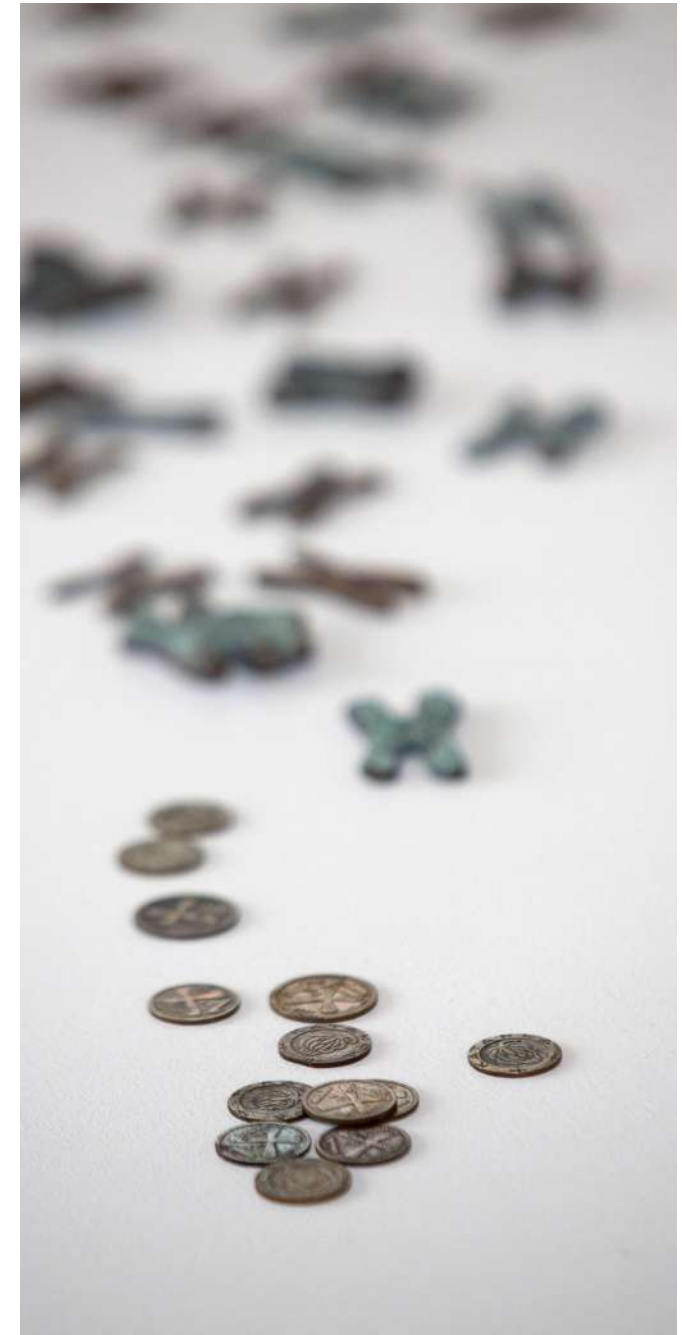
Exhibition view: Traversées, Poitiers, 2019.
Photo © Sébastien Laval

"I highlight the forms that reveal how closely the axes of the colony and the church are linked in their impositions to the local Katanga culture. This is clear from the urban planning of the colonial city of Elizabethville, later Lubumbashi, where the church and the state both occupy the carfax in the heart of the colonial city.

For me, nothing less than the copper crosses held in front of the hearts of the choir children suggest how the missionaries tried to steal their souls while exploiting the local copper resource for the benefit of Europeans.

V.Y. Mudimbe, who has achieved greatness and recognition through the synthesis of indigenous thought and European education, lingers in his autobiography on his stolen childhood, when Belgian Catholics took him from his parents to school, stealing from him the possibility of an alternative education close to his birthright and the identity of his parents..."

— Sammy Baloji



Tales of the Copper Cross Garden

2017

Exhibition view: Sammy Baloji at EMST-National
Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens/
documenta 14. Photo © Stathis Mamalakis



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Tales of the Copper Cross Garden,

Episode I

2017

HD Video, colour and sound

43 min

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5: Private Coll., Paris

Ed. 3/5: Coll. Museum für Moderne Kunst,
Germany

Exhibitions:

- documenta 14, EMST Museum, Athens, 8 April -
17 Sept. 2017

- *A Blueprint for Toads and Snakes* (solo
exhibition), Frammer Framed, Amsterdam, 25 June

- 26 Aug, 2018

- *Sammy Baloji. Other Tales* (solo exhibition),
Lundskonsthall, 15 Feb - 24 May, 2020

- *Sammy Baloji. Other Tales* (solo exhibition), 21
Aug - 1 Nov, 2020

"I highlight the forms that reveal how closely the axes of the colony and the church are linked in their impositions to the local Katanga culture. This is clear from the urban planning of the colonial city of Elizabethville, later Lubumbashi, where the church and the state both occupy the carfax in the heart of the colonial city. For me, nothing less than the copper crosses held in front of the hearts of the choir children suggest how the missionaries tried to steal their souls while exploiting the local copper resource for the benefit of Europeans. V.Y. Mudimbe, who has achieved greatness and recognition through the synthesis of indigenous thought and European education, lingers in his autobiography on his stolen childhood, when Belgian Catholics took him from his parents to school, stealing from him the possibility of an alternative education close to his birthright and the identity of his parents..."
— Sammy Baloji

"Of all the works undertaken in Africa to awaken the artistic consciousness of our Black brethren, the work of the 'Singers at the Copper Cross' is one of the most human, one of the most beautiful, one whose renderings accord confidence and hope."

De toutes les œuvres entreprises, en Afrique, pour élever nos frères noirs dans l'intelligence des arts, celle des Chanteurs à la Croix de Cuivre est l'une des plus humaines, c'est aussi la plus belle, celle dont les résultats nous donnent confiance & espoir.

Blanche Duhamel
Duhamel
Elizabethville
9 mars 1948



Exhibition view: *Sammy Baloji, Other Tales*, Kunsthal Aarhus. Photo © Mikkel Kaldal



Exhibition view: Sammy Baloji, *Tales of the Copper Cross Garden: Episode I*, 2017, MUSEUM MMK FÜR MODERNE KUNST, Photo © Axel Schneider

*802. That is where, as you heard,
the elephant danced the malinga.
The place where they now grow
flowers*

2016

Installation includes:

- 8 sections of woodblock printed wallpaper lined onto synthetic canvas
- 32 scarified photographs, unframed
- 38 post-WWI & WWII mortar shells
- two copper ceiling pieces with scarification patterns,
- a recording of a selected excerpt from Andre Yav's book *Le Vocabulaire d'Elizabethville*

Variable dimensions

Unique

Collection Tate, London

Exhibition view: *802. That is where, as you heard, the elephant danced the malinga. The place where they now grow flowers*, Galerie Imane Farès, Paris, 2016.



802...
2016

Exhibition view: 802. That is where, as you heard, the elephant danced the malinga. The place where they now grow flowers, Galerie Imane Farès, Paris, 2016.

Sammy Baloji's new exhibition at Galerie Imane Farès is not an exhibition but a journey. A journey into time and space. A mise-en-abime of all the subjects that he has held dear over the last few years. Within this whole concept, we find the artist's intellectual and artistic questions. How do we, through a work, translate the untranslatable? He has chosen to immerse us in his world in which, contrary to what the title suggests, an elephant would have a hard time dancing. The room that we enter has an art deco touch that is reminiscent of early twentieth century colonial architecture. Much like a bull in a china shop, Baloji takes us to the heart of a brutal history that his gaze manages to sublimate, without losing tension. The wallpaper and ceiling trim derive their patterns from ritual scarifications, while shells transformed into flower pots are an ironic nod to a trend that the Belgian bourgeoisie maintained landing in the colonies. On the walls a reminder (through an aerial photography archive) of mining and the conditions under which those who worked there lived.

And then casually placed on the main table, like a book to read by the fire, *The Vocabulary of Elizabethville* by German anthropologist Johannes Fabian, in which the author collected the testimonies of African "domestic servants", from Lubumbashi of course: we enter into the heart of the matter. It is the exploitation of man by man; it is these 'unknown soldiers', dead in the two European world wars that the artist wants to talk about. And as we approach the second room, the reality of these scarified faces doesn't only make reference to initiation rites, but metaphorical masks of injury, the scar and this memory that is reflected in the faces. These faces are punctuated by quotations borrowed from W.E.B. Dubois, the legendary author of *The Soul of Black Folks*, and tell us of a mute anger, sadness or the duty of remembrance. Throughout this installation, we find the same author's gaze which confuses time and history, in the sense that he assigns and un.masks them. We leave this strange journey into the troubled night, disturbed, but more aware of the mechanics of history and what colonisation was.

Not, yet again, in a claimant and vindictive way, but as a constant, both discreet and moving. By the way, while I think about it: do you dance the Malinga?

— Simon Njami, 2016



802...
2016

Exhibition view: 802. That is where, as you heard, the elephant danced the malinga. The place where they now grow flowers, Galerie Imane Farès, Paris, 2016.



The Other Memorial

2015

Copper

Scarification patterns of different Congolese communities, found in ethnographic archives

400 x 200 x 200 cm

Unique

Coll. Fondation Sindika Dokolo, Luanda

Three months later in Marrakech, after a series of meetings [between Sammy Baloji and Olafur Eliasson] in Berlin and Copenhagen, the partnership seemed to be having an effect. Baloji had winnowed down a range of possibilities he had been considering in late 2014, and embarked on the copper dome that he would show in Venice. The dome was his first installation, and it was very ambitious, constructed from more than 50 copper panels. On each he superimposed the image of a “scarified” body taken from a book he had unearthed during his extensive research of the Congo during the colonial period. The way he was using scarification — the etching of a pattern on to the body, a practice common in Africa in the first half of the 20th century — was complex. “In my artwork, I often adopt a multilayered approach,” he explained. “In my photocollages, there are several stories with different time frames set in a fictional context that I have created. I have used the same process with the dome.”

Scarification, which was widely used in initiation rites, was a key cultural signifier in African communities, amounting almost to a map of an individual’s identity. The church in Liège, a memorial to the Western dead of the First World War, had been built in the 1930s with copper brought from Katanga. By building a small-scale replica with copper panels decorated with images of scarified bodies, Baloji was engaging in an act of reclamation, almost a reverse colonization. “There are seven memorials to the Western war dead in Liège,” he said. “This will be an eighth memorial — to the African war dead.”

Baloji also showed related work, including another set of copper bas-reliefs using images of scarification, in the Belgian Pavilion at Venice. Taken together, these works reflect on the power struggle between colonizers and colonized. That struggle was evident even in the ways in which they built their separate districts in Lubumbashi — a subject that fascinates Baloji and underlies much of his thinking. While the Belgian colonizers preferred regimented streets, set well away from the African part of the city for fear of disease, the indigenous population kept to the geometric forms — echoing patterns common in scarification — of traditional villages. A cultural war was being waged between oppressors and oppressed, and half a century after that war ended Baloji is trying to untangle its meanings.

— Stephen Moss, 2016

[link to the original article](#)



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Sammy Baloji working on his dome for the
2015 Venice Art Biennale. Photos: ©Rolex/
Tomas Bertelsen



Sociétés Secrètes

2015

The installation includes eight engraved copper plates (42 x 29,7 cm each), four black & white photographs (variable dimensions), a handwritten letter (16 x 20 cm)

Unique

Coll. Fondation Zinsou, Cotonou, Benin

Exhibition view: Belgian Pavillion, Venice Biennale, 2017



Biennale de Lyon, 2015

Hunting and Collecting

2015

Installation includes:

- *The Album or Pauwel's Album*

20 Digital archival photographs on

Hahnemühle PhotoRag 308 gr.

Photographic collages, 40 x 55 cm (each)

- *Diorama*

Metal sculpture, 400 x 550 cm

- Archival photographs

Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, and of the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren

- *Hunting & Collecting*

Artist's book, 32 pages, 37.5 x 31 cm

2 books dedicated for each installation

- Photographic print listing North- and

South Kivu NGOs, variable dimensions

Unique

Exhibition views:

Sammy Baloji at macLYON/Biennale de

Lyon 2015. © Blaise Adilon

Dioramas, Palais de Tokyo, 2016

Sammy Baloji's works have their roots deep in the ongoing upheavals in Democratic Republic of Congo. At the macLYON, Sammy Baloji has erected a monumental structure that recalls the old dioramas in museums of natural history. The artist recently collaborated with Chrispin Mvano, a journalist from North Kivu (a war-ravaged province) on a photo album project. The album in question contains old colonial photos taken by Belgian Commander Henri Pauwels during his expedition to the then Belgian Congo, between 1911 and 1913. Baloji took inspiration from these to collect together new montages of photos taken by Mvano and photographs of his own taken against the backdrop of the town of Goma.

There are, furthermore, fifteen images and watercolours, reproductions from the American Museum of Natural History in New York, that retrace the steps of an expedition to the then Belgian Congo by the famous taxidermist Carl Akeley, along with pictures showing the construction of the diorama that housed "The Old Man of Mikeno", one of the first stuffed gorillas in the world. There is also a thirty-two page book, a plan of Commander Henri Pauwels's expedition to Africa, drawn by Chrispin Mvano, the map used by Carl Akeley on one of his African expeditions, as well as drawings of mineralogical studies by the Congolese metals and mineral trading company, Gécamines.



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The Album or Pauwel's Album

2013-2014

20 Digital archival photographs on

Hahnemühle PhotoRag 308 gr.

Photographic collages

40 x 55 cm (each)

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ed.3/5: Fotomuseum, Antwerp

Exhibition view: Mu.ZEE, Kunstmuseum
aan zee, 2014



The Album or Pauwel's Album

Exhibition view: Mu.ZEE, Kunstmuseum
aan zee, 2014





Sierra Leone le 31 Janvier 1912 pour le Commandant Brunelle.

Antilopes "plaine de las Savanah"

Phacochère



Léopard prêt au piège à Suddhawa

Elephant dans la savane



Gorille tué par le soldat de poste de Bolacca (Indes) le 17/01/1912

Pungulume

2016

Installation includes

- *Pungulume*

HD video

Single image version: HD video, color and sound, 16:9, Sanga spoken, English subtitles, 2016, 32 min

Installation version: HD video, color and sound, 16:9, Sanga spoken, English subtitles, 2016, 29 min

- *Notebook of the Sanga chief Mpala*

Swanage's father, containing the list of names of all his predecessors. Fungurume

2014

Digital photograph on baryta Photo Rag

315g. 80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Edition 1/5: Coll. Cnap, Paris



Pungulume

2016

Installation includes

- Pungulume

HD video

Single image version: HD video, color and sound, 16:9, Sanga spoken, English subtitles, 2016, 32 min

Installation version: HD video, color and sound, 16:9, Sanga spoken, English subtitles, 2016, 29 min

- Notebook of the Sanga chief Mpala

Swanage's father, containing the list of names of all his predecessors. Fungurume

2014

Digital photograph on baryta Photo Rag 315g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

The town of Fungurume is situated in the province of Katanga (D.R. Congo) and the hills and mountains surrounding Fungurume form one of the world's largest copper and cobalt deposits. In pre-colonial times the area was already a major centre in the copper trading network that ran across Central Africa. Today the mountains have become the property of the American Tenke Fungurume Mining consortium (TFM). From 2009 on, TFM's mining activities have been in full swing, causing the resettlement of thousands of local Sanga inhabitants. Pungulume focuses on Sanga chief Mpala and his court elders while they are rendering the oral history of the Sanga people, against the backdrop of the industrial destruction of the landscape that anchors Sanga memory and identity.» (Filip De Boeck)



The Tower: a Concrete Utopia

2015

Installation includes

- *The Tower, a Concrete Utopia*

HD video, color and sound

70 min

- *The Tower, 7th street, Quartier industriel,*

municipality of Limete. Kinshasa

2015

Digital photograph on baryta Photo Rag

315g

100 x 150 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Edition 1/5: Kadist, Paris



The Tower: a Concrete Utopia

2015

Installation includes

- *The Tower, a Concrete Utopia*

HD video, color and sound

70 min

- *The Tower, 7th street, Quartier industriel, municipality of Limete. Kinshasa*

2015

Digital photograph on baryta Photo Rag

315g

100 x 150 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

One of the first major monuments of Belgian colonial urban architecture is the Forescom tower.

Built in 1946, it is the first skyscraper in Leopoldville and one of the first towers in Central Africa. Pointing towards the sky, it also stands in the direction of the future. It embodied and made tangible the new ideas of possible futures, and as such, the tower was a material translation and emblematic visualization of colonialist ideologies of progress and modernity.

The video *The Tower: A concrete Utopia* offers a guided tour by the « Doctor », the owner of this remarkable tower located in Limete, one of Kinshasa's municipalities. Designed and built by the « Doctor », without the help of any professional architect, the construction, still unfinished to date, began in 2003. In many ways, this postcolonial tower is a contrapuntal commentary on the 1946 Forescom Tower and all that it demonstrated at the time, while also illustrating the different ways in which the colonial heritage continues to be reformulated and reconstituted today.



Essay on Urban Planning

2013

Installation includes:

- twelve framed Inkjet prints on Innova Ultra Smooth Gloss 285 gr each: 80 x 120 cm, full: 320 x 360 cm
- an archival photo displayed between two glass plates in a wall frame perpendicular to the wall
28 x 28 cm
- an extract from the article "L'Urbanisme au Katanga", in Essor du Congo, special edition for the international exhibition of Elisabethville, 1931, handwritten on the wall
Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ed. 2/5: Mu.ZEE | Oostende

Ed. 3/5: Musée du Quai Branly, Paris

Photo : Alessandra Bello

"The neutral zone avoids close contact between whites and blacks. An almost empty area measuring a minimum of 500 meters separates their two areas of settlement, this distance corresponding to that which a malaria-carrying mosquito will normally cover. The neutral zone thus divides the lives of blacks from those of whites: it keeps the latter safe from the sources of malaria, and from the rowdy activities of blacks, so creating completely independent living conditions for each race... it is a true cordon sanitaire, placed at a right angle from the prevailing winds... our urban planning contents itself with creating developments that satisfy conditions of hygiene, salubrity and security, giving the white and black races the opportunity to live according to the hopes and needs of each, however modest these might be."





*Retour à l'authenticité ! Vue de
la pagode du président Mobutu,
N'sele Kinshasa, photo des
archives J. Fourche ca. 1935
2013*

Innova Ultra Smooth Gloss 285 gr/m2
paper mounted on Dibond
80 x 80 cm (each) / 80 x 240 cm (total)
Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/5: Private collection, Morocco



Series: Urban Now
2013-2015
55 photographs
80 x 120 cm / 100 x 150 cm
Editions of 5 + 2 AP

In *Urban Now: City Life in Congo*, visual artist Sammy Baloji and anthropologist Filip De Boeck use photography and video to explore how people imagine and live in cities and new urban extensions in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In ongoing discussions about the unique nature of the African city, architects, urban planners, sociologists, anthropologists, and demographers devote a lot of attention to the built form and to the city's material infrastructure. Architecture has become a central issue in reflecting on how to plan, engineer, sanitize, transform, and imagine new urban paradigms for the African city of the future.

Very often these new urban futures manifest themselves in the form of billboards and advertisements. Inspired by urban models from Dubai and other recent urban hotspots, these promotional images are an aesthetic display of modernization as spectacle. Images of gated communities and luxury satellite towns for a (hypothetical) local upper-middle class foster new dreams and hopes, even as the cities they propose invariably give rise to new geographies of exclusion. In sharp contrast with these neoliberal re-codings of earlier colonialist modernities, the current infrastructure of Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, is of a different kind. The built colonial legacy has largely fallen into disrepair. Failing material infrastructures and an economy of scarcity now physically delineate the limits of the possible. At the same time, they also generate other possibilities that allow urban residents to create new social spaces that bypass and overcome breakdown and exclusion.

This series reflects on these diverse narratives of urban place-making. Underlying much of Baloji's and De Boeck's exploration is the metaphor of the "hole" (libulu in Lingala, the lingua franca in large parts of Congo). They investigate the physical and social gaps that exist in Kinshasa and beyond, and explore where and how people transform them into openings for new kinds of creativity, interactivity, and conviviality.

*Humbu land chief Martin Lusala
Mayindu, chef de groupement of
Kimwenza Matadi Mayo together
with his sister (doona), in the
municipality of Mont Ngafula
2015*

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo
Rag 315 g
80 x 120 cm
Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Teke land chief Jean Daniel
Bambory Popo Mwinkwa,
Mombele neighbourhood,
municipality of Limete
2015*

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo
Rag 315 g
80 x 120 cm
Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Teke land chief Ima Ngande
Munke from the clan Inkianu, chef
de groupement of Nguma, in the
municipality of Maluku*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Humbu land chief Ngandu Ndola
Mabela, chef de groupement
of Mikondo, at his home in the
municipality of Kimbanseke
2013*

Digital photograph on Baryta paper
Photo Rag 315 g
80 x 120 cm
Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Teke chief Mikala, sub-chief
of Kingakati, at his home in
the neighbourhood of Kinkole,
municipality of Nsele*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Sanga land chief Mpala Swanage
Pascal Musenge. Fungurume.
2013
Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo
Rag 315 g
80 x 120 cm
Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Samuel Mandefu Biye.
Municipality of Masina, Petro-
Congo neighbourhood
2015
Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo
Rag 315 g
80 x 120 cm
Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Humbu land chief David Ebalavo,
head of the Mbuku Mvemba
Mavuba clan. Municipality of
Lemba*

2015

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Humbu land chief Munziami
Lita and some of his sons. Bibwa
neighbourhood, municipality of
Nsele*

2015

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Houses marked for demolition at the Kiswishi site. Three villages will have to make way for the new planned city (1)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Houses marked for demolition at the Kiswishi site. Three villages will have to make way for the new planned city (2)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Houses marked for demolition at the Kiswishi site. Three villages will have to make way for the new planned city (3)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Houses marked for demolition at
the Kiswishi site. Three villages
will have to make way for the new
planned city (4)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Houses marked for demolition at the Kiswishi site. Three villages will have to make way for the new planned city (5)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Houses marked for demolition at the Kiswishi site. Three villages will have to make way for the new planned city (6)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Horticulture in the Malebo Pool (1)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Horticulture in the Malebo Pool

(2)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Horticulture in the Malebo Pool

(3)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Horticulture in the Malebo Pool

(6)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



2013 Digital photograph on Baryta paper
Photo Rag 315 g
80 x 120 cm
Edition of 5 + 2 AP



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*Transformed OCA housing near
Lemba Terminus (1)*
2013
Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo
Rag 315 g
80 x 120 cm
Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*New construction at the
roundabout of Lemba Super (2)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Office of the ADGA ('Assistant of
the Deputy General Director'),
Cielux OCPT*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Inside the building (4)

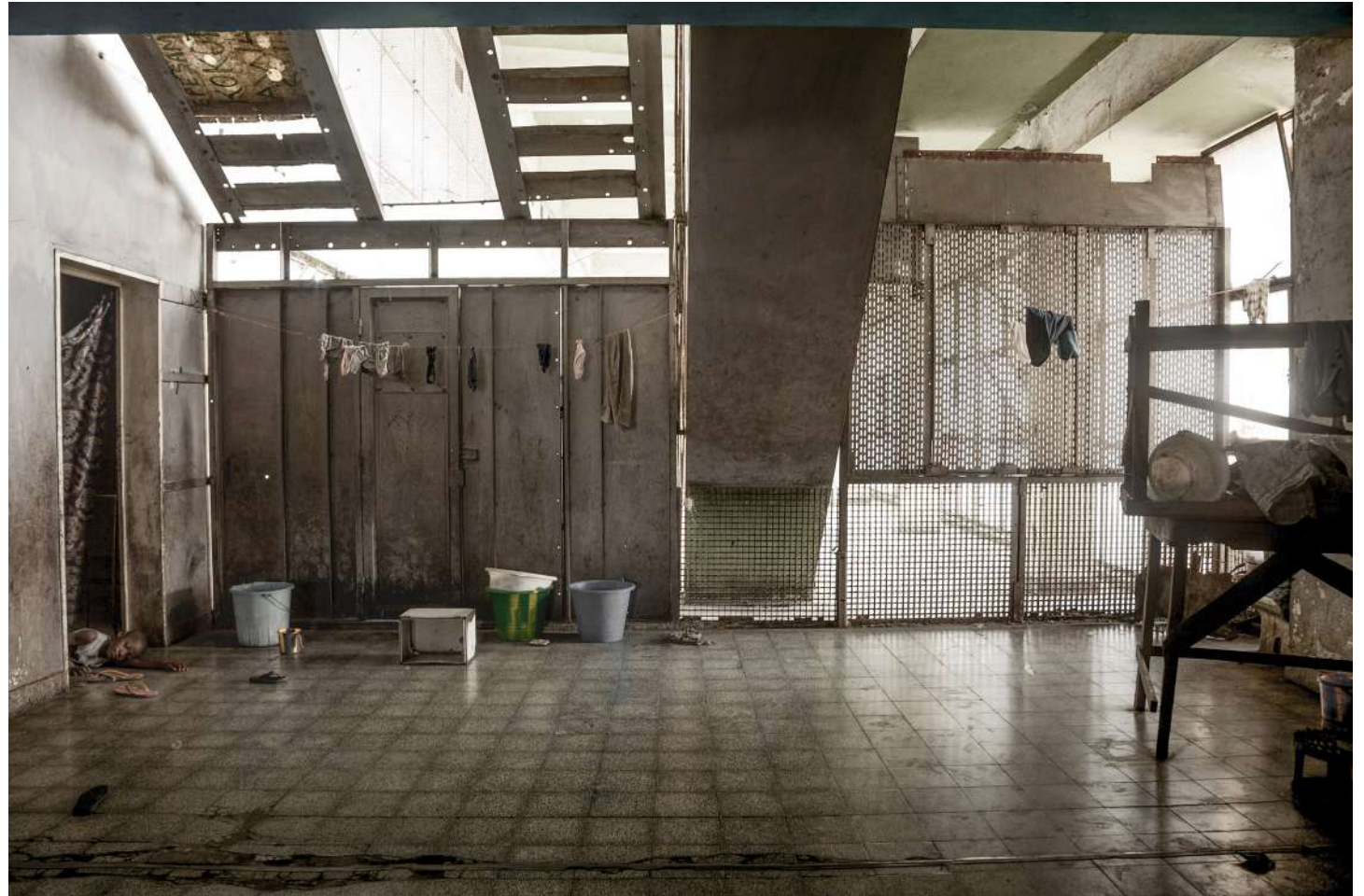
2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Transformed OCA house, Lemba

Foire

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Cielux OCPT (Office Congolais
de Poste et Télécommunication),
colloquially known as 'the Building'
(le Bâtiment). Neighbourhood of
Sans Fil, municipality of Masina.
(3)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo
Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*TFM housing camp for relocated
villagers*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Street views, municipalities of
Masina and Kimbanseke (2)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Street views, municipalities of
Masina and Kimbanseke (4)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Street views, municipalities of
Masina and Kimbanseke (5)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Street views, municipalities of
Masina and Kimbanseke (6)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Along the Avenue de la Libération
(ex 24 Novembre), municipality of
Lingwala*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*New housing construction along
the Avenue de la Démocratie
(Ex Huileries), municipality of
Lingwala*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Portraits of gravediggers at
Kintambo cemetery (1)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Portraits of gravediggers at
Kintambo cemetery (2)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Portraits of gravediggers at
Kintambo cemetery (3)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Funeral coaches for rent along
Avenue Bypass, municipality of
Lemba (1)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Funeral coaches for rent along
Avenue Bypass, municipality of
Lemba (4)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Funeral coaches for rent along
Avenue Bypass, municipality of
Lemba (5)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Mobutu's throne, Institut des
Musées Nationaux du Congo
(IMNC)*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



La Cité du Fleuve

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*View of Gombe from the Cité du
Fleuve island*
2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

80 x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Illegal housing constructions in
the Mapela/Abbatoir sector of
the Malebo Pool. Municipality of
Masina*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

100 x 150 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Cielux OCPT Building, exterior (1)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

100 x 150 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Abandoned communication
infrastructure near Menkao
village, Bateke Plateau, on
Kinshasa's eastern periphery
2013*

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo
Rag 315 g
100 x 150 cm
Edition of 5 + 2 AP





Street views, municipalities of
Masina and Kimbanseke (1)

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

100 x 150 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Dilapidated pedestrian bridge
along the Boulevard Lumumba,
municipality of Masina*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

100 x 150 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Boulevard Lumumba before
its renovation, with Mount
Mangenge in the back*
2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo
Rag 315 g
100 x 150 cm
Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Ed. 1/5 : Private collection, Paris
Ed. 2/5 : Private collection, USA



*Billboard advertisement
for the Mangembo church,
municipality of Bandalungwa. The
advertisement reads: 'Increase,
Multiplication and Supernatural
Growth'.*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo
Rag 315 g

100 x 150 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



'Cinq Chantiers' billboard, Place
de l'échangeur, municipality of
Limete

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

100 x 150 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



*Urban expansion on Kinshasa's
southwestern periphery,
municipality of Mont Ngafula*

2013

Digital photograph on Baryta paper Photo

Rag 315 g

100 x 150 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Series: Kolwezi
53 photographs
2010-2012
Digital inkjet prints on Baryta
paper
Variable dimensions
Editions of 5 + 1 AP

In 2006, the first democratic elections are held in Congo. The same year corresponds to strong external demand for copper and cobalt. Several international investors are rushing to Katanga. Among these investors are Chinese. China promises to rehabilitate Congolese infrastructure in exchange for the exploitation of Katanga's mining resources. Artisanal mining, which began shortly after the fall of the Gécamines industry, and supported by the government, has become a survival practice for Congolese people. They are former Gécamines workers, their family members, unemployed students and families who have fled the war. As a result of economic and territorial instability, artisanal miners live in tarpaulin cities near mining areas.

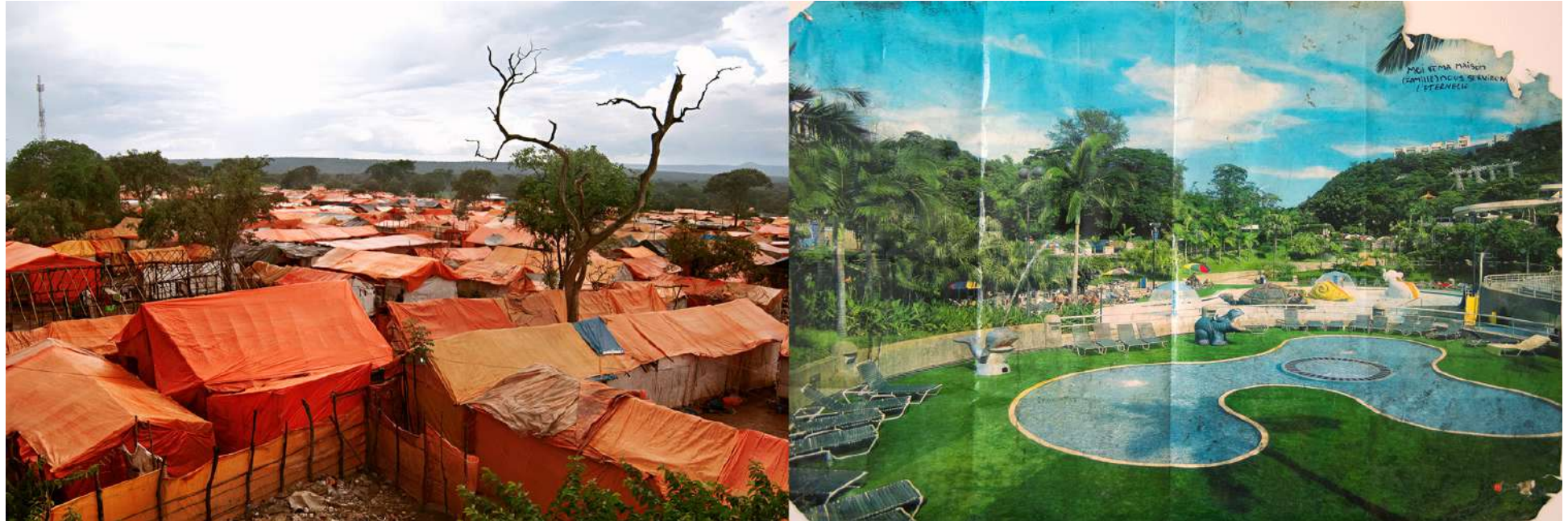
Mining takes place in mining sites that were once drilled by industrial machinery, with slopes up to more than 100 metres deep.

Equipped with picks, hammers, lamps and raffa bags, the miners climb these slopes in search of heterogeneity (raw material containing copper and cobalt). To extract this heterogeneity, they must excavate tunnels 60 to 100 metres deep, on slopes, before reaching the vein. Then, they go up the slope loaded with more than 50 kilos, several round trips, to constitute a sufficient tonnage for sale to industrialists. It is common for miners to fall victim to landslides; but these losses of life do not stop the march towards gold.

In the cities of tarpaulins, I was struck by the presence of Chinese posters that decorate the interior facades of bars, hotels, houses, hair salons, photo studios... These posters illustrate images of large Western or Asian cities, real or mounted landscapes. You would almost think that these images represent the Congo of tomorrow. Thus, I integrate these posters into my work as a utopian extension of a future resulting from artisanal mining, the loss of human lives, the export of minerals and the continuous displacement of populations.

— Sammy Baloji

Raccord #1, Cité de Kawama
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 239,45 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Raccord #2, Usine de Shituru

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 227,86 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5: Frac MECA, Bordeaux



*Raccord #3, Mine à ciel ouvert
noyée de Musonoï*
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 241,88 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



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*Raccord #4, Mine à ciel ouvert
noyée de Musonoï*
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 238,89 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Raccord #5, Mine à ciel ouvert
noyée de Banfora*
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 231,18 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Raccord #6, Musonoi
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 267,35 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



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Raccord #7, Usine de Shituru

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 252,96 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



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*Cité de Kapata #1. Habitations
des ouvriers de la Gécamines
occupées par des creuseurs
artisanaux, 2011*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5: Private collection, Germany



*Cité de Kapata #2. Habitations
des ouvriers de la Gécamines
occupées par des creuseurs
artisans, 2011*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Cité de Kapata #3. Habitations
des ouvriers de la Gécamines
occupées par des creuseurs
artisans, 2011*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Cité de Kapata #4. Habitations
des ouvriers de la Gécamines
occupées par des creuseurs
artisans, 2011*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Cité de Kapata #5. Habitations
des ouvriers de la Gécamines
occupées par des creuseurs
artisans, 2011*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Détail site d'extraction artisanale #1,

2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 2/5 : Private collection, Angola



Détail site d'extraction artisanale

#2. 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Détail site d'extraction artisanale

#3. 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 2/5 : Private collection, Luanda, Angola



Détail site d'extraction artisanale

#4. 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Détail site d'extraction artisanale

#5. 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Détail site d'extraction artisanale

#6. 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Détail site d'extraction artisanale #7.

2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Détail site d'extraction artisanale #8

2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Mine à ciel ouvert noyée de
Banfora #1,
Lieu d'extraction minière
artisanale, 2010*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 215,47 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5: Private collection, USA

Ed. 2/5: Private collection, Beyrouth



*Mine à ciel ouvert noyée de
Banfora #2,
Lieu d'extraction minière
artisanale, 2010*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 240,48 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 2/5 : Private collection, Luanda, Angola



*Mine à ciel ouvert noyée de
Banfora #3,
Lieu d'extraction minière
artisanale, 2010*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 282,59 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 2/5 : Private collection, Luanda, Angola



*Mine à ciel ouvert noyée de
Banfora #4,
Lieu d'extraction minière
artisanale, 2010*
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 460,58 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Mine à ciel ouvert noyée de
Banfora #5, Lieu d'extraction
minière artisanale, 2010*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 360,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



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Mine à ciel ouvert noyée de KOV,

2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 404,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



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Mine à ciel ouvert noyée de
Mutoshi, 2011
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 120,45 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Tunnel d'extraction artisanale,
2011
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 120,45 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Vue de la cité de Kawama
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 120,45 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Zhong Hang Mining, intérieur.

2009

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Zhong Hang Mining, 2009
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 120,45 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #1, Cité de Kapata,
Creuseur artisanal à l'intérieur de
sa tente en bâche, 2011
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 120,45 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Portrait #2, Cité de Kapata,
Creuseur artisanal à l'intérieur de
sa tente en bâche, 2011*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Portrait #3, Cité de Kapata,
Creuseur artisanal à l'intérieur de
sa tente en bâche, 2011*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Portrait #4, Cité de Kapata,
Laveuse de minerais à l'intérieur
de sa tente en bâche, 2011*
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 120,45 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Portrait #5, Cité de Kapata,
Ancien ouvrier de la Gécamines à
la retraite, 2011*

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #1, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #2, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #3, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5: Private collection, Belgium



Portrait #4, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5: Private collection, Belgium



Portrait #5, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #6, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #7, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #8, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #9, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #10, Cité de Kawama,
2011
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 120,45 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #11, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #12, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #13, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #14, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #15, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #16, Cité de Kawama,
2011
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 120,45 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #17, Cité de Kawama, 2011

2012

Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper

80 x 120,45 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Portrait #18, Cité de Kawama,
2011
2012
Digital inkjet print on Baryta paper
80 x 120,45 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Congo Far West
26 photographs
2010-2011
Archival digital photograph on
Hahnemühle PhotoRag
Variable dimensions
Editions of 5 + 1 AP

During his residency at the Royal Museum of Central Africa in Tervuren in 2010, Sammy Baloji met Maarten Couttenier, an historian-anthropologist writing his thesis around Charles Lemaire (1863-1925). In 1889, this military man embarked on a journey to Congo, then colonized by the Belgian government, and participated in the definition of the urban space of Leopoldville. Under the guise of a scientific purpose, the mission was actually to organise the occupation of the territories leased by England to Leopold II in 1894. Lemaire was accompanied by photographer François Michel and watercolourist Léon Dardenne, who were then responsible for producing a visual trace of the Belgian colonial mission. Taking possession of the various archives linked to Lemaire, Sammy Baloji did not content himself with reconstructing this expedition, but also rethought its repercussions (historical, sociological, and psychological). Accompanied by Maarten Couttenier, the artist travels to Katanga province and retraces the steps of Charles Lemaire and his companions. Sammy Baloji's approach in the *Congo Far West* series consisted in comparing the archival images taken by François Michel with photographs taken by Baloji himself in today's DRC. These diptychs thus open up the possibility of a dialogue between past and present. In addition, the appropriation of archival photographs and watercolours dating from the induced colonial period aims to deconstruct these modes of representation of the dominated produced by the dominant. Through the use of photomontage and the juxtaposition of two distinct images through the diptych, an analysis and questioning of anthropometric photography takes place, which tends to objectify and dehumanise the subjects photographed.

*Portrait #1: Kalamata, Grand Chef
Urua sur fond d'aquarelle de
Dardenne*

*(Kalamata, Big Chief Urua against
watercolor by Dardenne)*

2011

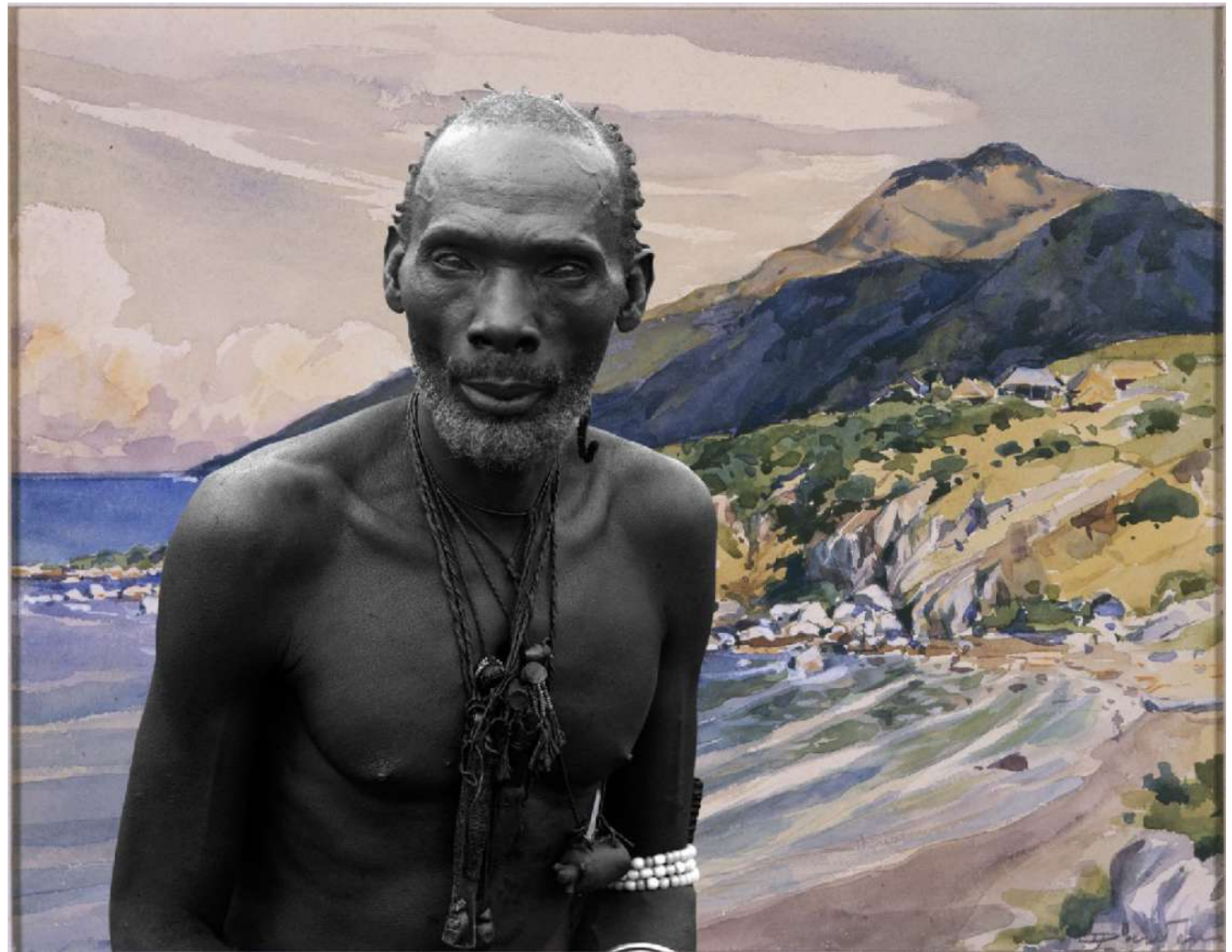
Archival digital photograph on

Hahnemühle PhotoRag

100 cm x 128 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5: Mu.ZEE, Ostende



*Portrait #2: Femme Urua sur fond
d'aquarelle de Dardenne (Luba
Woman against watercolor by
Dardenne)*

2011

Archival digital photograph on

Hahnemühle PhotoRag

100 cm x 159,95 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Portrait #3: Groupe de femmes
Urua sur fond d'aquarelle de
Dardenne, (Group of Luba women
against watercolor by Dardenne)*
2011

Archival digital photograph on
Hahnemühle PhotoRag
100 cm x 136,83 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 2/5: Musée d'Ixelles, Belgium



*Portrait #4: Groupe d'hommes
Urua sur fond d'aquarelle de
Dardenne, (Group of Luba men
against watercolor by Dardenne)*

2011

Archival digital photograph on

Hahnemühle PhotoRag

100 x 159,95 cm

Edition of 5 + 1AP



1. *Kyamakela. 1899. The mission camp at the cave site. François Michel.*

2. *Kyamakela. 2010. Present mining concessions at the Tenke Fungurume. Mining Company 2010*

Archival digital photographs on satin matte paper

80cm x 109cm (left)

80cm x 120cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Kyamakela. 1899. View of the
burning village of late Chief
Muluwa Nyama. François Michel.

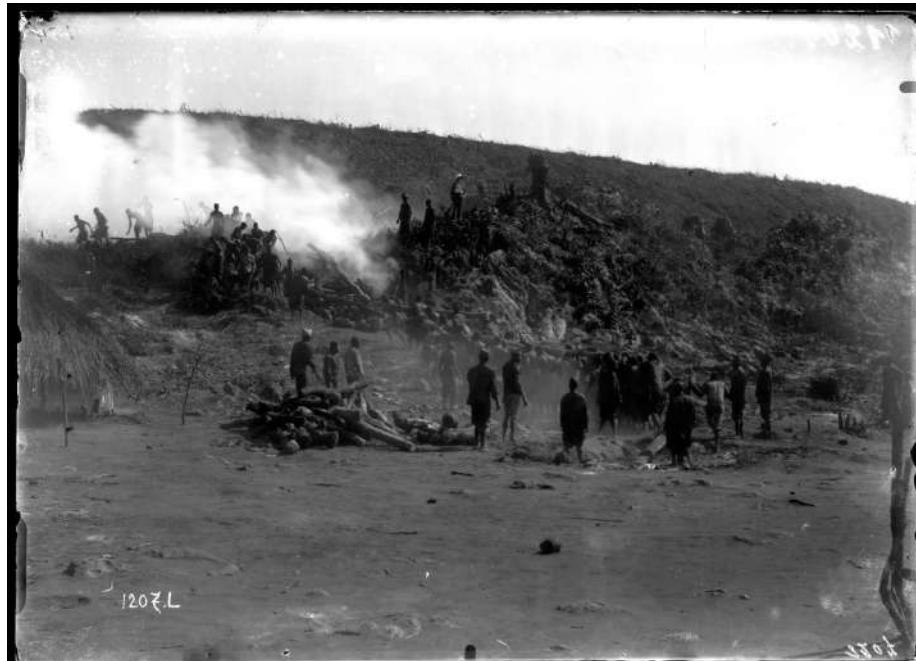
2. Kyamakela. 2010. The
Kyamakela Cave. Currently a
mining concession of the Tenke
Fungurume. Mining Company
2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80cm x 111cm (left)

80cm x 120cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Pweto. 1899. Mutilated man in Pweto. François Michel.

2. Kyoba Falls. 2010. An abandoned weapon left during the recent conflicts between the Congolese armed forces and the Mai-Mai. Kyubo belongs to the area then called 'the triangle of death'.

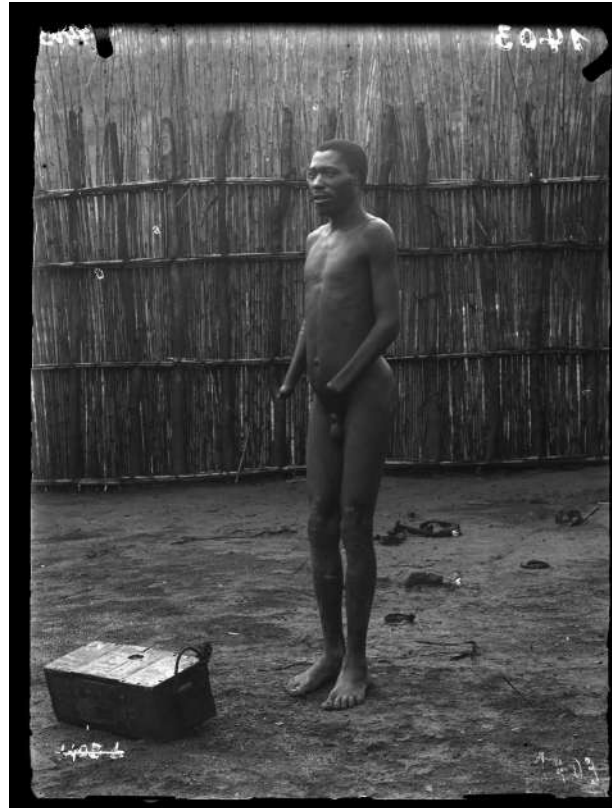
2010

Archival digital photographs on satin matte paper

80cm x 60 cm (left)

80cm x 80 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Litupisha 1899. Mukunda-Bantu,
Msiri's Son François Michel
Bunkeya

2. Marcel Barasseur Mukunda-
Bantu, grandson of Mukunda-
Bantu. 'Barasseur' is derived from
Commander Brasseur's name
who befriended chief Mukunda-
Bantu, 2010.

2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80cm x 59 cm (left)

80cm x 80 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1AP



1. Kyamakela. 1899. Entrance to the Kyamakela Caves site. François Michel.

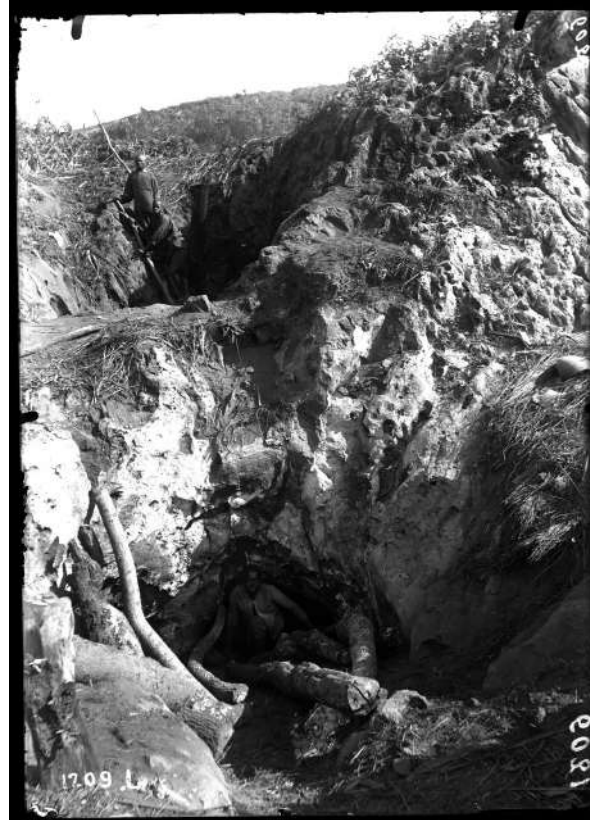
2. Kyamakela. 2010. Mumba Wa Mukekwa, grandson on one of the 7 survivors of the Kyamakela Cave massacre stands at the site where lieutenant Fromont was killed during the battle against Mulowa Nyama. Presently a concession of the Tenke Fungurume Mining Company. 2010

Archival digital photographs on satin matte paper

80cm x 57 cm (left)

80cm x 80 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1AP



1. Lukafu, 1899. *The Lukafu Station. The avenue of the native camp.*

2. François Michel. Fungurume, 2010. *Msiri concession. Typical buildings for the local population at the Tenke Fungurume Mining Company concession*
2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 125 cm (left)

80 cm x 120 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1AP



1. Fungurume, 1899. *The Scientific mission pays homage at the tomb of late Lt. Fromont. François Michel.*

2. Fungurume, 2010. *The Msini concession, Lt. Fromont's tomb. In this image: Aloïs Mudjimba, a local resident*

2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 109 cm (left)

80 cm x 80 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1AP



1. Kyubo, 1898. Geodetic marker at the Kyubo Falls. François Michel.

2. Lupiri Lua Baluba, 2010. Remnants of a geodetic marker. The marker's were destroyed by the natives under the pretext that they covered ore treasures hidden by the Belgians. In this image: Mwenze Augustin, (chief Mpanga's grandson) and Seya Faustin.

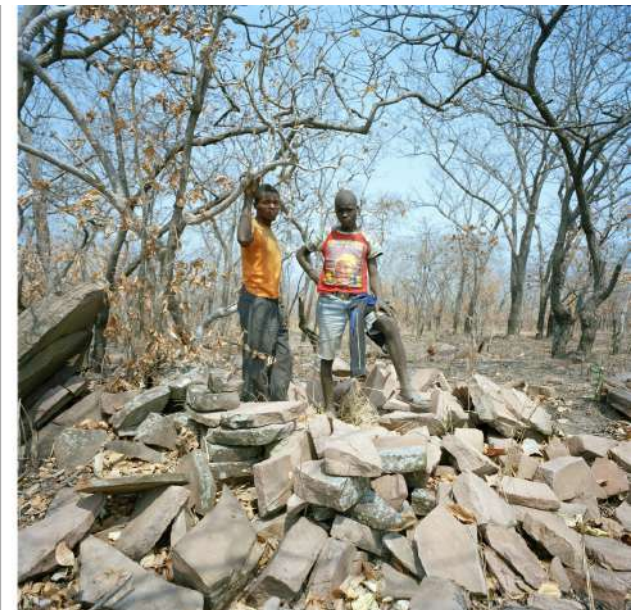
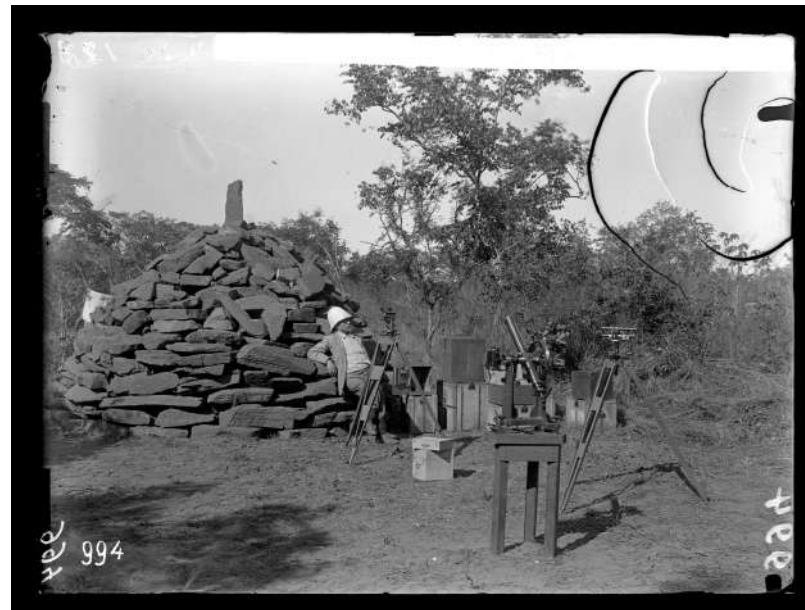
2010

Archival digital photographs on satin matte paper

80 cm x 105 cm (left)

80 cm x 80 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Kyubo, 1898. View of the Kyubo Caves. François Michel.
2. Kyubo, 2010. Kyubo Caves. The site where the village sourcerer and his disciples perform their incantations.

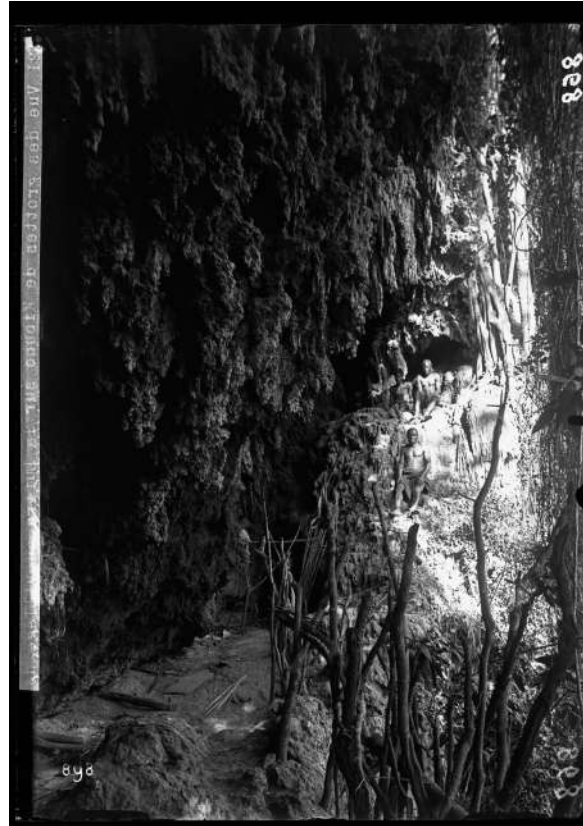
2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 109 cm (left)

80 cm x 80 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Mischiru, S.D. Mischiru Village.
Chief Katanga. NE of Tenké.
François Michel.

2. Kyubo, 2010. Head of the
outpost, Jean-Marie Ngombe
Masengo in his office.

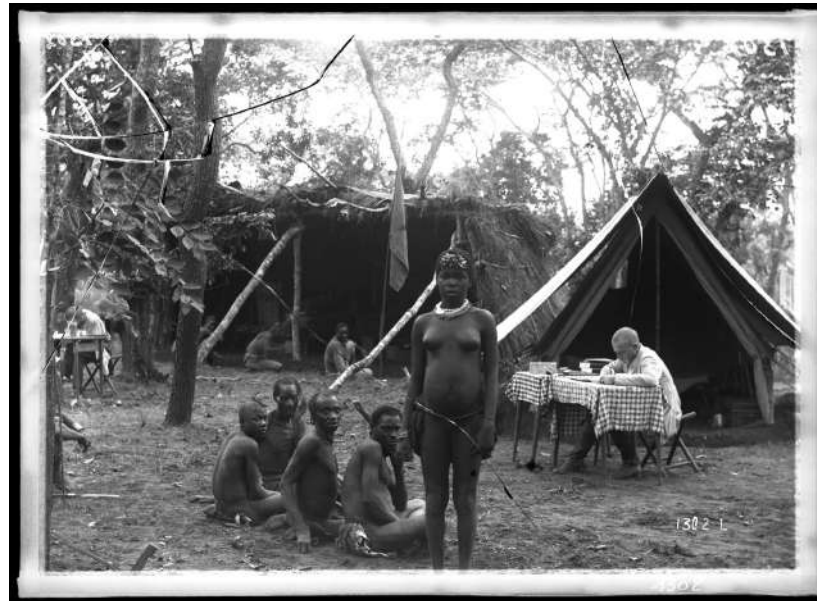
2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 109 cm (left)

80 cm x 80 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Kyubo, 1898. Kyubo Falls.

François Michel.

2. Kyubo Falls, 2010. The remains
of the old Lemaire hotel built
during the colonial period. The
national parks guardslive here
now.

2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 111 cm (left)

80 cm x 120 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Lolo, 1899. The mission staff
assemble the boa named Lady-
Lolo on the right bank of the
Lualaba. François Michel.

2. Lupiri lua Baluba, 2010. River of
the Lufira

2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 109 cm (left)

80 cm x 120 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Lofoi, 1898. *The Tomb of Comdr. Brasseur on Lofoi. François Michel.*

2. Lukafu, 2010. *The European cemetery. Brasseur's head is buried here.*

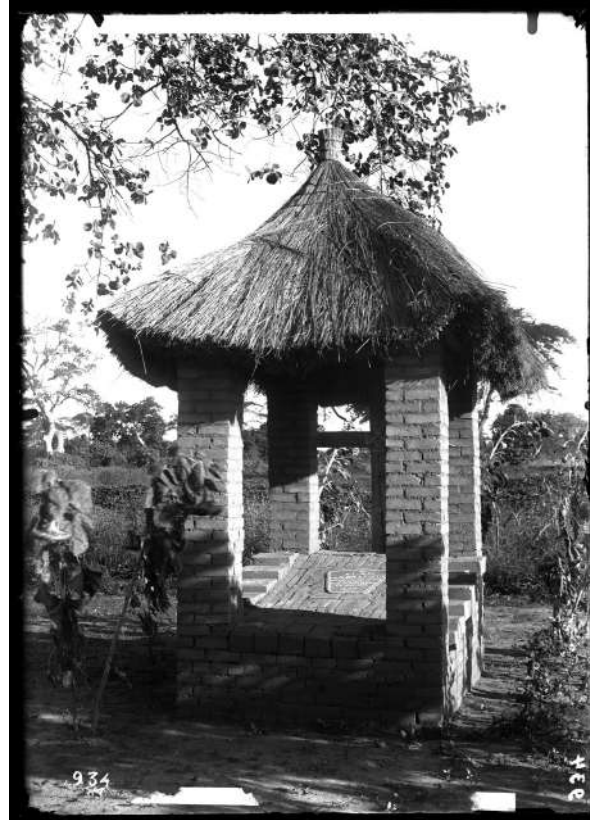
2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 57 cm (left)

80 cm x 80 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Lukafu, 1899. *The Lukafu Station. A group of Europeans.*
François Michel.

2. Lukafu, 2010. *The bed in which Prince Albert slept when he stopped in Lukafu*

2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 105 cm (left)

80 cm x 80 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Lukafu. 1899. Housing in Lukafu.
François Michel.

2. Lukafu 2010. Interior of an old
European housing. Currently,
homes are run by the Catholic
mission

2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 103 cm (left)

80 cm x 80 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Litupisha, 1899. A cordial reception in Litupisha Village, NW of Lukafu. François Michel.

2. Litupisha, 2010. Chief Mwaka-Adolphe of the Village Kyolokosa posing on the remains of Mukanda-Bantu's house. The ancestors of Chief Mwaka-Adolphe fought alongside Mukanda-Bantu

2010

Archival digital photographs on satin matte paper

80 cm x 105 cm (left)

80 cm x 80 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Lofoi, 1898. View of Pic Bodson.

François Michel.

2. Lofoi, 2010. Kamukombwe, the
local name for Pic Bodson

2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 110 cm (left)

80 cm x 120 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Loföi, 1898. Group of Europeans
in Loföi. François Michel.

2. Loföi, 2010. Flore Cerckel's
tomb, desecrated in the search
for ore.

2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 110 cm (left)

80 cm x 120 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



1. Lakafu, 1898. The Lakafu Station. Morning roll call. François Michel.

2. Lofoi, 2010. The Lofoi station, called 'Bon Gain' or 'Good Profit' by the Belgians and 'Mbonge» by the local population. The monument erected during the Belgian colonial period was devastated by the search for ore. 2010

Archival digital photographs on satin matte paper

80 cm x 106 cm (left)

80 cm x 120 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Ed. 1/5: Mu.ZEE, Belgium



1. Lofoi, 1898. A shelter in Lofoi.

François Michel.

2. Lofoi, 2010. Remains of the first station, 'Bon Gain' or 'Good Profit'.

2010

Archival digital photographs on satin
matte paper

80 cm x 109 cm (left)

80 cm x 120 cm (right)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Bunkeya, 2010. The place where
Bodson fell on the road leading to
Maria Da Fonseca's house after
being shot by Masuka, Msiri's son
2010*

Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper

80 cm x 80 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Zilo, 1899. Camp at the Zilo Falls
on ration distribution day. François
Michel*
2010
Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper
80 cm x 110 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Kyamkela, 1899. Construction of
the geodesic terminal caves of
Djamekeli (sic). François Michel
2010*

Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper

80 cm x 110 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Kyubo, 2010. Chief Mpanga.
He had heard about Lemaire's
expedition. He knew the story told
by his parents, and showed us the
places that Lemaire visited*

2010
Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper
80 cm x 120 cm
Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Kuleshi, 1899. Bridge over the
river to chief Tam-wana's village,
Kukechi. François Michel.*

2010

Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper

80 cm x 115 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Lukafu, 2010. Mashyamo
Kashimba Sylvain, present chief
of the village of Liseba*

2010

Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper

80 cm x 80 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



*Lofoi, 2010. The queen and
mother of chief Liseba. In her
son's absence the queen refused
to talk about the relations
between the village of Liseba and
'Bon Gain' or 'Good Profit'.*

2010

Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper

80 cm x 120 cm

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Allers et retours

Series of six photographs

2009

Inkjet Print on Fine Art Lisse
paper, Hahnemühle PhotoRag
Ultrasmooth, 305 gr

10 x 150 cm (each)

Unique

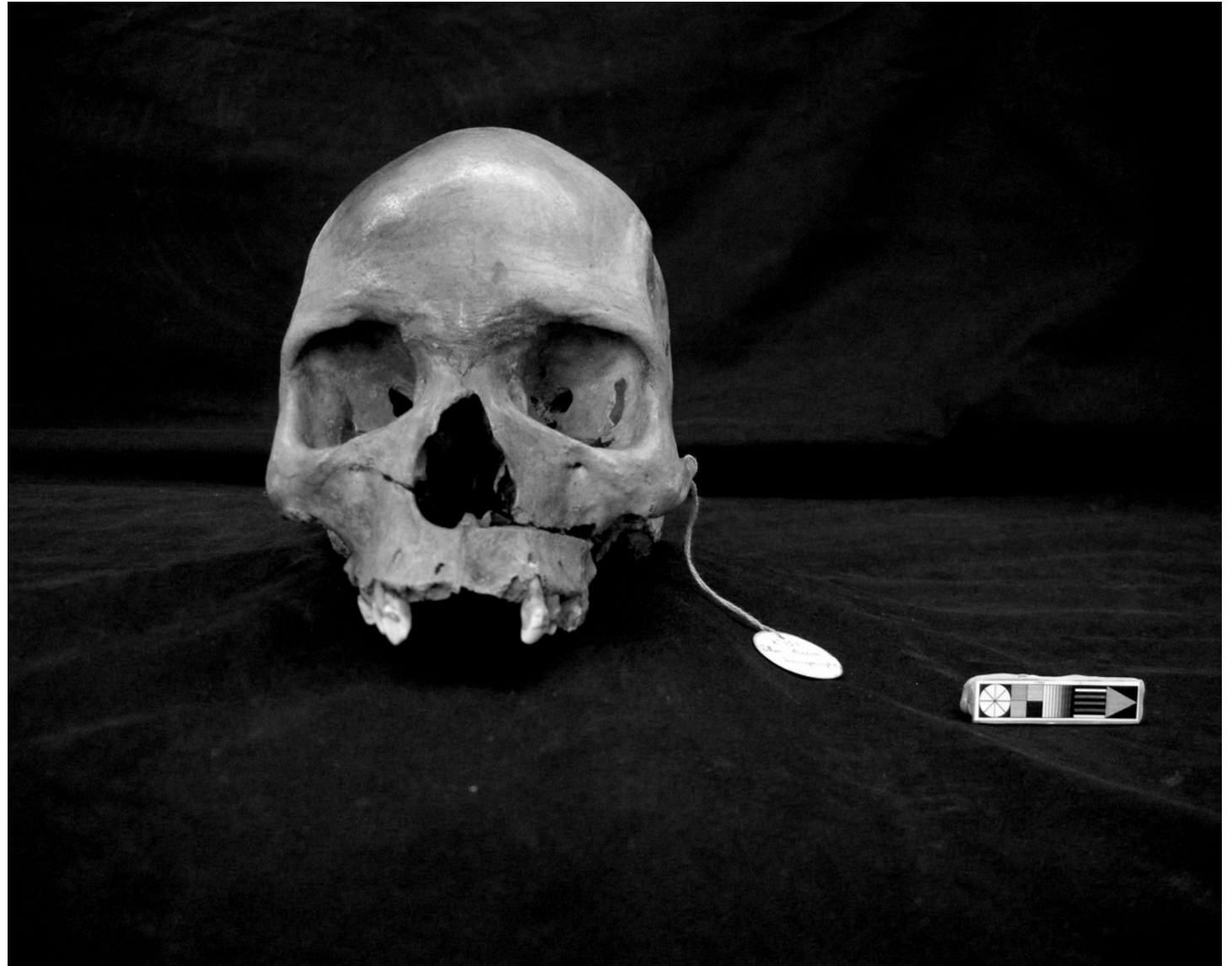
Collections Musée du Quai

Branly - Jacques Chirac

“For one of his artistic works *Allers et retours* (2009), Baloji conducted photographic research dedicated to the skull of the murdered Congolese chief Lusinga, kept in the storerooms of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences in Brussels (...)

The work *Allers et retours*, consists of a series of six photographs and a video. The photographs show the skull in the way anthropometric photography does, that is, they opt in their representation for the nearly exact reproduction of what seems to be a mere object of science. The black and white prints depict the skull from the front, back, top, side and bottom, on a black fabric background. This multiplication of views in anthropometric photography followed the logic of generating information for a three-dimensional reconstruction. Black fabric was a common background material in 19th century anthropometric photography, often rendered visible in the picture. Similarly, in Baloji’s photographs, the materiality of the fabric has also a striking presence. The integration of the scale in the image points to the purpose of the photography and its inherent functionality in the anthropometric context. Aspiring to produce ‘objective knowledge’ by scientific means, scales and other measurement tools and inscriptions were frequently pictured in anthropometric photography. Furthermore, some of the photographs depict a small plate fixed onto the skull that indicates classificatory data. The photographic lighting underlines the physical features of the skull; it itself reflects the light in sharp contrast with the light-absorbing background. Baloji’s photographic series is organized horizontally. All together, the six images seem to diverge from average anthropometric photography only by their size: Expanding beyond the life-size dimension of the skull, the chosen format – with print dimensions of 123 x 153.5 cm – brings the images close to “fetishization”.

— Lotte Arndt, “Vestiges of Oblivion – Sammy Baloji’s Works on Skulls in European Museum Collections”, *darmatter* n°101, 2013













Mémoire

29 photomontages

2004-2006

Archival digital photographs on

satin matte paper

Variable dimensions

Editions of 10 + 1 AP

Lubumbashi was a vital regional center for centuries before the Europeans arrived and became a major industrial centre thanks to the mining of copper under Belgian colonial rule. Nowadays, Lubumbashi, casts a pale shadow of its former glory.

In *Mémoire*, past and present collide. Baloji juxtaposes color photographs of today's bleak, industrial landscapes with historical images drawn from the archives of the local mining company, which memorialize African and European colonial actors, who toiled for and benefited from the mine. While the resulting images are indictments of the lasting legacies—social, political, environmental—of colonialism, they also recall the economic benefits made by the mines and their ruin after independence. Appropriating and assimilating all of this history, Baloji transforms the diverse temporal and personal fragments into a contemporary reading, in order to open up a way forward.

Collections:

Cnap, Paris, *Untitled #1, #6, #12, #13, #20, #21, #25*

Frac Réunion, *Untitled #3, #4, #6, #8, #12, #14*

Frac Poitou-Charente, *Untitled #12*

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, *Untitled #6, #17, #21, #25, #27*

Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, *Untitled #21*

Tate, London, *Untitled #6, #12, #17*

Untitled

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 193,75 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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www.imanefares.com

259/287

Untitled #1

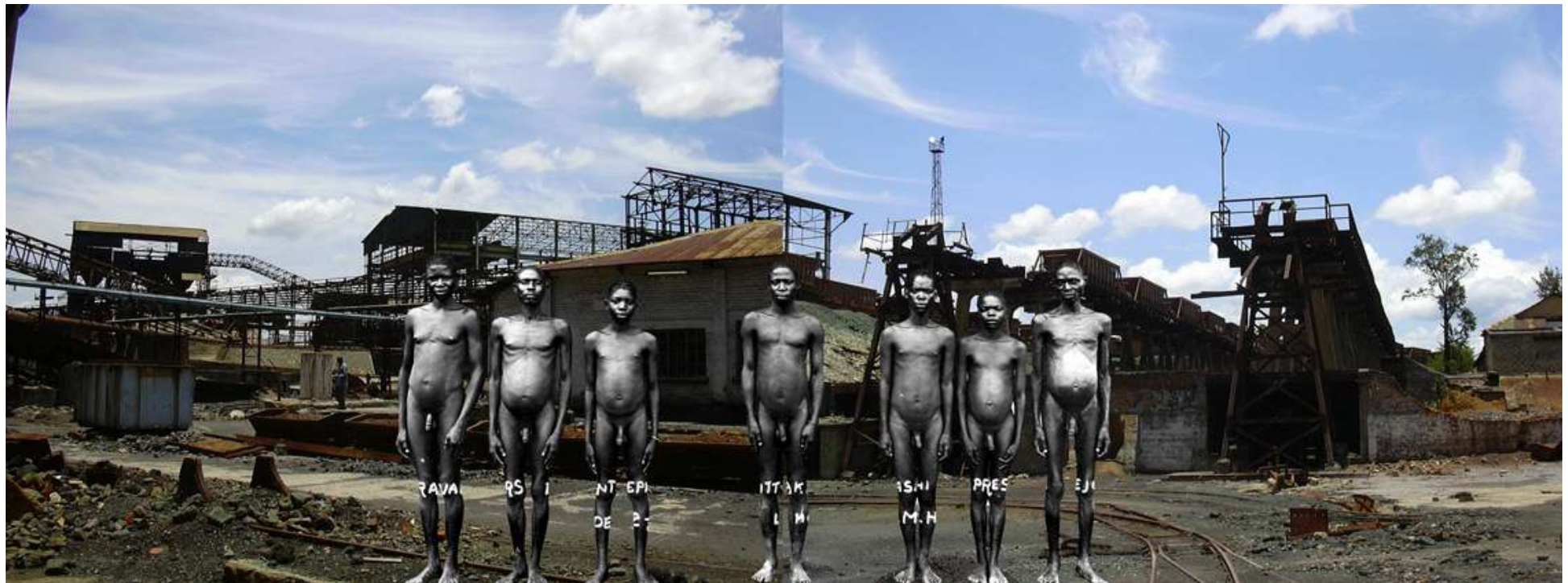
2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper

60 x 193,75 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP

Edition available : 6/10



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Untitled #2

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper

60 x 161 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



Untitled #3

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 159,4 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #4

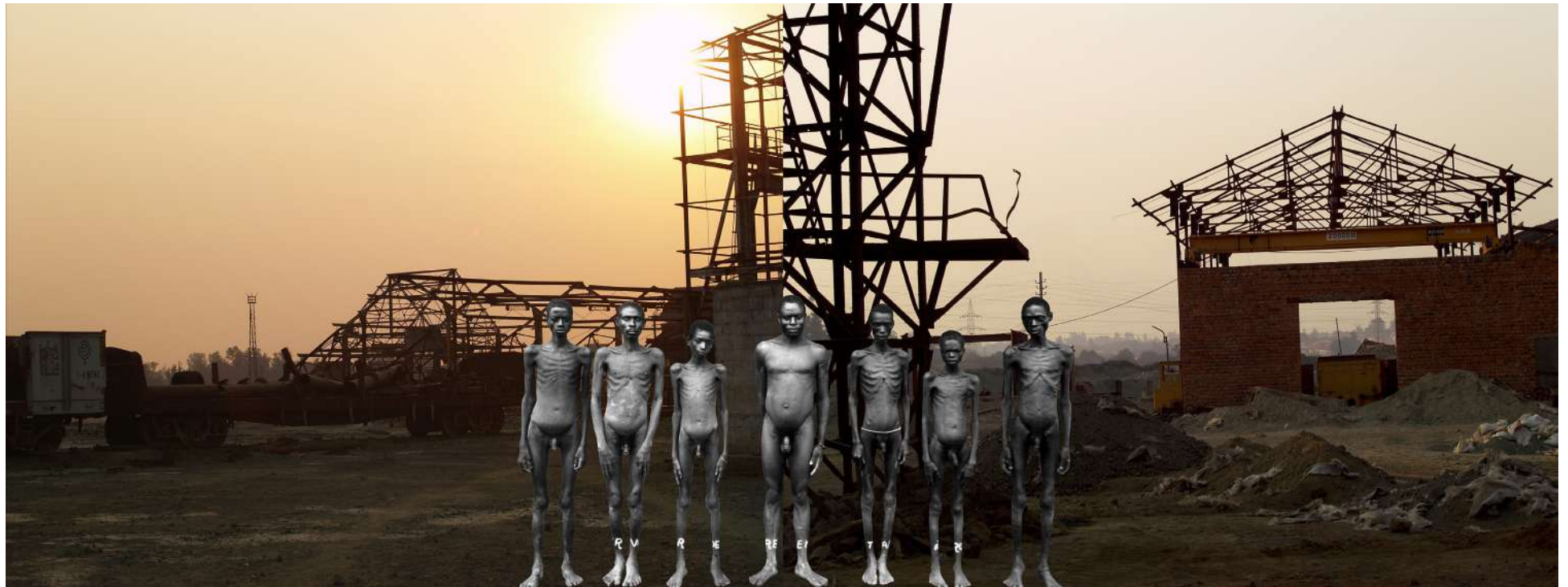
2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 160 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #5

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper

60 x 160,27 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #6

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 160,27 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



Untitled #7

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper

60 x 191,79 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #8

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 160,18 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



Untitled #9

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 159 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #10

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 178,56 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



Untitled #11

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 180 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #12

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 181 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



Untitled #13

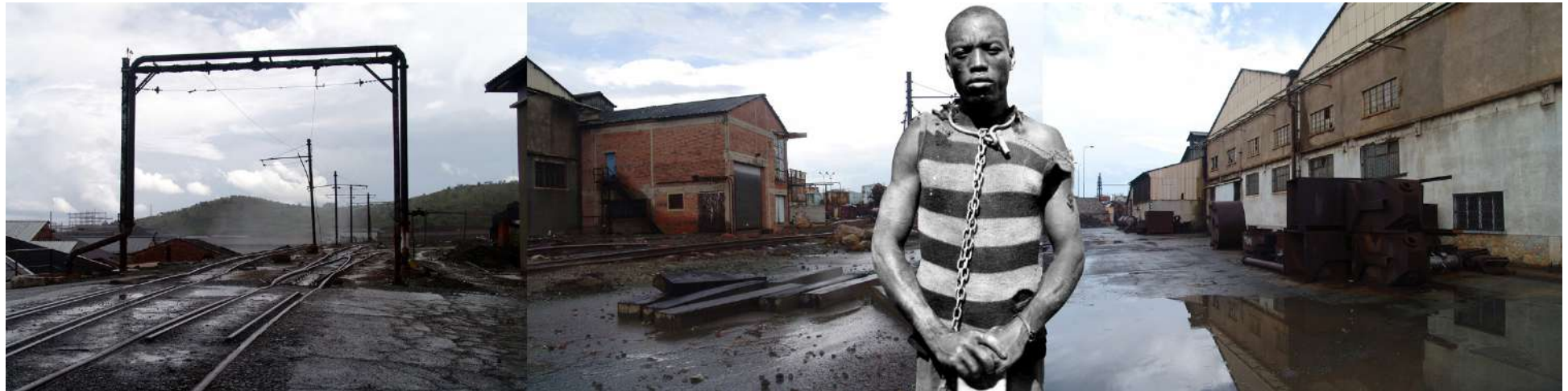
2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 240 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



Untitled #14

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper

60 x 180 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #15

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 180 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



Untitled #16

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte
paper

60 x 167,61 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



Untitled #17

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 167 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #18

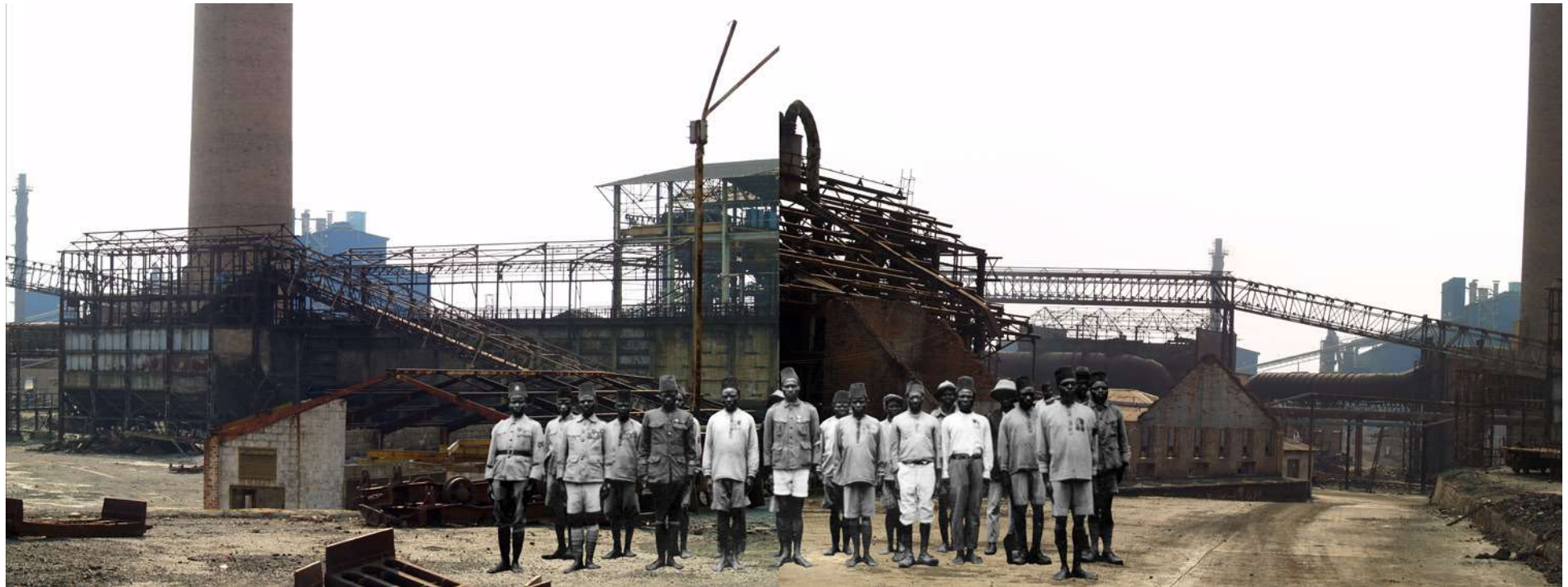
2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 160 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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277/287

Untitled #19

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 160 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #20

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin
matte paper

60 x 160 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #21

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 160 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #22

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 160 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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281/287

Untitled #23

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 160 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #24

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 160 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #25

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 160 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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Untitled #26

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 161 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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285/287

Untitled #27

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 180 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



Untitled #29

2006

Archival digital photograph on satin matte

paper

60 x 158 cm

Edition of 10 + 1 AP



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