

FIAC 2021

Sammy Baloji

Younès Rahmoun

James Webb

October 21-24, 2021

Preview: October 20

Grand Palais Éphémère, Paris

Galerie Eiffel, Booth F32

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."

Sammy Baloji (b. 1978 in Lubumbashi, DR Congo) lives and works between Lubumbashi and Brussels. Sammy Baloji started in September 2019 his PhD artistic research project "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 and distinctions, including the Prince Claus Prize, the Spiegel Prize of the African Photography Encounters of Bamako and the Dakar Biennale, and the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. Sammy Baloji co-founded in 2008 the Rencontres Picha/Biennale de Lubumbashi. In 2019-2020, he was a resident of the Académie de France à Rome - Villa Médicis.

His future and recent personal exhibitions include Galerie degli Uffizi (2022), *K(C)ongo, Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues*, Beaux-Arts de Paris (2021); *Sammy Baloji, Other Tales*, Lund Konsthall and Aarhus Kunsthall (2020); *Congo, Fragments d'une histoire*, Le Point du Jour, Cherbourg (2019); *A Blueprint for Toads and Snakes*, Framer Framed, Amsterdam (2018); *Sven Augustijnen & Sammy Baloji*, Museumcultuur Strombeek (2018); *Urban Now: City Life in Congo*, *Sammy Baloji and Filip de Boeck*, The Power Plant, Toronto and WIELS, Brussels (2016-2017), and *Hunting and Collecting*, Mu. ZEE Kunstmuseum aan zee, Ostend (2014).

He has recently participated in the Sydney Biennial (2020), documenta 14 (Kassel/Athens, 2017), the Lyon Biennial (2015), the Venice Biennial (2015), the Photoquai Festival at the Musée du Quai Branly (Paris, 2015).

His works feature in many important public collections, including Centre Pompidou (Paris), Tate Modern (London), MMK (Frankfurt/Main), Museo Nacional de Arte Reina Sofia (Madrid), Smithsonian (Washington D-C), Musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac (Paris), Museum Rietberg (Zürich),...

[More information on the artist >](#)



Photo: Sophie Nuytten

News:

K(C)ongo, Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues, Beaux-Arts de Paris, June-July 2021 (solo)
Beaufort 21, Zeebrugge, May-Nov. 2021 (group)
...and to those North Sea waves whispering sunken stories, In Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres, July 2021-Jan. 2022 (residence)
Congoville, Middelheim Museum, May-Oct. 2021 (group)
Gallerie delle Uffizi, Florence, 2022 (solo)
MACBA, Barcelona, 2022-23 (group)

Selection of collections:

Tate, London
Victoria & Albert Museum, London
MMK, Frankfurt/Main
Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond
MuZEE, Kunstmuseum aan Zee, Oostende
Musée national d'art moderne/Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
Cnap, Centre national des Arts Plastiques, Paris

[ArtReview Power 100. "new entry" in 2020, rank 67](#)



Sammy Baloji

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

Edition 1/5: Private Collection

Edition 2/5: On Hold

Edition available: 3/5

Exhibitions:

- *Sammy Baloji, Kasala: The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human, Bende's Error*, Imane Farès, Paris, 2020 (solo)

- *THIS IS NOT AFRICA – UNLEARN WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED*, ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, 2021 (group)

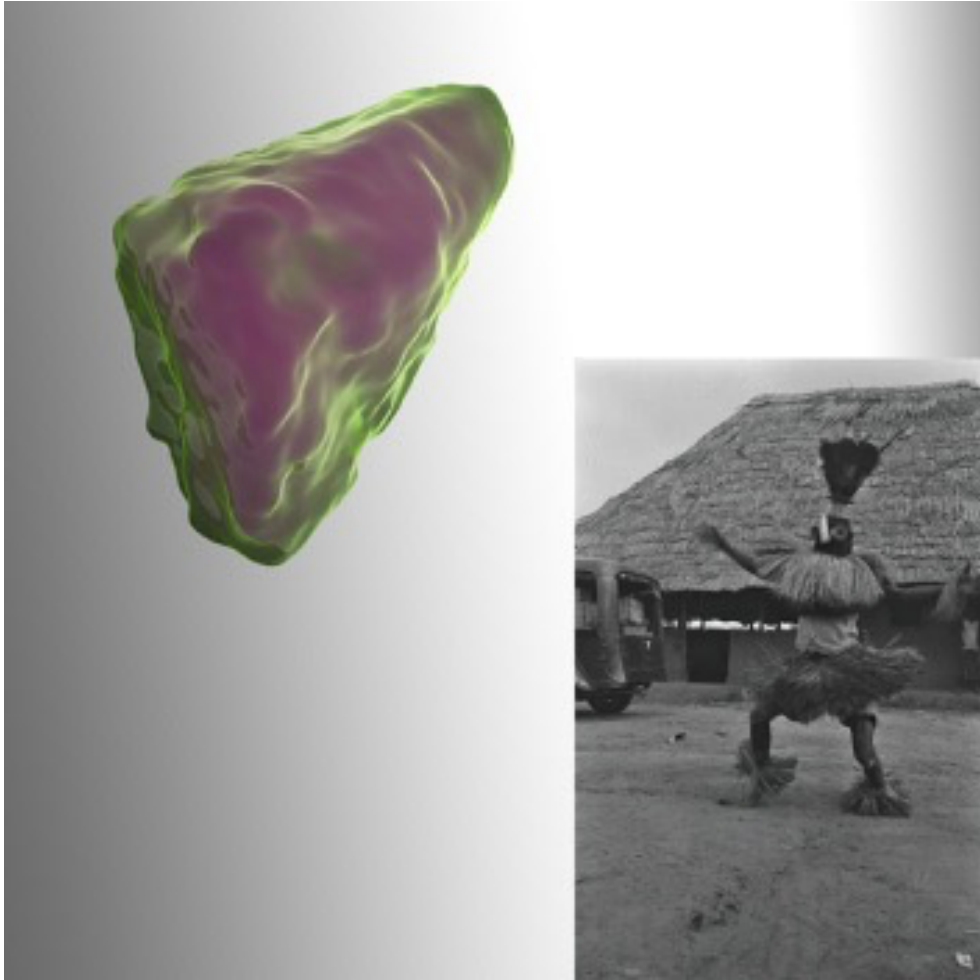
The series' starting point of this series is Sammy Baloji's critical questioning of German ethnologist Hans Himmelheber's (1908-2003) photographic archives, which include pictures collected in 1939 during a trip to the Congo, then a Belgian colony.

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 [Himmelheber'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





Sammy Baloji

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

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

Edition 1/5: Victoria & Albert Museum, London

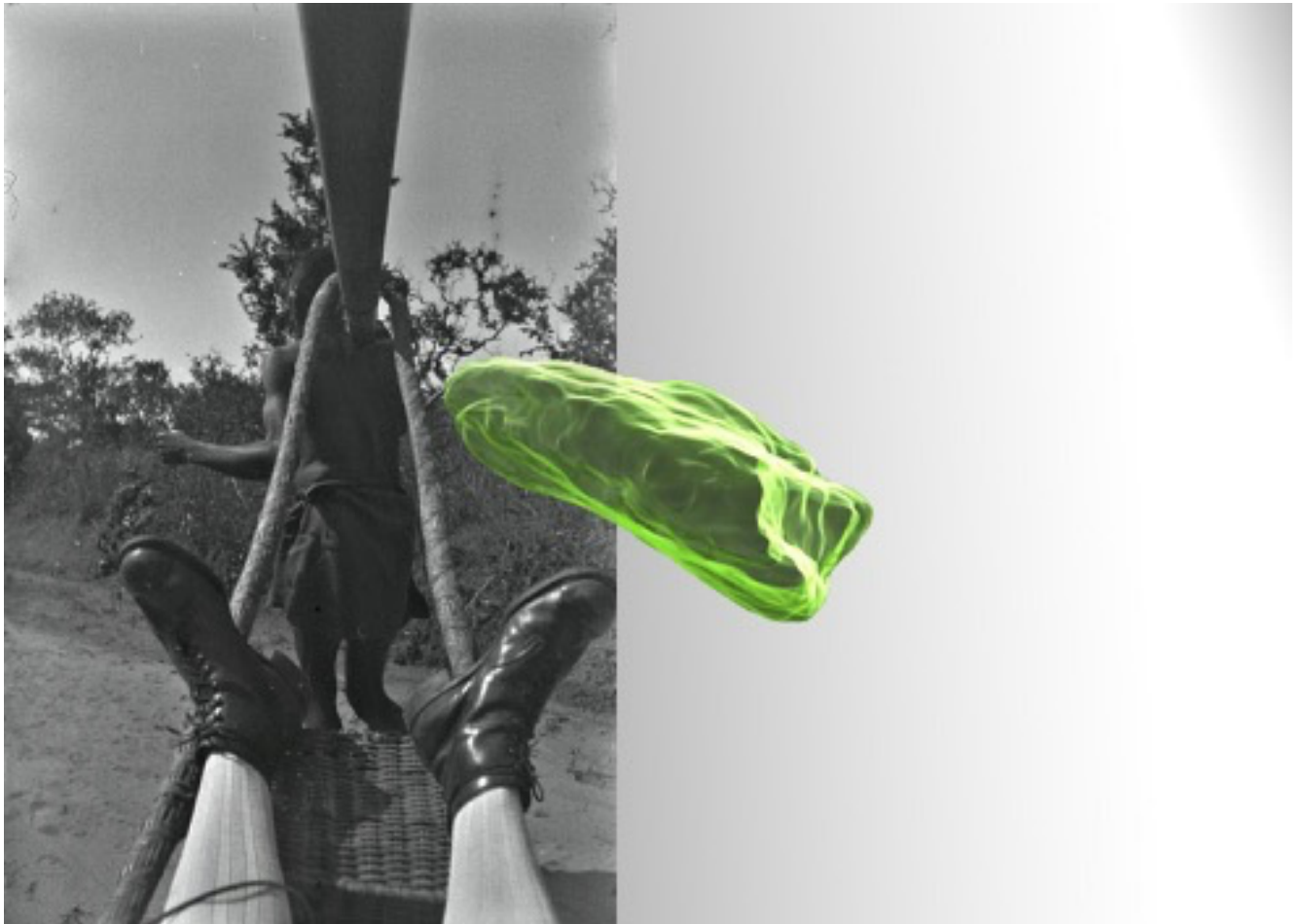
Edition 2/5: Private Collection

Edition available: 3/5

Exhibitions:

- Sammy Baloji, *Kasala: The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or the First Human, Bende's Error*, Imane Farès, Paris, 2020 (solo)

- *THIS IS NOT AFRICA – UNLEARN WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED*, ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, 2021 (group)



Sammy Baloji

*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

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

Edition 1/5: Coll. Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Edition available: 2/5

Exhibitions:

- *Sammy Baloji, Kasala: The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or
the First Human, Bende's Error*, Imane Farès, Paris, 2020
(solo)

- *THIS IS NOT AFRICA – UNLEARN WHAT YOU HAVE
LEARNED*, ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, 2021
(group)

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



Younès Rahmoun typically begins an artwork by collecting numbers, shapes, and objects from his surroundings. He then uses repetitive, familiar gestures to manipulate these elements and give form to everyday, ephemeral, or barely visible activities, such as praying, rolling dough, and breathing.

His religious beliefs and his identification as a practicing Muslim also inform his work. He repeatedly employs numbers that are significant in Islam, such as seven and ninety-nine, and chooses to orient his installations in the direction of Mecca. His artistic practice cannot be reduced to, or fully explained by, his religious beliefs and their attendant symbolism. His longstanding interests in Buddhism, meditation, and Sufism are equally visible, as are the basic shapes and materials of everyday life: cones, cylinders, grids, and spheres and light, brick, jute, and earth.

While he works primarily in sculpture, his exhibitions also include photographs, drawings, preparatory plans, videos, and other objects that relate to the sculpture's place of production or that document artworks made outside of the gallery or museum walls. These elements allow Rahmoun to experiment with connecting the place of an artwork's production to the site of its exhibition.

—Emma Chubb

Younès Rahmoun (b. 1975 in Tétouan, Morocco, where he lives and works) is one of the most widely exhibited North African artists of his generation. He and his art school cohort were the first in the country to have formal training in "l'art contemporain," thanks to his mentor, Faouzi Laattiris.

Recent museum exhibitions include *Little Worlds, Complex Structures*, VCUarts – Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (2018), *De la mer à l'océan, L'appartement 22*, Rabat (2016). His work has recently been shown at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid), the Palais de Tokyo (Paris), the Tripostal (Lille), the Victoria & Albert Museum (London), *L'heure rouge*, the Dakar Biennale (2018) and Viva Arte Viva, the 57th Venice Biennale (2017).

A forthcoming retrospective of his work since 1996 will be held at the Smith College Museum of Art (Northampton, USA) in 2023.

[More information on the artist >](#)



Photo © Younès Rahmoun

News:

Trilogía marroquí, 1950-2020, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, March-Sept. 2021 (group)

Stories From the City, Imane Farès, Paris, Sept.-Oct. 2021 (group)

Selection of collections:

Musée National d'Art Moderne / Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Frac Alsace, Sélestat

MACBA, Barcelona

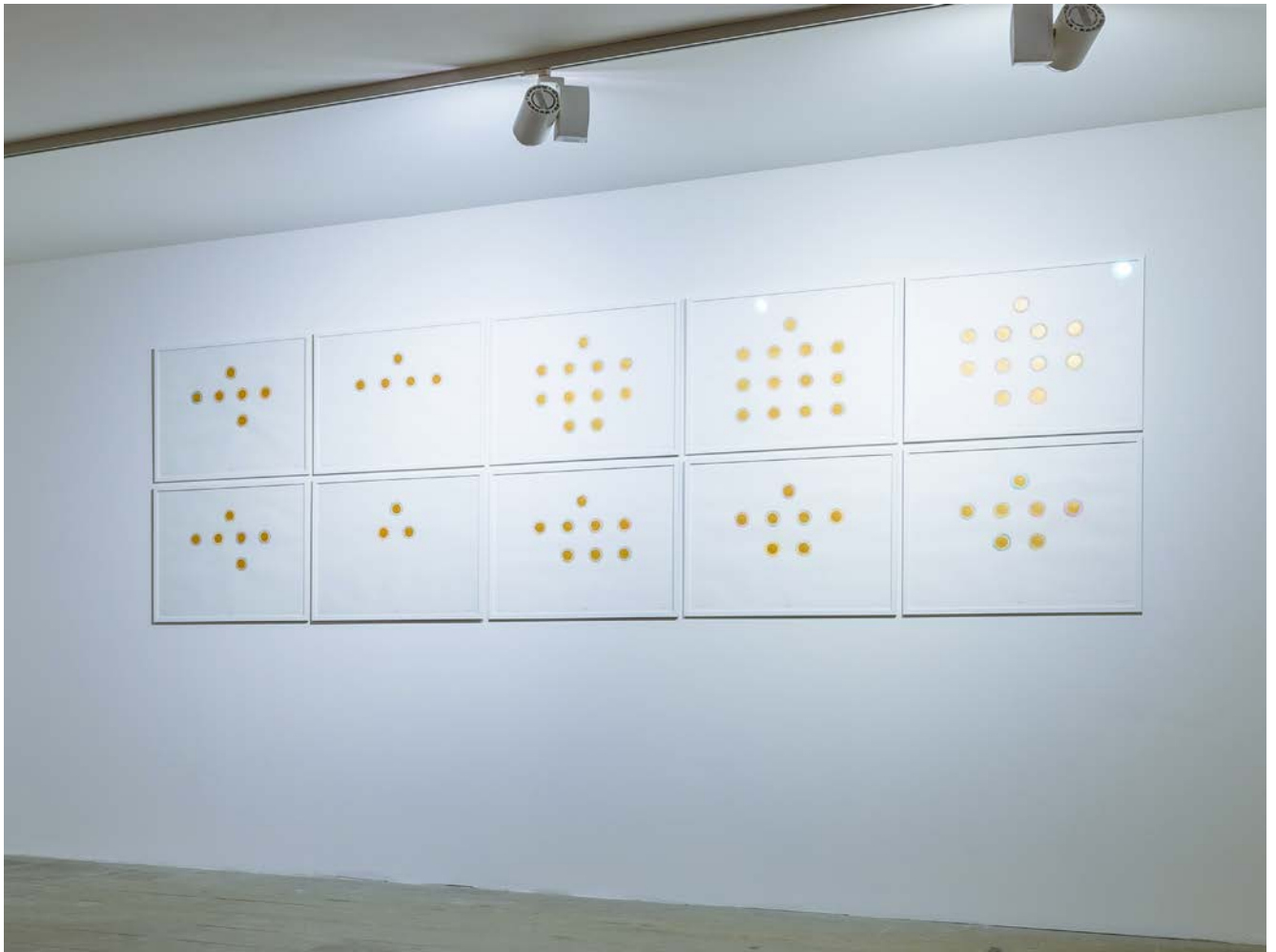
John Jones Foundation, London

Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton

King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, Dhahran

Vehbi Koç Foundation, Istanbul

Mathaf - Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha



Younès Rahmoun

Tâqiya-Nôr

2017

Installation of 10 drawings

Acrylic paint, watercolour and pencil on paper

50 x 71 cm (each) / 106 x 367 cm (total)

Unique

Exhibition:

Viva Arte Viva, 57th International Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, 2017

Tâqiya-Nôr was first exhibited at the Biennale di Venezia alongside an installation made of 77 coloured woollen hats organised in groups of ten in parallel rows (now in the collection of Cnap, Paris).

The numbers 10 and 77 allude to the number of branches of faith according to the teaching of the Prophet of Islam: ten main branches and seventy-seven secondary branches. While some of these teachings are universal, such as smiling at strangers or taking something out of someone's way that might hurt them, others are more specific to Islam, such as believing in Muhammad as the Prophet Messenger of God and praying five times a day.



Younès Rahmoun
Manzil-Tayf (House-Spectrum)
2021
Resin
70 x 10 x 10 cm
Unique

To build a house, for Younès Rahmoun, is to use space to live in it physically but also to occupy it mentally. He draws on his spiritual experience, his imagination, but also on collective memory, to express his idea of the house in a number of objects and experiences. *Manzil-Tayf* is a reverie, an invitation to imagine and to project ourselves into the mystery of being. It evokes "stays of being", "houses of being, where a certainty of being is concentrated". It is a "reverie, that of inhabiting uninhabitable places".

Manzil-Tayf materializes the relationship of the body to the world. It is an envelope, a metaphorical body, a natural living space. Interior and exterior mingle in an ambiguous relationship that modifies our perception of the body but also of space.

Parcels of light, parcels of colour: *Manzil-Tayf* are small houses. Brief forms of habitat. Imaginary constructions. Made of resin, they reveal themselves in the light. From this light, according to the artist, emanates a pure colour that would be the essence of the universe. From this play of repetition of form and colour, these houses represent unity in diversity. They also metaphorically evoke "the body inhabited by light" says the artist.

Image: Younès Rahmoun, *Manzil-Tayf (House-Spectrum)*, detail



Image: Younès Rahmoun, *Manzil-Tayf (House-Spectrum)*, detail



Image: Younès Rahmoun, *Manzil-Tayf (House-Spectrum)*, detail





Younès Rahmoun

Manzil-Fahm-Almas (House-Coal-Diamond)

2018

Coal, diamond, resin

11,5 x 11,5 x 17,8 cm, 0,7 cm diamond

30 x 30 x 125 cm (with pedestal)

Unique

Image: Younès Rahmoun, *Manzil-Fahm-Almas (House-Coal-Diamond)*, detail



James Webb is a conceptual artist, known for his site-specific interventions and installations. His practice often involves sound, found objects, and text, invoking references to literature, cinema, and the minimalist traditions. By shifting objects, techniques, and forms beyond their original contexts and introducing them to different environments, Webb creates new spaces of tension.

These spaces bind Webb's background in religion, theatre, and advertising, offering poetic inquiries into the economies of belief and dynamics of communication in our contemporary world.

Webb (B. 1975, Kimberley, South Africa) lives and works in Cape Town and Stockholm.

He has had solo exhibitions at, amongst others, the Art Institute of Chicago, USA, 2018; SPACES, Cleveland, USA, 2018; Norrtälje Konsthall, Norrtälje, Sweden, 2018; Galerie Imane Farès, Paris, France, 2016 and 2019; Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, United Kingdom, 2016; Hordaland Kunstsenter, Bergen, Norway, 2015; blank projects, Cape Town, South Africa, 2014, 2016, and 2020; CentroCentro, Madrid, Spain, 2013; Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2012; and mac, Birmingham, United Kingdom, 2010.

Major group exhibitions include the 13th Biennial of Dakar (2018), 4th Prospect Triennial of New Orleans (2017), documenta 14 (2017), 13th Biennial of Sharjah (2017), 12th Bienal de la Habana (2015), 55th Biennale di Venezia (2013), 3rd Marrakech Biennale (2009), Melbourne International Arts Festival (2009), and the 8th Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon (2007). Other notable group shows include those at spaces such as Wanås Konst and Historiska, Sweden; MAXXI Roma, Italy; Darat al Funun, Jordan; Théâtre Graslin, France; and the Tate Modern, London.

Webb's work has been acquired for numerous public and private collections, and his projects have been the subject of the two monographs, "... " (blank projects, 2020), and "Xenagogue" (Hordaland Kunstsenter, 2015).

[More information on the artist ↘](#)



James Webb, 2016 © Ph

News:

Borås Art Biennial 2021, May-Sept. 2021

There's No Place Calles Home (Edinburgh), Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh / Talbot Rice Gallery (commission)

As Yet Untitled, Norval Foundation Sculpture Garden, Cape Town (commission)

Nothing here does not hear you, National Arts Festival, Makhanda (commission)

Selection of collections:

National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

Unisa Art Gallery, Pretoria

Tate Modern, London

The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago

MAXXI, Rome

FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld

A4 Arts Foundation, Cape Town

Darat al Funun, The Khalid Shoman Foundation, Amman



There Is a Light That Never Goes Out is an ongoing series of neon text works in which Webb has rerouted in which he has rerouted the title of the 1986 song by The Smiths by translating it into carefully selected languages including Arabic, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Mandarin, Mixe, Sesotho, and Tupi Guarani.

Produced in neon, the lyrics are transformed from their musical origins into a visual event that conjures open-ended cultural and site-specific associations. Alternating between local and globalized forms of community and nationhood, the inclusion of the Farsi-language version brings to bear the image of the language and its associated cultures as a position in Europe and the western world. Depending on its chosen context, the work plays out a dual sense of romance and fear associated with the “Middle East,” as well as the current plight, and perceived threat, of Iranian politics, and Iranian immigrant communities and religious minorities in Europe. To those who know its meaning, the work offers a sense of hope and wonder, and brings to mind luminary Persian writers such as Jalāl ad-Dīn Mohammad Rūmī and Hafez.

The series began in 2010, and the original Arabic edition adorns the facade of Dar Khalid at the Darat al Funun in Amman, Jordan.

Examples of the series are in museums collection such as MAXXI Roma (Arabic); public collections such as the Khalid Shoman Foundation, Amman, (Arabic); GordonSchachat collection in Johannesburg (isiZulu); and private collections in Dakar, Johannesburg, Marrakech, Paris, and Toronto.

James Webb

There Is a Light That Never Goes Out (Farsi)

2020

Coloured white neon tubes in crystal glass, diam. 8 mm

Variable dimensions

Edition of 1 + 1 AP

Edition 1/1: available

Edition 1 AP: Private Collection



James Webb

I Do Not Live in This World Alone, But in a Thousand Worlds (Dreams of Franz Kafka)

2019

[Transcription of the 30 accounts of dreams Franz Kafka notes in his Diaries](#) from 1910 until his death in 1923 written with ink on soluble paper, dissolved in water, and presented in 30 glass vials (found objects)

Variable dimensions

Unique

Exhibition:

Choose the Universe, Imane Farès, Paris, 2019 (solo)

I Do Not Live in This World Alone, But in a Thousand Worlds is presented as a series of glass vials, each containing the liquid remains of a poetic or philosophical text written on soluble paper that has been dissolved in water. Through this process the ink stains the water, and the water converts the paper to a thin, soft pulp, allowing for the initial page of writing to become an opaque, liquid solution.

The artwork, and its medium of transformation, references medicines, potions, psycho-active drugs, and poisons. Taking the form of liquid, the ideas and images contained in the text have the agency to seep, stain, and spill. The dissolved words suggests the possibility to be contained by the body, with the drinker able to possess and embody it, allowing it to influence from the inside.

These transmuted texts, or 'drowned anthologies', oppose the idea of the permanence of the written record —whether on paper or in stone— and their transitory nature allows them the potential to shift and undergo subtle changes over time, so that the artwork is in a constant state of flux.

The title of the series is a quotation from the poet John Keats's letter to George and Georgina Keats where he wrote "I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone but in a thousand worlds..." (25 October 1818).



This work is the largest and most in-depth version of the series to date. Webb has worked with the diaries of the writer Franz Kafka.

In these books detailing the years 1910 to his death in 1923, there are 30 instances where Kafka writes about a dream he had the night before. These accounts are occasionally absurd and at times disturbing, and allow the reader some clues as to the mind of their dreamer, and perhaps too what his psyche was trying to express.

Installed together the bottles seem to visually suggest a dark and magnificent city: a sprawling psycho-geographic image reflecting and abstracting the shapes around it.

The bottles were sourced in Barcelona, Basel, Cape Town, Chicago, Cleveland, Paris, Stockholm, Tallinn, and Venice. They were selected for their elegant and occasionally unusual shapes, as well as their transparency to allow the black ink to be visible.





James Webb

I Do Not Live in This World Alone, But in a Thousand Worlds (Alma's story)

2019

[The text of Alma's monologue](#) detailing her group sexual experience on the beach from the film script *Persona* (1966) by Ingmar Bergman, transcribed with ink on soluble paper and presented in a blue Gullaskruf bottle.

Distilled water, ink, paper, glass

16 x 10 cm (vial)

Unique

Exhibitions:

MERDELAMERDELAMERDELAMERDELAMERDELAMER, curated by Kendell Geers, MAM Mario Mauroner, Contemporary Art Vienna, 2019 (group)

In this key part of the film, the character Alma, a nurse employed to tend to the mute Elisabet, shares a secret about an experience she had that, although thrilling and liberating, is also unresolved for her. In this scene, Alma's story is a kind of talking cure for her; symbolic as it is her that is meant to be taking care of the sickly Elisabet.

Conceptually, one could drink this text and, through that, allow for the imagery –a description of an experience, disclosure of a secret– to be ingested like a medicine. Furthermore, the medium of water that transforms the text could also be thought of as 'drowning' the secret information or reconfiguring it into an element that could merge with, or disappear into, the world.

Gullaskruf were a highly significant Swedish glass company who closed in 1983. The colour of the bottle can be thought of as referencing the "blue hour," which has been the inspiration for many Swedish artists.



James Webb

I Do Not Live in This World Alone, But in a Thousand Worlds (A Comet is Coming)

2018

3 texts written on soluble paper, dissolved in water, and presented in 3 glass vials (found objects sourced in Cleveland, Stockholm, and Reykjavík)

Distilled water, ink, paper, glass

[Texts: an extract of the colophon of the *Bardo Thodol*, a haiku by Taigu Ryokan and a poem by Denise Levertov](#)

20 x 40 x 18 cm

Unique

Exhibitions:

- *It's not what it looks like, an audio guide to getting lost*, SPACES, Cleveland, 2018 (solo)

- *Choose the Universe*, Imane Farès, Paris, 2019 (solo)

The title's suggestion that a comet is coming connects to themes of science fiction apocalypse, divine revelation, and astronomical events beyond our control. The texts contained in the artwork are all, in many ways, antidotes to such dystopian thinking.

The sentiments found in the final line of what is often called in the West, the "Tibetan Book of the Dead" point to how, in the face of limitless change, our time is best spent doing good.

Similarly, Ryokan's haiku expresses the vast richness in the simplicity of life: what is revealed when all is taken away is a spaciousness that can allow more beauty to be noticed.

Denise Levertov's poem describes the author's communing with a mountain, a relationship which is affected as much by weather as it is by her own lapses of attention.

With these texts in mind, and with the way that they have been presented in found vials, the artwork could be thought of a course of poetic medicine: 3 ways of being with chaos.

At the gallery, 41 rue Mazarine, Paris 6e

Stories From the City

Basma Alsharif, Sammy Baloji, Ali Cherri, Alia Farid, Emeka Ogboh, Younès Rahmoun, James Webb

2 Sept. — 8 Oct. 2021

Sinzo Aanza, Le Mémorial improbable

19 Oct. — 18 Dec. 2021, opening: 19 Oct. 5-8pm

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