

# FRIEZE LONDON

Sammy Baloji

Ali Cherri

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Preview: October 13 & 14

The Regent's Park, London

Booth H14

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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), etc.

[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 degli 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  
*Mfuba's Extract.*  
*Wunderkammer (Work in Progress)*

2020

Installation of 15 drawings

Acrylic paint on paper, wooden frames

80 x 80 x 30 (each)

Unique

Exhibitions:

- *Dans le tourbillon du Tout-Monde*,  
 French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici,  
 2020

- *Sammy Baloji, K(C)ongo, Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues*, Beaux-Arts de Paris, 2021 (solo)

- *Gallerie Degli Uffizi*, 2022 (solo)

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 where Baloji was already weaving a series of narratives by combining archives and objects on the dissemination and reappropriation of knowledge.

"What is most interesting is the evolution of the status of these objects through time, initially objects of curiosity, they were later integrated into the collections of ethnographic or natural science museums and then acquired a new status. By proposing an installation of kinetic type drawings inspired by Kongo cushions, I suggest a change of view on these same objects."

—Sammy Baloji









Sammy Baloji  
*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  
Copper  
52,3 x 51,3 x 0,9 cm  
Edition of 3 + 1 AP  
Available: 1/3

#### Exhibitions

- *Dans le tourbillon du Tout-Monde*, French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici, 2020
- *Sammy Baloji, K(C)ongo, Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues*, Beaux-Arts de Paris, 2021 (solo)
- *Gallerie Degli Uffizi*, Florence, 2022 (solo)

"[The question of the historical links between Portugal, Kongo and the Vatican] has been a concern of mine since documenta 14, which I participated in 2017 in Kassel. Papal bulls allowed the Portuguese to land in Africa, first for the purpose of conducting fair trade, and then to engage in the slave trade, which led to the decline of the Kongo empire. I was interested in the 2015 exhibition *Kongo: Power and Majesty* at the Met in New York, which featured the entire Kongo art collection that was traded between the 15th and 17th centuries.

I made negatives of these pieces, which were then molded and cast in bronze, a copper alloy - a material that is, of course, emblematic of contemporary extraction, but also of the long past extraction of African natural and human resources. The resulting negatives become objects that bear the trace of these exchanges and elements of reflection to see how to 'cast' a positive image of the future.

The negative is an in-between, a step in a process of reappropriation or reconsideration. (...)"  
—Sammy Baloji



Sammy Baloji

*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

Copper

64,5 x 63 x 0,9 cm

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

Available: 1/3

Exhibitions:

- *Dans le tourbillon du Tout-Monde*, French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici, 2020
- *Sammy Baloji, K(C)ongo, Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues*, Beaux-Arts de Paris, 2021 (solo)
- *Gallerie Degli Uffizi*, Florence, 2022 (solo)





Sammy Baloji

*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

Copper

62 x 50,3 x 0,9 cm

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

Available: 2/3

Exhibitions:

- *Dans le tourbillon du Tout-Monde*, French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici, 2020
- *Sammy Baloji, K(C)ongo, Fragments of Interlaced Dialogues*, Beaux-Arts de Paris, 2021 (solo)
- *Gallerie Degli Uffizi*, Florence, 2022 (solo)

Ali Cherri's work explores the temporal shifts between ancient worlds and contemporary societies whose logics tend between the constitution of a foundation origin and the myth of unlimited progress.

His work explores the links between archaeology, historical narrative and heritage, taking into account the processes of excavation, relocation and museification of funerary remains, which are a violence to timeless cultural practices. His interest in this "science of the beginnings" and the practices and institutions that are associated with it – classifications, mythological narratives, universal museums, casts collections... – has led him to carry out speculative and poetic works which, in the words of Marcella Lista, "assume above all an erosion of certainties and engage in a visual mediation based on mismatched truths".

His various artistic gestures, starting from the observation that archaeological history manipulates artefacts of ruin and survival, invite us to reconsider our apprehension of objects and spaces and the way they mediate stories of power, identity and belonging.

Ali Cherri (B. 1976, Beirut) lives and works between Paris and Beirut. Future and recent solo exhibitions include National Gallery (London, 2022), Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval (Hauterives, 2021), *Somniculus* (Uppsala Art Museum, 2021), *Tales from the Riverbed* (Clark House, 2018), *From Fragment to Whole* (Jönköping County Museum, 2018), Programme Satellite 10: *Somniculus* (CAPC Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux et Jeu de Paume, 2017), *A Taxonomy of Fallacies: The Life of Dead Objects* (Sursock Museum, 2016).

His work has been recently exhibited at the EYE Filmmuseum (Amsterdam), macLYON, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (Valencia), the Jameel Arts Center (Dubai), Para Site (Hong Kong), MAXXI (Rome), the Centre Pompidou (Paris), as well as included in Manifesta 13 (Marseille, 2020), the Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art (Yekaterinburg, 2019), the Biennale internationale d'art contemporain de Melle (2018), the Biennale de Lyon and the Sharjah Biennial (2017).

In 2021, he is an artist in residence at the National Gallery in London. He was the Robert E. Fulton III Fellow of the Film Study Center at Harvard University in 2016-17, and was nominated for the Abraaj Group Art Prize in 2018. To complete his first feature film *The Dam*, shot in Sudan in early 2021, he received several prestigious grants, including from the Hubert Bals Fund of the International Film Festival in Rotterdam (« Bright Future » category) and the Aide aux cinémas du monde from the Centre National du Cinéma (CNC) and the Institut Français.

His work is part of numerous institutional collections: Cnap, Fonds d'art contemporain - Paris Collections, MAC VAL, Frac Nouvelle-Aquitaine MÉCA, Frac Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Les Abattoirs - Frac Occitanie Toulouse, Musée national d'art moderne/ Centre Georges Pompidou, Art Jameel (Dubai), MACBA (Barcelona), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), Sursock Museum (Beirut), Sharjah Art Foundation.

[More information on the artist >](#)



Photo © Ali Cherri

#### News:

*Hungry for Time. An Invitation to epistemic disobedience with Raqs Media Collective*, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Oct. 2021-Jan. 2022 (group)  
National Gallery, London, 2022 (solo)  
Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, 2023 (solo)

#### Selection of collections:

Musée national d'art moderne/Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris  
MAC VAL, Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine  
Frac Nouvelle Aquitaine-MÉCA, Bordeaux, France  
Les Abattoirs, Musée-Frac Occitanie Toulouse, France  
MACBA, Barcelona  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York  
Sursock Museum, Beirut  
Kadist Art Foundation, Paris

Artist in residence at the National Gallery, 2021





Ali Cherri

*Totem 1: Fire*

From the series *The Gatekeepers*

2020

Moorish style column made of oak, Spain, end of 18th / beginning of 19th century; metallic base; sheep skin; 20th century mask assigned to the Bushong ethnic group in Zaire made in light tropical wood, darkly framed, for use in initiation ceremonies, characterized by its protruding eyes and serrated pattern on the forehead; burlap hood, decorated with feathers and cowrie shells, bast beard; Krahnn mask with a fantastic beast's head, Ivory Coast, second half of the 20th century; ostrich feathers, neoprene tube, paint

320 cm high (approx.)

Unique

Commissioned by Manifesta 13 Marseille, supported by [N.A.I] Project, Ammodo and Drosos Foundation

*The Gatekeepers* draws on the tradition of erecting totem poles at the gates of certain communities. These vertical pillars can welcome, warn or simply tell the story of the people who once lived there.

Using figures inspired by the animal kingdom, the aquatic world or crossbreed beasts, *The Gatekeepers* offered a tribute to the souls of all the animals lodged in the Museum d'Histoire naturelle, only a few steps away, in the opposite wing of Palais Longchamp.

Despite the proximity of both these institutions in Marseille, they reassert the divide between nature and culture. These vertical pillars offer a substitute to the "pillars of knowledge" that these museums represent, while also echoing the colonnade balcony that connects them both.



Ali Cherri

*Totem 3: Wind*

From the series *The Gatekeepers*

2020

Moorish style column made of oak, Spain, end of 18th / beginning of 19th century; metallic base; sheep skin; 20th century mask assigned to the Bushong ethnic group in Zaire made in light tropical wood, darkly framed, for use in initiation ceremonies, characterized by its protruding eyes and serrated pattern on the forehead; burlap hood, decorated with feathers and cowrie shells, bast beard; Krahn mask with a fantastic beast's head, Ivory Coast, second half of the 20th century; ostrich feathers, neoprene tube, paint

320 cm high (approx.)

Unique

Commissioned by Manifesta 13 Marseille, supported by [N.A.I] Project, Ammodo and Drosos Foundation



Ali Cherri  
*Fish Totem*  
2020

Taxidermy porcupine fish, 20th century, pole from  
Salampasu village, anthropomorphic wooden head, metal  
rod, wood and neoprene tube  
160 x 60 x 50 cm  
Unique  
Commissioned by Manifesta 13 Marseille, supported by  
[N.A.] Project, Ammodo and Drosos Foundation





Ali Cherri  
*Grafting (F)*

2018

Terracotta statue representing a Sphinx, Nok Civilization, ca. 500 BC; head of a roe deer in taxidermy, ca. 1950

36 x 13 x 13 cm

Unique

In agricultural botany, a graft is a sprout inserted into a slit on a trunk or stem of a living plant, from which it receives sap. In medicine, it's a piece of living tissue that is transplanted surgically to replace diseased or injured tissue. Grafting is often used to create new varieties or species, and it can sometimes be made between different species, that is, human and animal.

By performing the assemblage of fragile things, a new appearance, a new life is granted. These hybrids give us a glimpse into the power of matter. By looking at the life cycles of objects and the complexity of preservation and representation of matter, the relationships and tensions between the organic and synthetic, figurative and the abstract, the found and made object are revealed.

Sculptures from Ali Cherri's *Graftings* and *Hybrids* series are now part of the following collections: Art Jameel (Dubai), Kadist (Paris), Lazaar Foundation (Tunis).





Ali Cherri

*Euphoria*

2021

Marble torso of Dionysus (Roman period, 1st and 2nd century), arm of a bronze putti statue, formerly silvered (Roman period), bone vanity, glazed stoneware

32.5 x 26 x 14.5

Unique

A certain agency animates these sculptures [grouped in the exhibition *Return of the Beast* at Imane Farès in 2021], most of which seem to have been frozen in the midst of a gesture.

Endowed with terracotta legs, *Euphoria* appears to have been petrified while in the process of walking. Its upper body bears no resemblance to a human figure: a black marble hand springs out of its torso, a miniature skull delicately resting on it. This skull is not just a dreary reminder of death; it is a part of the living that resolves the tension between life and death.





Ali Cherri

*Staring at a Thousand Splendid Suns*

2021

Pair of ocular prostheses in glass, moulding in glazed stoneware

15 x 16 x 6 cm

Unique

A ceramic face protrudes from the wall and stares ahead, its eyes heavily under-lined in black. It recalls the Eye of Horus, a symbol from Ancient Egypt that served to protect or to warn, and transpires an ominous feel that could be linked to another Latin etymology of the word monster, *monere*, meaning to prevent or caution.

A closer look reveals that two glass eyeballs are peering at you. These prostheses, used to heal the sight after an enucleation, leave us with an interpretive dilemma. Is the assemblage a protective ritual object, or is it the fatal announcer of a blinded future?



Ali Cherri

*If You Prick Us, Do We Not Bleed?*

2021

Terracotta statuette head representing a veiled woman (Hellenistic period, Cyprus), small animal head in green stone (Pre-Columbian America), glazed stoneware, wood  
23 x 24.5 x 12.5 cm

Unique

The small sculptures that are ordered on the metallic table cannot simply be considered as monsters. Like the roadkills placed side by side, some of these creatures share a platform, as if they formed a community of devalued and displaced things together. They are not only monsters by their appearance, but also by their condition of uprooted objects. Or rather, they are outcasts who gather as survivors and witnesses of catastrophes.



Ali Cherri

*Tree of Knowledge*

2021

Beads, cylindrical face in glass paste (Phoenicia, 1st millennium B.C.), coral branch, glazed stoneware

23 x 13 x 18.5 cm

Unique





Ali Cherri

*The Avian Spirit*

2021

Amulet of the Egyptian falcon god Horus in glass paste  
(Ancient Egypt, Late Period), glazed stoneware

17 x 1.5 x 8 cm

Unique

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