



Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Preußischer Kulturbesitz

CONNECTING **AFRO** FUTURES

FASHION x HAIR x DESIGN

Berlin, 23 August 2019

PRESS RELEASE

Kulturforum, Kunstgewerbemuseum

Matthäikirchplatz, 10785 Berlin, Germany

Opening hours: Tue – Fri 10 am – 6 pm, Sat + Sun 11 am – 6 pm

Connecting Afro Futures. Fashion – Hair – Design

24 August – 1 December 2019

An exhibition project of the Kunstgewerbemuseum – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, supported by the TURN fund of the Federal Cultural Foundation

For the first time Berlin's Kunstgewerbemuseum (Museum of Decorative Arts) is dedicating an exhibition to the complex and versatile world of fashion design and hairstyling of African origin. "Connecting Afro Futures. Fashion – Hair – Design" opens the museum up to decolonial fashion discourses and at the same time takes a position in the current discussion about the direction of museums and their collections.

Reclaiming the narrative

Fashion is a system with rules of its own and is regarded as a pacemaker of social change. An innovative generation of designers of African origin is currently rethinking contemporary African fashion and hairstyling beyond the (neo)colonial patterns of thought and beauty norms. The continent and its diaspora are in the process of breaking up the still existing hegemony of the Western fashion system and establishing new design hubs throughout Africa.

The dynamic engagement of the protagonists in the various fields of creative work and the rapid spread on social media are creating new design practices, identities and visual codes that create and transport a new image of Africa. It is not only about aesthetic aspects, but rather about a cultural and political engagement with a decidedly decolonial self-image.

Contemporary visions

Several fashion designers from the two fashion hubs Dakar in West Africa and Kampala in East Africa as well as an artist from Benin were invited to present in the Kunstgewerbemuseum. The invited designers and artists received a carte blanche to transform their visions of African fashion and hair into an installation. The kick-off took place in November 2018 with a one-week workshop in Berlin. After two project stations in Dakar and Kampala, the project now returns to Berlin's Kunstgewerbemuseum.

Fashion designer **Lamula Anderson** of Lamula Nassuna (London/UK, Kampala/Uganda) in her mixed media installation "The Perfect Stereotype" draws a line from historical women's bustle dresses, over stereotypical color assignments in fashion, to the Afro. The fashion label **Bull Doff** (Dakar/Senegal) developed a work based on its current collection 54Punk, which combines traditional craftsmanship and punk rock. The artist **Meschac Gaba** (Cotonou/Benin) shows wig sculptures made of braided artificial hair, inspired by Berlin's architectural icons.

Taking photographs is solely permitted for the current press coverage of the exhibition/event. For any further use of photos you are required to clarify issues of copyright and usage rights independently in advance. You are responsible for obtaining further rights (e.g. copyrights for works of art portrayed, personal rights etc.).

GENERALDIREKTION
PRESSE – KOMMUNIKATION – SPONSORING

Stauffenbergstraße 41
10785 Berlin

MECHTILD KRONENBERG
HEAD OF PRESS, COMMUNICATION,
SPONSORSHIP

MARKUS FARR
PRESS OFFICER

Tel: +49 30 266 42 3402
Mobile: +49 151 527 53 886

presse@smb.spk-berlin.de
www.smb.museum/presse

Supported by the TURN fund of the:





CONNECTING **AFRO** FUTURES

FASHION x HAIR x DESIGN

In her work "Signs of the Now", fashion designer **José Hendo** (London/UK, Kampala/Uganda) uses the traditional Ugandan material barkcloth to address questions about sustainability. Multimedia artist **Njola Impressions** (Kampala/Uganda) works with recycled industrial waste. Her practice is community-oriented: with people, for people; not only for galleries and catwalks, but also for the streets. In her installation "Shameless Afro Hair", **Adama Paris** (Dakar/Senegal), fashion designer and founder of Dakar Fashion Week and Black Fashion Week, questions beauty ideals and norms for hair and fashion in the African context.

The artist and curator **Ken Aïcha Sy** (Dakar/Senegal) of Wakh'Art presents the work "Baadaye" (Swahili for Future) – a photographic and videographic survey of Afrofuturist visions for the African continent. Fashion label **Tondo Clothing** (Kampala/Uganda) brings its VOUAFF to Berlin – visions of urban African future fashion. VOUAFF closes the gap between traditional African fashion and current trends in the urban scene. The exhibition is complemented by works of illustrator **Diana Ejaita** (Italy/Nigeria – Berlin/Germany) as well as fashion and music videos and photographs of hair and fashion in an African context.

"Connecting Afro Futures. Fashion – Hair – Design" is curated by **Claudia Banz** (Kunstgewerbemuseum – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), **Cornelia Lund** (fluctuating images), and **Beatrace Angut Oola** (Fashion Africa Now).

Project partners: Goethe Institute Kampala, 32° East / Ugandan Arts Trust (Kampala), Wakh'Art (Dakar), fluctuating images (Berlin), and Fashion Africa Now (Hamburg).

The exhibition will be accompanied by a **magalog**, published at Kerber Verlag and designed by Leni Charles (Vienna/Austria) and Maximilian Mauracher (Berlin). In addition to extensive visual material and fashion sections, the magalog offers essays, statements and interviews by, among others, Claudia Banz, Sunny Dolat, Denenge Duyst-Akpem, Natasha A. Kelly, Cornelia Lund, Serubiri Moses, Mwangi Hutter, Simon Njami, Mazzi Odu, Beatrace Angut Oola, and Jacqueline Shaw on fashion and hair in an African context.

An accompanying program with artistic interventions, performances, poetry, workshops and artist talks rounds off the project. On **Sunday, 25 August 2019**, a **discussion and exhibition tour** with Lamula Anderson, Bull Doff, José Hendo, Njola, Adama Paris, Ken Aïcha Sy, Tondo, Diana Ejaita and Emo Rugene (moderator) will take place from 2 pm on.

GENERALDIREKTION
PRESSE – KOMMUNIKATION – SPONSORING

Stauffenbergstraße 41
10785 Berlin

MECHTILD KRONENBERG
HEAD OF PRESS, COMMUNICATION,
SPONSORSHIP

MARKUS FARR
PRESS OFFICER

Tel: +49 30 266 42 3402
Mobile: +49 151 527 53 886

presse@smb.spk-berlin.de
www.smb.museum/presse

Supported by the TURN fund of the:

