

M E N N O U R

GEORGES ADÉAGBO

Georges Adéagbo (1942 in Benin, then Dahomey) is a conceptual artist who has been developing his own style of using found objects since the early 1970s in Cotonou, Benin. When out on walks he gathers items that have been lost or thrown away, and incorporates them into his installations. Adéagbo enriches his palette with acquired objects and works he has commissioned himself – sculptures, masks, pictures and text panels. As a result, episodes from his personal past interface with unusual interpretations of so-called objective historical scholarship, mainstream pop culture is juxtaposed with canonized high culture, and the banal confronts the profound in his works. Adéagbo avoids overly obvious interpretations of his work: ambiguity and entrapment are integral to his strategy of provocation.

The artist also deliberately avoids those elements and facets expected of "African" artists – in some cases even presenting these expectations in a satirical light. Adéagbo's works key into the process of coming to terms with the colonial era, explore the imperialistic claims of Western powers in mainland Africa, and pose questions about traces of colonialism still visible in European cities. From his perspective as an African ethnologist, Adéagbo studies the customs of each place at which he exhibits, and casts these as glaring clichés– a parallel to the way his own culture is often misrepresented.

Georges Adéagbo has exhibited his work throughout the whole world, notably among the exhibition spaces in the Serpentine Gallery in London, MoMA PSI in New York, Villa Medici in Rome, Toyota City Museum (Japan), Bozar in Brussels, Museum Ludwig in Cologne, Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, Philadelphia Museum of Art, MAK Vienna, MUSAC in León, Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Palais des Nations-Unis in Genève, Aby Warburg Haus in Hamburg, KINDL in Berlin, Kunsthalle in Bonn, Oslo National Museum, Macro in Rome, Kiasma Contemporary art museum in Helsinki, Palais de Tokyo and Musée d'art moderne de Paris, Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice, Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, Kunsthalle in Zurich, Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in Washington DC and Hamburger Kunsthalle.

His work is kept in prestigious collections such as : Centre Pompidou in Paris, Smithsonian Museum of African Art in Washington DC, Galerie Nationale du Bénin, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Museum Ludwig in Cologne, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Toyota City Museum, KIASMA Helsinki and Moderna Museet in Stockholm.