



Portrait of Chéri Cherin

## Chéri Cherin

## Biography

Born 1955, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.  
Lives and works in Kinshasa.

In the heart of Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), five times larger than France, possesses incomparable natural human and cultural riches. More than 400 ethnic groups speaking as many languages have flooded into Kinshasa in one exodus after another. A megalopolis with more than 10 million inhabitants, Kinshasa exemplifies the famous article 15 of the Constitution, which encourages people to take themselves in hand. Often this is done with talent, or even with genius. And this popular genius is what makes "Kin-the Beautiful" a stunning city, by day and by night.

Since the early 1970s, the city has witnessed a creative explosion in every artistic realm. The group "Viva la Musica", led by the superstar Papa Wemba, has enjoyed a huge popular success. It was a member of this group, Kester Emeneya, who invented the concept of the SAPE, the "Society of Atmosphere-Creators and Elegant Personalities". In this Kinshasa institution, Chéri Chérin is one of the most prestigious figures.

Within this effervescent context, the 1978 exhibition Art Everywhere, brought attention to a whole group of young "people's" artists, co-called because their representational, narrative painting is rooted in an addressed to the people at large. Samba, Moké, Bodo, and Chéri Chérin, the chief innovators of the group, have achieved success and have been embraced by all Kinshasa.

The artists in the "gang" - it is neither a school nor a movement - work in their separate studios on subjects inspired by social and political developments. They are differentiated as much by choice of subjects by style by the way they treat pictorial space, and by their use of colour. Chéri Chérin whose name is an acronym for "Créateur Hors (série) Expressionniste Remarquable Inébranable Unique en son genre" (« Unclassifiable Remarkable Expressionist Creator Unequalled and Unique in this field »), gives equal prominence to subject, form, representation, intelligibility, and decorative qualities. In this way he draws the spectator into his own interrogations, imprecisions, uncertainties, and unfinished works. He denounces a world in which opportunism and comedy threaten to win out over the true values for which Chéri Chérin means to fight.

"And if you, in the West, say that painting is finished, I will not give in to the facility of video as it is seen everywhere today, even in the Dakar biennale. I will keep on painting and you will see what you will see".

## GROUP SHOWS

2019

*Congo Stars*, Kunsthalle Tübingen, Germany (curators: Sammy Baloji, Bambi Ceuppens, Fiston Mwanza Mujila, Günther Holler-Schuster, Barbara Steiner)

2017

*Kinshasa, par Chéri Chérin et Moke fils*, Institut français, Beyrouth, Lebanon

2016

*Essentiel Paysage*, Al Maaden Art Gallery, Centre d'Art contemporain Africain, Marrakech, Morocco

*Congo Art Works. Popular Painting*, Bozar, Brussels, Belgium (curators: Bambi Ceuppens, Sammy Baloji)

2015

*Beauté Congo - Congo Kitoko : 1926 - 2015*, Fondation Cartier pour l'Art contemporain (curator: André Magnin)

2013

*Peintres reporters de l'urbanité, à Kinshasa*, Latitude 21, Dijon, France

2011

*Riad Al Maaden, Magnin-A*, Marrakech, Morocco

*JapanCongo, Double regard de Carsten Höller sur la collection de Jean Pigozzi*, Le Magasin, Grenoble, France (curator: Yves Aupetitallot)

*Group Show with Chéri Samba, Billie Zangewa*, Galerie Hussenot & Magnin-A, Paris, France

2010

*Kinshasa Pop, group show with Pierre Bodo, Moke, Chéri Samba*, Galerie Pangée, Montréal, Canada

*African Stories*, Magnin-A, Ancienne Banque du Maroc, Marrakech, Morocco (curator: André Magnin)

2009/2010

*Africa : Una nuova storia, Complesso del Vittoriano*, Roma, Italy (curator: André Magnin)

2009

*Against Exclusion*, 3rd Moscow Biennial, The Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, Russia

2007/2008

*Why Africa ? La collezione Pigozzi*, Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, Torino, Italy (curator: André Magnin)

"Popular Painting" from Kinshasa, Tate Modern, (Room 10), London, UK

2006/2007

*100% Africa*, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain (curator: André Magnin)

2005

*15 ans de transition*, Hôtel Memling , Kinshasa, DRC

*Peinture populaire congolaise*, Musée d'art haïtien, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

2004/2007

*Africa Remix* (curator: Simon Njami)

Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf, Germany; Hayward Gallery, London, UK Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japon; Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2004

*Mémoires de Lubumbashi*, Musée national, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo  
Art Korner Gallery, The Hague , Hetherlands

2003

*Kin Moto Na Bruxelles*, Hôtel de Ville, Brussels, Belgium

2001

*La Cité dans la peinture populaire*, Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles, Kinshasa, DRC

2000

*An/Sichten. Malerei aus dem Kongo*, Museum für Völkerkunde, Vienna, Austria

1999

*Quatre peintres congolais*, Centre culturel Gembloux, Gembloux, Belgium

## EXPOSITIONS PERSONNELLES

2003

*Chéri Chérin*, Dommenhoff, Neerpelt, Belgium

2002

*Chéri Chérin*, Galerie Marc Dengis, Brussels, Belgium

1993

*Chéri Chérin*, Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles, Kinshasa, DRC

1991

*Chéri Chérin*, Centre culturel français, Kinshasa, DRC