



Bodys Isek Kingelez, Africanish, 07-09-1993, © Kleinefenn, courtesy galerie Magnin-A, Paris

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## Bodys Isek Kingelez

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## Biography

Born 1948, Kimbembele Ihunga, Democratic Republic of Congo

Died 2015, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

In the hands of Bodys Isek Kingelez, the African metropolis becomes an urban utopia. After graduating from secondary school, Kingelez made Kinshasa his home in 1970. Over the next seven years, he studied part time, supporting himself through teaching. During these years, Kinshasa had become a sprawling, chaotic, anarchic city that was falling apart. Kingelez, highly aware of this, dedicated himself aesthetically, politically, and poetically to questioning the human condition, and after 1977, he began to experiment with assembling fantastic structures that offered a redemptive vision for the city. Since 1985, Kingelez has entirely concentrated on what he calls "Architectural Modelism". For Kingelez, this project is one of regeneration: "Art is superior knowledge, a vehicle for individual renewal in improving the general well-being", he stated.

He has created hundreds of models from found materials in which paper, cardboard, and plastic are used to construct the present, the future, and the hopes of an African regeneration. After 1992, he started imagining entire cities. These colossal works are made up of buildings -some playful, some imposing, some utterly fantastic- that are incorporated into a carefully conceived urban grid. Avenues, parks, waterways, stadiums, and monuments are also part of Kingelez's meticulous vision. Together these elements fulfill all the functions of an ideal metropolis that the artist would like to see built. His first city was called Kimbembele Ihunga, to honour his native village, his dead father and his mother, who still lives there.

About the works *Ville Fantôme* (1995), *Kinshasa: Project for the Third Millennium* (1997), *The City of the Future* (2000), he noted: "I wanted my art to serve the community that is being reborn to create a new world, because the pleasures of our earthly world depend on the people who live in it. I created these cities so there would be lasting peace, justice and universal freedom. They will function like small secular states with their own political structure, and will not need policemen or an army."

EXPOSITIONS INDIVIDUELLES (Sélection)

2018

*Bodys Isek Kingelez: City Dreams*, MoMA, New York, USA (curateur: Sarah Suzuki)

2005

*Perspectives 145 : Bodys Isek Kingelez, Nina and Michael Zilkha Gallery*, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, USA (curateur: André Magnin)

1996

*D'autres Ajouts d'Eté*, Bodys Isek Kingelez, MAMCO Contemporary and Modern Art Museum, Genève, Suisse

1995

Bodys Isek Kingelez, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, France

1992

*Bodys Isek Kingelez*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Allemagne

EXPOSITIONS COLLECTIVES (Sélection)

2015-2019

*Making Africa, A Continent of Contemporary Design, Exposition itinérante* (curateurs: Amélie Klein, Okwui Enwezor)

Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Allemagne ; Bilbao, Bilbao, Espagne ; CCCB Barcelona, Barcelona, Espagne ; Kunsthal Rotterdam, Rotterdam, Pays-Bas ; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgie ; Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, Nouveau-Mexique ; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, USA

2017

*Art/Afrique : le nouvel atelier \_ Les Initiés : sélection d'oeuvres (1989-2009) de la collection d'art contemporain africain Pigozzi*, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France (curateurs: Suzanne Pagé, Angéline Scherf, Ludovic Delalande, conseiller scientifique: André Magnin)

2015/2016

*Beauté Congo - 1926-2015 - Congo Kitoko*, Fondation Cartier, Paris, France (curateur: André Magnin)

2014

*Luminós/C/ity. Ordinary Joy: From the Pigozzi Contemporary African Art Collection*, Ethelbert Cooper Gallery of African & African American Art, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA (curateurs: David Adjaye, Mariane Ibrahim-Lenhardt)

*Ici l'Afrique / Here Africa*, Château de Penthes, Genève, Suisse (curateur: Adelina von Fürtsenberg)

## MAGNIN-A

2012

Postmodernism, Victoria and Albert Museum, Londres, Angleterre

2010

*Dreamlands*, Pompidou Center, Paris "Ville Fantôme" (curateur: Quentin Bajac)

2007/2008

*Why Africa?*, Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, Turin, Italie (curateur: André Magnin)

2006/2007

*100% Africa*, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Espagne (curateur: André Magnin)

2005

*Arts of Africa*, Grimaldi Forum, Monaco, France (curateur: André Magnin)

African Art Now : Masterpieces from the Jean Pigozzi Collection, Museum of Fine Art Houston, Houston, Etats-Unis (curateur: André Magnin)

2004

Africa Remix, Art contemporain d'un continent, exposition itinérante (curateur: Simon Njami)  
*Museum Kunst Palast*, Düsseldorf, Allemagne ; Hayward Gallery, Londres, Angleterre ; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France ; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japon

1999

*1 Monde Réel*, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, France

1998

Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago. Chicago, Etats-Unis

1997

*Projects 59 : Architecture as Metaphor*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Etats-Unis

1993

*Home and the World Architectural Sculpture by two African Artists*, The Museum for African Art, New York, Etats-Unis

1991-1992

*Africa Hoy-Africa Now*

Moderno Art Center, Las Palmas, Ile des grandes Canaries, Espagne; Groningen Museum, Pays-Bas; Contemporary Art Center, Mexico, Mexique

1989

*Magiciens de la Terre*, Georges Pompidou Center, La Grande Halle de la Villette, Paris, France (curateurs: Jean-Hubert Martin, André Magnin)

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