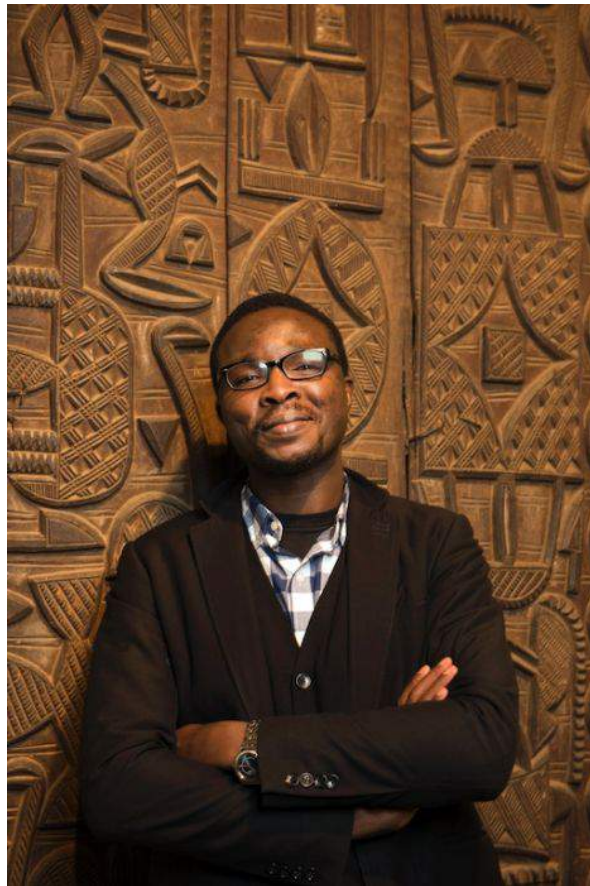


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Meet 12 Contemporary African Artists Making Waves in the Art World

By Rain Embuscado



Curator Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi, Photo: Courtesy of metropolism.com

African art's irresistible appeal has finally reached New York City.

Nigerian-born artist and scholar Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi has curated a group exhibition at Richard Taittinger Gallery in the Lower East Side. The show, aptly titled "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" after the 1967 American comedy-drama film of the same name, is comprised of 12 contemporary African artists evenly split between six men and six women.

Their points of origin, however, are anything but uniform. This curatorial decision is

designed to "problematize the burden of Africanness," which Nzewi describes in the show's catalog as the "cultural aesthetics which continue to inform the reception of contemporary art by African artists in the Western and international imagination."

In a statement to artnet News, Nzewi said that interest in African artists "has been rising steadily in the international mainstream." Across the board, auction houses, galleries and arts institutions-at-large have been scrambling to capitalize on collectors' swelling interest in African and African diasporic art. Notably, Art Basel announced an entire serialized program dedicated to discussions about the continent's market.

"Unfortunately," Nzewi added, "this is hardly the situation in New York." He continued, "With this exhibition, the New York art scene is being pushed out of its comfort zone, and in a sense, forced to think more broadly, and to confront its system of assigning value, which locates the work of artists from Africa at the bottom of the value chain."

In his quest, Nzewi cast a wide net in his search for contemporary artists whose experiences of Africa are as diverse as they are intimate.

Here are the 12 artists invited to sit at the table:

1. Halida Boughriet



Halida Boughriet, *Diner des anonymes* from the series *Pandora* (2014).

2. Gopal Dagnogo



Gopal Dagnogo, End of an Era N°4 (2014).

3. Sam Hopkins



Sam Hopkins, Logos of Non Profit Organizations working in Kenya (some of which are imaginary) (detail) (2010 – ongoing).

4. Onyeka Ibe



Onyeka Ibe, Double Walls (2015).

5. Amina Menia



Amina Menia, Sidi Maarouf from the series Chrysanthèmes (2009 – Present).

6. Chika Modum



Chika Modum, *The Tie of Allegiance* (2015).

7. Aida Muluneh



Aida Muluneh, *The Wolf You Feed 1* (2014).

8. Chike Obeagu



Chike Obeagu, *Private Viewing* (2015).

9. Amalia Ramanankirahina



Amalia Ramanankirahina, *PH R* from the series *Portraits de Famille* (Family Portraits), (2013)

10. Ephrem Solomon



Ephrem Solomon, Untitled from the series Forbidden Fruit (2014).

11. Uche Uzorka



Uche Uzorka, Also Known as No Place Like Home (Tear and Wear) (2015).

12. Beatrice Wanjiku



Beatrice Wanjiku, *The Sentiment of the Flesh IV* (2015).

The group exhibition *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* runs through August 22, 2015 at the Richard Taittinger Gallery.