

TRUE AFRICA

May 6, 2016

5 must-see booths at 1:54 African art fair in NYC



1:54 is the only contemporary African art fair of its kind. And it's now in New York for the second year running. Ahead of this edition opening to the public, here are some highlights.

1. Mariane Ibrahim Gallery

Mariane Ibrahim returns to 1:54 this year with a varied roster of artists. Clay Apenouvon uses cardboard and plastic to explore the theme of material value and environmentalism. The work of Fabrice Monteiro, a fashion photographer and photojournalist, explores the anthropology of Africa, and in particular slavery. Zohra Opoku's printed photography is draped on fabric in the middle of the booth.



And in the midst of these artworks, you'll find a chair by furniture designer Stephen Burks, who also designed the VIP lounge at the fair.



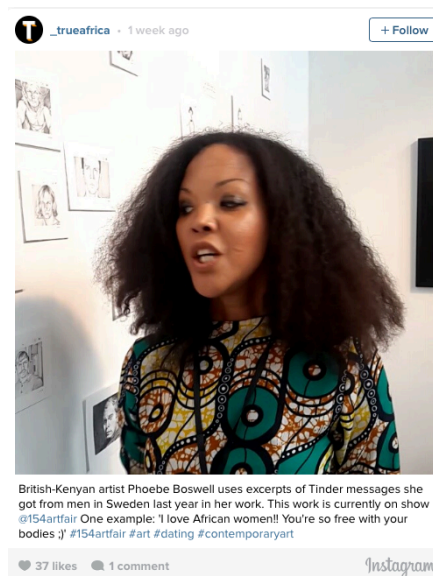
2. Jack Bell Gallery

Jack Bell Gallery has a particularly varied mediums of work on display: Hamidou Maiga's 1960s black-and-white photos sit next to Boris Nzebo's contemporary, bold paintings and Gonalo Mabunda's 3D sculptures.



3. TAFETA

TAFETA brings a range of work that is staunchly in the 21st century. Phoebe Boswell explores fetishisation in her work *Stranger in the Village* with her illustrations of men found on Tinder and their, at times, bizarre messages – such as ‘you are fair-skinned and sort of beautiful’. I’m sure she was flattered.



As well as Boswell's work is on display next to Adeniyi 'Niyi' Olagunju's sliced wooden sculptures.

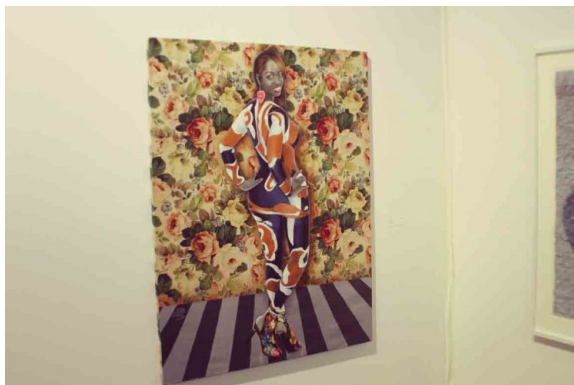


4. Magnin-A

With a larger space and more work than most of the galleries, Magnin-A is a favourite. There's a familiar breadth of work – from Dakar artist Omar Victor Diop to Congolese painter JP Mika.



Fashion is a key theme that ties the works together from Mika's bashful characters to Vincent Michea's stylish muses.



5. Richard Taittinger Gallery

Walking through the space for Richard Taittinger Gallery, the artwork of Frances Goodman will likely stand out. Even from a distance you will surely notice the image of Nelson Mandela displayed on a giant currency note, and large sculptures which resemble flowers protruding from the wall.



As you stop for a closer view, you then realise these seemingly ordinary artworks are far from normal: the Mandela bills are made of tightly-sewn sequins and the large flowers are equally deceptive – they are made of (likely hundreds) of painted acrylic nails. Goodman especially works with materials associated with women and beauty, and feminism and sexuality. Her artworks at 1:54 are worth a close look.

