



Culture Inspirations

Kubatana – when African art illuminates Norway

July 21, 2019 Christelle Kamanan African artists, Art, contemporary art, exhibition

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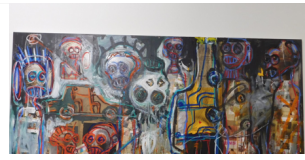
Kubatana or friendliness in Shona language (Zimbabwe). This exhibition highlights the work of 33 African artists in a warm and aesthetic way. All works are visible until 21 September 2019 at the *Kunstlaborium in Vestfossen*, Norway.



Yassine Balbzioui – photo C.K.



Gonçalo Mabunda – photo C.K.



Aboudia – photo C.K.



Serge Attukwei Clottey – photo C.K.

Kubatana, showcase of African contemporary art

English speaking Africa

African contemporary art; what does it look like? The monumental installation of the Ghanaian artist *Serge Attukwei Clottey* announces the color, even before entering the Kunstlaboratorium. Starting from his origins, his family history related to the sea and the migration, he made a work of several meters. Like a marine net, the installation covers a large part of the front façade of the building. All these small tiles, made from water can, are in the image of contemporary African art: colorful, flamboyant and imposing.

Francophone Africa & Arabic

There is also the **imposing 10-meter mural** by **Yassine Balbzioui** (Morocco). You feel very small near such an achievement; as against the immensity of the possibilities of art. **Aboudia** (Ivory Coast) surprises and questions with a painting of human relations in our time. Several stories are superimposed. Why does his work attract attention? No spoiler, the answer is Vestfossen!

Portuguese-speaking Africa

The Mozambican artist *Gonçalo Mabunda* is part of the current movement of upcycling by transforming old weapons. They are now masks, sculptures and other objects of design. We can see the artist's proposal for the future of his country, marked by many years of war. How to "upcycle" - recycle and create - with the "waste" left by the war?

In Kubatana, artists from 18 African states offer amplified, ultra-modern and even futuristic visions of the contemporary world. Make no mistake, they do not live in their bubble! These artists, most of whom live in Africa, roam the world and exchange with their peers. They are perfect observers of the news, with African points of view.



artiste : *Dawit Abebe* – credits photo : C. Kamanan

One of the works that will speak to everyone with ease is that of Dawit Abebe, originally from Ethiopia.

You have certainly recognized some of the personalities. An allegory of the “new world order” or a representation of the world as shown on the internet? Interesting proposal from the country that houses the headquarters of the African Union ...

There is an echo to *Leviathan's* work of the Italian street artist Blu, displayed on a wall in Kreuzberg, Berlin (Germany).

Maybe all these parallels seem to be far-fetched: it's all the richness of art – the freedom of interpretation and expression. This is also one of the reasons why this painting will arouse the curiosity of a young audience or novice visitors.

This is one of the great successes of Kubatana: attract a varied public, local as international and not to leave indifferent.

African art honored

Reading this title now, does not cause surprise or even questioning. For about ten years, the arts and artists of the African continent are actively present at the international level. Moreover, in recent years there has been an explosion of cultural events dedicated to Africa in the West. In this, Kubatana does not escape the trend. Except that the exhibition, organized as an art fair, takes place in Scandinavia, in Norway precisely. We do not expect it. It also contributes to the beauty of the initiative. The organizers and the artists did not stay in their comfort zone.

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My main impulse in bringing these artists together has been to showcase the varied interests and incredible expressions of art that are happening throughout Africa.”



Kristin Hjellegjerde, organizer of Kubatana – credits photo : C. Kamanan

Kristin Hjellegjerde is at the origin of this project out of the ordinary. While exploring the African continent, Kristin observes, meets and exchanges with talents. It is also the richness of this artistic entrepreneur's career, which is presented in Kubatana. For this quality project, she received the support of *Africa First Collection*. A third of the exhibited works come from their collections. Kristin Hjellegjerde, herself of Norwegian origin, is the founder and director of the eponymous gallery. We find it London and Berlin. Exhibitions of African artists are regularly organized.

Vestfossen, host city of Kubatana

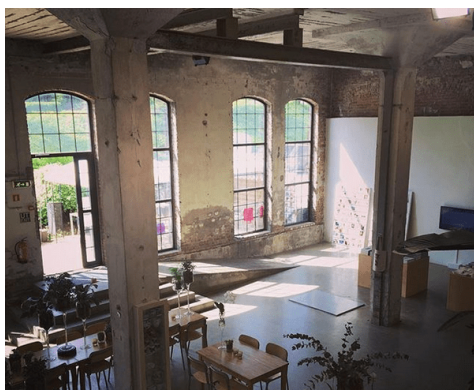
The city is about 45 minutes by train from Oslo and has a little less than 3000 inhabitants. By going there, it is not possible to remain indifferent to the natural beauty of the landscape and the feeling of peace that accompanies it. It is an ideal destination for adventurers, the curious, the travelers, the nature lovers, the people in search ... the lovers of arts.



Vestfossen - @godteglasset



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The Kunstlaborium de Vestfossen is a laboratory dedicated to contemporary art. This is how Lars-Andreas T. Kristiansen presents this artistic center. The space opened in 2003, has already hosted 32 exhibitions and several artists in residence.

In addition to the desire to visit Kubatana, Norway offers sunny summers and beautiful temperatures. This is the perfect time to go there.

Article by Christelle Kamanan, translated from French to English by Gova-Media



Author: Christelle Kamanan

Travel addicted willing to explore the world as much as I can. As a native from Africa, I want to tell the world about all the diversity of its cultures and art.