

## **Once Upon a Time in West Africa**

Curated by Alessandro Romanini

**Saturday June 4th, h 6pm**

4.06. - 10.07.2022

**Works by: Aboudia, Bernard Ajarb Ategwa, Nu Barreto, Armand Boua, Frédéric Bruly Bouabré, Seni Awa Camara, Laetitia Ky, Saint Etienne Yeanzi**

In this new edition of the Collectors Night in Pietransata Giovanni Bonelli Gallery renews its collaboration with Lis10 Gallery and The Project Space. Three galleries based in the ex-Marmi building (via Nazario Sauro 56-52), which will present for the white night the collective show "Once upon a time in West Africa", curated by Alessandro Romanini. The leading personalities of the show are eight African Artists - some of which have been selected to represent their country for this 2022 edition of the Venice Biennial.

West Africa is a wide and articulated region of the ancient continent, between the Atlantic Ocean to the south and the Sahara to the north, horizontally marked by a preponderant nature and a varied territory; a northern belt consisting of desert, a southern area with thickets and forests and a central semi-desert part called Sahel. At the heart of large migrations, it has become in recent years a jumble of cultures and creativity that have spread throughout the entire globe.

The artists gathered in this exhibition perfectly represent with their languages - pictorial, sculptural and photographic - this mix of cultures and iconography, able to harmoniously blend the millennial traditions with the latest visual forms of the mainstream, south of the world and west, ritual and myth. Among the group of the selected artists exhibiting at Venice Biennale we can mention the "father of Ivorian Art" Frédéric Bruly Bouabré; Aboudia - young artist based between Abidjan, New York and Paris- who broke auction records over the last two years in the main international auction houses-; ), the poet of street life Armand Boua; Saint Etienne Yeanzi: painter, philosopher and sociologist; and the very young Laetitia Ky (aged 25), who conquered the lagoon event as "most fresh and innovative expression", thanks to her photographs of "hair sculptures".

On stage in Pietrasanta the Senegalese Seni Awa Camara: "godmother" of African art, already present with her terracotta sculptures - like Bouabré - in the historic exhibition "Magiciens de la terre" hosted at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1989, that brought for the first time contemporary African art in Europe. Bernard Ajarb, from Cameroon, creates paintings that focus on the street cultures of the capital - Yaoundé- with their ethnic and cultural melting pot.

From Guinea Bissau, Nu Barreto was able to establish himself on the international scene, his paintings, with their strong component of militant human rights vindication, have been exhibited in the main international museum events.

"The exhibition - explains the curator Alessandro Romanini - represents an opportunity to see gathered together contemporary African artists who have been able to assimilate and re-elaborate the various contemporary trends in an expressive form, encouraging viewers to reflect, from those more related to the news such as Black Lives Matter , the Cancel Culture and the war conflicts, up to those of a historical and socio-political nature such as colonialism, the diaspora and the inevitable ethnocultural synthesis imposed by globalization " encouraging the viewers to reflect deeply on our contemporary world.

**Opening Hours: from Tuesday to Sunday 11-13; 18-24**

**INFO:**

Galleria Giovanni Bonelli and Lis10 Gallery, Pietrasanta, Via Nazario Sauro 56

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