

# EVERARD READ

## **THONTON KABEYA**

(b. 1983 Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo)

Thonton Kabeya captures the essence of African cosmopolitanism through his constructions of contemporary urban life in paint and sculpted canvas. Having travelled across the African continent extensively, living and working as an artist between Senegal, Paris and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kabeya has been settled in Johannesburg since 2014. Kabeya challenges the medium of paint and canvas, pursuing new and experimental ways to create texture, depth and balance of colour. He glues layers of canvas together which he then cuts, carves and sculpts before painting. The works are finished with transfers of ink from newspaper, carefully positioned to indicate the folds of moving fabric, and the application of a deep brown walnut powder (an old method of staining wooden furniture) to render skin, as well as balance the tonality of the work.

Inspired by Congolese architecture and design, as well as its Rumba dance, Kabeya's practice seeks balance in composition, line and colour. In his three-dimensional work, he creates portraits of people and cities alike: bustling street scenes and tender exchanges between individuals. His recent works have focused on the Rumba, inspired by the culture around this phenomenon. Rumba music and dance originated primarily in Congo, then developed further in Cuba and Colombia, Cuba having an important historical link to Africa through the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The Rumba gained enormous popularity in the rest of the world after Cuban Independence in 1960; it was recently added to UNESCO's intangible heritage list.

## **SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 2025 Missile Blues, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa  
Introspect II, UNISA Gallery, Pretoria, SA
- 2023 FNB Art Joburg, with Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Introspect, Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa  
A Sunny Day, Everard Read Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2022 Pasada, Everard Read Johannesburg, South Africa  
La Rumba Rosa 2, Bonne Espérance Gallery, Paris, France  
Galerie Bilembo, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2021 La Rumba Rosa, One Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2019 Galerie Bilembo, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2018 ODA Gallery, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2017 ODA Gallery, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2015 Cry Smile Dream, S Art Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2014 New Voices, Lizamore and Associates Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2010 Médiathèque Woluwe, st Pierre, Bruxelles, Belgium  
Galerie dialogue, National Museum of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2009 Métamorphose, Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris, France  
Métamorphose, Arte kalao galeria, Bilbao, Spain

## **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 2026 ArtParis, with Everard Read, Paris, France
- 2025 EXPO CHICAGO, with Everard Read, Chicago, USA  
Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa  
10 Years | Summer Show, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2024 Inner Sanctum, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa

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- Winter Collection, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa  
Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa  
Dakar Biennale, Dakar, Senegal  
EXPO CHICAGO, with Everard Read, Chicago, USA
- 2023 Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa  
The Other's Warmth, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa  
110 Year Anniversary, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2022 Spring, group show, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa  
UCCLE / Brussels, Belgium  
Winter, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2021 A Cloud, Gallery 2, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Salon Globalisto, Bonne Esperance Gallery, Paris, France  
Work on Paper, Art Voice Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Turbine Art Fair, with One Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2020 Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with Eclectica Contemporary, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2018 Turbine Art Fair, with One Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2017 The Gravity of Things, Museum of Contemporary Art of the Basque Country, Alava, Spain
- 2015 FNB Joburg Art Fair, with Bag Factory, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2012 Institut Francais of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2011 International Contemporary Art Fair, Casablanca, Morocco
- 2008 Vision for Africa, Archelle, Germany  
Midi Libre, Mas de grille, Montpellier, France  
Rencontres Picha Biennale De Lubumbashi, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo  
Dakar Biennale (Off Biennale), Gallery LS Senghor, Dakar, Senegal
- 2007 Yambi, Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art (MAMAC), Liège, Belgium  
Burogest, Business Centre, Namur, Belgium  
French Institute, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2006 Memling Hotel, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo  
Belgium Consulate, Democratic Republic of Congo  
National Museum of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2005 French Institute of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo  
National Museum of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo

## RESIDENCIES & WORKSHOPS

- 2024 Noldor Artist Residency, Accra, Ghana
- 2022 Everard Read at Leeu Estates, Franschhoek, South Africa  
Texaf Bilembo, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2019 Texaf Bilembo, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2014 Thupelo, Prince Albert, South Africa
- 2013 Institut Francais of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2010 Galerie d'art contemporain Workshop, Musée de Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2009 Cité internationale universitaire de Paris, France
- 2008 Village des arts, Sénégal
- 2006 The fine art of Kinshasa Workshop, Centre Wallonie Bruxelles, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2003 Ecole de beaux arts, Workshop, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo

## COLLECTIONS

University of South Africa Art Collection, Pretoria  
Artium Basque Museum Center of Contemporary Art of Vitoria-Gasteiz, Alava, Spain  
George Forest Art Collection, Lubumbashi

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Sanaa Art Collection, Johannesburg  
Erick Vellard Art Collection, Paris

## **AWARDS**

2024 Ampersand Fellowship Award (Residency), New York, USA  
2006 UNIADS Award  
Belgium Council Award