

# NOW LOOK HERE

## THE AFRICAN ART OF APPEARANCE

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From the 25th of January 2020 the exhibition [NOW LOOK HERE – The African Art of Appearance](#) in Amsterdam North will present the work of eighteen African artists who use outward appearances to tell a deeply rooted story. They upend perceptions of Africa through the use of irony, beauty and style.

### *Beyond the image*

This group exhibition showcases the work of eighteen African artists whose work at first glance stands out for its attention to outward appearance: everything is colourful, radiant, smooth, and aesthetic. On closer inspection, the seductive surface proves to be a lure that draws visitors into a deeper story, in which perspectives are reversed: white becomes black, stigma becomes beauty, a skivvy turns out to be a high priestess, and apparent footnotes to history are revealed as prominent figures.

### *Taking charge*

The works address, directly or indirectly, the historical abuses and current troubles that dominate the media image of Africa. But the artists take charge of this image, and in doing so, set a completely different tone. What connects the photos, videos and performances in NOW LOOK HERE is a superior game of clichés and prejudices, in which humour, beauty and optimism challenge daily reality.

### *Style as a counterforce*

NOW LOOK HERE unites these art works under the thematic heading ‘The African Art of Appearance’. The exhibition is an outtake of the [N’GOLÁ biennial](#) on the African islands of São Tomé & Príncipe held earlier this year, from the 26<sup>th</sup> of July until the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2019, curated by [Renny Ramakers](#). During her research she was struck by the extent to which fashion, style and beauty can be manifestations of dignity, identity and self-realisation on the African continent. This paradox of apparent superficiality that actually functions as a serious counterforce, developed into an important theme for the exhibition. The end result in São Tomé & Príncipe emphasised this coherence. It provoked a dialogue between the artworks as much as between the artists –who were almost all present at the opening—that merits continuation.

### *Now, Look, Here*

All the artists participating in NOW LOOK HERE have therefore been invited to the Netherlands to participate in the public programme at the opening on 24 January 2020. The exhibition will be held in a former warehouse on the Asterweg, the new hotspot in Amsterdam Noord. The works in NOW LOOK HERE invite the public to look at Africa with fresh eyes: artists there have been working on a different narrative about the continent for quite some time: look, here, now.

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### *Participating artists*

This group exhibition includes works by Tabi Bonney (Togo/VS), Blinky Bill (Kenya) Justin Dingwall (South Africa), Omar Victor Diop (Senegal), Sunny Dolat (Kenya), Samuel Fosso (Cameroon), Raquel van Haver (Colombia/The Netherlands), Bobbin Case & Jan Hoek (Uganda & the Netherlands), Lola Keyezua (Angola), Osborne Macharia (Kenya), Emo de Medeiros (Benin/France), Sethembile Msezane (South Africa), Yves Sambu & Sapeurs (Democratic Republic of Congo), Mary Sibande (South Africa), Bulewezwe Siwani (The Netherlands/South-Africa), Stephen Tayo (Nigeria) and Sarah Waiswa (Uganda).

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NOW LOOK HERE - The African Art of Appearance is on display in New North from 25 January until 23 February 2020. New North is open from Wednesday to Sunday from 11.00 to 19.00 hrs.

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### *Note to editors*

For information and visual material please contact the Press Office of NOW LOOK HERE on +31 (0)6 83 67 97 37 / [press@now-look-here.com](mailto:press@now-look-here.com).

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