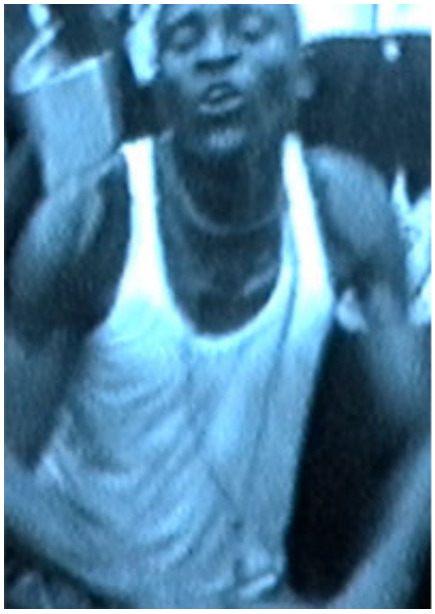
8. | Exotic





2002, France, 7 min 36, SD, 4/3, color, stereo.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 5 + 2 A.P.

Les expéditions des missionnaires pendant la colonisation en Afrique ont converti les populations à une nouvelle religion et ont imposé un système de valeur étranger à leur mode de vie et coutumes. Ces missions ont rapporté de nombreux objets en Europe qui ont suscité un certain engouement.

Le regard des occidentaux sur les masques et les objets traditionnels africains leur ont fait perdre toute fonction rituelle et religieuse pour devenir des curiosités dans les expositions universelles et des pièces de collection dans les vitrines des grands musées, ils sont devenus les objets exotiques par excellence pour l'Occident. Mais cet art dit "nègre" ou "primitif" a aussi influencé l'art européen et a bouleversé son approche de la modernité.

Aujourd'hui les produits et les images véhiculés par la mondialisation submergent le continent africain et imposent à leur tour de nouveaux systèmes dominants de valeur, souvent au détriment des cultures locales. Paradoxalement l'Occident et ses icônes du star-système restent inaccessibles et lointains pour la majorité des Africains, c'est une des raisons qui les rend si attrayants et exotiques à leurs yeux.

L'exemple de jeunes danseurs de rue au Congo Kinshasa illustre ce phénomène. Ils ont associé à leurs costumes traditionnels de représentation le maillot de la star du football anglais David Beckham. Ils ont récupéré cette figure mondialement connue qui incarne la compétition et la réussite pour en faire un costume de danse.

Studio Fatmi, Janvier 2003.

The expeditions led by missionaries during the colonization in Africa converted the populations to a new religion and imposed a system of values departing from their way of life and customs. Lots of objects were brought to Europe, which aroused quite a craze.

The way Westerners look at masks and other traditional African objects has deprived them of their ritual or religious function : they have become mere curiosities in World Fairs and collector’s items in the glass cases of great museums; they have become exotic objects par excellence for the West. Nevertheless, this art called either “Negro art” or “primitive art” has also influenced European art and has radically changed its approach of modernity.

Nowadays, the products and pictures conveyed by globalization submerge the African continent and impose in their turn a new and dominant system of values, quite often to the detriment of local cultures. Paradoxically, the West and its star-system icons remain unreachable and remote for most Africans, which is the reason why they are so exotic and so appealing to them.

The young street dancers in Congo Kinshasa illustrate this phenomenon: they have mixed the jersey of England’s football star David Beckham with their traditional performance dress. They have retrieved this world famous figure who embodies competition and success to make their dancing costumes out of it.

Studio Fatmi, January 2003.

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lire aussi le texte de Michèle Cohen Hadria,
Vous avez dit exotic?

" What we recognize there does not reveal itself at once, though there is this dance performed by men and filmed in the streets of Kinshasa,
these streets being so specifically African that all that we could withdraw from it is an identification to the amused and distracted look of an undefined foreign tourist
confronted with this kind of performance which bears such an intense “vernacular” strength.
"
–

Michèle Cohen Hadria, 2003

exhibitions:

2018

This is My Body - Art Bärtschi & Cie - Solo show



Exotic

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