

PRESS RELEASE

'The 8 MILE WALL'

Fabrice Monteiro

CLAES
CONTEMPORARY & MODERN

BRUSSELS GALLERY WEEKEND
8-11.09.2022

Opening 8.9.22
Exhibition 9.9 < 8.10.22

FABRICE MONTEIRO

'The 8 Mile Wall'

Claes Contemporary & Modern is marking its artistic return and Brussels Gallery Weekend by staging a solo show of the work of the celebrated Belgian/Beninese artist **Fabrice Monteiro**. Having started out in fashion, Monteiro decided to move behind the lens and retrace his origins through photography. In each of his series, he uses the portrait – his favoured form of expression – to raise a major issue besetting Africa and tackles it through the prism of identity.

His latest work is *The 8 Mile Wall*, which explores the stereotypes constructed during the era of slavery and colonial rule. The series is inspired by a conversation he had with his father when he was still a child, when he became aware of a fact of life at the time: that the only way a Black man could be treated as an equal and with respect in Europe was to wear a three-piece suit. The artist chose to deconstruct this subconscious way of thinking, which can be triggered by aesthetic details, such as clothing or accessories.

The idea for the title *8 Mile Wall* came following contemplation of a concrete wall of the same name in Detroit, also known as Detroit's Wailing Wall, Berlin Wall and The Birwood Wall. Some 1.8 metres high and 30cm thick, it runs for 0.8km south from 8 Mile Road to Pembroke Avenue, through the back yards of houses on Birwood and Mendota streets. It was built in 1941 to keep Black and White homeowners apart on the basis of their race. Though not particularly high or very long, and though it runs through several streets, it clearly indicated that Black people would not be welcome to build or live on one side of it. The wall symbolises the psychological barriers deliberately erected since slavery to incite racial discrimination.

The work *The 8 Mile Wall* encourages a “double reading” and through which the artist transposes the complex heritage of his history and his genes. The relationship between Africa and Europe can be felt in the images, a relationship that has always veered between curiosity and rejection, responsibility and denial, and recognition and anger.

Through his photography, **Fabrice Monteiro** seeks both to deconstruct the stereotypes of the “Black” image that have long featured in the media and, above all, to offer up something new to unsettle the spectator. *“Here, “blackface” is not shown grinning, teeth showing, and rolling marbles. He holds himself with dignity as a symbol of mental oppression, issuing a call to reason, a challenge to break with discrimination once and for all, with the “inferiorisation” of his fellow beings.”*

Born in Namur, Belgium, in 1972, **Fabrice Monteiro** is the son of a Beninese father and a Belgian mother and grew up in Benin. After studying industrial engineering, he worked in fashion, which brought him into contact with photography for the first time. Not surprisingly, his first experiences behind the lens came in the fashion world, though it was not long before he decided to tell a different story. The photographs of Fabrice Monteiro are a combination of photojournalism, fashion photography and «tableau vivant». Fabrice lives and works in Dakar, Senegal.



PITIT NOIR
2017
120x120 cm
digital art print



MAURESQUE

2017

120x120 cm

digital art print



EVOLUÉ
2017
80x80 cm
digital art print

Selected solo exhibitions

2019

Fabrice Monteiro : The Prophecy, Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, Wisconsin

2018

The 8 Mile Wall, Dak'Art Biennale, Saint Louis, Sénégal

2014

«Vues de l'esprit, Dak'Art, Fondation TOTAL, Dakar, Sénégal

2013

La voie du Baye Fall, Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris, France

2011

Wind of change, Maison du peuple, Bruxelles, Belgique



Selected group exhibitions

2015 – 2020

Making Africa : A Continent of Contemporary Design Blanton, Museum of Art, Austin, US

Albuquerque Museum, US ; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, US; Kunsthal Rotterdam, Netherlands ; CCCB, Barcelona, Spain ; Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain ; Vitra Design Museum, Germany (curators: Amélie Klein, Okwui Enwezor)

2021 – 2022

Back to Future - Technical Visions between Reality and Science Fiction, Museum for Communication, Frankfurt, Germany; Museum for Communication, Berlin, Germany

2021

And I Must Scream, Emory University, Atlanta, USA

2020

Alpha Crucis : African Contemporary Art, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway (curator: André Magnin)

Good as Gold : Fashioning Senegalese Women, North Carolina Museum of Art, USA (curator: Amanda Maples)

FieldNotes - Landmark, Williams College Museum of Art, Massachusetts, USA (curator: Horace D. Ballard)

L'Afrique - Vue par les photographes, Völklinger Hütte, Völklingen, Saarbrücken, Germany (curator: Frank Krämer)

2019

SEEDS for future memories, Villa Romana, Florene, Italy; Voicing the Two Ends of Migration, IFA Gallery, Berlin, Germany

2018

Good as Gold : Fashioning Senegalese Women, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington, DC, USA

In their own form, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago, Illinois, USA (curator: Sheridan Tucker Anderson)

Songes d'hier, rêveries du présent, MuPho (Musée de la photographie de Saint- Louis), Saint-Louis, Sénégal

Afrique, Les religions de l'extase, Musée d'ethnographie de Genève (MEG), Genève, Switzerland (curator: Boris Wastiau)

Cry of Victory and short walks to freedom - Project + gallery, St Louis, USA (curator: Modou Dieng)

Beyond Borders, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Michigan, USA (curator: Laura de Becker)

2017

Afro-Tech and the Future of Re-Invention, Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund,

Germany (curators: Inke Arns, Fabian Saavedra-Lara) Impressions mémorielles, Musée de l'Homme, Paris, France (curator: Nja Kwa)

2016

African Art against the State, Museum of Art, Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, USA

2015

Africa Architecture, culture & identity, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (curators: Kjeld Ljeldsen, Mathias Ussing Seeberg)

COLLECTIONS

Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, Wisconsin

MEG - Musée d'ethnographie de Genève

Iziko Museum, Cape Town

Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago

MACAAL - Fondation Alliance, Marrakech

MuPho, Musée de la photographie, Saint-Louis

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle

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