



Preview: 5 highlights not to miss at 1:54 African Art Fair London 2017

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London's leading international art fair dedicated to the contemporary art production from Africa and its diaspora returns from 5-8 October for its fifth edition.

Ahead of its inaugural presentation in Marrakech next year, 1:54 African Contemporary Art Fair returns to London to consider the artistic buzz from 54 African countries.



Lakin Ogunbanwo, 'Let it Be', 2016, archival ink-jet print on hahnemühle photorag, 119 x 79.5 cm, edition of 10. Image courtesy Lakin Ogunbanwo and Whatiftheworld.

Taking place across the East, South and West Wings of London's Somerset House, **1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair's** most recent offering is a dynamic, multidisciplinary presentation of work which engages with current issues within Africa and the wider world. From performance, installation, sound pieces and craft-based practices, **the fair gathers 42 leading international galleries** showcasing over 130 African and African diaspora artists.



Lebohang Kanye, 'O Emetse Mohala', 2016, inkjet print on cotton rag paper, 64 x 90 cm, edition of 5 + 2AP. Image courtesy Afronova Gallery.



Mohau Modisakeng, 'Passage', 2017, three-channel HD video, edition of 10 + 2AP. Image courtesy Tyburn Gallery.

Particular highlights include the first solo exhibition of British-Moroccan photographer **Hassan Hajjaj** in seven years, site-specific commissions by Emeka Ogboh and Pascale Marthine Tayou (the Somerset House courtyard installation).



Mary Sibande, 'Pick a Card', 2017, digital pigment print. Image courtesy Gallery MOMO.

1:54's Founding Director Touria El Glaoui told *Art Radar*:

For the fifth anniversary edition of 1:54 London, it is very exciting to welcome some new galleries and countries presenting for the first time, as well as many returning friends, and we're especially proud to have such a strong contingent of galleries from Africa this year. We also have an exciting line-up of Special Projects that strengthens our already amazing mix of galleries with additional voices and perspectives. It is especially exciting for us to be collaborating with Somerset House once again to present a major exhibition of British-Moroccan master portraitist Hassan Hajjaj ahead of the launch of 1:54 Marrakech in 2018.

Ahead of the fair's opening, *Art Radar* selects a few not-to-be-missed highlights from the 2017 edition.



Atta Kwami, 'Maroons', 2017, acrylic on linen, 193 x 183 cm. Image courtesy Beardsmore gallery.

1. Zineb Sedira at Plutschow Gallery

The haunting yet serene video installations of artist **Zineb Sedira** are informed by her multiple identities as a French-born Algerian living in England. Questions of memory, migration and history span her practice. Whilst earlier works explored traditional gender roles of Arab women, she now focuses on themes of displacement. Since 2006, the sea has become a strong inspiration, with images of waves, the sea, harbours and cargo ships becoming more common motifs. Sedira is showing with **Plutschow Gallery**.



Zineb Sedira, From the series "Sea Path", 2017, c-prints. Image courtesy Plutschow Gallery.

2. Pascale Marthine Tayou — *Summer Surprise*

This year 1:54's annual courtyard installation features the specially designed work of Cameroonian artist **Pascale Marthine Tayou**. Produced by **Galleria Continua**, *Summer Surprise* (2017) uses wood, spears and cobbles to create this installation piece which references *togunas*, public structures native to Mali that are purpose built to be used when discussing community and constitutional issues. By placing a structure integral to village life in the middle of London, the artist creates a meeting point for debate and dialogical thought to take place, as the artist hopes to engage visitors and initiate discussion around modern forms of violence.



Pascale Marthine Tayou, 'Summer Surprise', 2017, wood, spears and cobbles. Image courtesy the artist and Galleria Continua.

3. Hana Tefrati – *Desire Paths*

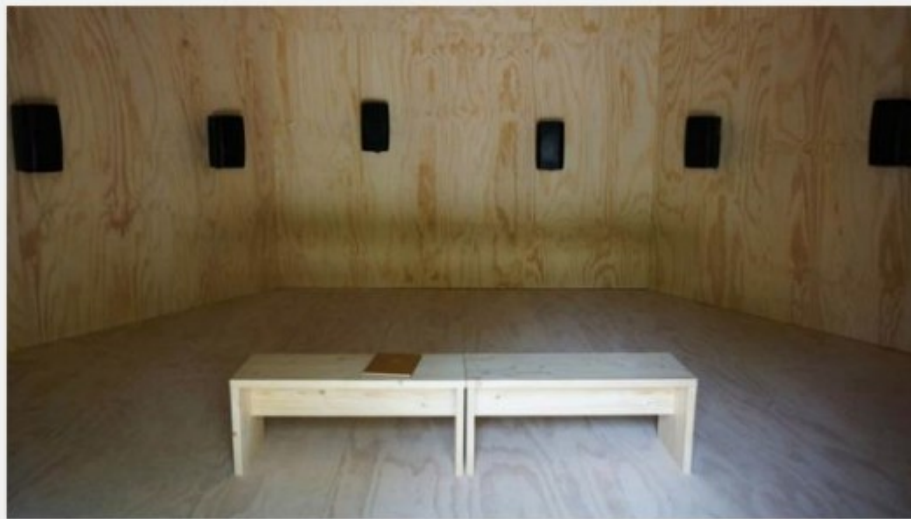
The 2017 edition of the fair presents an exciting new performance programme with artist **Hana Tefrati**. Tefrati's *Desire Path* (2017) is a new durational performance that transforms Somerset House's West Wing corridor into a "desire path", which seeks to comment and draw attention to the marginal spaces occupied by Morocco's queer community. Performer, dancer, artist, curator and activist Tefrati is based between Marrakech and Berlin, with work questioning themes of queer identity, the body, and the relationship between interaction and social spaces. The work is co-produced by **Mint Works**, an artist-run platform based in Marrakech which aims to strengthen support networks between emerging European and North African artists.



Hana Tefrati, 'Desire Path', 2017, performance. Image courtesy Mint Works.

4. The Modern Forms Commission: Emeka Ogboh

Originally from Nigeria, **Emeka Ogboh's** site-specific commission entitled *Ebube Dike* fuses the sound of an Igbo flute, known as the *Òja*, with spoken and sung words. This fusion, described as a "sonic ode to the African renaissance", takes over the space. Primarily a sound artist, but also working with video and photography, Ogboh creates distinctive, multi-layered and immersive soundscapes on and inspired by urban life, investigating historical, economic and social infrastructures of cities and in particular, Lagos, where he lives now.



Emeka Ogboh, 'The Song of the Germans', 2015. Image courtesy 1:54.

5. Abe Odedina at Ed Cross Fine Art

Having recently been shown at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition (2017) and the solo show "Eye to Eye" at Copeland Gallery in 2016, **Abe Odedina** returns to London with **Ed Cross Fine Art**. Born in 1960 in Nigeria and now living between London and Salvador de Bahia, Odedina's works "articulate a contemporary dialogue between epochs, cultures and individuals":

Odedina's stylistic vernacular is figurative, whilst his bringing together of classical themes from ancient Greek to Yoruban mythologies speaks of magic realism. His bold and hybrid visual language conjures energy from his adopted home London and from the streets of cities like Lagos, Salvador de Bahia and Port-au-Prince.



Abe Odedina, 'Say it Loud', 2017, acrylic on plywood, 70 x 70 cm. Image courtesy Ed Cross Fine Art.

His images oscillate between the everyday and the miraculous; from temple walls and love motels to advertisements for healers or barbers, these colourful, captivating pieces are definitely one to watch at the fair. Looking forward, Odedina's work will be animated for Carnegie Hall, New York, as part of Dramatic Need's *The Children's Monologues* directed by Danny Boyle, this November 2017.

Anna Jamieson