



Eddy Kamuanga Ilunga, *Profondeur d'identité 2 (Depth of Identity 2)*, 2021. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 170 x 150 cm. Courtesy the Artist and October Gallery, London.

Eddy Kamuanga Ilunga

Ghost of the Present

13th October– 27th November 2021

October Gallery is thrilled to announce **Eddy Kamuanga Ilunga's** third solo exhibition. Running simultaneously with 1-54 London 2021, this exhibition features a new body of work by Eddy Kamuanga.

In this new series, Eddy Kamuanga furthers his investigations of the Democratic Republic of Congo's history by examining the effect of Catholic missions in the country from the end of the 19th century onwards. His large-scale figurative compositions offer insight into the colonial influence of such enterprise, and into the acts of resistance that it triggered.

In 1893, the religious order of the Jesuits established the governing system of chapel-farms in the former colony, which were intended to offer shelter to Congolese children or orphans, but in fact trained them in military discipline as well as in handicrafts and agriculture. In Kamuanga's new paintings, his figures are flanked by these red brick 'sanctuaries' and shadowed by religious objects. These children served as free labour, fuelling the colonial mission for decades, resulting in a generation of Congolese people cut off from their families and communities. Through these works, Kamuanga reminds us that the Catholic Mission was instrumental in fostering the exploitation of people and lands. Distinctive vivid colours and careful textures, remnants of that exploiting system, run as a thread through this new body of work.

The chapel-farms represented in this new series have been the theatre of resistance actions as early as late 19th century. In these paintings, Kamuanga has integrated visual elements symbolising the persistence of traditions despite the violence that colonisation brought about, and which the neoliberal project continues to generate in the country.

Kamuanga continues to portray his subjects with bare skin replaced by intricate electronic circuitry. This references the components of our everyday modern devices, technology that could not exist without coltan, a substance mined at volume in the DRC, with great human and environmental cost.

Notes to Editors

Born in 1991, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. Lives and works in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo and in Brussels, Belgium.

October Gallery held Kamuanga Ilunga's first solo exhibition in 2016, quickly followed by a second successful solo exhibition in 2018. In 2017, Kamuanga Ilunga's work was included in the exhibition *African-Print Fashion Now!* at the Fowler Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, California, touring to Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, Tennessee, and Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA. His work has been exhibited internationally at institutions including Frist Art Museum, Nashville, Tennessee, USA; Kunsthaus, Graz, Austria; Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Birmingham, UK; Saatchi Gallery and the Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK. His work is in important private and public collections including: Private Collection Laurence Graff OBE; Zeitz Collection of Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa; the Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, New Hampshire, USA; Pizzuti Collection of the Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio, USA; the Norval Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa; and Scheryn Art Collection, Cape Town, South Africa.

Eddy Kamuanga's work and practice has been featured on several occasions in the *Financial Times*. In 2020 he was named as one of *Apollo Magazine's* '40 Under 40 Africa'; an accolade celebrating artists, thinkers, business leaders and advocates who have pioneered arts from Africa and the Diaspora.

For additional press images and credits, please see here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/y4tqcn8gcs2pd00/AAAXJh6_y6ynTMKbHmsLKhsRq?dl=0

Exhibition:	<i>Eddy Kamuanga Ilunga: Ghost of the Present</i>
Dates:	13 th October – 27 th November 2021
Private View:	12 th October 2021
Venue:	October Gallery 24 Old Gloucester Street London WC1N 3AL 020 7242 7367
Telephone:	020 7242 7367
Opening hours:	Tuesday – Saturday 12.30 - 5.30pm
Admission:	Free
Website:	www.octobergallery.co.uk
Email:	press@octobergallery.co.uk or paige@octobergallery.co.uk
Nearest tubes:	Holborn/Russell Square
Buses:	19, 25, 38, 55, 168 and 188
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Image Credit:	Eddy Kamuanga Ilunga, <i>Profondeur d'identité 2</i> (Depth of Identity 2), 2021. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 170 x 150 cm. Courtesy the Artist and October Gallery, London.