

Beyond Borders: Global Africa

UMMA -- August 11, 2018 - November 25, 2018

Spatio-Temporal Boundaries

In addition to crossing national and global boundaries, the artworks in *Beyond Borders: Global Africa* involve us in movement across temporal and spatial bounds. Objects like the *Chokwe Chair* and the numerous *minkisi* or power figures in the exhibition involve movement between the world of the living and ancestral or godly realms. Power figures' capacity to maintain social order is intricately connected to their capacity to communicate with and invoke beings not of, or no longer of this earth. In addition to being adorned with ancestral faces, the Yoruba beaded foot cushion (*timùtimù*) would have been used by an *oba* (king) to prevent his feet from touching the ground. Like all living beings and things, an *oba* possesses *ase* (life force, vital force) but in intensified form and is thus able to bridge the realms of *aye* and *orun* (world and otherworld).



Artist unrecorded, *Chokwe Chair* (1992/1.136)



Artist unrecorded, *Vili (Kongo) Power Figure* (2005/1.180)



Kudzanai Chiurai, *Leviathan* (Loan)



Sam Nhlengethwa, *Tribute to David Goldblatt* (2016/2.6)



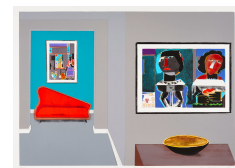
Artist unrecorded, *Yombe Power Figure* (2005/1.191)



Possibly the Workshop of the Adesina family, *Beaded Foot Cushion* (1997/1.308)



Nandipha Mntambo, *Ukugenisia* (Loan)



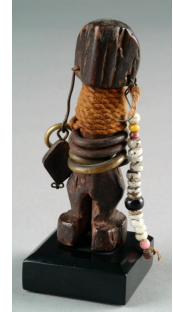
Sam Nhlengethwa, *Tribute to Romare Bearden* (2016/2.8)

Kudzanai Chiurai's *Leviathan* invokes both spatial and temporal movement, as the installation of wooden tall ships recalls the boats that carried Europeans to Africa during the contact period and enslaved Africans to the Americas. Chiurai reminds viewers that these movements between different locales further impacted cultural, material, and religious formations in many places, often with long-lasting effects. *Ukugenisia* involves viewers in a similar kind of movement in its reference to the colonial Praça de Touros but also in Nandipha Mntambo's performance in



Chéri Samba, *Hommage aux Anciens Créateurs (A tribute to earlier artists)* (loan)

which she crosses many often opposing boundaries or states of being. Finally, the paintings by Sam Nhlengethwa and Chéri Samba consider the aesthetic/stylistic flows between artists throughout time. Nhlengethwa speaks directly to two artists who have been influential on his practice, Romare Bearden and David Goldblatt. Additionally, Nhlengethwa's work plays with notions of space, moving between more intimate home interiors to the public zones of museums and galleries. Samba's work like Nhlengethwa invokes the influence of earlier artists including modernists such as Picasso but also those unnamed artists from the continent whose works entered museum collections during the colonial period. His work considers the manner in which display within museum contexts impacts narrative and representation and how such modes of display are not static.



Artist unrecorded,
Zande Power Figure
(2005/1.236)