

## BARTHÉLÉMY TOGUO *Independent New York*

March 5 - 8, 2020

Sixth Floor

50 Varick Street, New York, NY 10013



Installation view: Barthélémy Togu, *Urban Requiem*, exhibited in *All the World's Futures*, 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, 2015.

Galerie Lelong & Co., New York, is pleased to present a solo booth of recent work by Barthélémy Togu for Independent New York.

First conceiving of the idea in the 1990s, Togu executed the work *Urban Requiem* (2015) for the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale (2015) curated by the late Okwui Enwezor. For the Independent, an intimate iteration of the installation presents an arrangement of ladders weighed down with life-size portrait busts sculpted from Iroko wood. Arranged like toppled heads on the shelves, the busts' flat bases are visible to the viewer; carved with slogans of recent protests and national movements, each sculpture functions as a stamp. The process of stamping parodies

administrative gestures, as they require significant effort to lift and coat with black ink before making a thickly crusted mark on paper. Accompanying the installation are the resultant prints, bearing slogans from #MeToo to #BlackLivesMatter.

Also on view, a series of watercolor paintings demonstrates Togu's versatility in media. The artist's dreamlike paintings depict human, animal and plant forms in ink and wash; skillfully applied layers of liquid pigment allowing the abstract renderings to merge and morph into each other. Togu dissolves the boundaries between man and nature, initiating a conversation about our relationship to the environment and binding issues of ecology to society.

Barthélémy Togu was born in M'Balmayo, Cameroon, in 1967, and currently lives and works in Paris, France and Bandjoun, Cameroon. Solo exhibitions of his work have been presented at institutions including Parrish Art Museum, New York; Uppsala Art Museum, Sweden; Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Etienne, France; La Verrière by Hermès, Brussels; Fundação Gulbenkian, Lisbon; and Palais de Tokyo, Paris. He has been included in numerous international biennials, including the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (2018); the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India (2018); the Venice Biennale (2015); the Havana Biennial (2012); Biennale de Lyon, France (2011); the Sydney Biennale (2011); and Biennale de Dakar, Senegal (2018, 2016, 2000). In 2019, Togu was included in two inaugural exhibitions held at the new Ford Foundation Gallery, New York and El Espacio 23, Miami, Florida respectively. Upcoming in 2020, Togu will be participating in group exhibitions *Global(e) Resistance*, Centre Pompidou, France and *Voyage Voyages*, Mucem (The Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations), Marseille, France. In 2011, he was made a Knight of the Order of Arts and Literature in France. Togu's works are included in public collections worldwide, including Tate

Modern, England; Centre Pompidou, France; Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, France; Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM); Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and MoMA, New York.

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