

Kine Aw

Contemporary Perspectives



*The James E. Lewis Museum of Art
Morgan State University*

Cover
Before the Ebola
59" x 47"
2014

The Art of Kine AW
Contemporary Perspectives

August 8, 2018
The James E. Lewis Museum of Art

Morgan State University
Carl Murphy Fine Arts Center
2201 Argonne Drive
Baltimore, MD 21251

***Black woman, I sing your beauty that passes,
the form that I fix in the Eternal. (Leopold Sedar Senghor)***



Kine Aw

Foreward

Gabriel Tenabe - *Director, James E. Lewis Museum of Art*

Once again, the museum has gone across the Atlantic Ocean to invite and showcase an up and coming young artist. Kine Aw is a unique example of female artists from across Africa who are revolutionizing the contemporary art world.

Historically in Africa, women were artists. They painted the walls of the king's palace, shrines, and their homes. Blacksmithing, woodcarving and bronze casting were activities reserved for men.

The international recognition of African female artists trained in African Fine Arts Schools is a recent phenomenon. Today, through Kine Aw's art, we are witnessing a shift: African female artists are indeed changing the global art scene at a dizzying pace.

Kine Aw's creative genius and her "triple consciousness" reside at the heart of her compositions. Aw's consciousness emerges from her existence as a woman, as an African, and as an African woman living in a contemporary world where tradition and modernity are con-

stantly dialoging.

We thank Kine Aw for sharing her works with us at Morgan State University's James E. Lewis Museum of Art. We also extend our gratitude to the Senegalese Embassy for their support. It is our hope that more collaborative programs promoting African culture in the United States and Senegal will take place. My thanks to the museum staff led by Dr. Diala Toure, curator of this exhibition, for a job well done.

We welcome you all to our museum.

Diala Toure - *Curator of Collections*

Kine Aw celebrates women in traditional and contemporary African society. Her paintings depict a range of experiences and emotions from an African woman's perspective. Kine Aw's art interrogates cultural values, gender roles, and engages on a global platform. Aw's large, colorful and abstract figures in fragmented compositions represent her signature. The artist uses a mix of materials such as acrylic, resin, oil and tar. Reflecting on their roles in society, Kine focuses on women's aesthetics and distinctiveness. She tackles major themes of friendship, health, music, education and history.

Recently part of the 2014 Dak'Art Biennale in Dakar (Senegal), Kine Aw achieved international recognition early in her career and has exhibited in France, Switzerland, Denmark, and United States as well as several African countries. Aw brings new perspectives in African contemporary art to the James E. Lewis Museum of Art at Morgan State University.

Kine Aw's art depicts a poetic tale of traditional African values in relation to the modern world. Her motifs revolve around tradition and innovation in a young African woman's life. The art of Kine Aw can

also propel us into a world depicting and denouncing current events.

As an "engaged artist", Aw denounces political and societal ills. One of her recent paintings "Before the Ebola" focuses on the devastating effects of Africa's current plague, the subsequent quarantine of neighboring countries like Liberia and Guinea and the preventive sanitary measures taken by locals. "Before the Ebola" vividly depicts the disease's effects on daily lives and expresses the artist's extreme concern for the progression of the deadly disease.

Using abstraction and warm earth tones on large canvases, the Senegalese-born artist engages in a rigorous analysis that dissects planes, faces and figures in a masterful way.

Linear and curvilinear shapes intersect, clash and fuse leaving a powerful effect on the viewer. Often characterized as cubistic or "Piccassoesque", her style is unique and her use of material original. Kine often claims that: "Picasso's cubistic style is indebted to African sculpture. Without African art, there would not be any cubism. But without cubism, my art would still be standing. My art reflects the

The Art of Kine Aw: Contemporary Perspectives

essence of who I am: An African. An African Woman.”

Indeed, Kine Aw’s personal, cultural and visual narratives give us a new way to interpret African women’s contributions to society through the eyes of an African artist, an African woman and an African poet.

In Kine Aw's Own Words.....

Before the Ebola analyses a current event. Senegal is at the border of Guinea, which was recently in the news due to the Ebola virus. Resulting in spreading fear among the population and in the closing of borders, the virus has radically changed the way people interact with one another. To illustrate this fact, I chose to focus on food preparation by depicting one typical and popular local eatery known as "Gargotte" in many West African countries. It is assumed that the Ebola virus resulted from the consumption of wild animals by local populations. Contrary to these culinary practices in Senegal, we do not consume any wild animals. My work speaks volumes about my concern and revolt about the spread of the deadly disease.

At the center of my composition is a cook wearing blue gloves. Blue gloves are sanitary gloves. I constructed my work in such a way to catch the viewer's attention with a dominant of red (color of blood and life) surrounding the main figure and blue to focus on the importance of hygiene while dealing with

food preparation and consumption.



Before The Ebola

59" x 47"

Acrylic, oil and tar on canvas

2014

Au Clair de la Lune (Moonlight) is a tribute to “Lebonn Lipoonn”, which means “Once upon a time” in Wolof, dominant Senegalese language. Many years ago, at nightfall with many Senegalese villages lacking electricity, people used to gather outside to listen to stories and legends narrated under the baobab tree. Those rich in details, proverbs and advice provided the population with great insights and were conducive to dreams. I personally find this piece technically interesting due to my spontaneous strokes and the combination of acrylic and tar resulting in stunning reliefs and contrast: the dark blue symbolizes warm colors associated with warm African nights. Imaginary spirits are conversing in the corner of the composition.



Au Clair de la Lune (Moonlight)
59" X 58"
Acrylic, oil and tar on canvas
2014

The symbolism of *La Femme et L'Oiseau* (*The Woman and the Bird*) is quite powerful for me. This is the Queen, the Queen Mother in all her splendor. Seated on her throne, she reigns, Woman, mother, sister, over, spouse, self-assured, free and strong woman. Free as a bird...She confidently carries a bird on her lap that she rocks and fans. This is a royal portrait very dear to me. Here the spontaneity of my move creates this effect of superimposition. I experimented the combination between acrylic and tar and I simply played with the resulting effect of light and shadow.

A pure delight for me!



La Femme et L'Oiseau (The Woman and the Bird)

77" x 51"

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2014

The word “Signare” is a local adaption of the Spanish word “Señora”, meaning Mrs. Signare is a reminiscent of the pre-colonial and colonial eras in West Africa. Since the end of the 19th century, and for a period of almost eighty years, the African continent was divided between different colonial powers mainly French, British, Portuguese, Spanish and German. The languages of the colonial powers became national languages.

Although Senegal was a former French colony, it is geographically close to lusophone Guinea Bissau where the word “Signare” ,may have originated from.

Initially given to powerful and influential women of mixed French and Senegalese origins, this name has pejorative connotation associated with slavery, miscegenation, cast system and social system associated with colorism. In my composition, I play with the term Signare and deliberately darken my central figure, making the color Black, a sign of power, privilege and high aesthetics.



Signare I
51" x 76 3/4"
Acrylic and tar on canvas
2014

We are in the 21st century and although dressed in traditional garb, my figures live in a contemporary African setting where Black is Beautiful. As some say in America, “the darker the berry....”

Etudes I (Studies I) is a metaphor for knowledge, self-knowledge and self-consciousness. Here, knowledge is synonymous with wisdom obtained through long and rigorous training and study. One can observe that the figure on the left is holding a globe. This refers to the knowledge of the world, and more precisely of Africa. With one hand on Africa, the figure stands tall and confident next to another figure absorbed in reading a book. As an important tool for advancement in many African traditional and contemporary societies, education is central. Associated with economic empowerment, better health, gender parity, and a reduced military power, education is highly valued by many African women like me.



Etudes I (Studies I)

76 ¾" x 51 ¼"

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2014

My composition speaks of the importance of friendship, exchange, reciprocity and affection. How does one apprehend it? How does one compose with his counterparts part of the same world? I am reflecting, experimenting, interrogating and discerning on what constitutes a connection between two beings. What is useful? What is useless? How does one embrace otherness? Otherness within her culture of origin but also in the world? Can a dialog be possible? Can affinities be developed? How? These many questions are yet to be answered. My movements, my incessant and repetitive movements are yet to be explained. Lines are here, lines are there. In fact, they are everywhere. By organizing them in an orderly fashion, I am creating figures in a “deconstructed”, disorganized way. While painting, only the beauty and magic of my strokes remain. My figures are here and lively. They talk to me and they also talk to you. They talk about women, those with a story, a background, a life, a discourse but overall those with a Soul.



Entre Deux (Between Two)
78 ¾" x 35 ¼"
Acrylic on canvas
2014

List of Artworks

Jeu de Dame (Dame Game)

51" x 59"

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2014

La Belle et la Bête (The Beauty and the Best)

79" x 35 ½"

Acrylic, pigment on canvas

2014

Alienation des Formes III

(Formal Alienation III)

23 ½" x 18 ½"

Acrylic on canvas

2014

**Les Bergères (Aliénation des Formes I) –
(Shepherds – Formal Alienations I)**

18" x 23 ½"

2014

Sans Titre (Untitled)

30" x 39 ¼"

Acrylic and oil on canvas

2010

L'Esprit du Baobab (The Spirit of the Baobab)

36 ¾" x 28 ½"

Acrylic on canvas

2014

Valentine

79" x 35 ¼"

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2014

Linguere II

78 ½" x 35 ½"

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2014

La Lettre du Cœur (Letter of the Heart)

51" x 39 ¼"

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2014

Océanes

51" x 58 ¾"

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2014

Détente (Relaxation)

Acrylic and oil on canvas

Aliénation des Formes II (Formal Alienation II)

23 5/8" x 18 1/4"

Acrylic on canvas

2014

Champêtre (Rural)

79 1/4" x 23 1/2"

Acrylic and pigment on canvas

2013

Le Patriarche (The Patriarch)

35 1/4" x 78 3/4"

Acrylic on canvas

2014

Au Réveil (Waking Up)

39 1/2" x 50 1/2"

Technique

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2014

Au Clair de la Lune (Moonlight)

59" x 58"

Acrylic, oil and tar on canvas

2014

Before the EBOLA

59" x 47"

Acrylic, oil and tar on canvas

2014

Le Dialogue des Opposés (Opposites' Dialogues)

59" x 47"

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2013

Entre Deux (Between Two)

78 3/4" x 35 1/4"

Acrylic on canvas

2014

Signare I

51" x 76 3/4"

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2014

List of Artworks

La Femme et L'Oiseau (The Woman and the Bird)

77" x 51"

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2014

Les Pieuvres (Octopuss)

79" x 35 ½"

Acrylic on canvas

2014

Récreation I (Recess I)

76" x 51"

Acrylic on canvas

2014

Etudes I (Studies I)

76 ¾" x 51 ¼"

Acrylic and tar on canvas

2014

Germe (Germ)

30" x 35 ½"

Acrylic on canvas

2014

Au Petit Matin (At Daybreak)

Acrylic, pigment and tar on canvas

15 ¾" x 12"

2013

Ménagère (Homemaker)

Acrylic, pigment and tar on canvas

15 ¾" x 12"

2013

Entraide (Mutual Aide)

Acrylic, pigment and oil on canvas

20" x 16"

2013

Friendship

Acrylic and oil on canvas

36" x 24"

2013

Koriste [A] (Kora player A)

Acrylic and tar on canvas

39 ¼" x 32"

2010

52 ¼" x 38"
2013

La Bergère (The Shepherd)

Acrylic and tar on canvas
39 ¼" x 39 ¼"
2010

Koriste [B] (Kora player B)

Acrylic and tar on canvas
45 ¼" x 34 ¾"
2012

Vendeuse de Poissons (Fish vendor)

Acrylic, pigment and tar on canvas
58 ¼" x 47"
2012

Autopsie (Autopsy)

Acrylic and tar on canvas
39 ½" x 32"
2010

Flûtiste (Flute player)

Acrylic, pigment and tar on canvas
78 ½" x 35 ¼"
2011

Le Baigneuses (The Bathers)

Acrylic and tar on canvas

58 ½" x 58 ½"
2010

Maternity Figure

Acrylic, pigment and tar on canvas
79" x 35 ¼"
2010

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JAMES E. LEWIS MUSEUM OF ART

WHERE ART, HISTORIES & CULTURES MEET