



VICTOR SONNA
BÉBÉLÉ ZAMBA
06.04–18.05.2024
EENWERK AMSTERDAM

OPENING SATURDAY 6 APRIL 2024 17–19 H
CURATED BY JULIUS VERMEULEN AND HANS DEN HARTOG JAGER

EENWERK presents the monumental installation *Bébélé Zamba* by Victor Sonna. *Bébélé Zamba* consists of 94 embroidered portraits of Victor Sonna's mother, which are presented together in an installation that occupies both EENWERK's gallery and library. The original design of *Bébélé Zamba* was created in consultation between Victor Sonna and EENWERK founder Julius Vermeulen.

Bébélé Zamba is Sonna's great, eager, almost desperate attempt to get a grip on his mother. She lives in Yaoundé, Cameroon, the place where Sonna was born, he lives in Eindhoven for almost thirty years. Due to a twist of fate, Sonna and his mother can no longer communicate directly with each other. For Sonna, that gap is symbolic of the distance between him and his family, his culture, his roots. With *Bébélé Zamba*, Sonna tries to bridge that distance, leading to a rich, ambitious and loving work that is full of references to distance and cultural differences. In this way, *Bébélé Zamba* initially depicts the relationship between mother and son Sonna, but the work will be universally recognizable to most people.

SHORT BIO

VICTOR SONNA (1977) is a visual artist whose practice deals with issues concerning identity, malleability and materiality. His work has a strong focus on bridging (apparent) contradictions. He was born in Cameroon and migrated to the Netherlands at a young age. He studied at the Design Academy in Eindhoven before transferring to the AKV | St. Joost towards autonomous art. He lives and works in Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

Sonna's artistic practice is closely intertwined with his personal history: negotiating between Cameroon and the Netherlands means he is always occupied with the struggle of holding onto his African roots on one hand, and integrating into his European home on the other. This duality runs like a thread through all his work. Where both worlds and continents collide is something he explores in paintings, sculptures and large-scale installations.

Sonna's work is included in the collections of the Centraal Museum, Utrecht (NL), the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (nl) and various private collections internationally. Recently, his work has been shown at the Van Abbemuseum (2020–2022) and Dak'Art Biennale (2022).

VICTOR SONNA (born April 6, 1977, Yaoundé, Cameroon) lives and works in Eindhoven, The Netherlands

EDUCATION

2007–2008 St. Joost, School of Art & Design, Den Bosch
2004–2007 Design Academy, Eindhoven

EXHIBITIONS | SELECTION

upcoming Stoel neemt Stelling, Centraal Museum, Utrecht (NL), group
2023 Te land, ter zee en in de lucht, Gorcums Museum, Gorinchem (NL), group
2022–2023 The Collection is..., Kazerne, Eindhoven (NL), group
2022 Í Ndaffa # / Forger / Out of the Fire, Dak'Art, La Biennale de Dakar (SN), solo
2022 Oscam Air #3, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (NL), group
2020–2022 1525, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (NL), solo
2016 Anatomy of Identity & Secundus, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (NL), solo
2016 Art and Technology, Museon Museum, The Hague (NL), group
2014–2016 Anthropocene, Deutches Museum, Munich (DE), group
2013 Paradise Reset, Church of Stones, Eindhoven (NL), group/curator
2011 University of Applied Science, The Hague (NL), solo
2011 Self-sufficiency, Savant Care, Helmond (NL), solo

RECENT PROJECTS | SELECTION

2020–now Mind Matter; man's increasing proficiency in using the world is often accompanied by a reduction in humanity
2019–now Bébélé Zamba; research on the idea of 'relation'
2019–2022 Echo; for many centuries we – Africans and Europeans – have been aware of each other's existence. The traces and legacies show us that our histories are never far away
2018–2019 Hidden Icons; taking the icon out of its religious context
2015–2022 1525; large-scale project on the history and impact of colonialism
2015–2020 Adieu l'Enfance; religious bronze relics take on a new meaning

PUBLICATIONS & INTERVIEWS | SELECTION

2022 Echo, Í Ndaffa # / Forger / Out of the Fire, Dak'Art, exhibition catalogue
2021 1522, Metropolis M, exhibition review
2020 Victor Sonna. 152, exhibition catalogue
2020 Zoektocht naar verbinding met kunst in 25 meter hoge toren, Hans den Hartog Jager, NRC, exhibition review
2020 Wat vonden we ervan?, Zoe Spaaij, Volkskrant, visitor exhibition review
2020 Victor Sonna, 1525, Sarah van Binsbergen, Volkskrant, exhibition review
2020 Nooit meer slapen, Pieter van der Wielen, VPRO, interview
2020 Je kunt pas echt zien, als je samen kijkt, Harmen van Dijk, Trouw, exhibition review & interview
2020 Design's new intimacy, Tracey Ingram, Frame, interview
2020 DDW20 Talks: Contemporary Icons, Robert Thiemann, DDWTV, interview
2017 Anatomy of Identity, ArtMazeMag, overview
2014 Future Nostalgia, Willkomen in Anthropozan, exhibition catalogue
2014 Future Nostalgia, Designboom, overview
2013 Future Nostalgia, New York Magazine, overview

GRANTS, NOMINATIONS & PRIZES | SELECTION

2023 Nomination memorial site, Bremen, Germany
2017–2020 Werkbijdrage Bewezen Talent, Mondrian Fund
2020 'The best book designs 2020', Victor Sonna. 1525, winner

COLLECTIONS

Centraal Museum, Utrecht (NL); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (NL); various private collections across the globe



VICTOR SONNA
BÉBÉLÉ ZAMBA
94 PARTS, 60 X 90CM EACH
MIXED MEDIA



PHOTOS G.J. VAN ROOIJ

VICTOR SONNA
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