

The Armory Show Announces Commissioned Artist Kapwani Kiwanga for 2016

October 14, 2015

by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

The Armory Show announced Kapwani Kiwanga has been selected as its commissioned artist for the 2016 edition of the New York City art fair. The artist will create an on-site installation, will contribute to the development of the Armory's visual identity during its 2016 edition held in New York City in March. The edition's Focus Section is African Perspective.

[Kapwani Kiwanga](#) was appointed by the Focus curators, Julia Grosse and Yvette Mutumba, and The Armory Show. The Armory Show launched its distinguished Artist Commission in 2002, extending its commitment to supporting artists' development by providing a global stage for their work. In this capacity, Kiwanga will inform the visual identity of the fair by contributing to the design of the official fair Catalogue, realizing an on-site commissioned project and producing a limited edition artwork with proceeds benefiting The Museum of Modern Art in New York.



Kapwani Kiwanga. Photo courtesy of futurelabafrika.org.

"We are delighted that Kapwani Kiwanga has agreed to be the Focus Commissioned Artist," said Mutumba in the appointment announcement. "Through her artistic practice Kapwani connects

historic narratives, struggles and archives with very contemporary moments. She grows and contributes to an understanding of not only entangled (post) colonial histories, but also of the importance of looking back as an artist to be able to form and comprehend the present. This is very similar to our approach with Contemporary And (C&).”

Grosse stated, “Additionally, Kapwani’s ability to use a wide range of media for her research and artworks makes her the perfect artist to provide amazing material for the different tasks that are part of The Armory Show’s Commission. We are very much looking forward to working with her on this special project.”

Born in Hamilton, Ontario and currently based in Paris, Kiwanga has a versatile practice that often takes shape through video, sound and performance, relying on ephemera and collective history to form the bases of her approach. As a trained anthropologist and social scientist, she occupies the role of a researcher in her projects.

Her methodology includes assembling narratives and establishing protocols, to observe culture and its characteristic propensity toward mutation, sometimes intentionally confusing truth and fiction in order to unsettle hegemonic narratives where marginal discourse can flourish. Afrofuturism, the anti-colonial struggle, collective memory, belief systems, vernacular and popular culture are but some of the research areas that inspire her practice.

In her films, installations and performances, which revolve around notions of belief and its relationship to “knowledge,” Kiwanga employs documentary modes of representation, various material sources, and testimonies in a quasi-scientific approach. She is interested in different approaches to the role of artist, explored most notably in her Afrogalactica trilogy project (2011-ongoing), for which she has invented and occupies the character of an anthropologist from the future who explores across vast fields of knowledge relating to Afrofuturism, hybrid genders and African astronomy.

International exhibitions include the solo exhibition Maji Maji at Jeu de Paume, Paris (2014) where Kiwanga revisited the historical account of the Maji Maji War, which took place between 1905 and 1907 and was one of the largest 20th century uprisings on the African continent. Kiwanga’s work has been included in exhibitions at the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2006) and the Glasgow Centre of Contemporary Art, Glasgow (2008). Her film and video works have been nominated for two British Academy of Film and Television awards and have received awards at film festivals worldwide.

BASIC FACTS: The Armory Show will be held March 3 - 6, 2016 at Piers 92 & 94 in New York City. www.thearmoryshow.com.

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