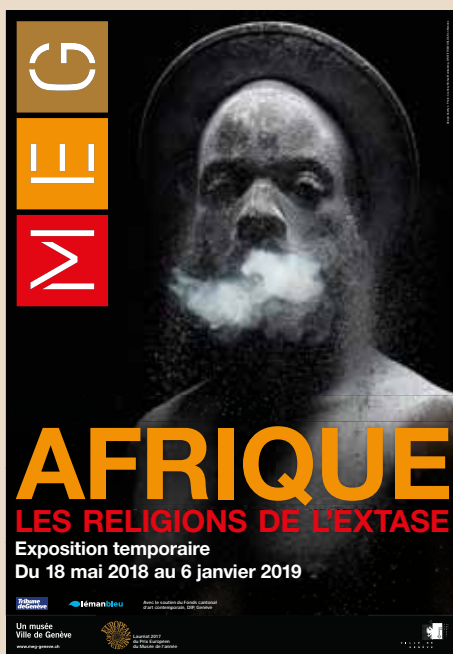




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**PRESS  
PACK**

**19 April 2018**



# Africa

The Ecstatic Religions

Temporary Exhibition

18 May 2018 – 6 January 2019

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Winner of the 2017  
European Museum  
of the Year Award



## NOTE OF INTENT

The definition of the subject itself is so open to debate that treating “African religions” in one exhibition is to attempt the impossible. Treating them from the angle of religious ecstasy amounts to much the same. It can also be considered that this is an opportunity to introduce our visitors to a cultural domain which is fascinating though little known to the general public. “Before Christianity and Islam, Africans had no religion, they were animists!” “Voodoo? That’s dolls with pins in them, witchcraft!” Many such commonplaces are heard when testing the subject in conversations with non-specialists. It is this that convinced us of the pertinence of adopting an overall approach.

The examples of religious practices were chosen partly according to what it was possible to treat using the MEG’s collections, but also bearing in mind what field research and collaboration with photographers and a videographer enabled us to illustrate. Another collection and other partners would have produced a different result. The view proposed is therefore inevitably partial. It makes no claims to be exhaustive. Once again its intention is to initiate visitors, to familiarize them with the theme, to teach them a few fundamentals and historical references, but above all to make them want to explore this incredible field of creativity represented by African religions. As for the angle of approach, “ecstatic religions”, it aims at encouraging reflection on the subjective aspects of religious experience in both its individual and collective embodiments and the feelings and emotions it creates.

In this exhibition, we seek to make strong use of photography and video work, in order to multiply viewpoints on today’s religions. The photographs illustrate specific moments in the context of religious practices, which are mediatized only by the camera’s lens and their sensitivity. The photographer releases an image which will trigger off reflection in those who look at and interpret it. Naturally, the photographers have also been marked by their own culture and its biases, but those we wanted to work with here possess the values of openness and respect towards the subjects they capture in the field or their studios. I extend very warm thanks to the photographers who agreed to collaborate on this project, as well as their respective galleries: Fabrice Monteiro, Mohau Modisakeng, Santu Mofokeng, Jean-Pierre Grandjean, Anthony Pappone, Johnathan Watts and, in particular, Christian Lutz who, for this venture, went to meet several African religious communities in Geneva: Congolese Kimbanguists, members of the Eritrean Orthodox Church and Senegalese Murids.

To complete these subjective points of view on religious experience, video documents were collected from “traditional” or Christian religious leaders during two field

missions with Johnathan Watts, in Zambia in March 2017 and in Benin in December 2017. In addition to these film documents, there are video capsules made several years ago by the anthropologist Paul Faber in Haiti and Quebec and by the historian Mauro Peressini for a MEG exhibition devoted to Haitian vodou. We thank them for having agreed to let us present them again here.

The exhibition’s scenography was entrusted to Franck Houndégla, an architect-scenographer with as many creations in the cultural and artistic field in Europe as in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world and whose sensitivity to our theme and interest in our museology made him the ideal partner in this adventure – for all exhibition projects are adventures! His mandate consisted in finding an original way of staging some 323 objects from the MEG’s collections, along with series of photographs and videos, in four main sections. The first is devoted to monotheisms, the second to the fundamentals of African indigenous religions, that is to say divination, sacrifice and the ancestors’ cult, the third to possession cults and the fourth to the complexity of African magico-religious systems.

These four sections are “articulated” by five installations by the videographer Theo Eshetu, invited as the project’s “artist in residence”. His works, as they appear chronologically in the exhibition, are *Trip to Mount Zuqualla*, *Veiled Woman on a Beach Front*, *The Festival of Sacrifice*, *Zar possession* and, as an epilogue, *The Phi Phenomenon*. The last two are original creations made specifically for the exhibition. I thank him very warmly for having accepted our invitation and for his stimulating and effective collaboration.

A certain number of paths for thought emerge from this overview of African religious practices. Although the choice of examples is inevitably incomplete, it reveals the great diversity, the complexity and often little-known dynamism of religions in Africa and the African diaspora. In the many forms given to monotheisms, it is a Manichaeism opposing God to the forces of evil which predominates, whereas in the more fragmented indigenous religions, the gods and spirits reveal more ambivalent powers. All they have in common is sacrifice, the climax of worship, be it real, symbolic or part of the founding myth. The exhibition’s photographs evoke the diversity of the emotional states into which devotion transports believers, whether during regular worship, calendrical events or pilgrimages. Finally, the series of installations by Theo Eshetu invites us to reflect on the dialectics between the material and immaterial, visible and invisible, embodied or disembodied aspects of religions, as well as on the emotional dimensions induced by music and images.

## SUMMARY

<b>Note of Intent</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Exhibition texts</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>	Introduction	15
<b>Exhibition design</b>	<b>5</b>	PART 1	17
<b>Number of objects in the exhibition</b>	<b>7</b>	Monotheisms in Africa	17
<b>Biographies of the artists and photographers</b>	<b>8</b>	PART 2	21
Theo Eshetu	8	Divination, Death and the Ancestors	21
Jacques Faublée	8	PART 3	25
Jean-Pierre Grandjean	9	Becoming One with the Spirits : Possession Trances	25
Christian Lutz	9	PART 4	29
Mohau Modisakeng	10	The Magico-religious Universes, Entangled Forces	29
Santu Mofokeng	10	PART 5	33
Fabrice Monteiro	11	Epilogue	33
Anthony Pappone	11	<b>Publication</b>	<b>35</b>
Boris Wastiau	12	<b>Contributions</b>	<b>38</b>
Johnathan Watts	12	<b>Key Informations</b>	<b>40</b>
		<b>Practical Information</b>	<b>41</b>
		<b>The MEG</b>	<b>42</b>
		<b>Objects and Photographs in the exhibition</b>	<b>43</b>



**At the MEG, the Musée d'ethnographie de Genève, every exhibition holds the promise of a journey. From 18 May this year, we stop off in Africa, to discover the religious cultures of the continent where humankind was born.**

The exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions” reveals the wealth of religious practices in Africa. Throughout the visit, the public is plunged into an atmosphere of mysticism and discovers the fervour of believers.

INTRODUCTION

323 previously unexhibited pieces, from the MEG’s collections, are enriched by fascinating images from five contemporary photographers of international repute. A series of short film documents presents the point of view of the followers themselves. Video installations by an Ethiopian artist punctuate the visit, displaying the notion of sacredness in African indigenous religions.

The exhibition’s main theme is religious ecstasy, intense communion with divine forces. This is a state in which people find themselves carried away, as if transported out of their own being and the real world.

In “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”, religion is defined as a set of rituals connecting the living to each other, in the face of invisible powers : one god, multiple deities, spirits of ancestors or of the natural world.

Visiting the exhibition, we discover the monotheistic religions (Islam, Christianity and Judaism), indigenous African religions, possession cults and magico-religious universes. Here Africa is not seen as a geographical space but as a cultural one. For these religious practices can be found in regions as far afield as the Americas or Europe, where they have been spread by the diaspora.

Throughout the exhibition’s duration, the MEG invites its public to a host of activities related to “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”: shows, lectures, films, workshops, guided or offbeat tours. There are also many activities for families and schoolchildren.



**Franck Houndégla and  
Sophie Schenck, scenographers<sup>1</sup>**

## EXHIBITION DESIGN

### **Scenographic design Translating a discourse into space**

Designing and creating the scenography of an exhibition, is giving a material existence to a discourse. From a scenario written by the exhibition's curating team, which sets out and hierarchizes the messages to communicate to the public, the scenography creates a production, that it to say a spatial translation. The texts, objects, images, sounds or interactive content which are the media for these messages are part of and displayed in a global spatial composition.

This composition, which is both plastic and technical, is based on the creative fields of architecture, design, the visual and performing arts, and engineering. The aim of the hybrid discipline of exhibition scenography is to offer visitors a singular spatial experience; one in which their interaction with an environment will enable them to encounter a diversity of knowledge and information, by experiencing sensations. This environment composed of atmospheres and forms, of signs and sounds, constitutes the vocabulary of the scenographic project.

The visual and technical, material and economic, solutions brought to the project, during its conception or directly on site, must always serve the essential intentions of the scenographic project, so as to enable it to be adapted without losing strength when faced with a budgetary or spatial constraint.

#### Creating the Scenography of "Africa. The Ecstatic Religions"

When we read the scenario of the "Africa. The Ecstatic Religions" exhibition at the time of competitive submissions for the scenographic design, we were inspired not only by the subject, but also by its structured, clear treatment in view of the diversity and complexity of contemporary religious practices in Africa.

<sup>1</sup> The scenographic design team  
Franck Houndégla/scenography  
Sophie Schenck/scenography  
Patrick Roger (Quatra.org)/technical and economic engineering  
Brice Tourneux/graphics  
Laurent Junod (Electric Lighting)/lighting design  
Alain Richon (Life Design Sonore)/acoustic and sound design



The notion of “religious ecstasy”, the main theme of the exhibition, is evoked through a wide variety of media – contemporary photography, documentary photography, video installations, ethnographic objects, filmed interviews and texts – whose articulation is capable of creating for visitors an experience which is at the same time informed, sensitive and reflexive.

The crux of the scenographic project was to succeed in giving materiality to the abstract subject of religion and to the diffuse notion of religious ecstasy.

We have proposed “a questioning space” which makes use of scales, points of view and pretences and is inspired by the spatiality particular to the African societies known to us. Through the scenography, we seek to immerse visitors in a space peopled by events, as an interpretation of the house yard of sub-Saharan Africa, where living space is in constant transformation through juxtaposition, interweaving and substitution depending on the evolution of social organization.

This “questioning space” is a space without partitions, which the public can visit in its continuity; an open space animated by different emergences.

These emergences of large objects whose proportions are on a scale with the display stage: a large curved shape. A long surface, high rock, hanging dome or shimmering ground. These are the media and containers of texts and maps, of object and images and of lights and sounds. The acoustic and sound approach of the exhibition, which combines permeable and confined zones and ambient and localized diffusion, reinforces the perception of a big open space divided up into quiet, private spots. The lighting atmosphere accompanying the visit varies according to the parts of the exhibition and the nature of the objects.

For the “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions” exhibition to be able to exist physically and be visited by the MEG’s public, a series of actions had to be accomplished prior to this. The skills and ways of numerous protagonists came together during the elaboration of the project: those of the MEG team – curating team, project team, mediation, workshops, administration; of the scenographic design team – scenography, graphics, lighting, acoustics; of the firms responsible for its construction – fittings, set, and graphic and photographic creation.

The scenographic project of the “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions” exhibition has been a collective venture combining paper and screens, meetings round a table and site visits. We progressed from an imagined project to a creation which has escaped us now that the public has taken it over.

## NUMBER OF OBJECTS IN THE EXHIBITION

323 objects from the MEG's collection

2 objects on loan : 2 books from the BGE

199 photographs

- Boris Wastiau: 41 photographs
- Johnathan Watts: 21 photographs
- Jacques Faublée: 82 photographs
- Christian Lutz: 18 photographs
- Jean-Pierre Grandjean: 11 photographs
- Mohau Modisakeng: 1 photograph
- Santu Mofokeng: 6 photographs
- Fabrice Monteiro: 11 photographs
- Anthony Pappone: 8 photographs

5 video installations by Theo Eshetu

29 vidéo portraits

- Johnathan Watts and Boris Wastiau (MEG): 14 portraits of healers, diviners, mask dancers and members of different Christian churches filmed in Zambia as well as of voodoo followers filmed in Benin (2017)
- Mauro Peressini (Canadian Museum of History, Ottawa): 9 portraits de voodoo followers filmed in Canada (2012)
- Paul Faber (Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam): 6 portraits concerning vodou filmed in Haiti (2008)





## BIOGRAPHIES OF THE ARTISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS



### THEO ESHETU

Theo Eshetu (1958 –), the creator of the video installations presented in the exhibition, was born in 1958 of a Dutch mother and Ethiopian father. A cosmopolitan, he grew up in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Dakar (Senegal), Belgrade and Rome. Today, he lives and works in Berlin. Drawing on the history of art, anthropology and religion, combining artistic video work and the cinema of reality, his favourite subjects are the notions of sensorial perception, identity and the sacred. His work is characterized by an aesthetic of fractal, kaleidoscopic or symmetrical images, presented in a particular rhythm and often accompanied by a soundtrack. He was commissioned by the MEG to create several video installations for the “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions” exhibition.



### JACQUES FAUBLÉE

Jacques Faublée (1912-2003) is a French ethnologist. After a short stay in Switzerland during the First World War, he attempted to join the French Navy before finally entering the Ecole du Louvre in 1932. With a passion for Malagasy languages, from 1937 he worked at the Musée ethnographique du Trocadéro (which would later become the Musée de l'homme). His scientific research on Madagascar enabled him to study the different cultures there, to constitute a large series of photographs and to write two theses, on the Bara societies and on Madagascar. A specialist of Malagasy dialects, in 1946 he wrote his *Manuel d'introduction au malgache*. After retiring, he pursued his linguistic and ethnological research until his death in 2003. Jacques Faublée took more than 10,000 photographs of tombs, necropolises and other funerary monuments during his visits and research missions to Madagascar between 1941 and 1965. On his death, he bequeathed these to the MEG. 82 photographs taken from his reports are presented in the MEG's exhibition.





## JEAN-PIERRE GRANDJEAN

Jean-Pierre Grandjean (1950 – ) is a Swiss photographer, trained as a graphic artist. As an artistic director in advertising communication for twenty years, he worked with the great photographers of the day (Art Kane, David Hamilton, Hans Feurer, Catherine Hibbs) who passed on their love of images to him. Today, his vocation is to photograph human beings and their world, structuring his work mainly around the themes of religion and traces of civilizations. The report presented in the “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions” exhibition shows vodou possession trances in Haiti.



## CHRISTIAN LUTZ

Christian Lutz (1973 – ) is a Genevan photographer. After studying at “Le 75”, a higher education institute for plastic arts in Brussels, he started to work in documentary photography, but soon took his own path asserting an approach which distances the real world and lights up the fine border between fiction and reality. More than ten years ago, Christian Lutz began a visual investigation of power. This fundamentally political and committed work, known by the name of *Trilogie*, propelled him onto the national and international scene. Honoured by a number of awards, the work of Christian Lutz is exhibited all over the world and is regularly the subject of publications. In autumn 2017, he co-founded the MAPS structure – a collective project proposing new ways of expression and of recounting life narratives, showing changes in the world’s societies and environments. In its exhibition the MEG presents three reports on Eritrean, Kimbanguist and Murid communities living in Geneva, as well as his report made in Nigeria on Pentacostalism and exorcism.



## MOHAU MODISAKENG

Mohau Modisakeng (1986 – ) is a South African artist from Soweto. He retraces the violent history of South Africa by looking at the black population, the black body. In films, large-scale photographs, installations or performances, the work of Mohau Modisakeng focuses on racial questions, the militarization of society and the deep post-apartheid division existing in his country. The winner of the 2011 Sasol New Signatures Award, his works have been exhibited in many galleries and museums throughout the world. He also represented his country at the Biennale de Venezia in 2017. The photo selected by the MEG for the “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions” exhibition is part of the “Metamorphoses” series, in which Modisakeng works on his self-portrait. This series evokes bodily changes, from life to death. In this particular photograph, Modisakeng seems to exhale the primordial breath, the origin of life in several religions.



## SANTU MOFOKENG

Santu Mofokeng (1956 – ) alias Mofokenga is a South African photographer from Soweto. He began his career very young as a street photographer. He then joined the Afrapix collective, a group opposed to the apartheid regime and practising “struggle photography”. Mofokeng’s work is immersed in the spiritual world, a dimension in which he has been particularly interested from the very beginning. He has won a number of international awards. In 1986 with the “Train Church” series, presented in the MEG’s exhibition, Santu Mofokeng plunged into the world of the tilting trains on the Johannesburg to Soweto line and immortalized these suburban trains turned into places of worship.



## FABRICE MONTEIRO

Fabrice Monteiro (1972 – ) is a Belgian-Beninese photographer. Although his career did not initially destine him to become a photographer, his encounter with Alfonse Pagano in 2007 would prove to be a revelation. His new mentor would introduce him to this art in which he built a visual universe corresponding to himself, a mixed one. Developing a particular taste for portraits, he would above all work in his native land, Africa, where he found inspiration in cultural diversity. A true artist of mixed race, he treats his themes with a dual gaze, moving away from clichés in order to offer the world what he feels, what touches him. The “Holy one” and “Holy two” diptych presented in the MEG’s exhibition proposes two photographs which the eye constantly compares thus creating confusion. One presents a bible while its hand writes the name of Allah, while the other portrays a Quranic tablet but makes the Christian gesture of blessing. The closed eyes suggest perhaps that “what is essential cannot be seen”.



## ANTHONY PAPPONE

Anthony Pappone (1979 – ) is an Italian photographer. He travels the world immortalizing many peoples through portraits, traditional ceremonies and their ways of life. He now focuses particularly on Africa, as the photographs exhibited at the MEG demonstrate. These were taken in one of the most famous Ethiopian Orthodox churches, that of Saint George in the holy town of Lalibela, during Fasika, Orthodox Easter. Anthony Pappone's photographs show various moments of the liturgy which lasts several days and culminates at 3am on the third night in the announcement that Christ is risen, that he has returned from death to life.



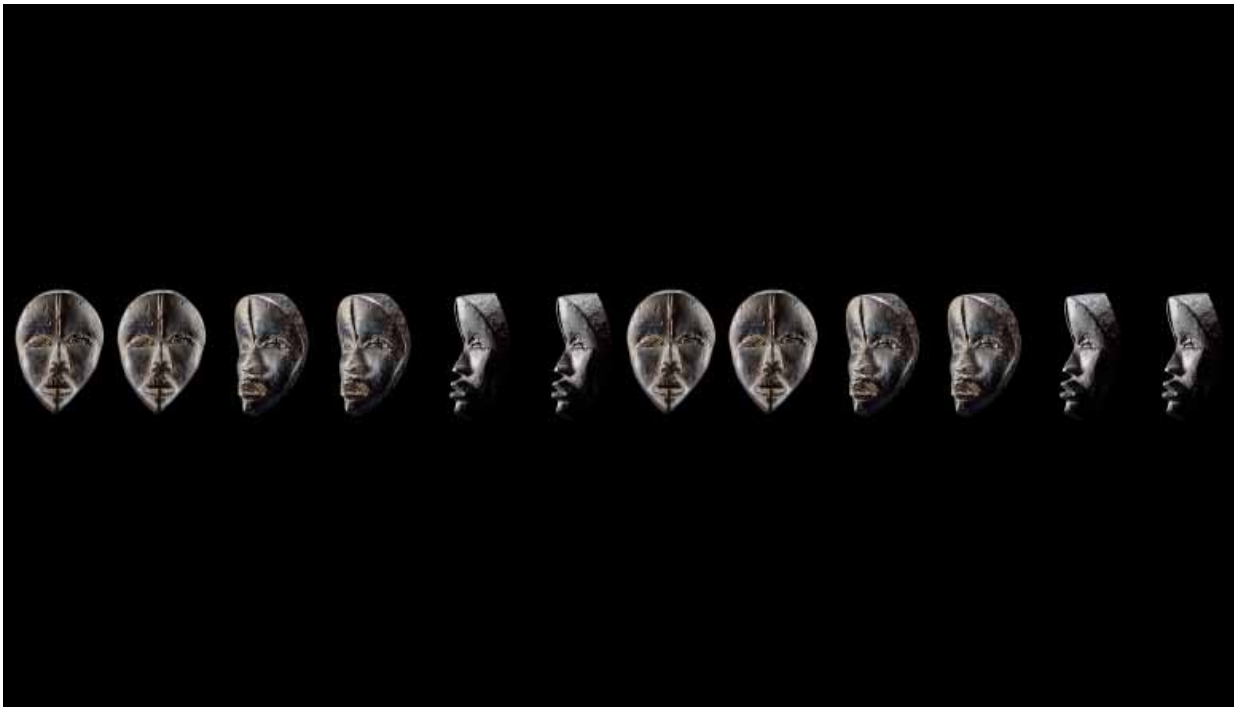
## BORIS WASTIAU

Boris Wastiau (1970 – ) has been the director of the MEG since 2009. He studied anthropology in Brussels and Coimbra and obtained his Ph.D. in Africanist anthropology of art at the University of East Anglia (GB). A specialist in the religions of Central Africa (Congo, Angola and Zambia) and working on the history of the provenance of African collections as well as on their interpretation and exhibition, he is the author of several books and exhibitions including *Exit Congo Museum* (2000), *Mahamba* (2000), *Chokwe* (2006), *Medusa. African Sculpture of Enchantment* (2008) or *Amazonie. Le chamane et la pensée de la forêt* (2016). He is also a tenure professor at the University of Geneva where he teaches African religious arts. He is the curator of “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”, and the photographs presented in the exhibition all come from scientific missions carried out in different African countries.



## JOHNATHAN WATTS

Johnathan Watts (1961– ) has been the photographer of the Musée ethnographique de Genève since 1993. He was a photographer in the London advertising world between 1983 and 1992 and specialized in photographs of objects. He has collaborated on numerous MEG exhibitions and also contributed to several publications on the MEG’s collections including *Medusa. African Sculpture of Enchantment* (2008). Johnathan Watts regularly works in the field to make his reports. For the “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions” exhibition, he has used photography and video to document the sacred arts in Zambia and Benin.









# Introduction

Contemporary African religions, their dynamism and versatility, are the subject of this exhibition. Its main theme is the notion of *religious ecstasy*, the fruit of the search for ever stronger communion with deities or spirits. Whether it being the various forms of Abrahamic monotheisms, ancestor cults, so-called “possession” cults or in more individual magico-religious practices, all over Africa we find this search for moments of religious ecstasy, the sign of close contact with and regular proximity to the sacred, the divine. This term will be associated with notions of contemplation, rapture, religious transport, visions, beatitude, wonder, intoxication, exaltation, bliss and exhilaration – all states which can characterize the most fervent moments of experiencing and expressing faith. Depending on the case, this ecstasy concerns the founding mystics or the prophets of certain religions, the priests and initiates, sometimes even all the cult members. Ecstasy describes a strong experience of the sacred – a powerful religious impulse – a quest for mysticism.

## ***Trip to Mount Zuqualla, video by Theo Eshetu***

Pilgrimages represent particularly intense times in believers' lives, whatever their religion. They give rise to moments of collective exaltation. The installation of the artist Theo Eshetu presented here has been made from images and sounds gathered in Ethiopia, during a pilgrimage, in which both Christians and followers of traditional religions take part, to the place where Saint Gabra Manfus Qeddus once withdrew. He became one of the most important mystics of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the founder of Zuqualla Monastery. In this work we can see scenes of jubilation and other moments when men, women and children fall into trances, possessed by evil spirits which affect them and from which they are freed by the agency of the cross embodying the Holy Spirit.

## **Theo Eshetu**

Theo Eshetu, the creator of several installations presented in this exhibition, was born in London in 1958 and grew up in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Dakar (Senegal), Belgrade (Serbia) and Rome. Today he lives and works in Berlin. Drawing on the history of art, anthropology and religion, mixing artistic video work and the cinema of reality, his favourite subjects are the notions of sensorial perception, identity and the sacred. His work is characterized by an aesthetic of fractal, kaleidoscopic or symmetrical images presented in a particular rhythm and often accompanied by a soundtrack.



# Monotheisms in Africa

## **Christianity, Judaism and Islam became established very early on in Africa.**

Christianity was promoted there by several Church Fathers of Amazigh (Berber) origin between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century: Tertullian, Cyprian of Carthage and above all Saint Augustin. The Church of Alexandria (Egypt), which according to the myth was founded by Mark the Evangelist, is one of the first five Christian Churches that with Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem made up the “Pentarchy” which long governed the Christian world. The Egyptian desert was the favoured place for “anchorite” Christians, with mystics carrying ascetism to seemingly impossible limits in the pursuit of religious ecstasy, such as Saint Anthony overcoming his temptations...

After its birth in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Islam became dominant in North Africa through military conquest. During the following centuries, it would enlarge its sphere of influence, particularly in the Sahel, West Africa and East Africa. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Almoravides, of Amazigh origin, strengthened its influence by armed jihad as far afield as Senegal and Ghana. Its progression would only be checked by European colonization, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, before being rekindled after independence. African Islam has been characterized by the coexistence of rigoristic movements, mainly Sunni, and mystical Sufi brotherhoods. The latter are today strongly contested by the former, especially by Salafist movements.

Judaism was spread through North Africa, without a great deal of proselytism, by the diaspora of Jewish communities which settled mostly in urban centres, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century on, during what was still the Roman period. Others would come from Spain in the 7<sup>th</sup> and then the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the Middle Ages, merchants set up communities as far away as the Sahelian region, working both as traders and craftsmen (gold and silversmiths, potters...). Judaism also became established in Ethiopia. After the creation of the state of Israel and the end of the colonial period in the 1960s, the Jews were soon led to leave most Muslim countries.

### 1.1. The Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Church

Founded in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, of the Gueze rite, is one of the oldest Christian Churches with a permanent historical existence. Largely isolated from Europe by the Islamized countries for several centuries but retaining a link with the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria (Egypt), of which it was part until 1959, it developed its own mysticism and liturgy, strongly influenced by the Old Testament. Once the religion of the kingdom of Ethiopia, its mythology identifies the first emperor, Negus Menelik I, as the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. In fact the Ark of the Alliance containing the Tables of the Ten Commandments is said to have been sent to Ethiopia by King Solomon himself to be kept there, as it still is today, in the Holy of Holies of the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion in Aksum. During their lives, the faithful make numerous pilgrimages and gradually gain access to the most sacred parts of the temples.

#### Lalibela, a Medieval Monastic Ethiopian City

One of the most famous Ethiopian Orthodox churches, after Our Lady Mary of Zion's in Aksum, is that of Saint George, in the holy town of Lalibela, where the devout come to purify themselves through holy water and the agency of the cross. An important pilgrimage site, this 13<sup>th</sup> century monolithic basilica is part of a complex of churches hewn into the mountain rock, where the faithful come literally to nest, to become one with the holy place. These pictures by the Italian photographer Anthony Pappone were taken at the Orthodox Easter in 2011.

#### An Eritrean Orthodox Church in Geneva

In Geneva, there are several Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Churches. Some recognize the authority of the patriarch and archbishop of Aksum, *abune* Mathias, who lives in Addis Ababa. Others follow the teachings of Bishop Abba Yesehaq, who lived in the United States and founded "the Ethiopian Orthodox community of the Western hemisphere". For its liturgy, each of these Churches possesses a model of the Ark of the Alliance, whose original is said to be in Aksum. The Genevan photographer Christian Lutz was

welcomed into the parish of *Abune* Habtom, which meets in the Catholic church of Saint Hippolyte, in Le Grand-Saconnex near Geneva. On the evening of 6 January 2018, a marriage, as well as two baptisms and the Orthodox New Year, were being celebrated in great rejoicing.

### 1.2. The many Faces of African Christianity

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Pope Nicholas V granted the Portuguese king Henry the Navigator the privilege to explore Africa and convert its inhabitants or reduce them to slavery. For four centuries, proslavery Europe limited its presence mainly to the coast, where the missionaries' influence was limited. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, evangelization became a priority for the colonizing countries which committed themselves to protecting all forms of Christian missions. Fired with zealous proselytism, the evangelists who devoted themselves to missionary work found in it a way of coming closer to God, whatever the risks or suffering involved. After decolonization, the Christian Churches swiftly became independent and began to diversify. Today the "Awakening Churches", particularly the Pentecostals, are very widespread. They emphasize supernatural "graces" such as the "gift of languages", the discernment of spirits or prophecy; graces which have particular resonance among populations in which possession cults and mediums were prevalent.

#### Zambia, a Landscape peppered with Churches

There are sometimes dozens of Christian denominations on a local and regional level, hundreds on a national one. The traditional Catholic and Reformed Churches, which became established in the colonial period, have been widely abandoned in favour of the "Awakening Churches", often Pentecostal Evangelist or Baptist, and a host of other denominations at times in fierce competition with each other in the hope of one day becoming "Megachurches". The denominational networks thus formed are having an increasing influence on everyone's social, political and economic life.



### 1.3. Prophetism, Pentecostalism and “New Jerusalems”

Throughout the colonial period, former converts of the European evangelical missions became preachers and predicators. Some turned into real prophets, announcing the return of Christ to earth mentioned in the Scriptures, but this was a new Christ – a black one. They then founded their own Churches, like Simon Kimbangu, Kimpa Vita, Simão Toko, Nongqawuse, Nonhetha Nkwenkwe... Often these prophets experienced a revelation through divine communion: they were inspired by the Holy Spirit or approached by angels, in a dream or fit of madness, after an ordeal (illness, serious accident...), or even a “temporary death” with shamanistic aspects. These prophetic movements, capable of mobilizing crowds, were quickly associated with a political struggle for emancipation and independence, which would earn them a great deal of suspicion and violent repression. One of the most noteworthy movements, with millions of followers in the world, is Kimbanguism which will celebrate its centenary in 2020.

#### Pentecostalism and Exorcism in Nigeria

For Pentecostals, all disease reveals the presence of the Evil One, who can manifest Himself through more or less violent trances affecting the faithful during worship. Inspired by the Holy Ghost, the preacher accompanies and soothes the patient in order to finally exorcize him or her by the laying on of hands. On the 29 May 2010, the photographer Christian Lutz spent a whole night following a service which took place in Oporoza, part of the kingdom of Gbaramatu, in the Niger delta of Nigeria. Many women fell into trances and the pastor treated them by the laying on of hands, sometimes several times.

#### The Kimbanguist Community in Geneva

Since 1989, Congolese residents in French-speaking Switzerland have held weekly services of worship between Lausanne and Geneva. On the 2 December 2017, in the parish of Christ-Roi in Lancy, the photographer Christian Lutz attended the funeral of a high dignitary of the Kimbanguist diaspora. A large number of delegates, from different European countries, were present. Other photographs were taken during a regular service in a room of the Protestant parish of Lignon. They show the fervour in contemplation and prayer characteristic of the Kimbanguists.

#### Individual Destinies: an Abandoned Prophet

As elsewhere in the world, a vast number of prophets have succeeded each other without ever managing to convince a large enough flock to found a lasting movement. Paul Kutwayi Fundi, known as “Jesus Christ of Chingalala” is an example of a prophet who for a while had a certain amount of success. Having settled in the village of Mbalakanyi (north-western Zambia) some twenty years ago, this once charismatic leader benefited from the collapse of possession cults and the ancestor cult, but today he has only two disciples left, his two common-law wives.

### “Train Church” or when Trains turn into Places of Worship

In 1986, the South African photographer Santu Mofokeng plunged into the world of the tilting trains of the Soweto-Johannesburg line. In each train, two or three carriages were the meeting place for Christians gathered together to pray, sing and dance, whirling around and stamping their feet to the rhythm of bells and percussion music improvised on the compartments’ bodywork. This veritable daily ritual afforded these believers moments of ecstasy, of spiritual catharsis, as the scenery flashed by.

### 1.4. Forms of Islam in Africa

The diversity of African Islam has been little recognized. Outside the main currents existing elsewhere (Sunni, Shiite, Kharijite like the Ibadites and Mozabites in Algeria), there are a large number of mystical Sufi brotherhoods called *turuq* (sing. *tariqa*, spiritual path) whose followers spend their whole lives searching for communion with the divine: Tijaniyya, Rahmaniyya, Shâdhiliyya, Aissawiyya, Idrîsiyya, Mouridiyya, etc. Within these brotherhoods, religious ecstasy is sometimes sought through body techniques ranging from asceticism to trance via meditation, song, dance or flagellation. Sufi sheiks and marabouts offer followers religious guidance. In sub-Saharan Africa particularly, Islam also cohabits with indigenous beliefs and practices, such as possession or saints’ cults and forms of divination or exorcism. For these reasons especially, African Islam, in its diversity and tolerance, is today suffering from the onslaughts of Salafist groups using terror: Boko Haram, Ansar ad-Dine, al Shebab, Al Qaïda in the Islamic Maghrib, etc.

#### The Murid Community in Geneva

The photographer Christian Lutz met the Genevan Mourid community, which had gathered at the Maison des Associations, on 13 January 2018, at an evening for reverential contemplation following the recent death of the General Caliph of the Mourids, Serigne Sidy Mokhtar Mbacke, in the holy city of Touba (Senegal).

#### The Baye Fall, a Senegalese Brotherhood

The Murids constitute the largest Senegalese maraboutic Muslim brotherhood, with well-developed international networks. Founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Sheik Ahmadou Bamba and his disciple Sheik Ibrahima Fall, whose devotees are the Baye Fall, recognizable on these photos by the importance they attach to their dress code. They also wear Quranic amulets which protect them. Practising self-denial, these followers devote their lives to their sheik’s teachings. The pilgrimage they make several times in the course of their lives to the founders’ tomb at Touba is a time of intense exaltation for them.

These pictures were taken in 2012-2013 by Fabrice Monteiro, a Belgian-Beninese photographer who lives in Dakar.



### 1.5. Judaism in Africa

The Jews left their mark on the cultures of North Africa, including the Islamic ones, in the field of crafts, the silver or goldsmith's trade and pottery in particular. Of Sephardic (Spain) and Mizrahi (the Orient) origin, many of them fled the Visigothic invasions in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and settled in the big towns still Byzantine. At the same time, several Berber groups, including the Jarawa and Nefusa, converted to Judaism and revolted against the Arabo-Muslim conquest. Other Jews would arrive in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, fleeing the Catholic repression of the Reconquista in Spain, after the fall of the Sultan of Grenada in 1492. The less known Ethiopian "Beta Israel" Jews, commonly called "Falashas", would be displaced to Israel during the 1980s and 90s. Moreover, a truly remarkable phenomenon can be observed today: indigenous African societies "are discovering themselves" and proclaiming themselves Jewish in many countries: the Zakkar (Mali), House of Israel (Ghana), Beth Yeshuva (Cameroon), Nyambo (Tanzania), Lemba (Zimbabwe), Hebrews of Havila (Rwanda and Burundi), Abayadaya (Uganda)...

### Jewish Religious Art in the Maghreb, a very old presence

In Morocco, Jewish art preceded Islamic art. That is why some motifs, such as the Star of David attested in Morocco since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, are found on objects for which it is sometimes difficult to determine whether they were used by Jews or Muslims. Such is the case for this bracket, which may have been used for hanging either mosque lamps or commemorative lamps in synagogues. The representation of a hand had an apotropaic aspect. Similarly decorated with the Star of David, it was often found in the form of a pendant to ward off the evil eye. The *hanouka* or "Festival of Lights" lamp commemorates the reopening (second inauguration) of the second temple of Jerusalem.

### *Veiled Woman on a Beachfront*, video by Theo Eshetu

Theo Eshetu created this video installation from images of a woman dressed in a burqa walking along a beach on Lamu Island (Kenya). The dress evoking a rigoristic, misogynous and patriarchal expression of faith also makes us reflect on the dialectics of the veiled – unveiled body. For the artist, the image which gradually becomes abstract alludes to the archetype of the Great Mother. Distorted along a symmetric vertical axis, the image turns into a veritable Rorschach test encouraging contemplation.





# Divination, Death and the Ancestors

Before conversion to the monotheisms from the north, Africa was made up of several thousand traditional societies, each with its own religious system. Despite the erosion of practices, in many cases the ancestor cult, in which ancestors' souls are invoked, has remained primordial. Deceased kin, considered to be still present among the living, help the latter and protect them. To obtain good health and fertility, their descendants worship them with prayers, offerings and sacrifices on altars devoted to them or before reliquaries containing their bones. Also responsible for certain misfortunes, for cases of "possession" attributed to their spirits, ancestors can make their voices heard during "possession trances", by taking hold of the body of certain descendants, who have become "mediums", and speaking through them. Another pillar of traditional religions, divination, is practised in order to detect the influence of ancestors and other spirits and to elucidate major events, such as death.

### 2.1. Using Divination to untangle the Invisible

Today practised both in town and country and in all contexts, divination is a fundamental element of African systems of religious thought. It makes it possible to reveal the influence of the gods, ancestors and any other category of spirits in men's lives. Divination makes it possible to ascertain the cause of events. It gives meaning to individual and group experiences; it "realigns" the different universes and links the microcosm of the oracle to the macrocosm of the world. Divination is essentially the work of specialists, diviners, who have sometimes been possessed by an ancestor who was himself a diviner or who may fall into a state of trance. Expert psychologists, diviners use "mechanical" and random techniques, oracles, which take an infinite number of forms: baskets, animals, games, rubbing and poison oracles, autopsies and the reading of entrails, etc. They are often aided by auxiliary spirits which guide them and "open their eyes" to the invisible.

#### A Diviner at Work

Samusole the diviner is trying to determine the cause of a patient's mental illness. His basket contains dozens of figurines and other divinatory objects. It is decorated with red and white clay and genet skins to ward off evil spirits, as well as to symbolize nocturnal vision. On his right is a bunch of arrows, each one representing a client who has requested divination in the context of a death, and a basket in which he keeps all his instruments. The diagnosis made that day, a problem concerning the ancestors and the *mahamba* spirits associated with them, was invalidated a few months later by another diviner in favour of a witchcraft accusation.

### 2.2. Madagascar, the Island where the Dead do not Die

Every society treats the dead coherently, specifically and efficiently. Religion provides an interpretation for the destiny of the often multiple spiritual elements which have left the individual's body: "soul", "spirit", "shadow", etc. One of the striking features of Malagasy societies – which are different from those of the continent due to their Asian origin – is their surprising investment in funerary rituals and monuments. The goal of a successful life is in a way to prepare as well as possible one's eternal stay in the beyond. Composed of dolmens and decorated with monumental wooden carvings, tombs are more perennial constructions than living people's actual dwellings. As the souls of the deceased do not join the ancestors until the skeleton has lost all its flesh, a practice known as "turning the dead" is observed regularly. Once the corpse has been dug up, the bones are cleaned and, wrapped in shrouds, carried in procession around the grave, before being put back into the ground.

### The Tombs and Funerary Monuments of Madagascar

During his visits and research missions to Madagascar between 1941 and 1965, the linguist and ethnologist Jacques Faublée took more than 12,600 photos. As perennial and omnipresent landmarks of the country, tombs, necropolises and other funerary monuments are naturally an important part of the corpus of images built up by this specialist of Arabo-Malagasy manuscripts.

### 2.3. Finding One's Ancestors in Gabon

These reliquary figures, called *nlo byeri*, were formerly intended for the lineage ancestor cult among the Fang and the Kota of Gabon. As soon as they became adults, young men were initiated into the regular manipulation of bones (long bones, skulls) coated with red clay and kept in bark boxes (*nsek byen*) or bundles of cloth, near which animals were sacrificed. This cult disappeared in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to make way for Christianity and, in some regions, for a new cult descended from it: *bwiti*. This is a lineage cult meant to favour contact with ancestors' spirits and in which reliquaries are no longer used. In some cases, *bwiti* has become a kind of anti-sorcerer cult and is now open to women. Links with ancestors are sought, particularly by taking *iboga*, an alkaloid drug provoking ecstasy and spectacular hallucinations.

### 2.4. Sacrifice and the Food of the Gods

Sacrifices are part of the standard liturgy of indigenous religions. Whether it be ancestors' souls, deities or minor spirits which are concerned, they must be fed regularly. Animals (chickens, goats, oxen, dogs) are sacrificed at shrines inhabited by various spirits who above all drink their blood. Other foods (flour, eggs, oil, etc.) and drinks, often alcoholic (gin, beer) complete the meal. Offerings of manufactured objects (textiles, beads, crockery), carved figurines, or even perfume, tobacco and money may be placed at some shrines as well. The sacrifice can also be dedicated to a spirit by offering an animal directly to an individual in the throes of a trance and possessed by the spirit who slays it "with its own hands". Depending on the culture and on its degree of importance, shrines are maintained and sacrifices made by household members or duly initiated priests.

#### Sacrifice among the Bobo of Burkina Faso

Among the Bobo of Burkina Faso, offerings and sacrifices are frequently practised to ensure the ancestors' goodwill. Chickens and goats are killed on sacrificial altars according to a code prescribing the victims suitable for every category of spirits. The sex and coat of each animal are chosen depending on the supernatural power with which one wishes to communicate. These sacrifices are accompanied

by libations of millet beer. Beer and meat are then shared out amongst all the participants, according to the hierarchy of the village's lineage systems.

### **Feeding the Ancestors among the Luvale of Zambia**

Ancestor cults are no longer a regular practice among the Luvale of Zambia. However, in certain circumstances, when the ancestors have reminded the living of their presence by afflicting them with various ills, ceremonies in homage to them may be organized to re-establish a peaceful balance. These consist in sacrificing an ox whose blood is poured onto a pile of bracelets, each representing a village member, at the foot of the ancestors' "tree altars". White cotton, flour and millet beer are offered up while clanic formulae are recited and the spear symbolizing the village chief's lineage is stuck into the ground.

### ***The Festival of Sacrifice*, video by Theo Eshetu**

Here Theo Eshetu returns to the celebration of a sacrifice, which rekindles the very origins of religious thought. Based on Chateaubriand's reflection: "All religions begin with sacrifice", *The Festival of Sacrifice* is part of a series of videos which examine certain aspects of Islamic culture in order to explore the formal qualities of representation and the underlying connections between cultures. Filmed on Lamu Island during the Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) celebrations, by multiplying the images, the video recreates the kaleidoscopic patterns which underline the event's spiritual aspect.







# Becoming One with the Spirits: Possession Trances

Possession cults using trances are legion, often designated by a generic term which masks their astonishing diversity : *ngoma*, *zar*, *bori*, *hamba*, *bwiti*, *voodoo*, *zebola*, etc. Their rituals, invariably accompanied by songs and drumming, lead up to a form of religious ecstasy comparable to other forms of rapture or states of transformed consciousness, as among mystics of other religions. Individuals who attain a state of “trance”, for a time, no longer controls their own body or consciousness. They embody the deity who has taken hold of them. Rolled upward eyes and a thrown back head are the first symptoms. Then come convulsions, often accompanied by cries, a foaming mouth, a trembling body and large erratic movements of the limbs. Finally, the person collapses on the ground, racked with spasms. In the meantime, the embodied spirit may address the audience in the possessed person's voice. Depending on the degree of initiation, the spirit's presence is gradually controlled, thus creating veritable choreographies.

## **Zar Possession, video by Theo Eshetu**

With, in the background, the ancient “matriarchal” music of the Zar cult, which originated in Ethiopia, Theo Eshetu's video installation recreates both the visual experience of the illuminations which lead followers into a state of trance and the transformative effects the music has on them. Zar, which in its original form included sacrificial rites, blood and intoxication, has become over the years a space of liberation and empowerment for women, involving more recently the practice of oriental dancing. The video images, taken in Cairo among the last authentic Zar devotees, suggest parallels between the spiritual and ritual origins of this music and those still apparent in cults belonging to other cultures and times, such as Haitian voodoo.

### 3.1. Mahamba, Ambivalent Spirits in Central Africa

In south-west Central Africa, many misfortunes or illnesses are attributed to the influence of spirits called *mahamba*, which “possess” their victims. *Mahamba* are said to be summonsed by ancestors when they wish to strongly influence one of their adult descendants. They can become angry if they feel neglected or because they want a successor to their title or profession (blacksmith, hunter, circumciser, diviner) to be named. To remedy this, the cure, consisting of dancing to the sound of drums, ablutions and medicinal plants, is aimed at revealing the presence of the spirits in the bodies of patients who, in turn, walk around the gathering taking on the behavioural characteristics peculiar to each spirit. The treatment is long. Patients are isolated and must respect prohibitions. In order to be completely cured, they are finally washed in the river or a lake, immersed with their clothes as well as all the altars and devices meant to protect them.

#### A Fertility Cult

Chipango is a cult of possession by *mahamba* spirits intended to treat fertility problems. For moral reasons, the ancestors may block fecundity by summonsing several *mahamba* to exercise their power over a woman's body. A long ritual sequence, which may last longer than the nine months of pregnancy, aims at re-establishing a positive connection with the ancestors and “taming” the *mahamba*'s presence in order to enlist their aid in procreation. Making use of any number of fertility symbols taken from the natural environment, these possession rituals mark the young mother's entry into and exit from the house where she lives cloistered until after childbirth.

#### A Cult to the Wind Spirits

Jila is an example of what are called the “air” or “wind *mahamba*”, spirits of affliction no longer connected to kinship. Followers voluntarily join a religious and therapeutic assembly in which the liturgy is full of symbolism inherited from the colonial period: soldiers and policemen, flags, nurses, chairs, white clothes and hats... The presence of “white spirits” was found in many other possession cults which appeared in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Jila has its own ethics, distinct from lineage morality, which are expressed in songs and preaching, as well as in trance sessions during which followers admit the wrongs they have committed and the influence this has had on their health.

### 3.2. Beninese Voodoo

“Voodoo” is probably the only indigenous African religion whose name is known to a wide public. Practised by the Fon of Benin and Togo in particular, it is characterized by possession rituals. Taking its name from a Yoruba word meaning “god”, it has similarities with this people's religion in Nigeria. Mawu is the “supreme god”, master of all other

gods. The priests (*hougan*) and priestesses (*mambo*) invoke Papa Legba to open the door of the world of gods and spirits, to which humans must be connected. Then songs, dances, offerings and sacrifices honour: Gu, the god of war and blacksmiths; Hevioso, the god of thunderstorms and lightening; Damballa, related to knowledge; Sakpata, a deity associated with illness and therefore recovery; Erzulie Freda, the god of love, etc. Voodoo was a religion closely linked to the social and political organization of the old Fon Empire, in which power was regarded as sacred and embodied in the person of the king.

#### Shrines and Temples of Beninese voodoo

Despite the repression of the Marxist government (1975-1990) which made voodoo illegal, shrines dedicated to the spirits of the *vodun* pantheon are today omnipresent, as are initiation “convents” and places of worship. At the entrance of every village or, in towns, of every district, there is a shrine dedicated to Legba, a sort of vaguely anthropomorphic mound of red earth flanked by a wooden or iron phallus; “Tron”, shrines auspicious for wealth; shrines dedicated to family *vodun*; temples; fresques or monuments dedicated to the royal lineages of Abomey, etc.

### 3.3. African Gods in Haitian Vodou

The slave trade was responsible for the spreading of African possession cults all over the Americas and the Caribbean. Among the best known figure Haitian vodou, Santeria and Palo Monte in Cuba, various forms of Candomblé in Brazil, Maria Lionza in Venezuela, as well as dozens of others, less famous. In Haiti, a Christian saint is associated with each deity (*lwa*, or “mystery”) of Fon (Benin), Ewe (Ghana, Togo), Yoruba (Nigeria) or Kongo (Congo, Angola) origin and there are also links with the ancient beliefs of the first inhabitants, the Taino Indians. Initiates worship these dozens of *lwa*, classified into twenty-one “nations”, through regular offerings on personal altars. They also take part in collective cults in temples called peristyles, as well as in processions and pilgrimages in which one scene of trance follows another. The foremost spirits include Papa Legba, Erzulie Freda and the Marasa, a deity of twins considered to be the children of the creator “Bondye”.

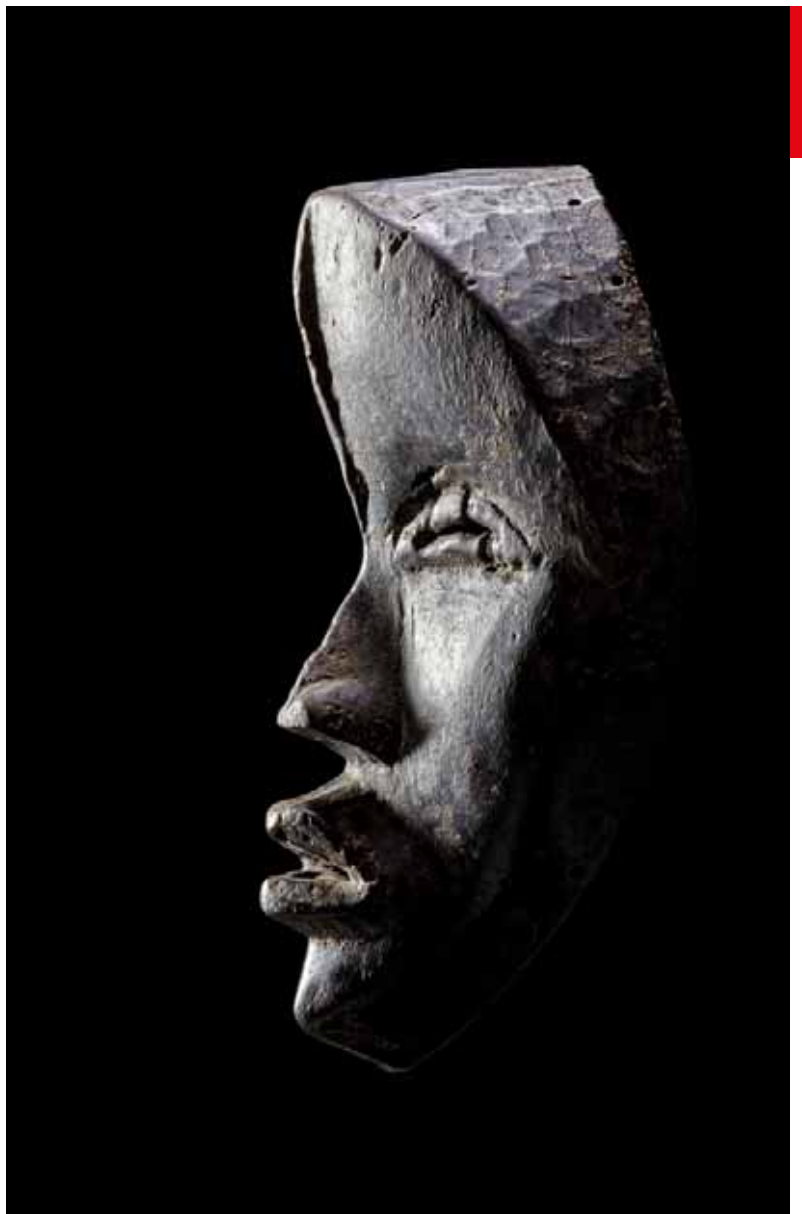
#### Vodou Pilgrimages in Haiti

For more than twenty years, the Franco-Swiss photographer Jean-Pierre Grandjean has dedicated most of his photographic work to the theme of religions. In 2003, he made a striking report on vodou followers in Haiti.

It is there, on All Saints Day, that vodou followers celebrate the *lwa* Baron Samdi in the utmost exaltation. They turn into Guede, possessed by the spirits of death. Intoxicated by Clairin rum spiked with chilli peppers, they stroll around, dance and shout making obscene gestures before washing down the tombs.



Every July in Haiti, two important pilgrimages take place. At Bassin Saint-Jacques, vodou devotees smear themselves with mud in the holy waters. Once in a trance and possessed by their *lwa*, they sacrifice cocks, goats and oxen in honour of Ogou Feray, god of fire and iron, and patron saint of blacksmiths and warriors. The other ceremony is dedicated to Mètès Philomise, the maritime spirit named after Saint Philomena. After imploring her for protection, the jubilant crowd on the beach sees a large number of followers fall into trances. Afterwards they bathe in the sea and purify themselves, as at Saint-Jacques, using medicinal herbs.





# The Magico-religious Universes, Entangled Forces

The magico-religious universes of African societies are not confined to monotheisms, ancestors and possession cults, that is to a defined set of beliefs rekindled by regular cults that may be “forgotten” for a while after leaving the chapel. They are much vaster, more complex and ramified. These universes pervade individuals’ everyday lives. To the “main religion” must be “added” a certain number of magico-religious practices which in principle it is hard for the individual to avoid : the initiation cycles concerning young men and women, and the masks associated with them ; the means of defence against sorcery and of combating it ; the sacred power of certain chiefs ; the individual or secondary cults, like those of the spiritual spouses, the twin spirits, the spirits of the earth and those of sacred woods or of rivers and streams.







#### 4.1. Masks, Sacraments on the Path of Life

Unlike possession, sacred masks are the visible incarnation of a spirit “in whose body” a dancer enters. Wearing these masks cannot but profoundly alter the wearer’s state of consciousness. The latter sometimes describes their experience as a real moment of rapture, sufficiently powerful to cause temporary amnesia. Masks are generally used to construct gender distinctions and the complementarity of the sexes. They appear at initiation rites, agrarian or funeral rites and, in some cases, constitute veritable “sacraments” punctuating the path of a person’s life. Masks have a strong effect on the crowd, which may find itself transported, due to fear of or admiration for the presence of the spirits they embody. Women are afraid of, and cannot approach or even see, certain masks. Coming into contact with them could cause sterility, even death.

#### The Power of Masks

Among the Luvale of Zambia, powerful, armed masks like *kalelwa* and *chikunza* are feared by all non-initiates and can even induce a real trance in women. Thus, at the close of boys’ initiation rites called *mukanda*, a *chizaluke*, although a “weak” mask, which dances with the young initiates’ mothers, can be sufficient to send them into an uncontrolled state of trance. A woman then applies medicinal herbs to the bodies of the possessed with a flat basket (*lwalo*) in order to cool them down and bring them back to their senses.

#### 4.2. Protecting oneself from all forms of Sorcery

Sorcery, wizardry and witchcraft take on a multitude of forms corresponding to very distinct representations and practices. To simplify, “congenital” witchcraft is distinguished from “acquired” sorcery. The first supposes that an individual carries within himself the essence of evil, which sometimes operates involuntarily. For example he or she may have the gift of leaving their body at night to take the form of were-beings in the shape of animals. The second consists in the use of magical objects to do harm. Discourses on sorcery and witchcraft always have an underlying social dimension: witches and sorcerers practise everything condemned by the ancestors’ and deities’ morality. Although the established religions help to protect their followers from sorcery and witchcraft, their omnipresence in all socio-economic spheres – as much in towns as in the rural world, in sub-Saharan traditional societies as in Muslim or Christian worlds – requires additional individual or collective means of protection.

#### Objects for doing Evil among the Luvale

Where there are powerful chiefs, even “sacred kings”, the magical incarnations of leopards, the latter protect their people from sorcerers’ intrigues. They sometimes preside over witchcraft trials. However, the powers invested in them and the supernatural powers attributed to them often make them the first suspects! In Central Africa anti-witchcraft movements, whose members seek out objects of enchantment, are regularly observed. At best, the designated spell casters are “washed” or exorcized. At worst they are ostracized, expelled or subjected to more violent physical punishments.

#### 4.3. Minkisi, the Kongo’s Power Objects

Veritable “power objects” intended to act on both men and spirits, the Kongo’s *minkisi* (sing. *nkisi*) are “armed” with magic substances and animated by ritual specialists called *nganga*. These were responses to the requests of individuals who felt themselves afflicted or threatened by evil spirits: requests to restore success to a hunter, to find and neutralize a sorcerer or to protect a village from theft and attacks. Some were used to resolve conflicts between individuals, families or clans. The many nails covering the surface of these objects are related to the pain one wanted to inflict on the *nkisi*’s spirit to make it angry and begin to persecute the designated victim! The most important magic substances are encapsulated behind a mirror on the abdomen. Mirrors, like white clay or the orifices of certain seashells, are related to the world of the ancestors, a virtual world beneath the water’s surface and the opposite of the world of the living.

#### 4.4. Mami Wata, a Deity who has become an Icon

Mami Wata is first and foremost an ambivalent spiritual being, who can bestow wealth or cast spells. With her half-woman, half-fish mermaid appearance and the presence of snakes, she is seductive and repulsive. Linked to the

aquatic world, she is part of the pantheon of different possession cults, including Beninese voodoo. Mami Wata has become an icon worshipped with offerings that are usually white: luxury products (beads, fabric, flowers, perfume) or white goats and chickens. A real mystery of African religious iconography, her image, often combined with exotic representations (Hindu deities, Catholic saints or Islamic icons) has now spread all over sub-Saharan Africa. Frequently represented with pale skin, she is typical of the “new spirits” who originated in the colonial period. The MEG possesses the first known mask of Mami Wata in the guise of an Asian snake-charmer.

#### 4.5. Twins, a Curse or a Blessing?

Everywhere the birth of twins has given rise to reflection. In sub-Saharan Africa, societies which abhor twinship emphasize the abnormality of such births and the problems they pose. Who is the eldest? How can two beings occupy the same social position in a lineage? How to cope with two bodies and only one soul to reincarnate? In other societies it is a blessing for twins are associated with mythological twins possessing perfect characteristics. For the Bozo, the Bamana or the Dogon, the origin of humanity consisted of opposite sex twins. As a reminder of this, the birth of male or female twins is always greeted joyously. They have spectacular charisma which makes them extraordinary beings. Among the Fon, the Yoruba, or the Ewe of West Africa, they are credited with the gift of bringing well-being, health, peace and abundance by their mere presence. Altars, either personal or collective, are dedicated to them in temples.

##### The Festival of Twins in Accra

Among the Ga in the Accra region (Ghana), as elsewhere in West Africa, twins have a special mystical aura. Every year in August, a big festival is devoted to them in the old town of Georgetown. Blessed by the gods thanks to this twin birth, parents consult a medium, who in a trance is capable of conversing with the spirit of “doubles”, in order to obtain advice. They dress their children in white, the symbol of purity, mark their skin with white clay, prepare medicine altars and distribute an abundance of food to all visitors. At the end of the day, all the participants purify themselves in the waters of the local river and leave medicines and offerings there.

##### River. Caribbean twins sing African spirituality

The twin sisters Lisa-Kainde and Naomi Diaz form the group Ibeyi, “twins” in the Yoruba language (Nigeria). Drawing on the Afro-Cuban cultures of their father, once a member of the Buena Vista Social Club, and the Afro-Venezuelan ones of their mother, playing Afro-American instruments and studying Yoruba music, in 2014 they made the video clip *River*. *River* is a soul and “R&B” song whose text is real Afro-American gospel. It is full of symbols “central” to African religions, including the river (soothing) in whose lustral waters one bathes... not to mention twin symbolism.










# Epilogue

## Religious Emotion: Changing our gaze

Whether they be seized by the gods and carried off into a series of trances, engaged in deep, serene introspection, elated among the crowd at a pilgrimage, scared by the embodiment of a spirit in a mask or delighted by the embodiment of another spirit, assisted by an auxiliary spirit in practising divination, in the grip of the effects of an alkaloid drug when attempting to communicate with their ancestors, engaged in the torments of a violent struggle with the forces of evil, shaken by exorcism through the laying on of hands, temporarily inhabited by spirits who speak through them or whether they leave their body temporarily to receive a divine prophetic message, whether their personality be momentarily obliterated by the mask they wear, whether in a dream or magically they are transformed and take on the form of an animal, whether they perceive with emotion the presence of the Holy Ghost or feel galvanized into action by the presence of their god, the followers of all the religions can experience particularly strong emotional states. As claimed by the anthropologist Ioan Lewis (1971) quoted in the introduction, for believers this mystical experience is often a dominant aspect in religious practice compared to ritual, even to faith itself.

At the end of this overview of African religious practices, a certain number of other paths of thought emerge.

Although the choice of examples was inevitably incomplete, it has shown the great diversity and often little-known dynamism of religions in Africa and the African diaspora. In their complexity and vitality, and in their relationships with each other, they form an exceptional seedbed of creativity, integrated into or adapted to different political and socio-economic realities in each place and time. Among the many forms given to monotheisms, today it is a Manichaeism opposing God to the forces of evil which seems to predominate, whereas in the more fragmented religions, which can be termed indigenous, the gods and spirits reveal more ambivalent powers. However, these religions have one thing in common: sacrifice, the climax of worship, whether it be real, symbolic or part of the founding myth. The principle of ambivalence in indigenous religions is clearly expressed by the fact that the force of what causes evil, misfortune and illness can be reversed to serve the living and bring good, happiness and health. This ambivalence, often coupled with an openness to syncretism, the capacity to integrate, assimilate and adopt new spirits and deities, enables traditional cults to remain the driving force behind adaptation to the changes affecting the lives of individuals in society. While Haitian vodou is the most eloquent example, other possession cults, adaptation to forms of divination or the evolution of discourses on witchcraft could also be mentioned.



Ignorance of African religions is not merely a question of knowledge. It is also a matter of cultural prejudices which sometimes create a hostile feeling towards them. So numerous and yet so little-known to the public, they still suffer from a negative image inherited from the generalized colonial stigma attached to them. Even after independence, many evils are still attributed to indigenous religions, as well as to African Islam and the Christian churches born in Africa, such as acting as brakes to the blossoming of the proclaimed values of “civilization”, “progress” and “development” which were the creed of colonizers and their missionary avatars. What is left of this disrepute has today been reinforced by an unfavourable image in the media that above all report certain African religions’ association with conflictual situations of which they are generally not the cause. For example, as Jean-François Bayart reminds us in his preface, many armed conflicts have been unjustly explained by an antagonism between Islam and Christianity. Ecstatic practices and sacrificial rituals also remain foils for many of us. It is important to understand the heritage of this rejection and the feeling linked to it in order to be able to open one’s mind to the knowledge of the diversity of religious experience in Africa.

Therefore, it is a sensitive, rather than a theoretical or encyclopaedic, approach which has been chosen; an approach intended to increase both African and European perspectives on the experience of believers. The different photographers’ gazes proposed in the exhibition have managed to intuitively illustrate certain aspects of the diversity of the emotional states believers are transported into by their devotion, whether in regular worship, calendrical events or pilgrimages. Their images invite us to renew our gaze, to call it into question. From the outset, this was the case for the two studio photographs, Holy 1 and Holy 2, from the “Vues de l’esprit” series by Fabrice Monteiro, who forces us to question what we believe we see or recognize. Anthony Pappone’s images take us to the heart of the congregation at Orthodox Easter in Lalibela, which celebrates the resurrection of Christ. Santu Mofokeng leaves imprinted on our memory images of the religious fervour and catharsis found in the train churches among the tilting trains of Johannesburg. Fabrice Monteiro then surprises us with the charisma of the Baye Fall, which he represents however not so much in their ecstatic activities as in poses and in meticulously studied lighting. The photographer Jean-Pierre Grandjean has shared with our visitors his striking experience of the ecstasy of voodoo

followers in Haiti. The often collective possession trances during which men and women embody gods are some of the most impressive. Christian Lutz takes a sensitive yet lucid look at several religious communities: among the Pentacostalists of Nigeria, it is the catharsis of trances and exorcism through the laying on of hands that he highlights; in Geneva, it is the reverence and joy in suffering among the Kimbanguists, the beatitude of an Eritrean Orthodox priest and the deep contemplation of the Murids during the pain of mourning...

Finally, the video director Theo Eshetu, our artist in residence, offers us a transversal perspective articulating the four parts which make up the exhibition. He invites us to reflect on the dialectics between the material and immaterial, visible and invisible, embodied or disembodied aspects of religions, as well as on the emotive dimensions induced in subjects by music and images, while reminding us of the importance of sacrifice in all religions. Through his five video installations, reproduced in this catalogue, Theo Eshetu suggests to us among other things that the development of reflection and knowledge can go hand in hand with emotional commitment. By using his art as an invitation to immerse ourselves in religious universes totally unfamiliar to us, seeking to produce in visitors alternately astonishment, contemplation and introspection, fascination and catharsis, or a sensation of hypnosis, he applies a system of acceptance enabling us to begin to apprehend religious practices to say the very least little-known, as well as subjects which we perhaps did not want to confront. An invitation to lessen our grip on ourselves, if not to flirt with ecstasy.

### ***The Phi Phenomenon, video by Theo Eshetu***

Animating hundreds of photographs of African religious objects from the MEG’s collection taken by Johnathan Watts, Theo Eshetu uses an extensive corpus to treat the question of visual perception and its effects in a ritual context. The phi phenomenon is the brain’s perception of movement, following the appearance of a succession of images which are in fact static. These are linked together by a movement or transformation which does not exist in reality, the brain compensating “realistically” for this lack of transition. The installation’s hypnotic effect recalls the use of objects in rites while at the same time reaffirming the quest for religious emotion and, no doubt, the vanity of attempts to represent the invisible and inexpressible. It refers the viewer to oblivion, to emptiness.

## PUBLICATION

### Catalogue

#### **Afrique**

##### **Les religions de l'extase**

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### Sommaire

#### **AFRIQUE**

##### **Les religions de l'extase**

**Préface** de Jean-François Bayart

**Avant-propos** par l'auteur Boris Wastiau

#### **PROLOGUE – S'APPROCHER DU DIVIN**

*Metamorphosis*, photo de Mohau Modisakeng

*Holy one, Holy two*, photos de Fabrice Monteiro

### **1. LES MONOTHÉISMES EN AFRIQUE: UNE DIFFUSION ANCIENNE**

#### **L'église orthodoxe éthiopienne et érythréenne**

Lalibela, cité monastique médiévale éthiopienne, photos d'Anthony Pappone  
La transe sur le chemin des pèlerins, *Trip to Mount Zuqulla* vidéo de Theo Eshetu  
Le mystique fondateur saint Gabra Manfas Qeddus  
Le halo des saints, rayonnement de la lumière spirituelle  
Rouleaux magiques protecteurs  
Les croix orthodoxes, symboles de vie éternelle  
Une église orthodoxe érythréenne à Genève, photos de Christian Lutz

#### **Le christianisme africain aux visages multiples**

Des églises qui jalonnent le paysage zambien, photos de Johnathan Watts  
Héroïques missionnaires ou candidats au martyre ?  
Dieux malgaches dans des vanneries  
Colonialisme, « œuvres missionnaires » et cartes à jouer

### **Prophétismes, pentecôtisme et nouvelles Jérusalem**

Pentecôtisme et exorcisme au Nigeria, photos de Christian Lutz

La communauté des kimbanguistes à Genève photos de Christian Lutz

Destins individuels : un prophète en déshérence

*Train Church*, ou quand les trains se muent en églises, photos de Santu Mofokeng

### **Les formes de l'islam en Afrique**

Manuscrit coranique avec recette de victoire au jihad

Un sabre votif pris lors de la chute de Kairouan

Trouvaille d'un naturaliste genevois en campagne

Les Baye Fall, confrérie mouride sénégalaise, photos de Fabrice Monteiro

La communauté mouride à Genève, photos de Christian Lutz

*Veiled Woman on a Beachfront*, vidéo de Theo Eshetu

### **Le judaïsme en Afrique**

L'art religieux juif au Maghreb, une présence ancienne

## **2. LA DIVINATION, LA MORT ET LES ANCÊTRES**

### **Appréhender l'invisible par la divination**

Lire la destinée avec le *sikidy* à Madagascar

*Tromba*, la divination par la transe de possession à Madagascar

Le « panier divinatoire » en Afrique centrale

Un devin en plein exercice

Les animaux dans la divination : l'oracle à souris et l'oracle à mygale

### **Madagascar. L'île où les morts ne meurent pas**

Photographies de Jacques Faublée

Du *lamba* au *lambamena*, des vêtements du quotidien à l'outre-tombe

### **Retrouver ses ancêtres au Gabon**

### **Le sacrifice et la nourriture des dieux**

Le sacrifice chez les Bobo du Burkina Faso, photos de Johnathan Watts

Nourrir les ancêtres chez les Luvalé de Zambie

*The Festival of Sacrifice*, vidéo de Theo Eshetu

## **3. FAIRE CORPS AVEC LES ESPRITS: LA TRANSE DE POSSESSION**

*Zar Possession*, vidéo de Theo Eshetu

### **Les mahamba, esprits ambivalents en Afrique centrale**

Un culte de fertilité

Un culte aux esprits du vent

### **Le vaudou béninois, une religion au quotidien**

Portraits modelés des vaudouisants à Porto-Novo (Bénin)

Les « bâtons de la rage », *makpo*

Les bochio, gardiens des maisons

### **Les dieux d'Afrique dans le vodou haïtien**

Les pèlerinages vodou en Haïti, photos de Jean-Pierre Grandjean

La cérémonie du Bois-Caïman

Les vèvè, diagrammes de l'univers religieux vodou



#### 4. LES UNIVERS MAGICO-RELIGIEUX: UN ENCHEVÊTREMENT DE FORCES

##### **Les masques, sacrements sur le parcours d'une vie**

La puissance des masques en Zambie  
Le « père » des masques initiatiques  
Le masque antisorcier d'une société secrète  
Des hommes possédés par les masques qu'ils portent

##### **Se protéger de toute forme de sorcellerie**

Des objets pour faire le mal chez les Luvale  
La diversité des amulettes gabonaises  
Les talismans malgaches  
Se protéger du diable et des maladies en Égypte  
Des masques pour débusquer les sorciers en Afrique de l'Ouest

##### **Les *minkisi*, objets-force des Kongo**

##### **Mami Wata, une divinité devenue icône**

##### **Les jumeaux, mauvais sort ou bénédiction ?**

Les jumeaux, ancêtres mythologiques dogon au Mali  
Le Festival des jumeaux à Accra (Ghana)  
*River*. Des jumelles caraïbes chantent la spiritualité africaine

#### 5. ÉPILOGUE: L'ÉMOTION RELIGIEUSE: FAIRE ÉVOLUER NOTRE REGARD

*The Phi Phenomenon / L'effet phi*, vidéo de Theo Eshetu

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#### #AfriqueExtase

 MEG Genève

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## KEY INFORMATIONS

### **Africa. The Ecstatic Religions** **From 18 may 2018 to 6 January 2019**

Temporary exhibition

#### **Press conference**

Wednesday 16 May 2018 at 10 a.m. at the MEG

#### **Opening Night**

Thursday 17 May 2018

6 p.m., opening doors

6.30 p.m., official speeches

7 p.m., toast

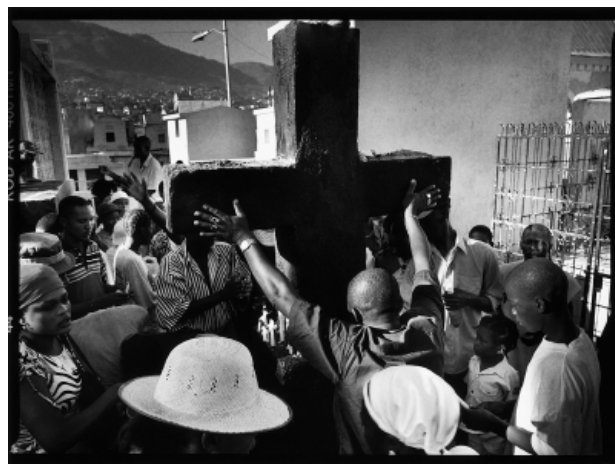
7.30-8.30 p.m., Sankoum Cissoko concert

8-10 p.m., DJ set with DJ Ras Mali (MEG gardens)

Exhibitions opened until 10 p.m., free entry

#### **Public opening**

Friday 18 May 2018 at 11 a.m.





## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### MEG

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Open from Tuesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Closed on Mondays, 25 December and 1 January

Permanent Exhibition: free admission  
Temporary Exhibition: Admission 9/6 CHF  
Free admission on the first Sunday of the month.  
Free for visitors under 18.

Audio guides are available at the reception desk.

You can also download on the App Store or Google Play our mobile app "The Ecstatic Religions".

Follow us on:



Our **MEG Shop** is open from Tuesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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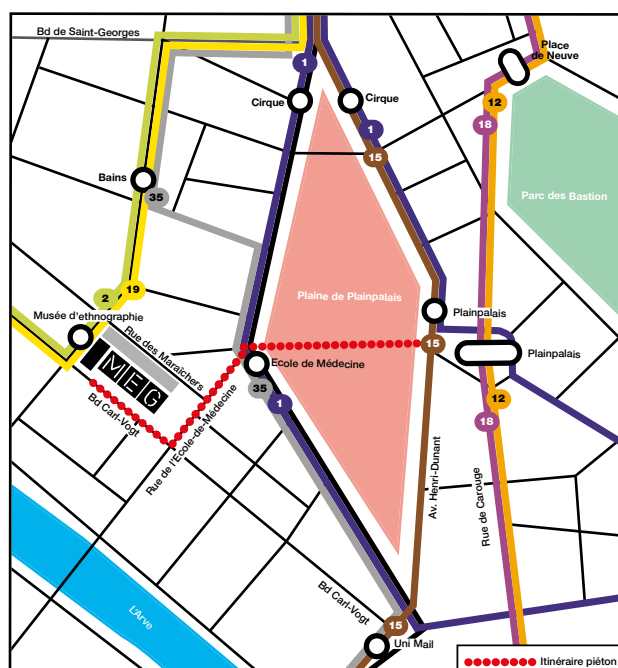
Our **MEG Café** is open from Tuesday to Sunday, 9.30 a.m. to 6.15 p.m.

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## LE MEG

The MEG (Ethnography Museum of Geneva) is a public institution which was founded by the Genevan anthropologist Eugène Pittard (1867-1962) in 1901. The museum curates objects illustrating human culture throughout history. It has a collection of some 70,000 works and a library with over 60,000 documents on world cultures. The MEG also houses a unique music library, the Archives internationales de musique populaire (AIMP), with over 16,000 hours of folk music recordings; the core of the archives is a collection of over 3,000 hours of historic recordings amassed by Constantin Brăiloiu between 1944 and 1958. The permanent exhibition displays one thousand objects from all five continents. The admission is free. The MEG also offers the public a cultural and scientific outreach programme, concerts, films and lecture cycles as well as stage shows. Since October 2014, the MEG has had a new building in which to display its riches. It was designed by the Zurich firm Graber & Pulver Architekten and stands on the site occupied by the MEG since 1941.

## OBJECTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE EXHIBITION



- [1] *Nzip byang akon* protection amulets against wounds at war or while hunting**  
Gabon, middle Ogooue or Ogooue-Ivindo  
Fang. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Horn, plant fibres, fur, metal, textile, organic matter  
Acquired from the pastor and missionary Fernand Grébert in 1917  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 007482  
Photo: ©MEG, J. Watts



- [2] *Aligôkpô* crozier-shaped sceptres recalling King Ghezo**  
Benin, Abomey  
Fon. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Wood, iron, brass  
Acquired in Paris in 1926 and 1927  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 010829



- [3] *Nago Yoruba* chief or king**  
Benin, Porto-Novo  
Nago-yoruba. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Terracotta, paint  
Acquired from G. Broux-Delarue in 1926  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 011532



- [4] *Initiate* carrying on his head the pot of fire decorated with red feathers, the symbol of the *vodun* *Hevioso***  
Benin, Porto-Novo  
Nago-yoruba. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Terracotta, paint  
Acquired from G. Broux-Delarue in 1926  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 011534



- [5] *Mbulu-ngulu* reliquary figure**  
Gabon, upper Ogooue  
Kota Obamba. 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Wood, copper, brass  
Gift of Doctor Georges Graz in 1929  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 011925



- [6] *Mask***  
Liberia, coastal region  
Wobe. Late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Wood, skin, iron, textile, pigments  
Acquired from Edmond Morlet in Brussels in 1935  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 014816



- [7] *Chikunza* dance mask and costume**  
Angola  
Chokwe. 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Plant fibres, resin, textile, paint  
Acquired from the ethnologist Théodore Delachaux in 1944  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 019634-b



- [8] *Khamsa*, hand-shaped bracket from which to hang a commemorative synagogue lamp**  
Morocco  
First half 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Copper alloy  
Gift of Jean-Jacques Pittard in 1966; acquired by the director of the MEG Eugène Pittard in Fez in 1935  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 019808



- [9] *Nkisi* power object**  
DR Congo, Mayombe region  
Kongo, Yombe. 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Wood, mirror, iron, pigments, textile, organic matter  
Acquired in Brussels in the 1930s  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 021315



- [10] *Nkisi* power object**  
Congo, Mouyondzi region?  
Kongo, Dondo or Bwende. 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Wood, iron, plant fibres, organic matter  
Acquired in Brussels in 1930  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 021318



**[11] Dean gle mask**  
Liberia, Demple village  
Gio or Dan. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Wood  
Acquired from the ethnologist  
Hans Himmelheber in 1950;  
collected in 1949  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 022938



**[12] Attribute of the Guede family, masters of the continuous cycle of life, death and regeneration**  
Haiti  
20<sup>th</sup> century  
Calabash, paint  
Gift of Dr Raymond de Saussure in 1957  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 026655



**[13] Ibeji, pair of twins**  
Nigeria, Oyo  
Yoruba. 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Wood  
Wood, plant fibres, beads  
Gift of G. E. Bucher in 1964  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 032321, 032322



**[14] Guro gyéla lu zahouli (fial) portrait mask on top of which Mami Wata is represented**  
Ivory Coast  
Guro. 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Wood, paint  
Acquired from the ethnologist  
Hans Himmelheber in 1967;  
collected in 1963  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 033697



**[15] Bochio anthropomorphic poles**  
Benin  
Fon. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Wood, textile, patina  
Miscellaneous acquisitions  
in 1930 and 1966; mission of  
the curator Claude Savary to  
Benin in 1973  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 038050



**[16] Legbaza or Legbakun hat symbolizing the many aspects of the vodun Legba**  
Benin, Abomey  
Fon. 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Textile, bone, beak, seeds, metal, wood, calabash, plant fibres  
Mission of the curator Claude Savary to Benin in 1973;  
collected in Abomey  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 038083



**[17] Quranic amulet**  
Senegal  
18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Camel mandible, textile  
Gift of the Professor of Arabic  
Jean Humbert to the Musée  
académique in 1820  
MEG Inv. ETHAF K000241



**[18] Divination bowl**  
Guinea-Bissau, Bissagos Islands  
Bidjogo. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Wood  
Acquired from Mr Durand  
in 1893  
MEG Inv. ETHAF K001943



**[19] Lefafa Tsedeq protective scroll containing the prayer for the dead**  
Ethiopia, central highlands  
Ethiopian Christians (Amhara, Tigrayans, Oromo).  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Parchment, ink  
Former MEG collection  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 040275



**[20] Representation of Saint Gabra Manfus Qeddus**  
Ethiopia, Aksum  
Amhara, Tigrayans. 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Wood, pigments, plant fibres  
Acquired from Nicolas Rossier  
in 1983  
MEG Inv. ETHAF 042611





- [21] *Fiqh* Muslim law treatise**  
 West Africa, Mande cultural area  
 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
 Paper, ink, leather  
 Gift of the painter and collector  
 Émile Chambon in 1981;  
 formerly in the collection of  
 François Coppier  
 MEG Inv. ETHAF 042948



- [22] Talismanic manuscript**  
 West Africa, Soninke cultural area  
 19<sup>th</sup> century  
 Paper, ink  
 Gift of the painter and collector  
 Émile Chambon in 1981;  
 formerly in the collection of  
 François Coppier  
 MEG Inv. ETHAF 042949



- [23] *Tihlolo* case of divination objects**  
 Mozambique  
 Ronga. 19<sup>th</sup> century  
 Bone, shell, plant fibres, metal  
 Acquired from Henri-Alexandre  
 Junod in 1913  
 MEG Inv. ETHAF 002525



- [24] Five protective leaflets contained in a talisman fly whisk**  
 Ghana. Kumasi  
 Akan, Ashanti. 19<sup>th</sup> century  
 Paper  
 Gift of Mrs Louis Ramseyer  
 in 1953 and 1960  
 MEG Inv. ETHAF 062266



- [25] *Bochio* anthropomorphic poles**  
 Benin  
 Fon. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
 Wood, textile, patina  
 Miscellaneous acquisitions in 1930  
 and 1966; mission of the curator  
 Claude Savary to Benin in 1973  
 MEG Inv. ETHAF



- [26] Set of crosses**  
 Ethiopia, central highlands  
 Amhara. 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century  
 Silver, bronze, wood, leather  
 MEG Inv. ETHAF



- [27] *Kalelwa* and *chikunza* masks pose with the people in charge of the circumcision camp**  
 by Boris Wastiau (1970- )  
 Zambia, Zambezi district, near  
 Kaposi. 1994  
 MEG, Photographic Archives



- [28] A woman follower falls into a trance, possessed by *Jila***  
 by Boris Wastiau (1970- )  
 Zambia, Zambezi district,  
 Mbalakanyi village. 1995  
 MEG, Photographic Archives



- [29] Behind the curtain, medium communicating the message from the twins' spirits**  
 by Boris Wastiau (1970- )  
 Ghana, Accra, Georgetown.  
 2017  
 MEG, Photographic Archives



- [30] Jesus Christ of Chingalala and his disciples in 1997**  
 by Boris Wastiau (1970- )  
 Zambia, Zambezi district,  
 Chingalala. 2017  
 MEG, Photographic Archives



- [31] Sacrifice scene among the Bobo**  
 by Johnathan Watts (1961- )  
 Burkina Faso, Mouhoun  
 province, Moundasso village.  
 2006  
 MEG Inv. ETHPH 74947



**[32] Warden of a sacred house**  
by Johnathan Watts (1961- )  
Burkina Faso, Mouhoun province,  
Moundasso village. 2006  
MEG Inv. ETHPH 74970



**[33] Voodoo Temple of Light**  
by Johnathan Watts (1961- )  
Benin, route des Pêches,  
Cotonou. 2017  
MEG, Photographic Archives



**[34] The Festival of Sacrifice**  
by Theo Eshetu (1958- )  
Video installation, 17 min 59 sec  
Kenya, Lamu. 2012  
On loan from Theo Eshetu and  
the Axis Gallery, New York



**[35] Trip to Mount Zuqualla**  
by Theo Eshetu (1958- )  
Video installation, 7 min 10 sec  
Ethiopia. 2005  
On loan from Theo Eshetu and  
the Axis Gallery, New York



**[36] Veiled Woman on a Beachfront**  
by Theo Eshetu (1958- )  
Video installation, 16 min 27 sec  
Kenya, Lamu  
On loan from Theo Eshetu and  
the Axis Gallery, New York



**[37] Zar Possession**  
by Theo Eshetu (1958- )  
Video installation  
2018  
With the participation of  
Samuele Malfatti, Keir Fraser,  
Shaymaa Shoukry and the  
Mazaher de Makan group  
(Egypt)  
Archive images by Jean-Pierre  
Grandjean (Haiti, 2003)  
Installation created by  
Theo Eshetu for the MEG



**[38] Zar Possession**  
by Theo Eshetu (1958- )  
Video installation  
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With the participation of  
Samuele Malfatti, Keir Fraser,  
Shaymaa Shoukry and the  
Mazaher de Makan group  
(Egypt)  
Archive images by Jean-Pierre  
Grandjean (Haiti, 2003)  
Installation created by  
Theo Eshetu for the MEG



**[39] The Phi Phenomenon**  
by Theo Eshetu (1958- )  
Photographs by Johnathan  
Watts, MEG  
Video installation  
2018  
Installation created by  
Theo Eshetu for the MEG



**[40] Funerary pole**  
By Jacques Faublée  
(1912-2003)  
Madagascar, north Bekili.  
1939  
Gift of Véronique Guérin-Faublée  
in 2008  
MEG, ETHPH 402282



**[41] Orimbatu, funerary monument**  
by Jacques Faublée  
(1912-2003)  
Madagascar, Marovalva.  
1940  
Gift of Véronique Guérin-Faublée  
in 2008  
MEG Inv. ETHPH 407198



**[42] Photograph from the *Eritrean Orthodox Church* series**  
by Christian Lutz (1973- )  
Switzerland. Le Grand-Saconnex.  
2018  
Report by Christian Lutz for  
the MEG



**[43] Photograph from the *Kimbanguist* series**  
by Christian Lutz (1973- )  
Switzerland, Geneva.  
2018  
Report by Christian Lutz for  
the MEG



**[44] Photograph from the series made alongside *Tropical Gift***  
by Christian Lutz (1973- )  
Nigeria, Niger delta, Oporoza.  
2010  
Courtesy of Christian Lutz,  
Geneva



**[45] Photograph from the series made alongside *Tropical Gift***  
by Christian Lutz (1973- )  
Nigeria, Niger delta, Oporoza.  
2010  
Courtesy of Christian Lutz,  
Geneva



**[46] Photograph from the *Eritrean Orthodox Church* series**  
by Christian Lutz (1973- )  
Switzerland. Le Grand-Saconnex.  
2018  
Report by Christian Lutz for  
the MEG



**[47] Photograph from the *Mourid* series**  
by Christian Lutz (1973- )  
Switzerland, Geneva. 2018  
Report by Christian Lutz for  
the MEG



**[48] Photograph from the *Mourid* series**  
by Christian Lutz (1973- )  
Switzerland, Geneva.  
2018  
Report by Christian Lutz for  
the MEG



**[49] Guede Festival in the chapel of Port-au-Prince cemetery**  
by Jean-Pierre Grandjean  
(1950- )  
Haiti, Port-au-Prince.  
2003  
Courtesy of Jean-Pierre  
Grandjean, Geneva



**[50] Anointment with sacred mud in Bassin Saint-Jacques**  
by Jean-Pierre Grandjean  
(1950- )  
Haiti, Plaine-du-Nord, Bassin  
Saint-Jacques. 2003  
Courtesy of Jean-Pierre  
Grandjean, Geneva



**[51] Guede Festival in Port-au-Prince cemetery, in front of the cross representing Baron Samdi**  
by Jean-Pierre Grandjean  
(1950- )  
Haiti, Port-au-Prince. 2003  
Courtesy of Jean-Pierre  
Grandjean, Geneva



**[52] Guede Festival from 1 to 2 November in Port-au-Prince cemetery**  
by Jean-Pierre Grandjean  
(1950- )  
Haiti, Port-au-Prince. 2003  
Courtesy of Jean-Pierre  
Grandjean, Geneva



**[53] *Metamorphosis 7***  
by Mohau Modisakeng (1986- )  
South Africa. 2015  
On loan from Mohau Modisakeng  
and WHATIFTHEWORLD & Ron  
Mandos, Cape Town





**[54] Song – Train Church series**  
by Santu Mofokeng (1956- )  
South Africa,  
Soweto-Johannesburg.  
1986  
On loan from Santu Mofokeng  
and Maker Studio, Johannesburg



**[60] Priests and pilgrims  
celebrate Orthodox Easter,  
Fasika, at Bet Medhane Alem  
Church in Lalibela**  
by Anthony Pappone (1979- )  
Ethiopia. 2011  
Courtesy of Anthony Pappone,  
Monza della Brianza



**[55] The Blessing – Train Church  
series**  
by Santu Mofokeng (1956- )  
South Africa,  
Soweto-Johannesburg.  
1986  
On loan from Santu Mofokeng  
and Maker Studio, Johannesburg



**[61] Priests and pilgrims  
celebrate Orthodox Easter,  
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Church in Lalibela**  
by Anthony Pappone (1979- )  
Ethiopia. 2011  
Courtesy of Anthony Pappone,  
Monza della Brianza



**[56] Holy 1 – Vues de l'esprit  
series**  
by Fabrice Monteiro (1972- )  
Senegal. 2014  
edition 5/5  
MEG Inv. ETHPH 421483



**[62] Poster "Africa. The Ecstatic  
Religions"**  
Design: Saentys  
Photo: ©Fabrice Monteiro



**[57] Holy 2 – Vues de l'esprit  
series**  
by Fabrice Monteiro (1972- )  
Senegal. 2014  
edition 5/5  
MEG Inv. ETHPH 421484



**[63] Poster "Africa. The Ecstatic  
Religions"**  
Design: Saentys  
Photo: Courtesy Mohau  
Modisakeng,  
WHATIFTHEWORLD &  
Ron Mandos



**[58] Norayni – The Way of the  
Baye Fall series**  
by Fabrice Monteiro (1972- )  
Senegal, Yoff. 2012  
On loan from Fabrice Monteiro  
and the Mariane Ibrahim Gallery,  
Seattle



**[64] Poster "Africa. The Ecstatic  
Religions"**  
Design: Saentys  
Photo: ©Jean-Pierre Grandjean



**[59] Kaboru Ya Salam & Mam  
Cheikh – The Way of the  
Baye Fall series**  
by Fabrice Monteiro (1972- )  
Senegal, Dakar. 2012  
On loan from Fabrice Monteiro  
and the Mariane Ibrahim Gallery,  
Seattle





**[65] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
 Scenography: Franck Houndégla, Sophie Schenck and Patrick Roger  
 Part I: Monotheisms in Africa  
 Photo: © MEG, J. Fuchs



**[66] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
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 Photo: © MEG, J. Fuchs



**[67] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
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 Photo: © MEG, J. Fuchs



**[68] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
 Scenography: Franck Houndégla, Sophie Schenck and Patrick Roger  
 Part II: Divination, Death and the Ancestors  
 Photo: © MEG, J. Fuchs



**[69] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
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 Part II: Divination, Death and the Ancestors  
 Photo: © MEG, J. Fuchs



**[70] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
 Scenography: Franck Houndégla, Sophie Schenck and Patrick Roger  
 Part III: Becoming One with the Spirits: Possession Trances  
 Photo: © MEG, J. Fuchs



**[71] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
 Scenography: Franck Houndégla, Sophie Schenck and Patrick Roger  
 Part III: Becoming One with the Spirits: Possession Trances  
 Photo: © MEG, J. Watts



**[72] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
 Scenography: Franck Houndégla, Sophie Schenck and Patrick Roger  
 Part IV: The Magico-religious Universes, Entangled Forces  
 Photo: © MEG, J. Fuchs



**[73] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
 Scenography: Franck Houndégla, Sophie Schenck and Patrick Roger  
 Part IV: The Magico-religious Universes, Entangled Forces  
 Photo: © MEG, J. Fuchs



**[74] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
 Scenography: Franck Houndégla, Sophie Schenck and Patrick Roger  
 Part IV: The Magico-religious Universes, Entangled Forces  
 Photo: © MEG, J. Watts



**[75] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
 Scenography: Franck Houndégla, Sophie Schenck and Patrick Roger  
 Part IV: The Magico-religious Universes, Entangled Forces  
 Photo: © MEG, J. Fuchs

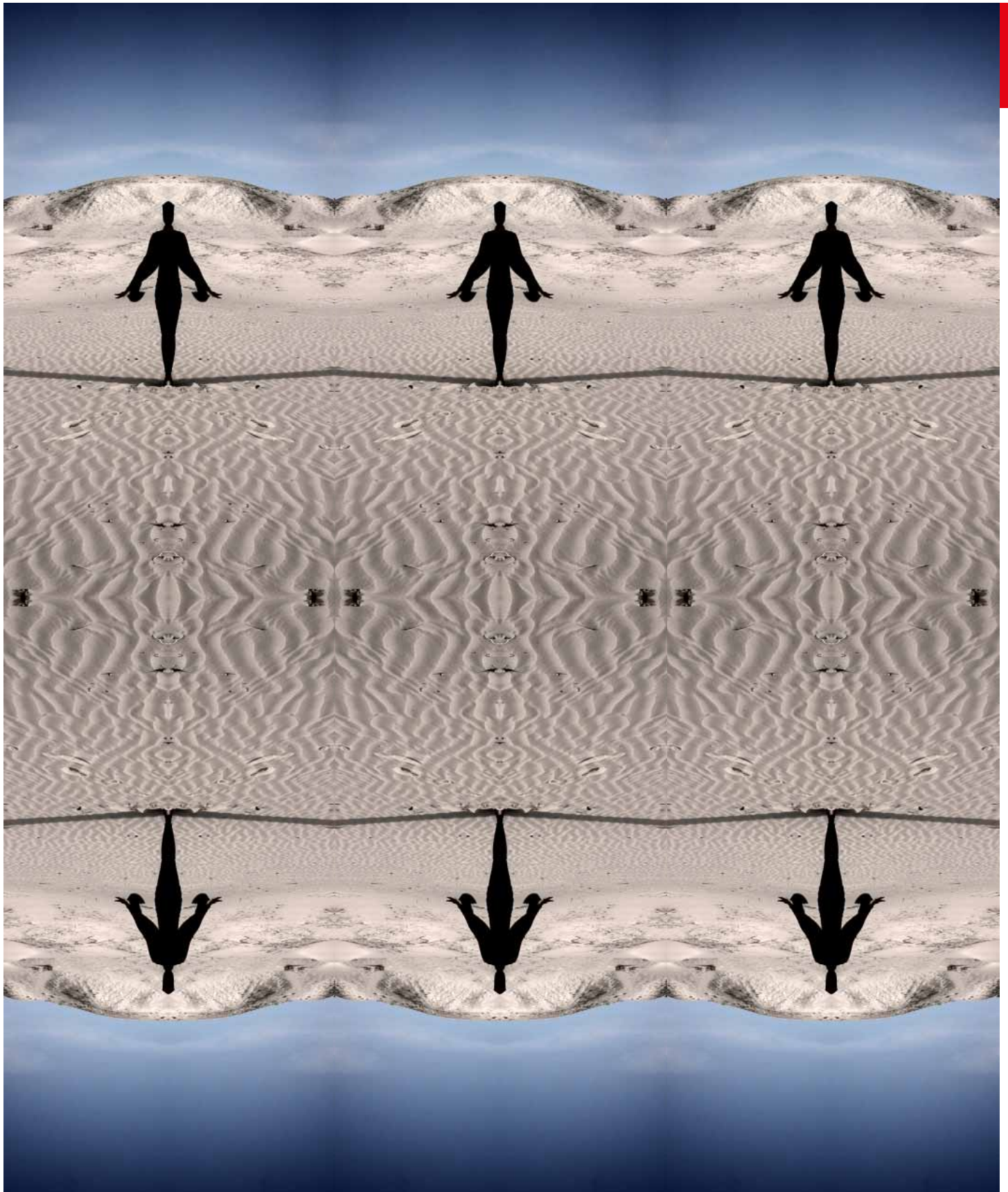


**[76] Exhibition “Africa. The Ecstatic Religions”**  
 Scenography: Franck Houndégla, Sophie Schenck and Patrick Roger  
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## LES RELIGIONS DE L'EXTASE

Exposition temporaire  
Du 18 mai 2018 au 6 janvier 2019

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