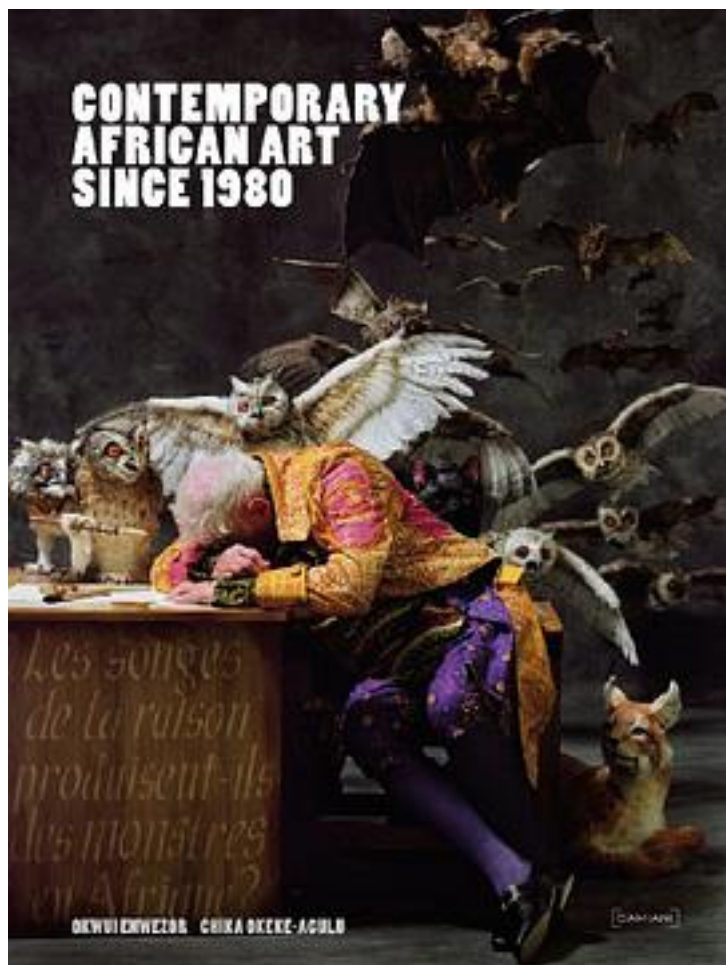


Contemporary African Art Since 1980



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"Contemporary African Art Since 1980" is the first major survey of the work of contemporary African artists from diverse situations, locations, and generations who work either in or outside of Africa, but whose practices engage and occupy the social

and cultural complexities of the continent since the past 30 years. Its frame of analysis is absorbed with historical transitions: from the end of the postcolonial utopias of the sixties during the 1980s to the geopolitical, economic, technological, and cultural shifts incited by globalization. This book is both narrower in focus in the periods it reflects on, and specific in the ground it covers. It begins by addressing the tumultuous landscape of contemporary Africa, examining landmarks and narratives, exploring divergent systems of representation, and interrogating the ways artists have responded to change and have incorporated new aesthetic principles and artistic concepts, images and imaginaries to deal with such changes. Organized in chronological order, the book covers all major artistic mediums: painting, sculpture, photography, film, video, installation, drawing, collage. It also covers aesthetic forms and genres, from conceptual to formalist, abstract to figurative practices. Moving between discursive and theoretical registers, the principal questions the book analyzes are: what and when is contemporary African art? Who might be included in the framing of such a conceptual identity? It also addresses the question of globalization and contemporary African art.

The book thus provides an occasion to examine through close reading and visual analysis how artistic concerns produce major themes. It periodizes and cross references artistic sensibilities in order to elicit multiple conceptual relationships, as well as breaks with prevailing binaries of center and periphery, vernacular and academic, urban and non-urban forms, indigenous and diasporic models of identification. In order to theorize how these concerns have been formulated in artistic terms and their creative consequences "Contemporary African Art Since 1980" examines a range of ideas, concepts and issues that have shaped the work and practice of African artists within an international and global framework. It traces the shifts from earlier modernist strategies of the sixties and seventies after the period of decolonization, and the rise of pan-African nationalism, to the postcolonial representations of critique and satire that evolved from the 1980s, to the postmodernist irony of the 1990s, and to the globalist strategies of the 21st century.

The main claim of this book is that contemporary African art can be best understood by examining the tension between the period of great political changes of the era of decolonization that enabled new and exciting imaginations of the future to be formulated, and the slow, skeptical, and social decline marked by the era of neo-liberalism and Structural Adjustment programs of the 1980s. These issues are addressed in chapters covering the themes of "Politics, Culture, Critique," "Memory and Archive," "Abstraction, Figuration and Subjectivity," and "The Body, Gender and Sexuality." In addition, the book employs sidebars to provide brief and incisive accounts of and commentaries on important contemporary political, economic and cultural events, and on exhibitions, biennales, workshops, artist groups and more. Rather than a comprehensive survey, this richly illustrated book presents examples of ambitious and important work by more than 160 African artists since the last 30 years. This list includes Georges Adeagbo Tayo Adenaike, Ghada Amer, El Anatsui, Kader Attia, Luis Basto, Candice Breitz, Moustapha Dime, Marlene Dumas, Victor Ekpuk, Samuel Fosso, Jak Katarikawe, William Kentridge, Rachid Koraichi, Mona Mazouk, Julie Mehretu, Nandipha Mntambo, Hassan Musa, Donald Odita, Iba Ndiaye, Richard Onyango, Ibrahim El Salahi, Issa Samb, Cheri Samba, Ousmane Sembene, Yinka Shonibare, Barthélemy Toguo, Obiora Udechukwu, and Sue Williamson.

Okwui Enwezor, a leading curator and scholar of contemporary art, is the Dean of Academic Affairs at the San Francisco Art Institute, and founding publisher and editor of *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*.

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