

ARMAND BOUA BIOGRAPHY

Armand Boua is a mixed-media artist whose work addresses the socio-political troubles and injustices of his home environment. Working in Abidjan, the economic capital at the crossroads of urbanisation and industrialisation, the artist illustrates the lives of street kids which testify to the violence and political struggles in West Africa. His paintings are based on observations from street scenes characterised by ethnic, linguistic, cultural and social entanglements due to urban migrations. Children abduction remains a cruel reality in West Africa, fuelled by sex trafficking, illegal adoption rings, plantation labour as well as an organ market for human sacrifices.

In his paintings, Armand Boua aims at showing these children in an immediate and unvarnished way. Boua's subjects are both victims of such exploitation, and symbols of hope and innocence. The severity of this crisis foreshadows the practice of the artist, who sees the atrocities of man echoed in everyday life and gives them shape through painting and emotive movements. The artist's technique employs found material to which he applies his signature form which invokes images in remembrance of the scenes experienced. Using tar and acrylic on found cardboard boxes, Armand Boua creates textured and layered compositions which are scrubbed and stripped back, leaving abstract forms that come in and out of focus. Thereby, the artist achieves a careful balance between heavy gestures and violent execution and the gentle treatment of his subject matter.

"I wanted to show their [the children's] suffering, their way of life, so that people are finally aware of this painful reality they pretend not to see."

Armand Boua was born in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, in 1978. He studied at the National School of Fine Arts and the Technical Center of Applied Arts, both in Abidjan. Furthermore, he attended courses at the Sainte Mary Training Institute and the Museum of Civilisation, both in Abidjan. His work has been featured internationally in solo and group exhibitions, among them with Bode Projects in Hamburg, DE; Fondation Montresso, Marrakech and Fondation CDG, Rabat, Marrocco; Kubatana, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen, Norway; PANGAEA II: New Art from Africa and Latin America, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; and Dak'Art, Biennale of Contemporary African Art, Dakar, SN. Armand Boua lives and works in Abidjan, CI.

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