DOPPIOZERO

"Why Africa?" A SAVVY Contemporary nonresponse

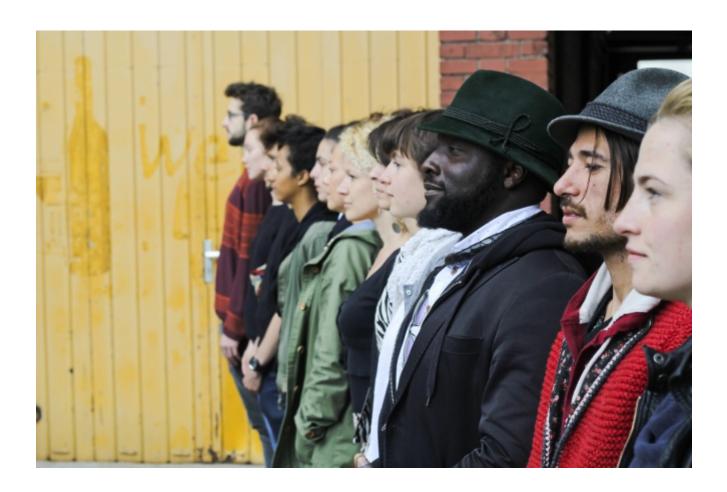
SAVVY

19 Giugno 2015

This month we asked our friend Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung to engage with the question â??Why Africa?â?•. A curator, a biotechnologist and a music aficionado, Bonaventure is the founder and director of SAVVY Contemporary in Berlin, an independent space for the discourse on art between the 'West' and the 'Non-West' which is currently running a crowdfunding campaign to support its upcoming exhibitions. The SAVVY team is an extremely passionate and talented group of volunteers committed to bringing high quality cultural content in an independent and bold manner. Please support their campaign here, there are still a few days left to make the difference. And now, enjoy their unique contribution to our column.

lettera27

Versione italiana



"Why Africa?" is more than an eerie question to ask. It calls for obvious counterquestions like "Why not?", straightforward answers like "Africa is this or that"... most of which are furnished by banalities, simplicities and predictabilities. In its complexities on many cultural, economical, historical, political, social and you name it levels, Africa can not be questioned, nor can it be expressed in the same breath with words that try to identify reasons, causes, purposes or a raison d'Ãatre.

It is against this backdrop that we at SAVVY Contemporary will like to engage with this question (not respond to it) through the sonic. Music and other sound-spaces are the ultimate points of departure, but also entry points. It is through the textuality of sound and the performativity of sound that we will tackle the question \hat{a} ? Why Africa? \hat{a} ? as it is sound's waves that can penetrate all the nooks and crannies to reveal through rhythm. For it is through sound that the ancestors are kept alive and through rhythm that their pulses keep the beat. As Hopewell Seyaseya crafted it in *Nightsong* (1984):

Silvery in the moonlight night

The river of my mind flows

To the nightsong of the truly great

Entombled in the caves of history

At heroes' acre. The music

Crescending through the valley

Of ghost towns and stabbed villages

Will come down to settle on our hearts

Like dew on leaves, tears for those

Who surrendered their lives at the altar

Leaving in us an eternal flame.

These are some of the sounds that could embody, encompass and reveal some form and meaning of Africa, just as a fluid will take the shape of the container it is in, and as much as the songs too fall short of answering the question \hat{a} ? Why Africa? \hat{a} ?

To be continuedâ? Stay tuned for part 2.

