
Title of Object

Les Winzins de Djamtala 1

Photo of Object (optional)



Object Information

Artist: Armand Boua

Culture: African, Ivory Coast

Date of Object: 2017

Country: Cote d'Ivoire

Accession Number: 2017.25

File Created: 12/4/2017

Material/Medium: acrylic and collage on canvas

Author of File: Ann Isaacson

Department: Africa - Art of Africa and the Americas

Reviewer of File: Kara ZumBahlen

Last Updated/Reviewed: 1/2/2018

Tour Topics

Contemporary World Art, African, Truth and Beauty, modern life, conflict/war, identity

Questions and Activities (list 3 to 4 sample questions here):

Global Thinking Routine: Beauty and Truth

Can you find beauty in the painting?

Can you find truth in this painting?

How might beauty reveal truth?

How might beauty conceal truth?

Key Points (Form: subject matter, medium and techniques of manufacture, style, etc.)

Subject:

- Armand Boua takes the street kids of his hometown Abidjan as subjects for his portraits.
- “Winzins” means street children.
- Djamtala is a neighborhood within the city of Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

- 'I wanted to show their suffering, their way of life', he says, 'so that people are finally aware of this painful reality they pretend not to see'. (Jack Bell Gallery)
- His observations of children are drawn largely from street scenes where urban migrations create ethnic, linguistic, cultural and social entanglements that have come to enrich and problematize the region in equal measure.

Technique:

- Acrylic and collage on canvas, street art style portrait of two boys against orange and black background; boy at L holds head down slightly while looking up toward viewer, wearing a white shirt; boy at R looks outward, wearing red and black shirt; collage of painted, slashed newspaper and paper pulp.
- His aesthetic is one born out of an engagement with found material, to which he applies his signature forms that evoke images and scenes in remembrance.
- His work is recognizable for its layered and textured surface - often using materials that are viscous and hard to manage, using tar and acrylic on found cardboard boxes. Each layer is applied and then scrubbed and stripped back, leaving abstract forms that come in and out of focus.
- The distressed effect is created by each layer being scrubbed, and then stripped back
- Boua achieves a careful balance between his heavy gestures and violent execution and the gentle treatment of his subject matter. (Jack Bell Gallery)

Key Points (Context: use, history, cultural information, artist bio, etc.)

History and Context

- The violence that followed the disputed Ivorian presidential election in late 2010 greatly influenced his work. Christian Government and Muslim factions in Cote d'Ivoire. (Jack Bell Gallery)
- In Cote d'Ivoire, where child abduction remains a chillingly real issue, myths of human sacrifice and other rituals fuel a market for the organs of the young, who also fall victim to sex trafficking, illegal adoption rings and plantation labor. (Saatchi Gallery)
- As the conflict escalated, many children were separated from their families amidst the political turmoil that enveloped Abidjan, Ivory Coast's sprawling capital.
- Depicting the formless figures of forgotten children, testify to the violence that continues to characterize the political struggles of West Africa. He gives them shape through poetic forms and emotive expressions. (Saatchi Gallery)
- His aesthetic is born out of an engagement with found material that evoke images and scenes of remembrance.

Cultural

- Street kids are a global phenomenon, and a painful reminder of how our societies (don't) deal with their most vulnerable members. The Ivorian painter Armand Boua uses collage and scrubbing techniques to create deteriorated surfaces that deliberately unsettle the image—reflecting the disrupted lives, torn memories, and precarious conditions of his subjects in his native Abidjan. This painting is part of a series.

Bio

- Armand Boua is an Ivorian painter, born in 1978 in Abidjan, the country's economic capital and one of Africa's most populous French-speaking cities. In his work, he takes the street kids of his

hometown as subjects for his portraits. *Winzins*, from the title, is a word in the Abidjan pidgin language that refers to a specific type of street children, who live from selling cigarettes and other small things during the day and, at night, promote music stars and perform dances for pay. They do not go to school and some of them get involved in small criminality. Their numbers greatly increased during the violence that followed the disputed presidential election in late 2010, when many children were separated from their families amidst the political turmoil and traveled to the cities for work and shelter. "I wanted to show their suffering, their way of life," Boua said, "so that people are finally aware of this painful reality they pretend not to see."

Current Mia Label Information (optional)

Not yet online

Sources of Information and/or Prop Ideas (photos/videos)

Jan-Lodewijk Grootaers Accession Proposal, 2017

Jack Bell Gallery - <http://www.jackbellgallery.com/artists/63-armand-boua/overview/>

Saatchi Gallery - http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/armand_boua.htm

Ethan Cohen Gallery - <https://www.ecfa.com/armand-boua--ethan-cohen-fine-arts>

Christie's Curates: Armand Boua: <http://www.christies.com/features/Christies-Curates-Armand-Boua-6190-1.aspx>