

"Why Africa?" A SAVVY Contemporary non-response

SAVVY

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This month we asked our friend Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung to engage with the question "Why Africa?". 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

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Savvy Contemporary team, ph. Luise Volkmann

"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'être*.

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 "Why Africa?", 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

Entombed 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 “Why Africa?”

To be continued... Stay tuned for part 2.

Kelin Kelin Orchestra (Jean-Jacques Elangué) – Massa-Haï

King Ayisoba – Look Ma Shoe

Pierre Akendengue – Awana w'Afrika

Ekambi Brillant – Aboki

Les têtes brulées Essingan

Mahmoud Guinia – Assamaoui

Orchestre National de Barbes – Zawiya

Manu Dibango – Bolingo City

Zim Ngqawana – Ebhofolo

Max Roach and Dollar Brand – Streams of Consciousness

Fela Kuti – Shuffling and Smiling

Fela Kuti – I. T. T. (International Thief Thief)

King Sunny Ade & His African Beats – Ori Mi Ja Funmi

Bola Johnson – Lagos Sisi

Sir Victor Uwaifo – Joromi

Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey & his International Brothers – Miliki Sound

K. Frimpong and his Cubano Fiestas – Kyenkyen Bi Adi M'awu

Ebo Taylor – Love And Death

Ogyatanaa – Yaa Amponsah

Tchala Muana – Amina

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Photo: [the little dog laughed](#), music films and life in Berlin. [October 2012](#)

Se continuiamo a tenere vivo questo spazio è grazie a te. Anche un solo euro per noi significa molto.

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