

Thomas Erben Gallery

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OLADELE BAMGBOYE

THE UNMASKING, PART II and earlier photoworks

April 13 through June 10, 2000

Opening: Thursday, April 13

Thomas Erben is very pleased to inaugurate his new gallery space at 516 West 20th Street with the first US solo show of the London based Nigerian artist Oladele Bamgboye.

On view will be *THE UNMASKING, PART II* a visually enticing interactive computer installation using technology to offer a modernized version of the museum experience. Earlier large scale black and white photographs complement the artist's interest in the unmasking of existent imposed structures whether they be museological, historical, anthropological or value systems.

On an iMac, one video channel documents the British Museum's relocation of its Egyptian collection as well as stored items of the Yoruba art collection, Glenbow Museum, Calgary. The second channel shows Bamgboye scanning antique objects which, since they do not fulfill prescribed requirements of form and style, are in storage at the San Antonio Museum, TX.

Both videos exude a strong sense of the places given to the objects, a sense of time and memory and refer to structures through which a hierarchy of objects, of cultural significance is established and maintained.

Placed opposite, an e-machine (a cloned iMac) displays digitally generated 3D images of the scanned objects, floating freely in space, publicly accessible and manipulable through function keys. Lightbox-versions as well as a scanner and a 3D-modeler complete the installation. The audience is invited to scan and model their personal artifacts.

The photoworks *ARISE I and II*, from 1989, present Phoenix like images of the artist's nude body, photographed from behind against a fabric printed with ears of corn - a symbol of fertility - draped to emulate a sea of fire.

UNMASK - ARISE:

As in the computer installation, where the artist creates new objects beyond a superimposed system of values and historical classification, the emergence of a unrestricted consciousness constitutes the foundation of Bamgboye's esthetic discourse.

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OLADELE BAMGBOYE is considered to be one of the most interesting young African-born artists.

His work has been included in major international survey shows such as:

DOCUMENTA X, *JOHANNESBURG BIENNALE* (both 1997), *PROSPECT 96*, Frankfurt, and *IN/SIGHT: AFRICAN PHOTOGRAPHERS, 1940 TO THE PRESENT*, **Guggenheim Museum**, New York (1996).

A one person show of Bamgboye's photo and video works will open at the **Witte de With**, Rotterdam, on April 29. This year he will also participate at *NEW BRITISH ART - INTELLIGENCE*, **Tate Britain**, London, *MIRROIR*, **Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris**, as well as *MISSION FINLAND*, **Helsinki City Art Museum**.

Born in 1963 in Nigeria, the artist currently works and lives in London. He also contributes regularly to writings on contemporary visual culture and theory.

For more information and images, please visit us at www.thomaserben.com or contact the gallery at 212-645.8701.

Hours: Tuesdays - Saturdays 10 - 6.