

Kiluanji Kia Henda: A City Called Mirage

An exhibition by Angola-based artist Kiluanji Kia Henda reflects on the birth, life and death of modern cities.

June 27–October 6, 2017

Opening Reception:
Tuesday, June 27,
6–8pm

Gallery Hours:
Tuesday–Friday,
12–6pm

The International Studio & Curatorial Program announces *A City Called Mirage*, an exhibition by Kiluanji Kia Henda, current resident at ISCP. The artist's first solo exhibition in the United States, *A City Called Mirage* looks at real cities and their 3D models in an immersive four-channel video installation, as well as three interconnected series of photographs.

In *A City Called Mirage*, Henda considers the birth, life and death of modern cities. The exhibition begins with a photograph of a rusty time-worn sign of the word “Miragem” (Mirage), found by the artist in the Namib Desert. Acting as a catalyst for new work that contemplates humanity's drive towards urbanization, the sign spurred Henda to look at Dubai as the faulty archetype of the contemporary city, as the byproduct of neoliberal desires. New cities such as Dubai are often built with little consideration of their historic context or environmental impacts, drawing parallels to the urban reconstruction of the artist's home city Luanda, Angola.



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *A City Called Mirage*, 2014–2017. Courtesy of the artist.

In *Paradise Metallic* (2014), four synchronized videos together recount the construction of an ideal city, dreamt by the “Man with the Shovel” and built on the barren Maliha Desert in Sharjah. At once land art and performance, a new fictional country is established and subsequently demolished in the sand, hauntingly demarcated by stakes in the ground, concrete walls and iron skeletons of buildings. Based on traditional Central African sona sand drawings, *A City Called Mirage* (2013–17)—a series of 50 photographs, also the title of the ISCP exhibition—documents large-scale sculptures assembled in the desert, based on the silhouettes of an imaginary city, using the geometric forms of sona drawings as a blueprint. Native to Tchokwe culture of Eastern Angola, these ephemeral forms are drawn in the sand to tell stories and transmit oral histories. Dubai as a spectacular city and the ultimate tabula rasa is conjured in *How to Create Your Own Personal Dubai at Home* (2013), with playful instructions for how to build your own iconic skylines at home using everyday domestic materials such as old circuit boards, tinfoil, beer cans and match sticks.

Kiluanji Kia Henda (born 1979, Luanda, Angola) is a Luanda-based artist, working across photography, video and performance. He has had exhibitions at institutions including SCAD Museum, Savannah, 2016; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2016; National Museum of African Art – Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 2015; Tamayo Museum, Mexico, 2012; and Arnolfini, Bristol, 2012. He participated in the 2015 Triennial: *Surround Audience*, New Museum, New York; Dakar Biennale, 2014; Bienal de São Paulo, 2007; and the Venice Biennale, 2007. He is winner of 2017 Frieze Artist Award and the 2012 National Prize of Art and Culture, awarded by the Ministry of Culture, Luanda.

This exhibition is curated by Kari Conte, Director of Programs and Exhibitions.

About ISCP:

ISCP supports the creative development of artists and curators, and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work

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studios and two galleries, ISCP is New York's most comprehensive international visual arts residency program and fourth largest in the world, founded in 1994. ISCP organizes exhibitions, events and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences.

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