

On Delegitimization and Solidarity: Sisiku AyukTabe, the Martin Luther King Jr. of Ambazonia, the Nera 10, and the Myth of Violent Africa

An exhibition of work by Adjani Okpu-Egbe, curated by Amy Rosenblum-Martín

September 17, 2021–February 25, 2022

Opening Reception
and Public Discussion:
Friday, September 17,
2021, 6–8pm

Gallery Hours:
By appointment via
info@iscp-nyc.org,
Tuesday–Thursday,
12–5pm.

In his first United States solo show, Adjani Okpu-Egbe presents mixed media compositions, aiming to raise awareness about Ambazonia, also known as Southern Cameroons or English Speaking Cameroons, where the artist was born and lived until 2004. Okpu-Egbe's antiracist and decolonial visuals, along with written, spoken, and musical contextualization, shed light on the ongoing war waged in Ambazonia by the French neocolonial regime of Cameroon. The artist observes, "United States taxpayers also unwittingly fund terrifying colonial violence—even the killing of children—in my homeland and have a right to know and have a say about this devastating War that started in 2016."



Adjani Okpu-Egbe, *Trip Hazard*, 2014, mixed media on canvas, 48 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist

His compositions are replete with symbolism inspired by the natural world, including pregnant fish, vines bearing lemons, and semi-abstract beasts, which refer to specific people and histories of oppression as well as celebrations of freedom. Often painting on nontraditional supports, like doors, and incorporating everyday objects including books, mouse traps, and bubble wrap, the artist layers materials to convey irreducible complexity. Prior to becoming an artist, Okpu-Egbe studied archaeology and the history of political thought, which informed his practice.

ISCP's opening reception and public discussion on September 17 will be co-hosted by the Ambazonia Prisoners of Conscience Support Network and the International Peace Research Association, and will feature a panel discussion with the artist, academics, and activists who will unpack the international political situation in Ambazonia in the context of the work on view. Other speakers will include political prisoners (connecting virtually) and leaders of the Black liberation movement in the United States. The panel will be moderated by Matt Meyer, co-author of *Guns and Gandhi in Africa: Pan-African Insights on Nonviolence, Armed Struggle and Liberation*, and Senior Research Scholar at University of Massachusetts/Amherst Resistance Studies Initiative.

Okpu-Egbe (born 1979, Kumba, Cameroon) lives and works in London and has exhibited work at Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany, and SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, among other institutions. He has presented his work in *Surpassing the Eternally Mysterious Afro-Surreal*, 2019, Sulger-Buel Gallery, London (solo show); *Regarding Africa: Contemporary Art and Afro-Futurism*, 2016, Tel Aviv Museum of Art; and his installation *The Journey of the Underdog*, 2014, was highlighted in the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, Somerset House, London. In 2020, he was the recipient of the inaugural Ritzau Art Prize and participated in a three-month residency at ISCP, followed by a four-month residency in 2021.

Amy Rosenblum-Martín is a curator who most recently served as guest assistant curator for Dr. Nicole R. Fleetwood's MoMA PS1 exhibition *Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration*. Formerly a staff curator at Pérez Art Museum Miami and The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, she has also

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worked for the Museum of Modern Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, all New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; National Portrait Gallery, London; and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, among others. Her exhibition *Ana Mendieta: Thinking About Children's Thinking*, 2017, at Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling, Harlem, was an *Artforum* Critic's Pick.

This exhibition is supported by Colleen Ritzau Leth; Evelyn Toll Family Foundation; Hartfield Foundation; Johnson Picture Framing & Galleries; Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council; New York City Council District 34; New York City Council District 33; New York State Council on the Arts and the New York State Legislature; Tauck Ritzau Innovative Philanthropy; Teiger Foundation; and William Talbott Hillman Foundation.

About ISCP:

Founded in 1994, ISCP is the fourth-largest visual arts residency program in the world and a global leader in the field of visual arts residency programs. 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 studios and two galleries, 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. Over 1,700 artists and curators from more than 80 countries, including the United States have undertaken residencies at ISCP.

ISCP does not discriminate on the basis of disability in terms of admission, access, or employment. ISCP programs and activities are accessible to visitors with disabilities. Accommodations are made to the best of the institution's ability, depending on individual visitors' needs. To request accommodations, please contact info@iscp-nyc.org or call 718-387-2900.

