ABOUT NAMSA LEUBA

Namua Leubu (b. 1982) is a Swiss-Guinean photographer and art director. Leubu studied photography at ECAL, University of Art and Design in Lausanne, Switzerland, and obtained a Masters in Art Direction at ECAL. She lives and works in Bordeaux, France.

Leuba has participated in international exhibitions including Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design at the Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain; Africa Reframed at Oksnehallen in Copenhagen, Denmark; Daegu Photo Biennale in Daegu, Korea; the Athens Photo Festival in Athens, Greece; Photokina in Paris, France; Lagos Photo Festival in Lagos, Nigeria, and a performance in Off Print at The Tate Modern, London. She recently held a solo exhibition at the Hangar Art Center, Brussels. Leubu's work has been featured in group exhibitions African State of Mind at New Art Exchange, London; and The New Black Vanguard at Aperture in New York. In 2019 she was featured in the special project Focus in the Eyes at Art Basel's VIP Lounge.

Her work has been published in numerous magazines, including The New Yorker, F-D, Numéro, KALEIDOSCOPE, Foam, Interview, Vice Magazine, New York Magazine, Liberation, British Journal of Photography, and European Photography.

PUBLICATION

The Halsey Institute has partnered with Damiani for the publication Namua Leubu: Crossed Looks, a 180-page monograph featuring images of Leubu's works in the exhibition and essays by Joseph Gerbel, Emmanuel Iduma, and Dr. Mary Trent and designed by Swiss design studio Maximage.

$55

Learn more and order your copy at halsey.cofc.edu/about/publications

NAMSA LEUBA
CROSSED LOOKS

August 27 - December 11, 2021

RELATED EVENTS

All events during this exhibition will occur in person in the Halsey Institute galleries, subject to change. Events are free and open to the public, unless noted.

MEMBER PREVIEW DAY
Thursday, August 26, 11 AM - 7 PM
Free for all Halsey Institute Members
Email halsey@cofc.edu to reserve a time

OPENING RECEPTION
Friday, August 27, 6:30-8 PM

ARTIST TALK WITH NAMSA LEUBA AND CURATOR JOSEPH GERGEL
Saturday, August 28, 2 PM

SIT A SPELL CONVERSATION SERIES
Wednesday, September 15, 12 PM

WGS INTERSECTIONS: NAMSA LEUBA
Monday, October 11, 7 PM
A panel discussion with the College of Charleston Women's and Gender Studies Program

HALSEY TALKS: PHOTOGRAPHY & COLONIALISM
Tuesday, November 9, 6:30 PM

SIT A SPELL CONVERSATION SERIES
Wednesday, November 17, 12 PM

CURATOR-LED TOUR FOR MEMBERS
Thursday, December 9, 7 PM
Free for all Halsey Institute Members

LOCATION
The Marini and Wayland H. Caro Jr. Center for the Arts
161 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401
halsey.cofc.edu

PARKING
Available in the St. Philip St. and George St. garages

GALLERY HOURS
Open days and times are subject to change. Please check halsey.cofc.edu for the most up-to-date information.
Monday - Saturday, 11 AM - 4 PM during exhibitions
Monday to Saturday, 11 AM - 7 PM on Thursdays
Free admission!

CONTACT
843/953-4422 or halsey@cofc.edu

BLOG
Learn more about the exhibition at halsey.cofc.edu/exam

MISSION: The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art at the College of Charleston School of the Arts provides a multidisciplinary laboratory for the production, presentation, interpretation, and dissemination of ideas by innovative visual artists from around the world. As a non-collecting museum, we create meaningful interactions between adventurous artists and diverse communities within a context that emphasizes the historical, social, and cultural importance of the art of our time.

Namua Leubu: Crossed Looks is organized by guest curator Joseph Gerbel. Namua Leubu: Crossed Looks is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, and Garden & Gun magazine. This exhibition is also supported by Bojinka and Richard Gerbel, Diane and Gary De Angelis, South State Bank, Kathleen and Tom Wright, Carol Perkins and David Rawle, Cindy and Steen M. Barnett, Donna and Walter McRae, and Mariana Samis.
Weke, created in the Republic of Benin, where she imagined narratives based on the Vodun (Voodoo) religion. In this series, her photographs turn towards the fantastical and ultimately abstraction—showing that ideas of Voodoo cannot be easily represented visually.

During an artist residency in Lagos, Nigeria, Namsa Leuba developed her series AGL, which focused on the bold style and swagger of Africa’s most populous city. An acronym for “Next Generation Lagos,” AGL explored the innovation and creativity of Nigeria’s youth culture. Here, Leuba collaborated with local fashion designers and models in Lagos, offering a nuanced representation of the thriving metropolis. Leuba’s endeavors in the world of fashion are represented here with works from Cocktail, The African Queens, and Tonkôma. In these, Leuba continues her critique of trite African tropes, for instance when she subverts the depiction of the “African queen” as a play on the stereotypes of African women.

Her most recent series Illusions was created in Tahiti, where the artist lived for more than two years. Illusions reassessed the paintings of Paul Gauguin and the fetishization of the Other in Western art. The subjects in Leuba’s contemporary portraits act out the mythical role of the vahine, as women are referred to in Polynesian languages, but through nonbinary definitions of gender conformity. After immersing herself in Tahitian communities and building relationships with these sitters, Leuba returns the pictorial plane to them as a site for subjecthood rather than objectification.

Leuba’s images ultimately suggest that the only truth one might be able to hint at in photography is through its fictions. Her work in Africa pushes against what Nigerian curator Okwui Enwezor describes as the gaze of “Afro-pessimism,” which he defined as the constant portrayal of a continent of poverty, conflict, and suffering. This gaze of “Afro-pessimism” was manifested in the photographic depiction of Africa during colonialism and continues today in the way that Africa is portrayed in the global mass media. In her role as a photographer, Leuba is keenly aware of the power of the photographic image and the cultural narratives that it can propagate.

Through her photographs Leuba searches for a visual sense of belonging, creating an alternative visual proposition that transcends fixed modes of representation. As Leuba explains, “I have always been characterized as the Other, whether I am too ‘African’ to be European or too ‘European’ to be African.” Her work is about that tension, of creating a dialogue with cultures in which she has one foot in and one foot out. The title of this exhibition, Crossed Looks, references this diverse perspective.

Joseph Gergel is an independent curator based in Lagos, Nigeria and New York City.