

CONTEMPORARY VOICES

The Phillips is proud to add to its collection two contemporary pieces—*Mapasa* by Aimé Mpane and *Wind #7 in Jungle* by Sijae Byun—that enrich the collection with works by important artists of today. Thanks to Gallerist’s Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Award and Phillips Trustee Carol Brown Goldberg and Hank Goldberg for helping the Phillips acquire the paintings from the 2012 and 2013 (e)merge art fairs in Washington.



Aimé Mpane

Mapasa, meaning “twins,” is composed of two portraits. Many Congolese believe twins have divinatory power. The idea of creating this diptych came to me after seeing near my studio a demonstration by Congolese women against Chinese merchants. In *Mapasa*, the figures are turning their backs to us; only the imported textile from China comes out, as a statement of the overwhelming presence of China in daily African family life. I only cut out part of the profile to express the anger, fear, and loss of local businesses by Chinese outsourcing politics in Africa.

I work on 0.15-inch plywood made up of three compressed layers of wood of different colors—light brown, white, and dark brown—which refers to human skin, also composed of three layers. By cutting into this wood (skin) with only a traditional African axe, I work like a woodpecker, picking deeper into the surface to express what oppresses my neighbors in Kinshasa.

Sijae Byun

Functions of the human body like digesting, breathing, and circulating are an underlying theme in my current nature and architecture series. To me wind is like breathing, so I try to infuse human function and apply a flow to the painting. The jungle is very alive, with so many species of animals and plants that I wanted to show the organic, natural feeling of it.

I like the performing arts and I am inspired by the use of space and screens in set design. It utilizes transparency, layers, light, and shadows. I want to mix those concepts and apply drawing and painting to bring out the images in my head. I start with a drawing and then let that dictate the colors that go with the image and feeling. It takes a while—around six months per painting—because each layer takes me in different directions.



Sijae Byun
Wind #7 in Jungle, 2013
Acrylic and ink on silk
50 ½ x 37 ½ in.
Acquired with funds provided by Hank and Carol Brown Goldberg

TOP: Aimé Mpane
Mapasa, 2012
Acrylic and mixed media on two wood panels
12 ½ x 12 in. each panel
The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Award, 2012