

# Owanto

The Lighthouse of Memory  
Go Nogé Mènè

curated by Fernando Francés



la Biennale di Venezia

53. Esposizione  
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Pavilion of the Republic of Gabon

## Launch of the Official Catalogue of the Pavilion of the Republic of Gabon at the 53rd Venice Biennale of Art

The official catalogue of the Pavilion of the Republic of Gabon at the Venice Biennale will be launched on the 18th of October at the renowned Galleria Ca' D'Oro in Rome in the presence of H.E. Noël Baiot, Ambassador of the Republic of Gabon in Italy.

Rome, Italy - 18th of October, 2009 - Galleria Ca' D'Oro and Christian Maretti Editore are hosting the launch of the official catalogue of the Republic of Gabon at the 53rd International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale. Titled, **Owanto, The Lighthouse of Memory Go Nogé Mènè**, this event also marks the inauguration of an exhibition, by artist Owanto, that echoes the original show in Venice, thereby bringing the wonderful spirit of 'Fare Mondi' to this intimate gallery located in the historical Piazza di Spagna in Rome. The launch and inauguration will take place on Sunday the 18th of October at 10.30 am at the Galleria Ca' D'Oro in the presence of H.E. Noël Baiot, Ambassador of the Republic of Gabon in Italy. The show will run until the 6th of November.

The catalogue presents the work of French-Gabonese artist Owanto, chosen to represent Gabon at 53rd International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale. This participation has allowed Gabon to showcase, for the first time, amongst 77 other nations, the forefront of its contemporary art. The curator of the artistic project is Fernando Francés, Director of the Contemporary Art Centre in Málaga (CAC Málaga), which under his direction has become one of the most important contemporary art centres in Europe. Mr. Frances has put together an exhibition, which outlines that the **Truth** may be found in the origins of civilisation, and this is why Owanto's motherland, Gabon as well as Africa, have much to contribute to the construction of a new world order. He went on to elaborate:

"The ideas and principles which underlie Owanto's message are as simple as nature. Her animist convictions, and belief that family unity is a starting point for world unity, are deeply rooted in her Gabonese background. The home, for Owanto, is the best laboratory in which to design and build love, a raw material that is vital for mutual understanding in the world. This laboratory, in which mothers are symbols of unity and courage, is a metaphor for hope that a better world is possible if each of us exerts a positive influence on our immediate environment, our family, our tribe, our society."

Since its successful inauguration on the 4th of June, the official Pavilion of the Republic of Gabon, located in the 16th Century cloister of the Telecom Italia Future Centre, has welcomed thousands of visitors to its serene interior. The show will close its doors to the public on the 22nd of November, 2009.

## Owanto

International artist based in Monaco, was born in Paris in 1953 to a French father and Gabonese mother. She lived in Gabon for the greater part of her childhood and has spent most of her life in Europe - in France, Great Britain, Monaco and Spain. Her works can be found in private and public collections around the world and are signed in her mother's memory Owanto Bia. Owanto means La Femme, The Woman. Owanto is representing, her motherland, the Republic of Gabon in their debut at 53rd International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale.

"Owanto uses pop, conceptual and minimal art in her creation of universal symbols, which remind spectators of where the solutions to our world may lie and how a society lacking moral strength may begin to heal. Using her sculptures as starting points, Owanto creates a series of icons which she presents in highly technical formats such as light-boxes and traffic signs - mediums previously explored by Maurizio Cattelan, Rogelio Lopez Cuenca, Gabriel Acuna and Michael Pinsky. Owanto's discourse focuses on images of a family group and a child playing, which suggest a happier world to come. The pieces have the double intention of alerting us to solutions to our global predicament, and of suggesting a change in governing attitudes and rules. The light-boxes, like torches and lighthouses, illuminate a future characterised by tolerance, unity and hope." (Fernando Francés, 2009)

For more information about Owanto, *The Lighthouse of Memory, Go Nogé Mènè*, please visit [www.pavillondugabon.com](http://www.pavillondugabon.com). For more information regarding the distribution and purchase of the catalogue please contact:

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