

Lives and works in Paris, France, and Bandjoun, Cameroon.

Barthelemy Toguo is not an artist locked inside an ivory tower; his work reflects his concerns about the development of his country, his continent, and the Earth as a whole. Reexamining the current turbulence in the world through his imagination, as well as through the ancient myths that he updates, mixes, and clashes together, he offers works that he hopes will speak to all humanity.

After his primary and secondary schooling in Edea, and Sangmelima, Cameroon, Toguo attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, where he studied drawing and sculpture. Starting in 1993, he attended the Ecole Supérieure d'Art in Grenoble, France, where he discovered contemporary art and was exposed to more experimental practices. The final stage of his artistic training began in 1998, in the prestigious Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where he was taught by the German artists Fritz Schwegler (1935-2014) and Klaus Rinke (b. 1939). There he also met the British sculptor Tony Cragg, the Greek installation artist Janis Kounellis, and the German painter and printmaker Konrad Klapheck.

Toguo's first exhibitions were held in France, Germany, and Africa (the Goethe Institut of Yaounde and Abidjan). Although he lives in Europe and has become a French citizen, Toguo maintains strong roots in Cameroon and returns there regularly. In 2004, for example, he created the arts foundation Bandjoun Station, with an artistic and cultural building that opened in 2013. As a visual arts center and museum of contemporary art, Bandjoun Station is designed to welcome artists and researchers-in-residence from around the world, where they can develop proposals in harmony with the local community. Thanks to exchanges with his fellow artists and collectors, Toguo has assembled a permanent collection for the museum. He has also organized agricultural projects there, in the spirit of healthy and sustainable development.

In the late 1990s, art critics and curators began to notice Toguo's works and invited him to participate in major art events. Among those curators were Hans Ulrich Obrist for *Migateurs* (Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris / l'ARC — Animation, Recherche, Confrontation, Paris) (1999); Jean-Hubert Martin for *Partage d'exotismes*, Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art (2000); and Pierre Restany for *Political Ecology* at Whitebox Art Center in New York City (2001).

Toguo has become a globe-trotting artist, participating in biennial and triennial events throughout the world. He constantly extends the range and dimension of his creations, using photography, video, installations, printing, and performance, and producing works that freely blend multiple techniques.