

Thierry Oussou
(Allada, 1988)



Thierry Oussou in his studio, Amsterdam 2020



When your dreams are alive, 2019, mixed media on paper, 152 x 402 cm



Equilibrium Wind

A solo show by Thierry Oussou

19 March– 30 April, 2022

Artist **Thierry Oussou** returns to Lumen Travo Gallery with the solo exhibition *Equilibrium Wind*, which presents a completely new body of work, developed by the artist in Benin. Part of an on-going project initiated by Oussou in recent years, this show addresses the cotton plantations located in the district of Panouignan in Benin and the significant impact they have on the country's economic growth.

Cotton is an important African product in the globalized arena. Beside its highly symbolic reference to a colonial history of oppression, the “white gold” is featured in international discourses and debates on privatisation, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development. Far from being just a raw material, cotton embodies a precious tool for Beninese working class, offering a dignified and fair life to those cultivating it. Oussou's multi-layered investigation stands as a reminder of the overlooked potential of this material.

After gaining first-hand experience by cultivating cotton himself, Oussou translates this very knowledge into the creation of the works featured in the exhibition, consisting in a new series of paintings, a video and several installations.

Each of the works exhibited at Lumen Travo Gallery offers us the chance to observe and interact with Oussou's cotton plantation and the lives of those working there every day.

The new series of paintings is inspired by the lives of Beninese men and women working in the cotton plantations. Oussou paints exclusively on black paper and favours large-scale formats. Distorted figures, faces, objects and symbols float freely against the dark background of the paper.

His distinctively gestural style with drips, scratches, splatters and calligraphic marks aims to recreate the sequence of movements taking place in the cotton plantations and, in a broader sense, in all those settings where the workers act.

The aim of this on-going project is to obliterate the distance between *creation* and *consume*, while raising awareness about the different stages of cotton production: from the plantations to the comfort of our homes, from the unprocessed material to the manufactured clothes that we wear every day, Oussou points out the sequence of actions that we, as consumers, often forget about.



Thierry Oussou
Equilibrium Wind





From left to right:
Workers - Untitled XIV, XIII, XII | 2022 | mixed media on paper | 151.5 x 62.5 cm





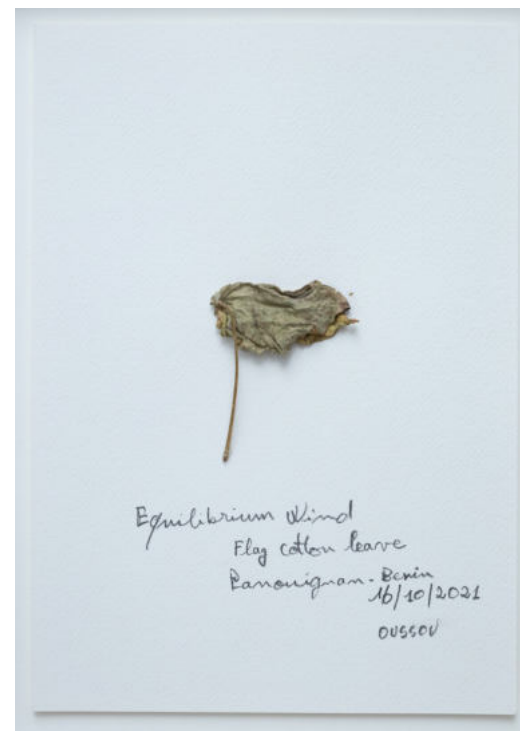
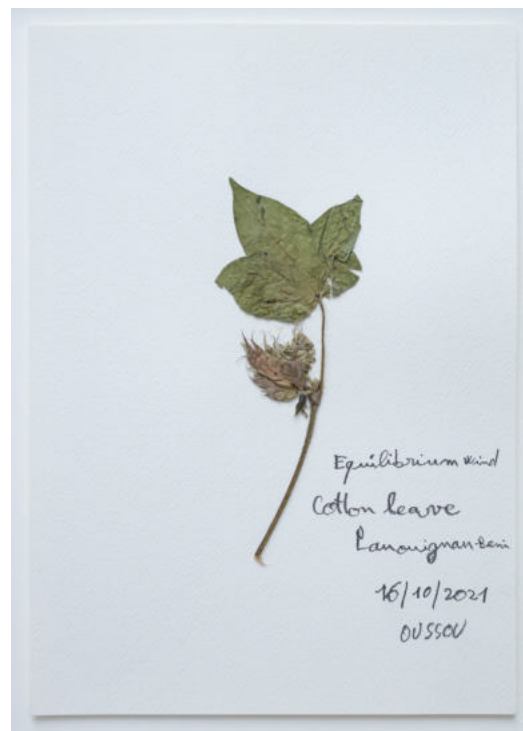
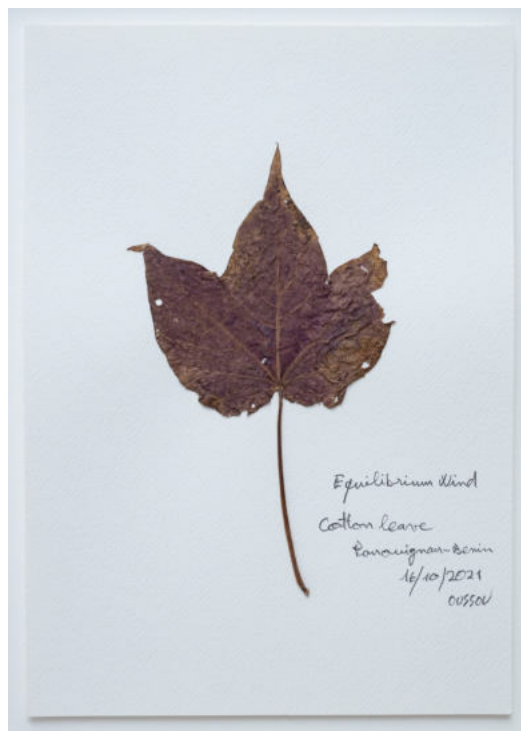
Workers - Untitled VII (2022)
Mixed media | 162 x 152 cm



Workers - Untitled VIII (2022)
Mixed media | 152 x 80.5 cm



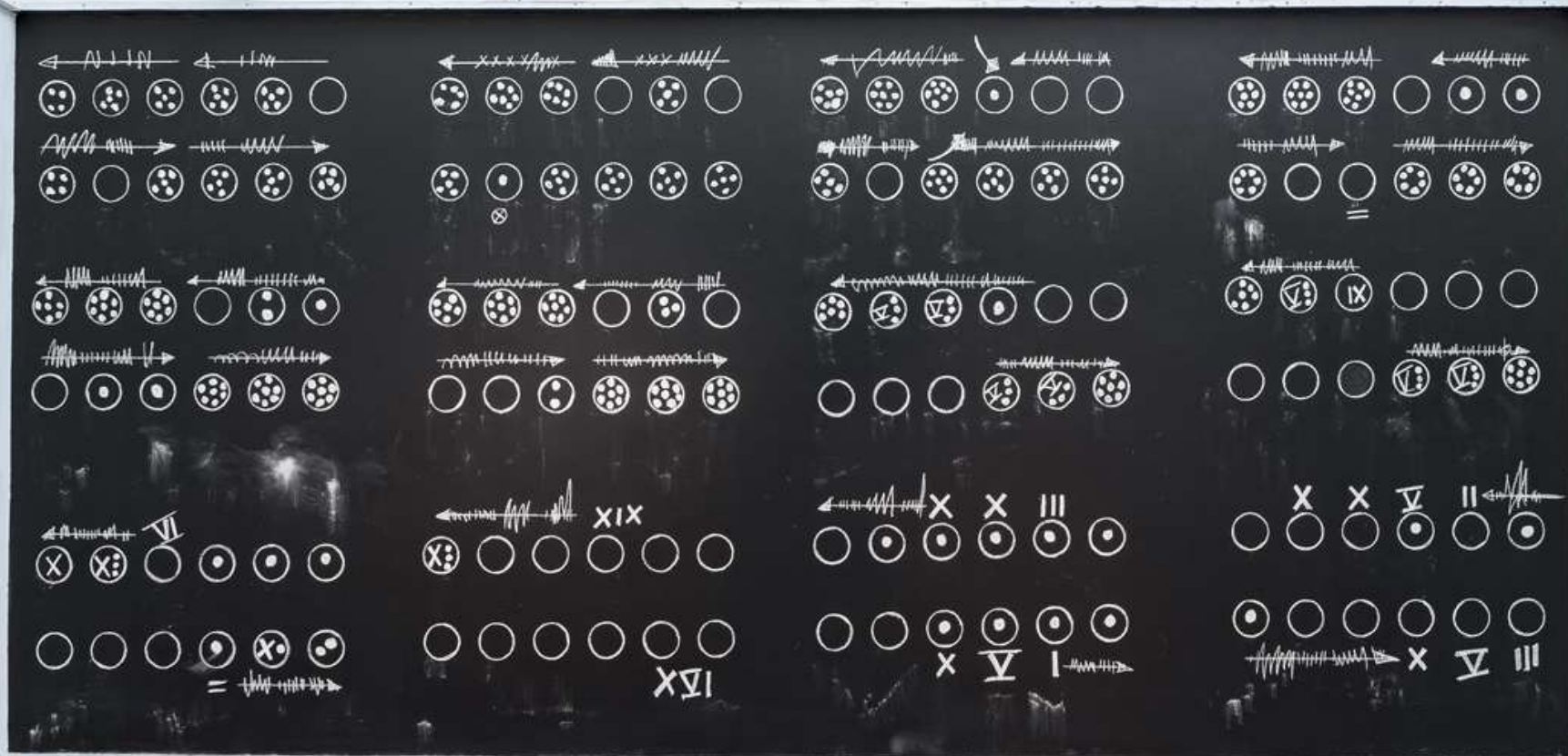




From left to right: *Equilibrium Wind* - Cotton Leave II, III, IV, *Empty Cotton Ball* | 2022 | 36 x 28 x 4 cm each



Adjikoui, 2019, mixed media on paper





Installation, 2020, gloves, concrete.
Rozenstraat 59 Project, Amsterdam, NL



What is Left of the Sugar Cubes, video installation
São Paulo Biennial, 2019

Part of the Brazilian Pavillion which
which received the Golden Lion for best national participation at
the BIennale di Architettura 2023 in Venice



Thierry Oussou, *Restless Matter*, installation, wood sticks
Cobra Museum, 2018



Works on Paper and Some Objects, Group show
Lumen Travo Gallery, 2018



Untitled #9, 2017, papier-mâché
18 x 9,5 cm



Together II, 2015, papier-mâché
23 x 15,5 cm



Untitled #6, 2017, papier-mâché
16 x 10 cm



A-1K 2016
Site de l'habitat
N° 10120-16
13/10/2016



“Impossible Is Nothing”, RijksakademieOPEN, 2016



“Impossible is Nothing”, 10th Berlin Biennale, 2018

In his artistic practice, Thierry Oussou (BJ, 1988) shows great interest in professions that are marginalised and overlooked. From cotton workers to public transport drivers, his visual investigation aims to emphasise, or rather turn visible the different terms of labour that exist, and how they contribute to the society we live in.

In 2015-16 Oussou was resident at the Rijksakademie van beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

In 2018 he was awarded with the Tollman Award.

Recent exhibitions include: Aichi Triennale, Japan (upcoming, 2022); Centraal Museum, Utrecht (upcoming, 2023); Art contemporain du Bénin, Palais de la Marina Cotonou (2022); Oude Kerk, Amsterdam (2020); Impossible is Nothing, Art Exchange, Essex (2019); São Paulo Biennial (2019); 10th Berlin Biennale (2018).

Thierry Oussou in his studio, Amsterdam, 2019



CV

Born in 1988 in Allada, Benin
Lives and works in Amsterdam, Netherlands

EDUCATION

2015-16 Rijksakademie van beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, NL
2012-14 Assistant to Meschac Gaba and Barthélémy Toguo
2007-8 Assistant to Ernesto Hounbo

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2019
Political Strategy, Lumen Travo Gallery Amsterdam NL
Impossible is Nothing, Art Exchange, Essex, UK
Patrimoine materile, immateriel, et artérité, MCN, Dakar, SENG
2018
Tiwani Contemporary, London, UK
Before It Is Completely Gone, Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg, SA
2017
Soil, Bradwol Project Space, Amsterdam, NL
Une histoire: le miel aux lèvres, Cargo in Context, Amsterdam, NL
2016
Don't Sit In, No Man's Art Gallery, Amsterdam, NL
Thierry Oussou, Ornis A. Gallery, Amsterdam, NL

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022
Aichi Triennale , Tokoname City , JP
Central Museum Utrecht, NL
2021
Talking Mirrors Hamburg, DE
Lumen Travo Gallery, NL
Benin Contemporary Abidjan, CI
2020
Mirrors of Time, KASTEEL OUD-REKEM, BE
3 Package Deal Talents 2019/2020 VondelCS, Amsterdam, NL
Oude Kerk Museum, Amsterdam, NL

Rozenstraat 59 Project, Amsterdam, NL
Untitled (Spirit of changing times), Lumen Travo Gallery Amsterdam, NL
Stories and Poems, Capital C, Amsterdam, NL
2019
Imagined Communities, the 21st Contemporary Art Biennial Sesc_Videobrasil, São Paulo, BR
2018
Restless Matter, Cobra Museum of Modern Art, Amstelveen, NL
Before The Fire Starts, Galerie van Gelder, Amsterdam, NL
Works on Paper and Some Objects, Lumen Travo Gallery, Amsterdam, NL
We Don't Need Another Hero, 10th Berlin Biennale, Berlin, DE
Gaia in the Anthropocene, Garage Rotterdam, Rotterdam, NL
2017
Field Work, Tiwani Contemporary, London, UK
Impossible is Nothing, Bradwol Project Space, Amsterdam, NL
2016
Dutch Royal Award for Modern Painting, Royal Palace, Amsterdam, NL
NO Futur, Performance Biennale, Athens, Greece
What About Africa?, Witteveen Art Space, Amsterdam, NL
2015
Nine Artists, Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, SA
Aqui Africa, SESC, Belenzhino, São Paulo, BR
Starting Block, Cotonou, BJ
2014
Textiles, Brazzaville, CG
Dokoutin, Mosso, Brussels, BE
Green Art Project & Multiplicity, Dak'Art Biennale, Dakar, SENG
TGD 10, IFAN Museum, Dakar, SENG
2013
UTOPIA, Holbaek Museum, DK
Western Waste meets African Craft, Blaakildegaard Museum, DK
2012
A WHAN KPO DO Te, Cotonou, BJ
Density New Generation, Cotonou, BJ
Inventing the Image Mode, Benin Biennial, Ouidah, BJ
2011
GBAVI NOUKPIN NON, Cotonou, BJ
2010
WABA, Cotonou, BJ
2009
The Free Education in Benin, Cotonou, BJ
2008
The Artistic Vision of Prison Life in Benin, Cotonou, BJ
2007

Young Prom'Art: Waste and Environment, Cotonou, BJ
2006
The Centenary of the Death of King Behanzin, Abomey, BJ
2005
National Arts School Competition, Cotonou, BJ

RESIDENCIES AND AWARDS

2018: Winner the 14th Tollman Award for the Visual Arts
2017: Arthouse residency, Lagos, NIR
2016: Nominated for Dutch Royal Award for Modern Painting, Royal Palace,
Amsterdam, NL
Awarded 1st Jacqueline van Tongeren Fellowship, Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, NL
2015-16: Rijksakademie residency, Amsterdam, NL
2014: Dokoutin residency, Brussels, BE
Mava Unit residency, Cotonou, BJ
2013: Youth Programme, World in Motion Images, DK
2012: Men Standing workshop, Fondation Zinsou, Cotonou, BJ
Creation residency, Abomey, BJ
Photographic workshop: Inventing the World in Image, Ouidah, BJ
Project Design residency, Abomey, BJ
2011: Yè artist residency, BJ
Winner of One Minute Africa Award, Cairo, EG
2010: Residency at ESMA Abomey-Calavi, BJ
Nominated for Benin Golden Awards, Cotonou, BJ
2007: Young Prom'Art Winner, Cotonou, BJ

COLLECTIONS

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis MN, USA



LUMEN TRAVO

Lijnbaansgracht 314, 1017WZ Amsterdam, NL
info@lumentravo.nl
www.lumentravo.nl
31 (0) 20 6270 883