

Pelagie Gbaguidi

11 November to 1 December 2016



Pélagie Gbaguidi was born in Dakar in 1965, from Benin. She graduated from the School of Fine Arts in Liège (Belgium) in 1995.

I re- discovered ‘the black code*’ in 2004 during a artist’s residency program in Nantes at a book fair (*decreed in Versailles by King Louis XIV in March 1685 the Black Code or Edicts Declarations and Decrees regarding the Discipline and Trade of Negro Slaves in French Islands of America was not revoked until 1848 the year in which slavery was abolished). After months of immersion it has become clear to me that it is time to de-mystify slavery as a unique phenomenon particular to the black race, rather to view it as part of universal patrimony. It has helped me to link the problems of racism and xenophobia, past and present, north/south or east/west... as essentially economically based. The deep impression made by this book and the images that obsessed me, configured an entire body of sketches/ paintings/ photographs/ drawings... that group together under a single tentative title: Le Code Noir.

In 2008, she was invited in the program IFAA, thinking about the subject ART MIGRATION IDENTITY , she proposed this reflexion on: Art- My Work in Progress is an utopia who question the world in which we lived. Is still and always this kind to question the human in what he is. Maybe to try to answer to this question : « with what theme do you work ? With no theme, is life a theme ? « I reflect on the mistakes of the past, to try to understand what we have fallen into ».

Migration- The day we no longer speak of multiculturalism of the richness of pluralism, we'll cease to speak about humankind. Identity- from the collective to individual, it incorporates everyone. But its discourse engenders passionate debates as soon as it refers to African Art. I think it's a trap, a ghetto one must run from. The grand illusion of these big identity debates is about moving alongside the Self, that is, toward the Other.

In a more personal way, she wrote a few years ago that : « I think fundamentally that identity, on the whole, far exceeds any partisan split between what is or not 'African', what is a part of or foreign a given territory. I aim to sharpen the awakened conscience of what I 'am' to better convey it to future generations ; and who I 'am' is

For More Information : <http://gbaguidipelagie.com>