



Opening reception
21 May 2026

Solo show
Steve Bandoma - *Pomme de discorde*
15 May to 20 June 2026

STEVE BANDOMA

Pomme de discorde

(Bone of contention)

15 May to 20 June 2026

Opening reception: 21 May, 6pm to 9pm

In the presence of the artist

Steve Bandoma is the artist of hybridisation and multiple identities. And this is no coincidence for an artist who lives between two opposing tendencies and two influences: art and politics. Bandoma has inherited a taste for public work from his late father, a former minister and ambassador. And art is omnipresent elsewhere in his family: his mother is a sometime artist, his sister is a singer, and his brother is a filmmaker. When Bandoma is asked which of his passions will gain the upper hand, he invariably answers that he intends to multi-task.

Voluntary exile in the early years

Despite his family background, Bandoma did not follow the well-worn path of being the “son of...”. Having graduated from ABA Kinshasa (School of Fine Arts) in 2004, he opted to move to South Africa. Bandoma settled in Cape Town where he began a multimedia art training programme. He tried his hand at photography and video, and did performance art, created installations, and had a go at anything and everything.

The start of his career in South Africa proved difficult and anonymous. However, Bandoma worked away, gradually developed his own style, raised his profile, started to exhibit his work regularly, and ended up making a name for himself on the South African art scene. In 2009, Bandoma hit the road again, firstly going to Zurich, and then travelling to Paris to take up a residency at the *Cité Nationale des Arts*.

Identity and culture at the heart of his work

Steve Bandoma moved back to Kinshasa in 2012 at the age of 31. He is showing works never seen in DR Congo, revolving around chaos, hybridity and deconstruction. An advocate of African self-assertion, Steve Bandoma uses his works to denounce a form of globalisation that is jeopardising the continent’s culture.

He does not necessarily aim to create African art. His work endeavours to be contemporary and universal. Nevertheless, the themes explored and the vision developed in his artworks do reflect his African identity. Bandoma produces themed series whose titles set the tone: *Lost tribes*, *Enculturation*, *Abolition*, etc. In other words: the relationship with identity, the conflict between tradition and modernity, and the clash of cultures.

With Bandoma, like many Congolese artists, the serious nature of the message in no way excludes levity. Humour and derision are omnipresent. For instance, when he tackles Africanness, he unequivocally criticizes Western domination and the materialism which accompanies it, albeit with more irony than acrimony. He applies the same ironic and mischievous tone when depicting colonialism.

Even the chaos and originality do not rule out a degree of harmony. A special talent is required to bring alive studiously incoherent artworks. Maybe making chaos coherent is a characteristic of Kinshasa?

An evolving technique

Having tried out all the different artistic media during his studies in South Africa, Bandoma opted for paper at the start of his career in 2008, with this medium offering him a clear advantage: namely that it allows the artist to combine drawing, ink splashes, collage and gouache. Bandoma’s creativity best expresses itself in this mix of techniques. This is how the

faces, limbs, body fragments, statuettes and fetishes combine most effectively.

Bandoma stopped creating collages in 2014-2015. Why did this happen? "Everyone is starting to do collage!" Bandoma therefore decided to focus on drawing, while increasing the size of his works, because large formats enabled him to express all of his energy.

The latest development took place in 2025 when Bandoma switched to canvas to which he no longer just applies ink but also acrylics. While the technique may change, his artistic world remains the same.

This exhibition showcases artworks from each period, with the oldest dating back to 2012.

Culture for development

And how do politics fit into all that? Here is an excerpt from an interview with Bandoma published in *Le Monde* to coincide with the *Beauté Congo* exhibition at the Fondation Cartier in 2015: "an artist is a politician in one way or another. Artists have a message to convey and an ideology to champion." Indeed, what is the purpose of focusing on identity or the disappearance of ancestral cultures, if it is not an invitation to reflect on the future and on a development model for DR Congo?

Bandoma is fascinated by this sea change in the history of Africa, which has seen the coloniser ride roughshod over the tribal cultures, while taking ownership of their most beautiful symbols: indigenous art. Not only does Bandoma believe in an African pathway to African development, but he also thinks that culture needs to play a pivotal role in it. It is natural that he wants to play an active artistic and political role, and be involved in the relationship between them.

"Pomme de discorde"

The exhibition's title is borrowed from one of the artworks on display. A chaotic scene is depicted in which a Christ, who could actually be a devil, holds an Israeli flag in one hand, while

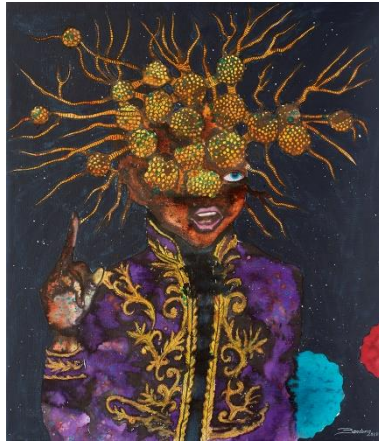
the other is equipped with a boxing glove. It is a snapshot of our contemporary world. The everlasting conflict between humankind leads to a rage, with some fighting for survival, while others see an opportunity to seize control. In truth, it is a quintessentially Congolese subject.

The exhibition showcases Steve Bandoma's three artistic worlds: power, with its grotesque incarnations, including a portrait lampooning Donald Trump, who looks frighteningly familiar; hybridity, with subjects who have assimilated because they were irresistibly drawn to the dominant culture, or distorted because they suffer from cultural indigestion; and the colonialism/decolonisation pairing. Indeed, 20 May will see the opening of a major exhibition on the latter subject at the Caen Memorial: *(Dé)colonisations : des artistes africains interrogent l'Histoire [(De)colonisation: African artists explore the past]*. Steve Bandoma was a natural fit for this exhibition. His 2023 work, *Emprise*, will be on display.

View the [artist's page](#).



1. Steve Bandoma, *Neter* (2025)
Ink and acrylic on canvas
100 x 90 cm
© Steve Bandoma
Photo credit: PCP Photographie



2. Steve Bandoma, *Mutant 2* (2025)
Ink and acrylic on canvas
110 x 95 cm
© Steve Bandoma
Photo credit: PCP Photographie



3. Steve Bandoma, *Little Trump* (2018)
Ink on paper
150 x 110 cm
© Steve Bandoma
Photo credit: PCP Photographie



4. Steve Bandoma, *Falling apart* (2012)
Ink and collage on paper
103 x 73 cm
© Steve Bandoma
Photo credit: PCP Photographie



5. Steve Bandoma, *Zap* (2016)
Mixed media on paper
180 x 120 cm
© Steve Bandoma
Photo credit: PCP Photographie

Visuals of the works in the exhibition are available on request from:
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