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For Immediate Use
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Fowler Museum presents work of internationally acclaimed artist Pascale Marthine Tayou in his first U.S. solo museum exhibition

UPDATE: Art Delayed at Port of L.A.

The container from Belgium carrying Tayou's works for the exhibition was held up in the record-breaking congestion at the Port of L.A. Port officials informed the Museum's customs agents that they could not guarantee the shipment would arrive in time for the exhibition's scheduled opening. To avert disaster, Tayou generously created an entirely new body of work at the Fowler over four days of residency, working with museum staff. These new mixed media artworks, produced using off-the-shelf materials purchased locally, are now installed with the originally commissioned works and are on view through Mar. 1, 2015.

Press Release
September 15, 2014

World Share: Installations by Pascale Marthine Tayou, Nov. 2, 2014–Mar. 1, 2015

The Fowler Museum at UCLA presents *World Share: Installations by Pascale Marthine Tayou*, a large-scale immersive environment that combines his sculpture, drawings, and poetry with Fowler artworks and recorded sound. Assembled from a stunning diversity of materials and found objects, Tayou's art is characterized by an aesthetic of accumulation. He pierces Styrofoam with thousands of pins and razorblades, stacks hundreds of birdhouses against a wall, and adorns crystal glass figures with beads, plastic flowers, and feathers. This approach derives in part from the ways African sculpture is empowered with accumulations of materials to assert various kinds of religious, social, and political authority. Tayou uses this aesthetic to raise searching questions about inequalities of wealth and power in today's postcolonial, global context at the same time he explores the hidden, spiritual forces that infuse ordinary, everyday life in African cities.

*This project is the continuation in my long journey toward the unknown,
An initiatory process at the heart of contemporary rituals,
Ought I to believe or not believe?*
Pascale Marthine Tayou, 2014

Exhibition Overview

World Share is composed of several multi-part installations, which intersect to encourage dialogue among them in surprising ways. Key installations include:

- “Bend skins” (the Cameroonian name for the moped-taxis ubiquitous in African cities), which are transformed by the artist into zoomorphic “power figures” that appear to glide through the gallery. The vehicles are laden with empty baskets, boxes, or plastic bottles and activated by the very horse hair amulets typically used by African taxi drivers to protect their vehicles. Each **Bend Skin** combines references to movement, journeys, and crowded cities in the developing world.
- **Favelas ABC**, first installed at the Copenhagen Arts Festival in 2012, features a mass of birdhouses clinging to the gallery wall and accompanied by the recorded sounds of birdsong. *Favela*—a word that refers to slums in Brazil—evokes the universal human quest for shelter and community while also referencing the imbalances of poverty and opportunity that plague peoples across the globe.
- **Poupées Pascales** (2014) and **Masques** (2014) form an installation that includes twenty-five hand-blown crystal figures and masks, some inspired by the Fowler Museum’s African collections. By remaking wood sculptures in transparent glass, Tayou opens them up to new associations. Following traditional African approaches of activating sculptures by adorning them with ritually significant pigments, animal claws, or other objects, Tayou embellishes his “power figures” with materials such as chocolate, feathers, and nylon stockings.
- **Les Sauveteurs** (2014) consists of four, almost life-size, blown glass crystal renditions of the itinerant street hawkers ubiquitous in African towns and cities. Each crystal figure is bedecked with goods and packages. Their name, *sauveteur*, which means “rescuer” in French, has multiple connotations that blend practical, spiritual, and emotional forms of “salvage.” Street hawkers in Cameroon are understood to “save” you by providing on-the-spot services and to “salvage” goods by recycling and reselling them within the informal economy.
- **Vodou Walls** (2014), **Madagascar 1/2** (2012), and **Gli Spilli del Sarto** (2010). All three pieces are made from large panels of Styrofoam pierced with a profusion of razor blades, nails, or colored pushpins, which trace the contours of topographic features such as rivers and mountains. For Tayou, the act of cutting or piercing relates to African methods of traditional healing as well as the transformation of the human body through scarification.

Other works include:

- **Citarum River** (2014), a pipeline constructed from transparent plastic water bottles, is named for one of the world’s dirtiest rivers, located in Indonesia.
- **Colonne Pascale**, a totem-like stack of Chinese-made enameled pots popular in kitchens across Africa, towers toward the gallery ceiling, an ironic monument to sustenance and its lack.
- **Black Diamonds** are hanging wire sculptures that call to mind the commercial extraction of Africa’s minerals and the colloquial name given to members of South Africa’s emerging black middle and upper classes.

A same-titled book published in conjunction with the exhibition will feature essays by Rodrigues and Leora Maltz-Leca, Assistant Professor of Contemporary Art and Culture, Rhode Island School of Design.

About the Artist

Tayou was born in Nkongsamba, Cameroon in 1966, and has been living and working for the last decade in Flemish-speaking Ghent, Belgium. In the 1990s, while still in Cameroon, Tayou embarked on a law degree, but left mid-way to pursue work as an artist. Following a kind of art training common in many African contexts, Tayou learned informally from other artists and developed his skills independently. He became a key figure in the contemporary art scene in Douala—one of the largest and most cosmopolitan cities in Cameroon—which since the early 1990s has been a center of experimental and often socially conscious work built on performance, installation, and site-specific intervention. In 1996, he participated in the Dak'Art Biennale in Senegal and emerged on the international biennial circuit, exhibiting at the Sydney Biennial in 1998, Documenta 11 in 2002, and the Tate Modern's Triennial in 2009, among numerous others. Also in 2009, Tayou produced one of the largest installations in curator Daniel Birnbaum's *Making Worlds* international exhibition for the Venice Biennale. He is represented by Gallery Continua in San Gimignano, Italy, and travels frequently between Europe and Africa.

More Information

World Share: Installations by Pascale Marthine Tayou is organized by the Fowler Museum at UCLA and curated by Gemma Rodrigues, Curator of African Arts. Major funding is provided by the Flemish Government, the National Endowment for the Arts, Brenda R. Potter, and the Fay Bettye Green Fund to Commission New Work. Generous support is provided by the Philip L. Ravenhill Fund, the Jay T. Last and Deborah R. Last Endowment, the Pasadena Art Alliance, and Manus, the support group of the Fowler Museum.



The Fowler Museum at UCLA is one of the country's most respected institutions devoted to exploring the arts and cultures of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA Arts, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$12 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call 310 825-4361 or visit fowler.ucla.edu.