

## The Armory Show *Platform: Barthélémy Toguo* September 7 - 10, 2023



Barthélémy Toguo, *Urban Requiem*, 2015.

For the Platform section of the 2023 edition of The Armory Show, curated by Eva Respini, Galerie Lelong & Co., New York is pleased to present *Urban Requiem* (2015), an installation by Barthélémy Toguo.

The installation is comprised of a series of ladders holding life-size portrait busts sculpted from Iroko wood. The floor beneath these structures is covered by images of boxes used to ship bananas, an element that recurs across a selection of Toguo's installations. The busts function as stamps, with the recognizable calls to action of recent protest movements, from #MeToo to #BlackLivesMatter, carved into their bases. Oversized in

comparison to a traditional stamp, these functional sculptures require significant effort to utilize, parodying administrative gestures.

Toguo, a Cameroonian artist based in France, first conceived of the idea for *Urban Requiem* in the 1990s upon realizing that his passport was filled with customs stamps from around the world, unlike those of his colleagues residing in the European Union. The first iteration of this installation was created specifically for the 2015 Venice Biennale, *All The World's Futures*, curated by Okwui Enwezor. In the time since, *Urban Requiem* has been a cornerstone of a number of solo presentations of Toguo's work, continuing to resonate as a poignant reminder of the communal power harnessed by the protest movements it references.

Barthélémy Toguo was born in M'Balmayo, Cameroon, in 1967, and currently lives and works in Paris, France and Bandjoun, Cameroon. Solo exhibitions of his work have been presented at institutions including Museu Picasso de Barcelona, Spain; Savannah College of Art and Design Museum of Art, Georgia; Centre d'art La Malmaison, Cannes, France; Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, France; Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York; and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France. In 2022, Toguo was commissioned for a monumental site-specific installation *The Pillar of Missing Migrants* (2022) under the Louvre Museum's pyramid in Paris, France. In 2021, Toguo was appointed UNESCO Artist for Peace and in 2016, he was shortlisted for the Prix Marcel Duchamp. The artist presented the installation *Vaincre le virus!* at the Centre Pompidou, Paris the same year. His works are included in public collections worldwide, including the Tate Modern, England; Centre Pompidou, France; Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, France; Studio Museum Harlem, New York; and MoMA, New York. In 2011, Toguo was made a Knight of the Order of Arts and Literature in France.