



Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology

Harvard University, 11 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02118-2019
Tel.: 617-496-1027 ♦ Fax: 617-492-7535 ♦ www.peabody.harvard.edu

PRESS RELEASE: For immediate release

Sammy Baloji Named

2017 Robert Gardner Fellow in Photography

(June 1, 2017, Cambridge) The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, is pleased to announce the selection of the 2017 Robert Gardner Fellow in Photography. Following an international search, the Gardner Fellowship committee awarded the Fellowship to photographer **Sammy Baloji** (D.R. Congo). The Fellowship carries a \$50,000 stipend to begin or complete a proposed project followed by the publication of a book. “Sammy Baloji’s visually and intellectually arresting work highlights and creates essential links between the past and the present, colonial and post-colonial histories with resonance well beyond the Congo,” said Peabody Museum Curator of Visual Anthropology Ilisa Barbash. “The Museum is especially excited by his repertoire and combinations of media—from original photography to archival photographs and documents, from relief to sculpture, from compositions of individual artifacts to collage.” Sammy Baloji (1978–) was born and raised in Lubumbashi, in the contested and mineral-rich Katanga province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, formerly the Belgian Congo and Zaire). Sammy’s work juxtaposes architecture, industrial ruins, and vast slag heaps with images of the people—workers, villagers, urbanites—to explore identity, social history, and memory. According to Fariba Derakhshani of the Prince Clause Fund, Baloji’s “... work is unusual and outstanding for its profound engagement with his people, their history, and their humanity. This personal involvement is perfectly balanced and contained by his sensitive eye and his commitment to critical intellectual enquiry.”



From the series *Memory*, Untitled 21 (top) and Untitled 11, 2006. ©Sammy Baloji.

Baloji's *Mémoire [Memory]* (2004–06) comprised a series of highly charged photomontages that juxtaposed archival images of workers with subtly colored panoramas of today's mining wasteland, challenging historical dogmas on colonization in Katanga Province. *Kolwezi* (2009–11) explored the impact of the ongoing post-colonial exploitation of the mineral resources of the DRC. *Essay on Urban Planning*, (2013) exhibited at the Venice Biennial (2015), is a stunning depiction of the human condition in its modern iterations, concerns extended in the exhibition *Urban Now: City Life in Congo* (2016)—currently at the Open Society Foundations in New York City. *Urban Now*, a collaboration with anthropologist Filip De Boeck, explores the city of Kinshasa, in the DRC “suspended between the broken dreams of a colonial past and the promises of neoliberal futures.”



From *Urban Now*: The Tower, 7th street, quartier industrial, municipality of Limete, 2015; David Ebalavo, Humbu land chief and head of the Mbuku Mvemba Mavubu clan sits on a chair, Mont Amba District, Kinshasa, 2015. © Sammy Baloji.

For his Fellowship year, Sammy will focus on the *Gendarmes Katangais*, a rebel resistance group from the copper-rich Katanga province of DRC. The Katangese Gendarmes have influenced political landscapes in Central Africa since the Cold War and are likely to continue to do so.

Defeated in their battle for the succession of Katanga from Congo/Zaire during the 1960s, the Katangese Gendarmes based themselves in neighboring Angola among communities that shared their mostly Lunda ethnicity. In precolonial times, a Lunda kingdom had ruled this cross-border region. The Katangese Gendarmes mobilized Lunda unity during the 1970s and, aided by Angolan forces, staged two insurgent wars against Zaire, ruled by President Mobutu. Mobutu, claiming the rebels were backed by Cuba and the USSR, enlisted aid from the US, France, and China, and defeated the rebels. During the 1990s, the Katangese Gendarmes joined Laurent Kabila's successful overthrow of Mobutu, but many became disillusioned with Kabila's rule and eventually returned to Angola, where today they struggle to maintain their identity and still dream of a return "home" to Katanga. In this new project Sammy will continue his collaboration with anthropologist and Lunda expert, Filip De Boeck, and his use of archival resources in his photographic processes.

Sammy Baloji lives and works in Lubumbashi, DRC and Brussels, Belgium. Baloji has had solo exhibitions at: Musée du quai Branly, Paris; MuZee, Oostende, Belgium; Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren; and Museum for African Art, New York. His solo show that opened in May at WIELS, Contemporary Art Center Brussels titled *Sammy Baloji & Filip De Boeck — Urban Now: City Life in Congo*, is currently showing at the Open Society Foundation, New York. Widely collected, Baloji has been featured in numerous group exhibitions worldwide.

Currently Sammy Baloji is featured in *documenta 14*, Kassel, Germany, and Athens, Greece, directed by Adam Szymczyk, and curated by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung. He is also in *Chinafrika: under construction*, at Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, Germany, *Tous, des sangs-mélés* curated by Frank Lamy and Julie Crenn, MAC VAL, Vitry-sur-Seine, France. *Senses of Time: Video and Film-Based Works of Africa*, curated by Karen Milbourne and Margaret Nooter-Roberts is currently at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington D.C., having already shown at The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles, CA, and the Wellin Museum, New York in 2016. In 2016 his work was also featured in the 11th *Shanghai Biennale*, and he curated in collaboration with Bambi Ceuppens, *Congo Art Works: Popular Painting* at BOZAR, Brussels, currently showing at The Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia. In 2015, he was featured in “la vie modern” curated by Ralph Rugoff, in the 13th Biennale de Lyon, “All the World’s Future’s” curated by Okwui Enwezor, the 56th International Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, and “Personne et les autres”, curated by Katrina Gregos, the exhibition for the Belgian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. He was also featured in “Africa” at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, “Beauté Congo”, Fondation Cartier pour l’Art Contemporain, Paris, and “Tech4Change”, curated by Mari F. Sundet, at Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Norway, 2015. He has been the recipient of numerous awards including, the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, 2015, and the 2014 Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative award, partnering with Olafur Eliasson. He was a Prix Pictet finalist in 2009, received the Prince Claus Award in 2008, and two awards at the 2007 African Photography Biennial in Bamako, Mali. Sammy is represented in the United States by Axis Gallery, New York.

About the Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography

The Fellowship funds an “established practitioner of the photographic arts to create and subsequently publish through the Peabody Museum a major book of photographs on the human condition anywhere in the world.” The Fellowship committee invites nominations from experts around the world; nominees are reviewed and selected by a committee of four. The Fellowship provides a stipend of \$50,000, and is unique in its dedication to funding professional documentary photography.

The Fellowship was given by Robert Gardner, award-winning documentary filmmaker and author, whose works have entered the permanent canon of non-fiction filmmaking. Gardner’s works include the documentary films “Dead Birds” and “Forest of Bliss” and books *The Impulse to Preserve: Reflections of a Filmmaker* and *Making Dead Birds: Chronicle of a Film*. In the 1970s Gardner produced and hosted “Screening Room,” a series of more than one hundred 90-minute programs on independent and experimental filmmaking. The series, considered an invaluable historical record of modern cinema, has been transferred to digital format for archival preservation by The Paley Center for Media in New York City. Robert Gardner received Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Harvard University and was director of the Film Study Center from 1957 to 1997. He was also founder and long-time director of the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts and taught the Visual Arts at Harvard for almost 40 years. Gardner is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. His most recent book is *Just Representations* (Peabody Museum Press and Studio7Arts 2010), a collection of Gardner’s short prose pieces about film and anthropology. In April 2013, Robert Gardner was awarded the James Smithson Bicentennial Medal by the Smithsonian Institution. He passed away in 2014.

Robert Gardner Fellowship Recipients

2007 Guy Tillim (South Africa). Tillim’s Fellowship took him to five African countries, documenting grand colonial architecture and how it has become part of a contemporary African stage. An exhibition of his Fellowship work, *Avenue Patrice Lumumba*, was shown at

the Peabody Museum in 2009, and was published in *Avenue Patrice Lumumba* (Peabody Museum Press and Prestel, 2009).

2008 Dayanita Singh (India). Singh's Fellowship work began as a visual diary and later evolved into "photographic fiction." Her Fellowship work was shown in the 2011 Peabody Museum exhibition *House of Love*, and was published in a book of the same name by Peabody Museum Press and Radius Books.

2009 Alessandra Sanguinetti (USA/Argentina). Sanguinetti continued a multi-year profile of two girls living in rural Argentina and their wider social networks for a project called, "The Life That Came."

2010 Stephen Dupont (Australia). Dupont created a study of cultural erosion as well as a celebration of Melanesian people in *Stephen Dupont: Papua New Guinea Portraits and Diaries*. A companion two-volume publication, *Piksa Niugini*, was published by Peabody Museum Press and Radius Books (2013).

2011 Miki Kratsman (Israel). Kratsman continued a project begun years ago to create a portfolio of photographs that explore how the medium of photography can be used to turn an ordinary moment in a person's life into a suspect one. Kratsman presents Palestinians as targets as though viewed from the perspective of a soldier; as *shahids* or martyrs as portrayed on neighborhood posters or placards; and as "wanted men." His volume, *The Resolution of the Suspect* (Peabody Museum Press and Radius Books), was published in 2016.

2013 Yto Barrada (Morocco/France) Barrada is working on "A Hole is to Dig," which engages the complex terrain of paleontology in her native Morocco. Barrada is exploring the topic from multiple human perspectives: from scientists, museums, and cultural heritage professionals, to those who collect fossils, and those who plunder and forge them.

2014 Chloe Dewe Mathews (United Kingdom) continued her work documenting the lives of people who live on the shores of the Caspian region(Countries?), examining their relationship to the resource-rich but volatile lands either side of the sea. Her resulting book is currently in press.

2015 Deborah Luster (United States) continues her investigation of violence, place, and prison, with a focus on Angola Prison. The site of the prison has been witness to slavery, Civil War, Reconstruction, Black Codes, convict leasing, Jim Crow, the Trustee System, segregation, and mass incarceration.

2016 Ilana Boltvinik and Rodrigo Viñas of TRES Art Collective (Mexico) is developing the second phase of their project *Ubiquitous Trash*, a beach-waste, art-based, research series, which began in Hong Kong in 2015 and has expanded to Western Australian beaches. The project draws on the disciplines of biology, archaeology, economics, and anthropology to create a complex understanding of the material waste in public spaces.

About the Peabody Museum

The Peabody Museum is among the oldest archaeological and ethnographic museums in the world with one of the finest collections of human cultural history found anywhere. It is home to superb materials from Africa, ancient Europe, North America, Mesoamerica, Oceania, and South America in particular. In addition to its archaeological and ethnographic holdings, the Museum's photographic archives, one of the largest of its kind, hold more than 500,000 historical photographs, dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the present and chronicling anthropology, archaeology, and world culture.

Location: The Peabody Museum is located at 11 Divinity Avenue in Cambridge. The Museum is a short walk from the Harvard Square MBTA station. **Hours:** 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., seven days a week. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. **Admission** is \$12 for adults, \$10 for students and seniors, \$8 for children, 3–18. Free with Harvard ID or Museum membership. The Museum is free to Massachusetts residents Sundays, 9 A.M. to noon, year-round, and Wednesdays from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. (September to May). Admission includes entry to the Harvard Museum of Natural History. For more information call 617-496-1027 or go online to: www.peabody.harvard.edu.

Media Contact: For additional information or images, please contact Pamela Gerardi, Deputy Director, Curatorial Administration and Outreach. Tel: (617) 496-0099, gerardi@fas.harvard.edu

To view more of Sammy Baloji's work, please visit the [Axis Gallery](#).