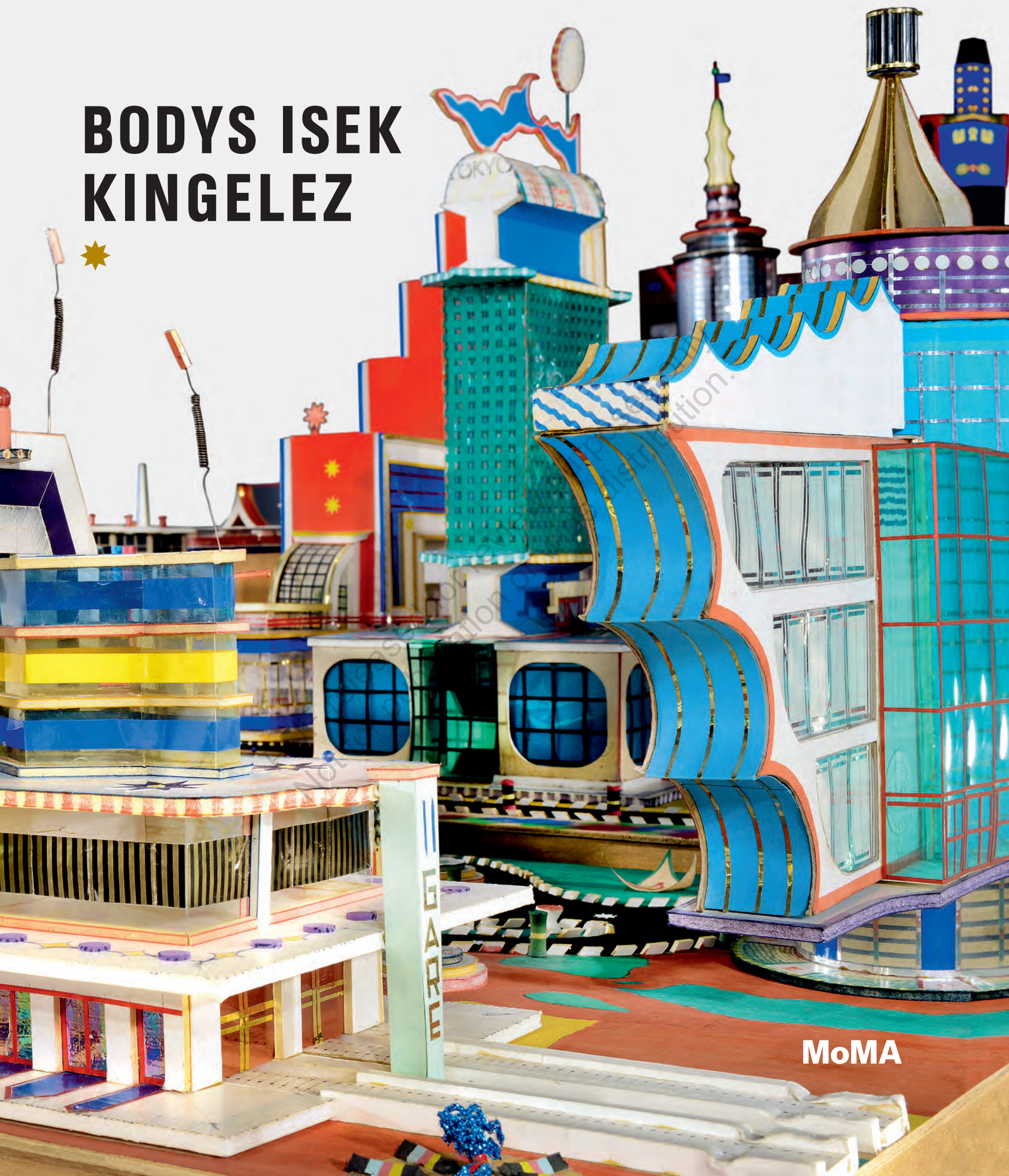


BODYS ISEK KINGELEZ



MoMA

BODYS ISEK KINGELEZ



SARAH SUZUKI

The Museum of Modern Art, New York



Published in conjunction with the exhibition *Bodys Isek Kingelez*, organized by Sarah Suzuki, Curator, with Hillary Reder, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints, at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, May 26, 2018–January 1, 2019



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Page 8: *Canada Dry* (detail). 1991. See plate 18.
Page 31: *Belle Hollandaise* (detail). 1991. See plate 16.
Page 32: *Place de la Ville* (detail). 1993. See plate 23.
Page 48: *Allemagne An 2000* (detail). 1988. See plate 6.

Contributors

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As a partner of contemporary art at The Museum of Modern Art, Allianz is proud to celebrate the first major retrospective of the work of the Congolese sculptor Bodys Isek Kingelez and the first substantial monographic presentation of his work in the United States.

Allianz believes that people want to live with courage rather than fear, remaining curious and exploring their world with an open mind and an abundance of imagination. Our engagement with the art of today reflects this belief, and we are honored to support exhibitions by contemporary artists who push the limits of their disciplines and challenge expectations and conventions.

Both as a company and as individuals, we are moved by the question of how people can live better lives in the future. With his infinite curiosity, imagination, and skill, Kingelez has shown himself to be an explorer of a new era. His spectacular, visionary sculptures shape a fantastical urban landscape that is prosperous and peaceful. They are powerful representations of the “city of tomorrow.”

This unprecedented exhibition is accompanied by a virtual reality component that transports visitors into Kingelez’s imagined tomorrow and enables them to see the future through his eyes. We hope that visitors will be inspired by this extraordinary artist and his vision of a better world.

#ExploreWithUs



Jean-Marc Pailhol
Head of Group Market Management & Distribution at Allianz SE

FOREWORD

An artist of tremendous and enduring vision, Bodys Isek Kingelez believed that art-making was “the grandest adventure of all”—a vocation with the power to serve his community, bridge civilizations, and contribute to the progress of science and the pursuit of a better life. Born in 1948 in what was then the Belgian Congo, Kingelez moved in 1970 from his home village to the city of Kinshasa, the capital of the newly independent Democratic Republic of the Congo (soon renamed Zaire). It was against the backdrop of this complex city, rapidly redefining itself in the years after Independence, that he would realize his artistic aspirations, creating fantastic paper sculptures that suggest utopian possibilities for global urban sites.

We are thrilled to present the first full retrospective of Kingelez’s work, tracing the arc of his practice in its entirety. While he has long been included in important exhibitions of contemporary art, from *Magiciens de la terre*, at the Centre Pompidou in 1989, to the landmark documenta 11, in 2002, he has been the subject of very few solo presentations. *Bodys Isek Kingelez* unfolds as a chronological display of the artist’s three-decade career, capturing the transformation of his work as it grows in scale and complexity from the early single-building architectural sculptures to the sprawling, futuristic cities of his later production. It is moving to see so many of Kingelez’s *extrêmes maquettes*, as he called them, assembled in one place for the first time.

Although Kingelez was part of the group exhibition *Projects 59: Architecture as Metaphor* at The Museum of Modern Art in 1997, this retrospective may be for many of our visitors their first

encounter with his work. His imagined metropolises offer a prescient articulation of the multivalent realities and potentials of the contemporary city, and his utopic, joyous vision for a global society—for a “better, more peaceful world”—seems pointedly relevant today. His distinctive voice adds immeasurably to the global story of modern and contemporary art we seek to tell at MoMA.

The success of our exhibitions relies on so many, beginning with my peerless colleagues at MoMA. Sarah Suzuki, Curator, and Hillary Reder, Curatorial Assistant, both in the Department of Drawings and Prints, have overseen every aspect of this project with enthusiasm and care. We owe particular thanks to Allianz for its significant contribution to realizing this exhibition. We are also grateful for the essential contributions of The International Council and The Friends of Education of The Museum of Modern Art. Additional support was provided by the Annual Exhibition Fund. Jean Pigozzi of CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection deserves my special thanks, not only for his loan of artworks but also for the ideas and enthusiasm he brought to our project. Lastly, on behalf of the Trustees and staff of The Museum of Modern Art, I extend my profound thanks to all the lenders who have entrusted us with their works by Kingelez, making this exhibition possible.

Glenn D. Lowry
Director, The Museum of Modern Art

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PLATES





Untitled. c. 1980
32 ¹⁵/₁₆ x 14 ⁷/₈ x 9 ⁵/₈"
(83.6 x 37.8 x 24.5 cm)
Private collection, Paris



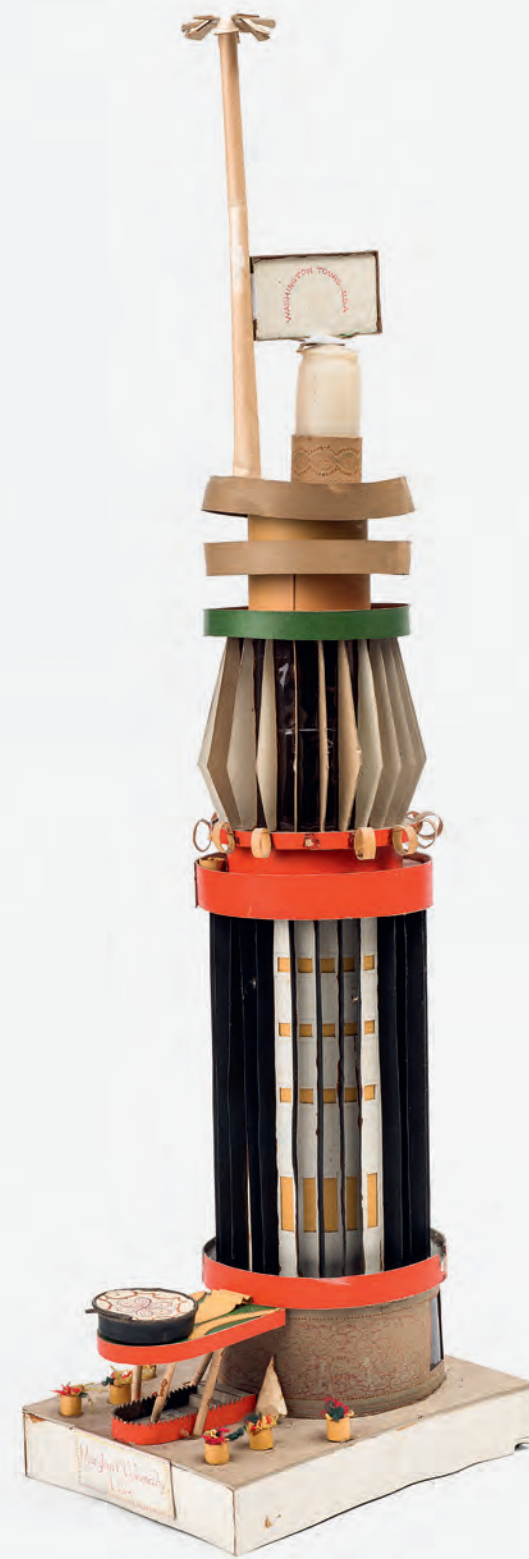
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2

Untitled. 1980
 $15\frac{3}{8} \times 17\frac{3}{8} \times 12\frac{3}{8}$ " (39 x 44.2 x 31.5 cm)
 Private collection, Paris



3

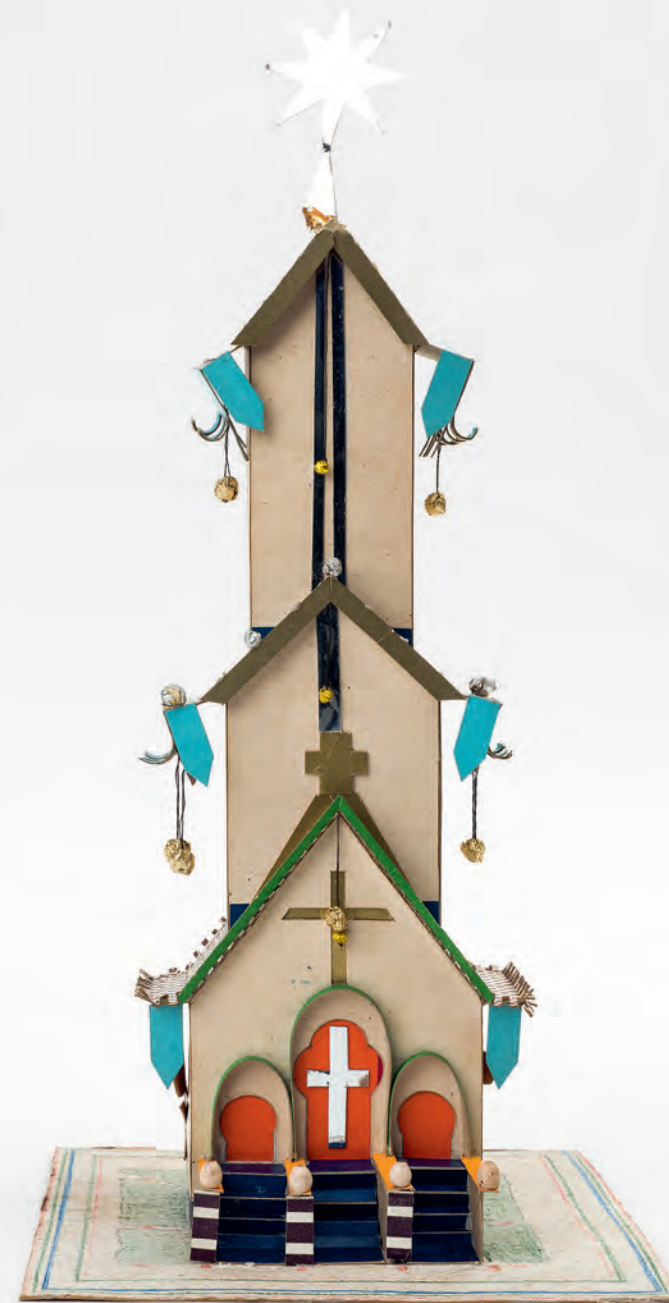
Maryland University USA. 1981
 $26 \times 5\frac{9}{16} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ " (66 x 14.2 x 19.1 cm)
 Private collection, Paris

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4

**Approche de l'Échangeur
de Limete Kin. 1981**
32 ⁵/₁₆ x 13 ⁷/₈ x 16 ³/₄"
(82 x 35.2 x 42.6 cm)
Private collection, Paris



5

Untitled. 1982
12 ³/₈ x 7 ¹/₁₆ x 7 ³/₁₆" (31.4 x 18 x 18.2 cm)
Private collection, Paris



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Allemagne An 2000. 1988
 33 ⁷/₈ x 24 ³/₁₆ x 24 ³/₁₆" (86 x 61.5 x 61.5 cm)
 Long-term loan from the Centre National des Arts
 Plastiques, France, to the Château d'Oiron, France





Paris Nouvel. 1989
 33 ⁷/₁₆ x 24 x 27 ⁹/₁₆" (85 x 61 x 70 cm)
 Long-term loan from the Centre National des Arts
 Plastiques, France, to the Château d'Oiron, France



10

Mongolique Sovietique. 1989
 24 ⁷/₁₆ x 15 ³/₄ x 24 ⁷/₁₆" (62 x 40 x 62 cm)
 CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva





11

Étoile Rouge Congolaise. 1990
 33 ⁷/₁₆ x 36 ¹/₄ x 19 ¹¹/₁₆" (85 x 92 x 50 cm)
 CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Kingelez's sculptures are complex amalgamations of materials, and there has not yet been an opportunity for exhaustive scientific study of the mediums of the individual objects in this exhibition. In his early years, the artist primarily used paper, paperboard, and commercial packaging; over time, as he gained access to more materials, he began to incorporate plastic, metallic foil, and a range of found objects. This list compiles the materials so far definitively identified in the works by conservators and curators, roughly organized from most to least prevalent:

Paper, colored paper, and printed paper (including wrapping paper and tissue paper); corrugated cardboard, paperboard and printed paperboard, and printed commercial packaging; wood; acrylic and plastic (including colored plastic); aluminum foil, metallic foil paper, and metallic foil cardboard; rubber foam, Styrofoam, and foamcore; ink, pencil, colored pencil, crayon, marker, and paint (including paint pen, gouache, and poster paint); adhesive, tape (including colored tape and metallic tape), and stickers; fabric (including mesh fabric), yarn, string (including colored string), thread (including metallic thread), and twine; beads (paper, wood, and plastic); balls (plastic, foam, and thread-wrapped); paper and plastic straws; copper wire, coated wire, and metal grommets; toothpicks, pins (including map pins, pushpins, thumbtacks, and other metal pins), and nails; aluminum cans, plastic bottles, and plastic and other bottle caps; and mirrors, plastic figurines, 35mm plastic slide mounts, ballpoint-pen shafts, circuit-board diodes, and electric lights.

For the dimensions of the works in the checklist below, height precedes width precedes depth. Many of the titles are French. Kingelez's poetic, idiosyncratic, and often playful phrasing and spelling make their spirit difficult to capture in translation, and, in most cases, the titles given below are those written directly on the works by the artist himself.

Untitled. c. 1980
32 15⁄16 x 14 7⁄8 x 9 5⁄8" (83.6 x 37.8 x 24.5 cm)
Private collection, Paris
Plate 1

Untitled. 1980
15 3⁄8 x 17 3⁄8 x 12 3⁄8" (39 x 44.2 x 31.5 cm)
Private collection, Paris
Plate 2

Maryland University USA. 1981
26 x 5 9⁄16 x 7 1⁄2" (66 x 14.2 x 19.1 cm)
Private collection, Paris
Plate 3

Approche de l'Échangeur de Limete Kin. 1981
32 3⁄16 x 13 7⁄8 x 16 3⁄4" (82 x 35.2 x 42.6 cm)
Private collection, Paris
Plate 4

Untitled. 1982
12 3⁄8 x 7 1⁄16 x 7 3⁄16" (31.4 x 18 x 18.2 cm)
Private collection, Paris
Plate 5

Allemagne An 2000. 1988
33 7⁄8 x 24 3⁄16 x 24 3⁄16" (86 x 61.5 x 61.5 cm)
Long-term loan from the Centre National des Arts Plastiques, France, to the Château d'Oiron, France
Plate 6

Paris Nouvel. 1989
33 7⁄16 x 24 x 27 9⁄16" (85 x 61 x 70 cm)
Long-term loan from the Centre National des Arts Plastiques, France, to the Château d'Oiron, France
Plate 7

Bel Atlas. 1989
33 7⁄16 x 26 x 17 9⁄16" (85 x 66 x 44 cm)
Sandro De Sanctis/African Collection
Plate 8

Stars Palme Bouygues. 1989
39 3⁄8 x 15 3⁄4 x 15 3⁄4" (100 x 40 x 40 cm)
van Lierde collection, Brussels
Plate 9

Mongolique Soviétique. 1989
24 7⁄16 x 15 3⁄4 x 24 7⁄16" (62 x 40 x 62 cm)
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 10

Étoile Rouge Congolaise. 1990
33 7⁄16 x 36 1⁄4 x 19 11⁄16" (85 x 92 x 50 cm)
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 11

Air Force. 1991
21 1⁄4 x 32 11⁄16 x 16 1⁄8" (54 x 83 x 41 cm)
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 12

Aéromode (Aéroport Moderne). 1991
21 1⁄4 x 31 1⁄2 x 21 3⁄8" (54 x 80 x 55 cm)
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 13

Kinshasa la Belle. 1991
24 13⁄16 x 21 5⁄8 x 31 1⁄2" (63 x 55 x 80 cm)
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 14

Palais d'Hirochima. 1991
18 7⁄8 x 30 11⁄16 x 16 1⁄8" (48 x 78 x 41 cm)
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 15

Belle Hollandaise. 1991
21 5⁄8 x 31 11⁄16 x 22 1⁄16" (55 x 80.5 x 56 cm)
Groninger Museum, Groningen, Netherlands
Plate 16

The Scientific Center of Hospitalisation the SIDA. 1991
16 19⁄16 x 25 9⁄16 x 31 1⁄2" (43 x 65 x 80 cm)
Groninger Museum, Groningen, Netherlands
Plate 17

Canada Dry. 1991
20 7⁄8 x 31 1⁄2 x 21 5⁄8" (53 x 80 x 55 cm)
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 18

Miss Hotel Brussels. 1992
19 11⁄16 x 15 9⁄16 x 24" (50 x 39.5 x 61 cm)
Lucien Bilinelli Collection, Brussels/Milan
Plate 19

Reveillon Fédéral. 1992
23 5⁄8 x 31 1⁄2 x 20 7⁄8" (60 x 80 x 53 cm)
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 20

Industria da Pharmacia. 1992
14 15⁄16 x 31 1⁄8 x 21 5⁄8" (38 x 79 x 55 cm)
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 21

Kimbembele Ihunga (Kimbembele Ville). 1992
20 1⁄16 x 42 1⁄2 x 34 1⁄16" (51 x 108 x 86.5 cm)
Courtesy The Museum of Everything
Plate 22

Place de la Ville. 1993
15 3⁄4 x 33 7⁄16 x 29 1⁄2" (40 x 85 x 75 cm)
Courtesy The Museum of Everything
Plate 23

Centrale Palestinienne. 1993
31 7⁄8 x 28 3⁄8 x 26 3⁄8" (81 x 72 x 67 cm), irreg.
COLLECTION PROSPER—The Prosper Collection.
Courtesy Aeroplastics Contemporary, Brussels
Plate 24

Africanisch. 1994
19 11⁄16 x 22 7⁄16 x 24" (50 x 57 x 61 cm)
Private collection, Paris
Plate 25

Kimbembele Ihunga. 1994
51 3⁄16" x 72 13⁄16" x 10' 5" (130 x 185 x 320 cm)
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 26

U.N. 1995
35 13⁄16 x 29 1⁄8 x 20 7⁄8" (91 x 74 x 53 cm), irreg.
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 27

Ville Fantôme. 1996
47 1⁄4" x 18' 8 7⁄16" x 7' 10 1⁄2" (120 x 570 x 240 cm)
CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva
Plate 28

Sports Internationaux. 1997
35 7⁄16 x 33 7⁄16 x 9 13⁄16" (90 x 85 x 25 cm), irreg.
Purchased 2013 with funds from Tim Fairfax, AM, through the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art Foundation. Collection Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane
Plate 29

Ville de Sète 3009. 2000
31 1⁄2" x 9' 10 1⁄8" x 6' 10 11⁄16" (80 x 300 x 210 cm)
Collection Musée International des Arts Modestes (MIAM), Sète, France
Plate 30

Nippon Tower. 2005
26 3⁄8 x 13 3⁄8 x 8 11⁄16" (67 x 34 x 22 cm), irreg.
Courtesy Aeroplastics Contemporary, Brussels
Plate 31

DAB (Development Australian Bank). 2007
39 3⁄8 x 18 1⁄8 x 16 15⁄16" (100 x 46 x 43 cm), irreg.
Collection LSO
Plate 32

Dorothe. 2007
28 3⁄8 x 24 13⁄16 x 19 11⁄16" (72 x 63 x 50 cm), irreg.
Courtesy The Museum of Everything
Plate 33

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This exhilarating undertaking—the first retrospective of the work of Bodys Isek Kingelez—would have been impossible without the generosity, expertise, and support of a long roster of colleagues, scholars, and friends. First I must thank our lenders, many of whom shared their experiences and memories of the artist: Lucien Bilinelli, Collection LSO, COLLECTION PROSPER—The Prosper Collection, Bruno and Gael van Lierde, Sandro De Sanctis, and other private collections. The support of CAAC—The Pigozzi Collection has been extraordinary: Jean Pigozzi constantly impressed with his generosity and enthusiasm; André Magnin, former curator, was gracious and generous in sharing information; and Elisabeth Whitelaw, Alexandra Theiler, and Corentine Guillot helped us at every turn. Our institutional partners welcomed me warmly on their campuses and assisted in making our loans possible. I send thanks to Yves Robert, Violaine Daniels, and the team at the Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris; Carine Guimbard and Samuel Quenault at the Château d’Oiron, France; Andreas Blühm, Marlon Steensma, and the staff at the Groninger Museum, Groningen, Netherlands; Victoire and Hervé Di Rosa, Sylvie Côte, and Pascale Grégogna at the Musée International des Arts Modestes, Sète, France; James Brett, Rosario Gallo, and Robin Mann at The Museum of Everything; and Chris Saines, Emmy Schneider, and Ellie Buttrose at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane.

This catalogue represents the first in-depth study of the artist, and the contributions of David Adjaye, Sammy Baloji, André Magnin, and Chika Okeke-Agulu add immeasurably to this effort. I am grateful to those who shared their knowledge, expertise, and experience of the artist with me: Bruno Asseray, Baudouin Bikoko, Philippe Boutté, Marco di Castri and Gianfranco Barbieri, Dirk Dumon, Christian Girard, Joseph Ibongo, Jerome Jacobs, Myoto Liyolo, Jean-Hubert Martin, Jean-Marc Patras, Grazia Quaroni, and Jacques Souillou. Augustin Bikale, in Kinshasa, kindly facilitated conversations for us there. We are grateful for the assistance of Alessandro Azzoni, Sarah van Beurden, Tiberio Brandolini d’Adda, Florence Burban, Elodie Cazes, Jean-Michel Champault, Bob Coppens and Hélène de Zagon, Diego Cortez, Ilse Dauwe, Stéphane Ibars, Hadeel Ibrahim, Hélène Joubert, Gervanne and Matthias Leridon, Albane Ménoret, Laurent Nebot, Federico Negro, John Ollman, Joan Rabascall, Liz Rudnick, and Thierry Simoens.

It has been my great fortune to work with the stellar staff at The Museum of Modern Art. Director Glenn D. Lowry has been steadfast in his support of the exhibition, as have Christophe Cherix, The Robert Lehman Foundation Chief Curator of Drawings and Prints, and Ann Temkin, The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture, whose advice and suggestions have been critical to its success. In the Department of Drawings and Prints, Hillary Reder, Curatorial Assistant, has been an extraordinary partner, and her intellect, enthusiasm, and tenacity inflect every aspect of the catalogue and exhibition. Hanna Girma, Curatorial Fellow,

has been an adept researcher and invaluable sounding board. Heidi Hirschl, former Curatorial Assistant, helped organize the project in its earliest phase. Heather Nickels, former Louise Bourgeois Twelve-Month Intern, contributed critical and exploratory research, and Charlotte Barat, Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, kindly made herself available for all manner of research queries. Jennifer Tobias, Librarian, helped us locate many volumes that have informed our research. Roger Griffiths, Associate Sculpture Conservator, and Erika Mosier, Paper Conservator, explored Kingelez’s materials with enthusiasm.

The catalogue has been realized under the guidance of Don McMahon, Editorial Director, and Christopher Hudson, Publisher, in the Department of Publications. Rebecca Roberts, Editor, has been my trusted and valued partner in shaping these texts, and Marc Sapir, Production Director, ensured the beauty of the images with his characteristic care and attention to detail. Hannah Kim, Senior Marketing and Production Coordinator, and Sara Beth Walsh, Senior Publicist, helped us publicize the catalogue and exhibition, respectively. Nancy Adelson, Deputy General Counsel, navigated rights issues with diligence and sensitivity. My thanks to Naomi Mizusaki of Supermarket for her inspired catalogue design. Ugochukwu-Smooth Nzewi commented on an earlier draft of my essay and helped it take shape. One of the great contributions of this catalogue is the beautiful new photography it contains, which allows for an enhanced understanding of the artist’s oeuvre. For this, I owe a debt of gratitude to Maurice Aeschmann, Vincent Everarts, Genevieve Hanson, Florian Kleinefenn, Marten de Leeuw, Frédéric Pignoux, and Pierre Schwartz.

Ramona Bannayan, Senior Deputy Director, Exhibitions and Collections, ensured that the exhibition had the support it needed. Erik Patton, Director, and Chloe Capewell, Assistant Coordinator, Exhibition Planning and Administration, and Susan Palamara, Registrar, seamlessly supervised the logistics. Carsten Höller was an invaluable colleague in developing the exhibition design, challenging us to rethink many of our standard procedures, and the end result is better for it. Aimee Keefer, Exhibition Designer, processed these various inputs and produced a beautiful show, and Elle Kim, Senior Art Director, and Olya Domoradova, Senior Graphic Designer, gave it a compelling graphic identity. MoMA’s Visitor Experience team and Aaron Louis, Director; Aaron Harrow, Design Manager; and Tal Marks, Manager, in our Audio Visual Department, were essential advisors as we navigated new technologies in virtual reality, in dialogue with Paul Jastrzebski of Oculus.

A project of this nature can be all-encompassing, and I thank my family and friends for their patience, love, support, and encouragement.

Sarah Suzuki
Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints

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