

Victor Ehikhamenor

The Enigma of Time Remembered

October 24 – November 30, 2024

Avenue Louise 430, 1050 Brussels

MARUANI MERCIER is delighted to announce the debut exhibition of their newly represented artist, Victor Ehikhamenor, marking his inaugural solo exhibition in Europe. Opening on October 24th, 2024, at their Brussels gallery, *The Enigma of Time Remembered* showcases a comprehensive body of work, including intricately patterned paintings, installations, and works on paper. This exhibition will delve into the artist's culture and heritage, its global diaspora, and the lasting impact of post-colonialism on the African continent.

History stands as a totem of storytelling, traversing time, space, and memory, a theme deeply embedded in Ehikhamenor's familial traditions. Often referencing history and literature, his recounting of the past intricately navigates complex religious implications and the confluence of an ever-evolving multicultural environment. A fervent advocate for the repatriation of the long-disputed Benin bronzes, a matter of global significance, Ehikhamenor uses his written and artistic voice to illuminate the realities of reclaiming cultural artifacts and traditions.

His 'rosary' works, for instance, poignantly symbolize the displacement of religious motifs when detached from their original context. These works—embedded with plastic rosaries and Benin corals—depict figures and scenes referencing the Kingdom of Benin and African members of the Catholic elite and clergy. They address the complex interplay of beliefs and traditions among colonized peoples while critiquing environmental destruction through the use of plastic rosaries as symbols of globalization and mass production.

These themes naturally extend to other areas of his oeuvre: delicately perforated paper works, adorned with a rich bronze tint that echoes the famed Benin sculptures, also nod to ancient rituals of body scarification evident in 16th and 17th century Benin bronze. In his paintings, Ehikhamenor's unique iconographic style shines through, largely inspired by the walls of sacred spaces in his hometown of Udomi-Uwessan, and the royal palace of the King of Benin Kingdom in Nigeria.

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Through these pieces, Ehikhamenor not only illustrates the disruption and transformation of cultural symbols but also infuses them with new meanings, underscoring their enduring relevance. This universally resonant message reaffirms his stature as an international artist.

Victor Ehikhamenor has exhibited his work internationally, including at the inaugural Nigerian Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017. He has participated in solo and group exhibitions at prestigious venues such as the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich, Germany; Fondation Blachere in France; Lehmann Maupin Gallery in New York; St. Paul's Cathedral in London, UK; Gagosian Gallery in London, UK; Tyburn Gallery in London, UK; Rele Gallery in Lagos, Nigeria; Retro Africa in Abuja, Nigeria; the 5th Mediations Biennale in Poznan, Poland; the 12th Dak'Art Biennale in Dakar, Senegal; Stellenbosch Triennale in South Africa; and Biennale Jogja XIII in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. His works are found in prestigious collections worldwide including The High Museum of Art in Atlanta Georgia; The Onassis Foundation in Athens, Greece; and The Staatliche Museen Zu Berlin in Berlin, Germany, among others.

Ehikhamenor earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and Literature from Ambrose Alli University in Nigeria and an MFA in Fiction from the University of Maryland. Besides his career as a visual artist, he is also a writer and photographer, documenting African life and critically engaging with political corruption and Africa's role in global politics. He established a creative residency in Lagos called 'Angels and Muses' and initiated 'Ink Not Blood', a peace campaign aimed at preventing violence during political elections. His work has been recognized with numerous awards and fellowships from esteemed organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, Civitella Ranieri Foundation, the Nirox Foundation, and the Norman Mailer Center. Ehikhamenor currently divides his time between Lagos, Nigeria, and Maryland, United States.

A public opening will be held on October 24th from 5 to 7 pm in the presence of the artist. For further inquiries, please contact press@maruanimercier.com.