

# African Space Art Project

A world first for African  
art and space science

Monitoring weather and climate from space





In a first, three African artists: Michel Ekeba, Jean David Nkot and Géraldine Tobé have produced a work of art through the African Space Art Project (ASAP) that will be launched into space with the first Meteosat Third Generation satellite operated by EUMETSAT.

*Above: Jean David Nkot, Géraldine Tobé, Paul Counet and Michel Ekeba at the artist selection ceremony, Paris, France, 27 November 2021 (source: AAD).*



## Three artists together as the Collectif NET ...



### Jean David Nkot

Born in 1989 in Douala, Cameroon, where he lives and works, Jean David Nkot is a graduate in drawing and painting from the Fouban Institute of Fine Arts. In 2017 he joined the Post Master "Moving Frontiers" organized by the École Nationale d'Arts de Paris-Cergy (France). Interested in how the indifference, passivity and even violence on the part of the international community impacts victims around the world, Nkot explores the notions of body and territory through his art. He incorporates cartography in his work in order to intertwine the notions of body and territory and to question the place of the body in society.



### Michel Ekeba

Born in 1984 in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo where he lives and works, Michel Ekeba graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts of Kinshasa in Visual Communication. A committed artist, he founded the label BACK DESIGN, is a founding member of the "Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise" (CATPC) and co-leads the collective KONGO ASTRONAUTS alongside the artist Eléonore Hellio, for which he develops performances, films, texts, photos and installations.



### Géraldine Tobé

Géraldine Tobé Born in 1992 in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo where she lives and works, Géraldine Tobé Mutumande is a graduate in painting from the Institute of Fine Arts in Kinshasa. Currently, she creates art as part of the BOKUTANI collective (Artistes Réunis). She uses a technique that consists of modelling silhouetted shapes on white backgrounds with smoke. This smoke is an expression of introspection, of an inner journey. Tobé tries to control the black smoke by imposing her will and aesthetic sensibility on it. This is also a way for the artist to externalize her struggle, to revisit the "already there", to rewrite the present and the future as well as a way for her to question the political, social and cultural realities of her country.

## ... and one satellite ...

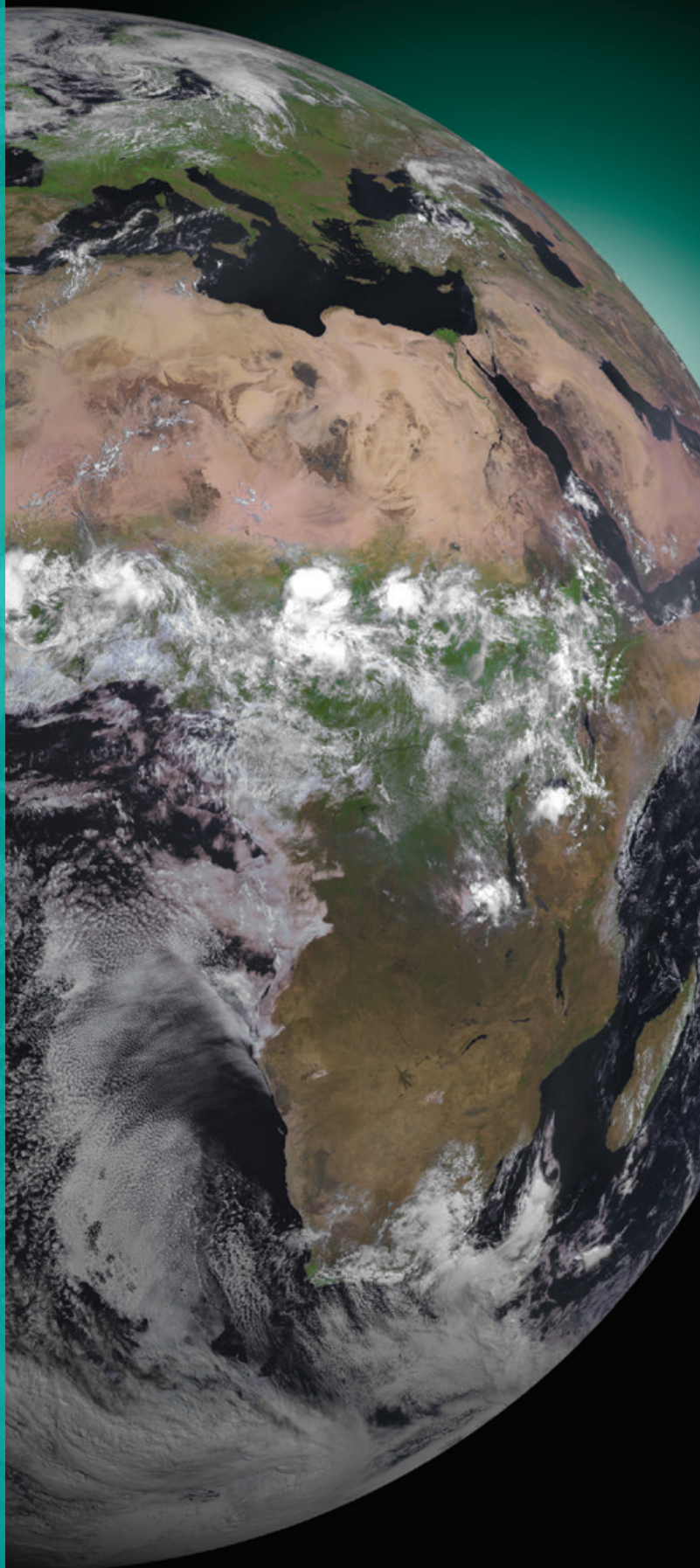


Meteosat Third Generation (MTG) is a fleet of highly innovative, next generation geostationary satellite system, which will be made up of a constellation of three operational satellites — two imagers and one sounder — that will be operated by EUMETSAT. This system will serve Europe and Africa by supporting meteorological and related environmental services by significantly increasing the accuracy of short-range weather forecasting (nowcasting). The data from these satellites will also increase the accuracy of complex computer modelling of the weather (numerical weather prediction), air quality monitoring and climate monitoring.

The first imager satellite, MTG-I1, is currently planned to be launched in December 2022. Once it reaches its final orbit, 36,000km above the Earth, it will provide meteorologists with a continuous stream of weather and climate data of unprecedented detail and precision, which will be received more frequently than ever before.

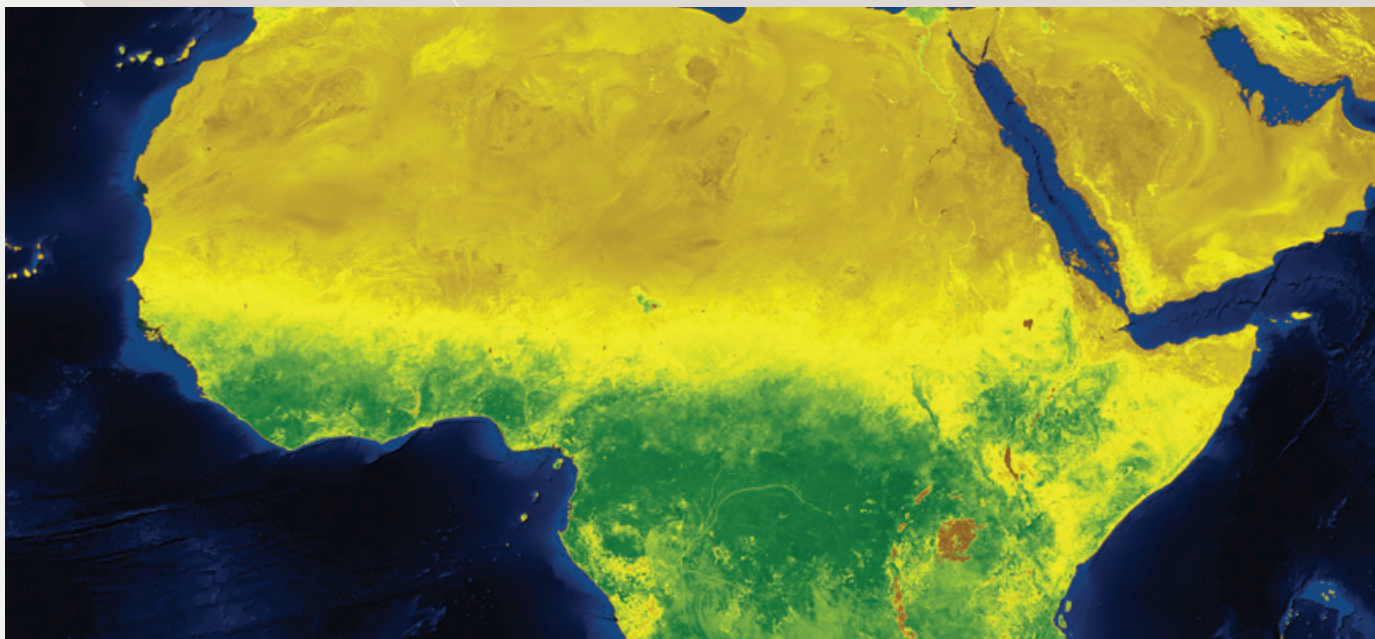
The instruments on board MTG-I1, more specifically, will enable National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS) to further help in reducing economic risks associated with extreme weather and natural disasters. They will also allow for the continuation of the 40-year-long climate data records maintained by EUMETSAT that are currently proving crucial to understanding climate change.

ASAP aims to show the strategic importance of such a launch for the continent of Africa. The data these next-generation satellites will provide will make it possible to better monitor extreme weather events and anticipate their consequences, which will be crucial for the further socio-economic development of the continent.





## ... to symbolise Africa's sustainable future



The African Space Art Project programme (ASAP), conceived of in 2017 by the French NGO African Artists for Development (AAD-fund) in partnership with EUMETSAT and Arianespace, was born out of this observation: Africa is the continent that emits the least CO<sub>2</sub> yet suffers the most from global warming and extreme weather events.

Based on this observation, which directly impacts the lives of hundreds of millions of people on the continent, AAD, EUMETSAT and Arianespace have decided that in December 2022 (planned launch date), for the first time in African space and artistic history, a contemporary African work of art will be reproduced on the nose cone of Ariane 5, a key piece of protection for EUMETSAT's next-generation satellite as it travels into space.

Jean David Nkot, Michel Ekeba and Géraldine Tobé created a unique work of art, a fusion of their three creative universes, during their residency in early 2022. Through their work, Michel Ekeba, Jean David Nkot and Géraldine Tobé could be considered to have the unique role of being African ambassadors in space..

Matthias and Gervanne Leridon, co-presidents of the AAD-fund said, "The joint work of Jean David Nkot, Michel Ekeba and Géraldine Tobé that will accompany the launch of the next-generation satellite is a symbol of the power of contemporary creation and the future of the continent. Europe and Africa will

*Above: Normalised Difference Vegetation Index image of the African continent which is used to monitor changes in, for example, vegetation cover, droughts and desertification (source: VGT-VITO).*

only succeed in building their future by realising that they must work together. This project is a further step in this direction and reflects the essential role that the African continent will play in the global concert of humanity and creation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

Phil Evans, Director-General of EUMETSAT said, "Through the ASAP project, African artists have expressed the link between space, Africa and climate change. These three elements are at the heart of what we do every day at EUMETSAT, with our satellites that observe the planet and in cooperation with our partners in Africa. I am looking forward to seeing the work that these three talented artists have created accompanying our satellite into space."

Stéphane Israël, Chairman and CEO of Arianespace said, "The work of art displayed on the Ariane 5 that will protect the MTG satellite immediately after launch in December 2022 highlights the cooperation between Europe and Africa and the need for more space for Africa. Arianespace is proud and honoured to be part of this emblematic initiative for the African continent."



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