



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.

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



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African Space Art Project

A world first for African art and space science

Monitoring weather and climate from space



Three artists together as the Collectif NET...



Jean David Nkoti

Born in 1989 in Douala, Cameroon, where he lives and works, Jean David Nkoti is a graduate in drawing and painting from the Fouban Institute of Fine Arts. In 2017 he joined the Post Master "Moving Frontiers" organised 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, Nkoti 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

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" (the existing) and 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...



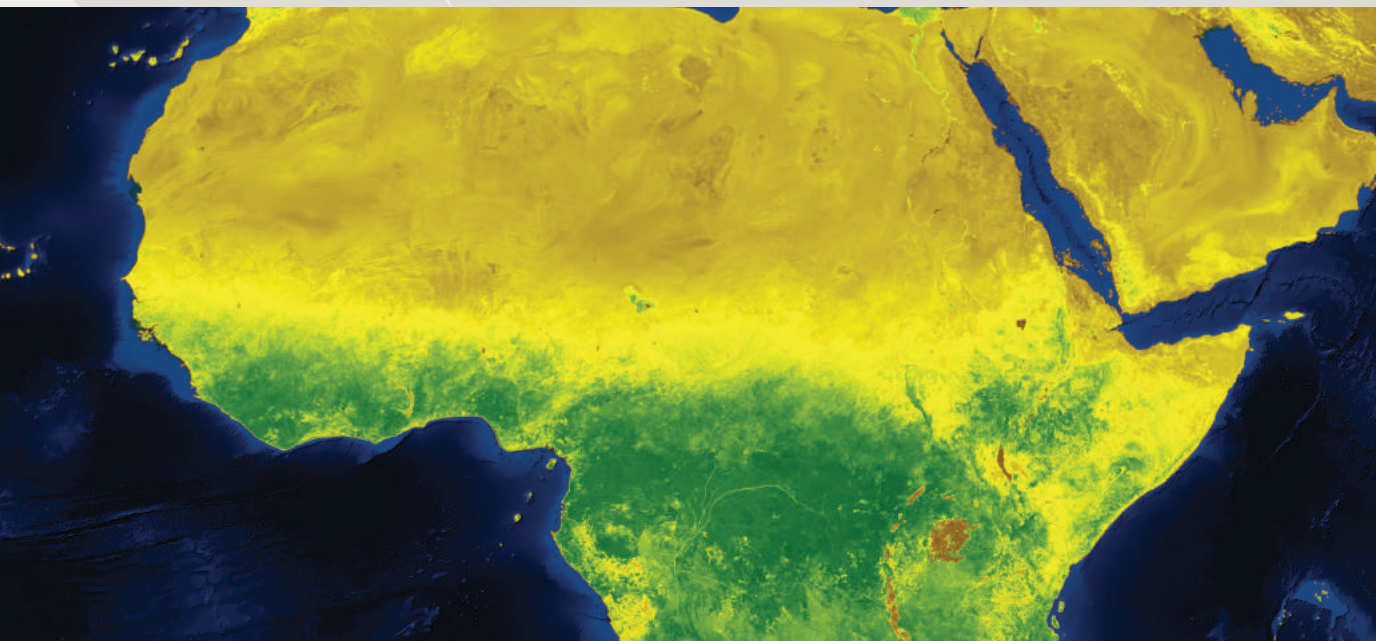
Meteosat Third Generation – Imager 1 (MTG-I1) is the first satellite in a next-generation geostationary fleet called Meteosat Third Generation (MTG). MTG-I1 is currently planned to be launched in December 2022. After it reaches its final orbit, 36,000km from the planet, it will supply weather and climate data with unprecedented frequency and resolution for many years to come.

EUMETSAT's Meteosat Third Generation is a highly innovative satellite system that will serve Europe and Africa by significantly increasing the accuracy of short-term weather forecasts (nowcasting) thus supporting meteorological and related environmental services. 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 instruments on board MTG-I1 will enable African National Meteorological and Hydrological Services to further help in reducing economic risks associated with extreme weather and natural disasters. They will also continue the 40-year-long climate data records maintained by EUMETSAT that are currently proving crucial to understanding climate change.

The African Space Art Project aims to show the strategic importance of such a satellite for 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



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)

The African Space Art Project was conceived in 2017 by the French non-governmental organisation African Artists for Development (AAD-fund) in partnership with EUMETSAT and Arianespace, and was born out of this observation: Africa is the continent that emits the least carbon dioxide and yet suffers the most from global warming and extreme weather events.

This is an observation that directly impacts the lives of hundreds of millions of people on the continent. For this reason AAD, EUMETSAT and Arianespace 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 fairing of the Ariane 5 launch vehicle, a key piece of protection for EUMETSAT's next-generation satellite as it travels into space.

Jean David Nkoti, Michel Ekeba and Géraldine Tobé created a unique work of art, a fusion of their three creative universes during their residence in early 2022. Through their work, Michel Ekeba, Jean David Nkoti and Géraldine Tobé can be considered as having 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 Nkoti, Michel Ekeba and Géraldine Tobé that will accompany the launch of the next-generation Meteosat satellite is a symbol of the power of contemporary creation and the future of the continent. Europe

and Africa will 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 21st century."

Phil Evans, Director-General of EUMETSAT said, "Through the ASAP project, African artists will express 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 users and 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 fairing that will protect the MTG satellite immediately after launch in late 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."