

LÉONARD PONGO

CURRICULUM VITAE

smac

BIOGRAPHY

b. 1988 in Liège, Belgium.

Lives and works in Belgium and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

EDUCATION

2009 BA in Political & Social Sciences

2012 BA in Visual Arts: Photography

GRANTS AND AWARDS

- 2025** ArtReview's Future Greats 2025 (selected by Roger Ballen with The Uncanny)
- 2024** Talia Transformation Fund for Documentary Innovation, New York, US
The Eiger African Photobook of the Year Awards (top 4 finalists), Geneva, Switzerland
- 2023** CAP Prize for Contemporary African Photography, Basel, Switzerland
- 2022** Leica Oskar Barnack Award 2022 (shortlisted with Primordial Earth)
Film Lab, Flemish Community of Belgium, Film Production Grant
Walloon Community of Belgium, Film Production Grant
- 2021** CAP Prize - The Contemporary African Prize (shortlisted)
ICP/GOST First Photo Book Award, London, UK
- 2020** Meitar Award for Excellence in Photography (finalist)
Futur pour la culture, FWB
- 2019** Prix de l'OIF (Rencontres de Bamako) for innovative exhibition design and project
- 2018** Joop Swart Masterclass (World Press Photo)
Getty Reportage Grant
- 2017** Visura Grant for outstanding Personal Project
- 2016** PDN's 30 under 30 New and Emerging Photographers to Watch (in selection)
Vocatio Grant
- 2014** CAP Prize, Basel, Switzerland

SOLO EXHIBITIONS & PRESENTATIONS

- 2026** Solo Exhibition, FOMU (Photo Museum), Antwerp, Belgium
- 2025** *Apophenia*, Project LOOP, UK
- 2023** Art Brussels (Kristof De Clercq Gallery), Brussels, Belgium
Primordial Earth, Sorbonne Artgallery, Paris, France
- 2022** *Primordial Earth – Interpretations*, Kristof De Clercq Gallery, Ghent, Belgium
Enter 14: Léonard Pongo – Primordial Earth, Mu.ZEE, Ostend, Belgium

- 2021** *Strangely Familiar, Foreign Agent*, Lausanne, Switzerland
Primordial Earth – The Beginnings, The Agprognostic Temple, Brussels, Belgium
Léonard Pongo: Primordial Earth, Bozar, Brussels, Belgium
- 2015** *The Uncanny*, Contretype, Brussels, Belgium

GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- 2026** *Mulhouse Biennale Sedimentation(s)* curated by Ange Frédéric Koffi, Mulhouse, France
- 2025** 1-54 London Contemporary African Art Fair, Somerset House - Special installation project and talk alongside Johnny Leya and Elena Ndindi, London, UK
Living Earth Festival Brussels installation for Primordial Earth: Inhabiting the Landscape, Abbaye de la Cambre, Brussels, Belgium
Mirages, duo exhibition with Mégane Likin at Maison CFC, Brussels, Belgium
The Armory Show NYC, Javits Center (Retro Africa Gallery), NY, USA
Kunst en Zwalm Festival, Zwalm, Belgium
BADAFF | Belgian Art & Design Affair, Ghent, Belgium (with Kristof De Clercq gallery)
Second Nature: Photography in the Age of the Anthropocene, Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, Stanford, US
Paysages Mouvants (curated by Jeanne Mercier - new commissioned work), Jeu de Paume, Paris, France
25 Arts Seconde: Soluble & Simulacrum, Centre Wallonie Bruxelles, Paris, France
- 2024** *Second Nature: Photography in the Age of the Anthropocene*, The Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, Durham, US
In communion, La Septième Gallery with 31Project, Paris, France
Encounters - Black Rock Senegal Alumni cycle 3 and cycle 4 (curated by Jareh Das) for the Dakar Biennial 'Off', Blaise Senghor Cultural Center, Dakar, Senegal
MK: 1-54 Art fair (special project group show with Black Rock Senegal), Marrakesh, Morocco

- 2023** *A World in Common: Contemporary African Photography* (curated by Osei Bonsu), Tate Modern, London, UK
Biennial Rencontres Photographiques de Guyane - 'Notre paysage est son propre monument', Saint-Louis, French Guiana
 11e Biennale De Photographie en Condroz, Marchin, Belgium
 Contour Biennial of Moving Images - *We Are Rooted But We Flow*, Mechelen, Belgium
- 2022** *Horst Festival: The Act of Breathing*, Asiat, Vilvoorde, Belgium
Consume by, Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, the Netherlands
 BredaPhoto Festival - Theatre of Dreams, Breda, the Netherlands
 Dak'Art 2022 Biennial: (Un)Chartered Grounds, Dakar, Senegal
Je suis moi-même le soleil (curated by Liz Gomis), 31 PROJECT, Paris, France
- 2021** PhotoVogue Festival, Milan, Italy
My Whole Body Changed Into Something Else, Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa
Presence: Five Contemporary African Photographers, The Photographers' Gallery, London, UK
Radically Naive / Naively Radical, Extra City, Antwerp, Belgium
Extractions, A Two Dogs Company, Brussels, Belgium
- 2020** *L'Afrique - Vue par les Photographes*, Patrimoine Culturel Mondial, Völklinger Hütte, Völklingen, Germany
 Lagos Photo Festival: Home Museum, Lagos, Nigeria
 The Photographic Collective, 1:54 African Art Fair, London, UK
Croyances : faire et défaire l'invisible, Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris, France
- 2019** *IncarNations* (curated by Kendell Geers & Sindika Dokolo), Bozar, Brussels, Belgium
6th Lubumbashi Biennale: Future Genealogies, Tales from the Equatorial Line, Lubumbashi, DR Congo
Rencontres de Bamako, Bamako, Mali
The New Jerusalem, VUB, Brussels, Belgium
 31 Days of .TIFF - Highlighting Emerging Image Makers, FOMU, Antwerp, Belgium
- 2018** The 3rd Beijing Photo Biennial, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China
- 2017** *Rencontres d'Arles*, Arles, France
- 2016** Lagos Photo Festival, Lagos, Nigeria
 Art Basel (with Edition POPCAP), Basel, Switzerland
 Nuits de la Photo, Arles, France
- 2015** Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome, Italy
 Noorderlicht Photo Festival, Groningen, the Netherlands
 Delhi Photo Festival, Delhi, India

Fotofestiwal Łódź, Łódź, Poland

Edition POPCAP, Gallery Weekend Berlin, Kasino der Fahrbereitschaft, Berlin, Germany

- 2014** CAP Prize 2014 winner with 'The Uncanny' in group show, Basel, Vienna, Addis Ababa, Dublin, Lagos, Cape Town, and Mindelo

FILM SCREENINGS

- 2023** Cinéma Lumière Mechelen (Avant-Première, CONTOUR Biennale), Belgium
- 2024** *Ishango Encounter*, Goma, DRC
 Doclisboa (International Premiere), Lisbon, Portugal
 DOK Leipzig (German Premiere), Germany
 Goldsmiths CCA, London, UK
- 2025** Festival En Ville!, Brussels, Belgium
 Festival du Jeu de Paume (commissioned installation), Paris, France
 BOZAR (Afropolitan Festival), Brussels, Belgium
 Cinema Lumière at FOMU, Antwerp, Belgium
 Academy of Arts, Vilnius, Lithuania
 Cinéma Fen, Gabès, Tunisia
 Art Brussels "The Screen", Brussels, Belgium
 Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Brussels, Belgium

PUBLICATIONS

- 2025** *Apopenia* (monograph), published by Maison CFC, Brussels, Belgium
- 2023** *The Uncanny* (monograph), published by GOST Books, London, UK

Pongo's work has been published in The Wall Street Journal, The Guardian, The Washington Post, National Geographic, The New Yorker, Hart magazine, Fisheye Magazine, Le Monde, Der Spiegel, Volkskrant, Vogue, TSA Magazine, and several other international publications.

FILMS

- 2024** *Tales from the Source*, 39'
- 2021** *Primordial Earth: Inhabiting the Landscape*, 8'26"
- 2013** *The Necessary Evil*, 11'19"

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact SMAC Gallery for more information or any other queries.

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