

King Houndekpinkou (b.1987)
Artist



Biography

King Houndekpinkou (b.1987) is a Franco-Beninese artist whose practice repositions the ceramic vessel as a form of spiritual transmission, cultural memory, and material intelligence. Working primarily with clay, his work expands ceramics beyond function and tradition, treating form as a bearer of identity, emotion, and ancestral traditions. He lives and works between France, Japan, and Benin and is a member of the International Academy of Ceramics (IAC).

Raised in the suburbs of Paris, Houndekpinkou's early exposure to 1990s Japanese popular culture (inc. anime, manga, and video games) sparked a lifelong fascination with Japan. In 2012, during his first visit, he inadvertently discovered the existence of the six historical cities of ancestral Japanese pottery known as the *Roku Koyō* (Bizen, Echizen, Seto, Shigaraki, Tamba and Tokoname). Drawn particularly to Bizen, he returned annually to train with local potters of the *Keramos* group, notably Toshiaki Shibuta, whom he considers his "Clay Father."

In Bizen, Houndekpinkou sensed deep affinities between Shinto-inflected ceramic rituals and the Vodun traditions of his Beninese heritage. This synthesis, in which matter is understood as animate, relational, and sacred, became central to his practice. In 2016, he started *Terres Jumelles*, an ongoing platform connecting pottery communities in Benin and Japan.

His vessels operate as hybrid forms, positioned between sculpture, ritual object and archive, activating shared cosmologies rather than fixed identities. Infused with a sense of imagination and fantasy, they transform material into forms that are at once spiritual, narrative, and otherworldly.

In 2017, his work was included in museum exhibition *Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary Ceramics in the Spirit of the Mad Potter* (Boca Raton Museum of Art, USA), curated by Garth Clark, situating his practice within a lineage of artists who have radically expanded the conceptual and sculptural possibilities of the vessel.

A milestone came in 2025, when he exhibited his monumental ceramic sculpture *White Totem of Light* at the Giza Pyramids, highlighting his dedication to craft, materials, and the universal dimension of his work.

That same year, he launched A GOOD SPACE in Melun, France, both his personal art studio and a creative label that extends his practice. Conceived as a platform for experimentation, collaboration, and cultural exchange, it serves as a creative hub, supporting the broader artistic community and fostering new forms of expression across disciplines.

King's work has been shown internationally in museums, biennales, and World Expos across Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas, including the Dakar Biennale (Senegal), the Korean International Ceramic Biennale and World Expo Osaka 2025 (Osaka, Japan). His work is held in prominent public collections, including the Grassi Museum of Applied Arts (Germany), Boca Raton Museum of Art (USA), the Republic of Benin Presidency, the Gyeonggi Ceramic Museum of the Korea Ceramic Foundation (South Korea) and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum (USA).

Memberships

Member of the International Academy of Ceramics
Geneva, Switzerland

Member of the Homo Faber Network of the Michelangelo Foundation
Geneva, Switzerland

Education

2014

School of Art and Ceramics Technique
Porte de Vincennes, France

2013 - 2015

Training under Bizen potter Toshiaki Shibuta
Bizen, Japan

2012 - 2014

Mire Workshop, Village St Paul
Paris, France

2007 - 2010

BA (Hons) Public Relations & Communications
Southampton Solent University, Southampton, UK



CV

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2025

Let My Soul Shatter...
Galerie Vallois, Paris, France

2024

Six Prayers
Southern Guild Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2021

Dans Mon Jardin...
Galerie Vallois, Paris, France

2018

Thank you for the clay!
Fujiki Gallery, Shigaraki, Japan

2017

Time on Earth
Vallois America, New York, USA

2016

Terre de Mémoire
Centre – Arts & Cultures, Cotonou, Benin

Selected Biennales / World Expos / International Exhibitions

2025

Forver is Now
Giza Plateau - The Great Pyramids of Giza, Cairo, Egypt
(Under the auspices of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and under the patronage of UNESCO)

World Expo 2025 – Expo Osaka 2025 – Republic of Benin Pavilion
Yumeshima, Osaka, Japon

2024

Révélation China – International Biennial of Craft and Creation
National Agricultural Exhibition Centre, Beijing, China

2022

Le Bénin en Majesté, Dakar Biennale OFF
Librairie aux 4 Vents, Dakar, Senegal

2022

Homo Faber – Crafting a More Human Future
Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, Italy

2019

10th Korean International Ceramic Biennale
Incheon World Ceramic Center, Incheon, South Korea

Biennale Internationale des Métiers d’Art & Création Révélation 2019
“Le Banquet”
Le Grand Palais, Paris, France

Selected Museum Exhibitions

2025

German & International Ceramics Since 1946
Grassi Museum of Applied Arts, Leipzig, Germany

2024

Liberatory Living: Protective Interiors and Radical Black Joy
Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD), San Francisco, USA

2023

Art Du Bénin, d’Hier et d’Aujourd’hui: de la Restitution à la Révélation – Contemporain
Musée Mohammed VI d’Art Moderne & Contemporain, Rabat, Morocco

2022

Collection Viviane S.
Museu Del Càntir, Argentona, Spain

2021

Cultural Affairs: Art Without Borders
Grassi Museum of Applied Arts, Leipzig, Germany

2020

International Academy of Ceramics Exhibition
Guozhong Ceramic Art Museum, Beijing, China

2019

An Idea Needing to be Made: Contemporary Ceramics
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, Australia

2017

Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary Ceramics in the Spirit of the Mad Potter
Boca Raton Museum of Art, Florida, USA
(curated by Garth Clark)

CV

Selected Group Exhibitions

2025

Sacred Intersection
Muse Contemporary Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey

Révélations! Art Contemporain du Bénin
La Conciergerie – Palais de la Cité, Paris, France

2023

Parcours des Mondes 2023: King Houndekpinkou & Franck Zanfanhouédé
Galerie Vallois, Paris, France

2022

Ceramics Now
Galerie Italienne, Paris, France

Art Du Bénin, d’Hier et d’Aujourd’hui: de la Restitution à la Révélation
The Republic of Benin’s Palace / Palais de la Marina, Cotonou, Benin

2021

SPRING 1883
Sarah Scout Presents Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

1:54 – Redefining the Trends, Histories in the Making
Christie’s London, London, UK

Royal Academy of Arts: Summer Exhibition 2021
Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK

2020

Là où l’Âme se Plaît
Carrousel du Louvre, Paris, France
(Curated by Galerie Vallois and UNESCO)

2019

Polyartworks / Performer
Minnano Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2019

Visceral Clay: Look Don’t Touch
Gerald Peters Projects, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

2018

Céramique Contemporaine: les artistes de Viviane S.
Abbaye de Léhon, Dinan, France
(curated by Stéphanie Le Follic-Hadida, IAC/UNESCO)

Palau de Casavells – Summer Exhibition
Palau de Casavells, Girona, Spain

Vasa Vasorum | The Vase in Contemporary Art + Design
Peters Projects, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA
(curated by Garth Clark)

Clay Gulgong 2018: The Masters’ Show
Gulgong, New South Wales, Australia

Business as Usual
Minnano Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2017

Africa Blooms Japan
Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong

2016

Kaïdin & King: l’éternel de l’immatériel
Espace Christiane Peugeot, Paris, France

Hommage au Bénin, 20 artistes contemporains Béninois
Château de Tanlay, France

2015

Temps modernes, la mémoire de l’esclavage et l’art contemporain
Galerie Vallois, Paris, France

Coco Fronsac & King
Galerie Vallois, Paris, France

CV

Selected International Art Fairs

- 2025

AKAA - Also Known as Africa - Contemporary Art Fair

Le Carreau du Temple, Paris, France
- Contemporary Istanbul BLOOM

Istanbul, Turquie
- Quarantine Art Fair

Point Nepean, Melbourne, Australia
- 2024

Design Miami/

Miami Beach, Florida, USA
- Investec – Cape Town Art Fair

Cape Town International Convention Centre, Cape Town, South Africa
- Ceramic Brussels 2024

Tours & Taxis, Brussels, Belgium
- 2022

1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair – New York

Harlem Parish, New York, USA
- 2022

Enter Art Fair

Tunnelfabrikken, Copenhagen
- PAD Paris – Design + Art

Tuileries, Paris, France
- Artgenève

Palexpo, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2021

ST-ART – Foire Européenne d’art contemporain & de design

Parc des Expositions, Strasbourg, France

- 2021

Art X Lagos

The Federal Palace, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2019

The Salon Art + Design

Park Avenue Armory, New York, USA
- KOGEI – Art Fair Kanazawa

The Share Hotels, Kanazawa, Japan
- Art Fair Tokyo 2019

Tokyo International Forum, Tokyo, Japan
- 2018

1-54 - Contemporary African Art Fair

La Mamounia Palace, Marrakech, Morocco
- Art Paris Art Fair

Le Grand Palais, Paris, France
- Selected Artist Residencies
- 2024

Southern Guild Artist-in-Residence Program, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2018

Shigaraki Ceramic Culture Park, Shigaraki, Japan
- 2016

Le Centre Arts & Culture, Cotonou, Benin
- Selected Brand collaborations
- 2023

Glenfiddich x King Houndekpinkou: Tokyo After Dark

Harrods, London, UK

CV

Selected Collections

Rhode Island School of Design Museum (RISD)
Rhode Island, USA

Collection of H.R.H. Franz, Duke of Bavaria
Munich, Germany

Grassi Museum of Applied Art
Leipzig, Germany

The Republic of Benin Presidency
Cotonou, The Republic of Benin

Embassy of the Republic of Benin to Japan
Tokyo, Japan

Gyeonggi Ceramic Museum Korea Ceramic Foundation
Gyeonggi, South Korea

Boca Raton Museum of Art
Boca Raton, Florida, USA

Barbara Bluhm-Kaul
Chicago, USA

Le Petit Musée de la Récade
Cotonou, The Republic of Benin

Conferences / Panels / Symposiums / Lectures

2019

- Lecture / Public Program – An Idea Needing to be Made: Contemporary Ceramics Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, Australia
- Lecture / Educator’s Program – An Idea Needing to be Made: Contemporary Ceramics Manningham Art Studios, Melbourne, Australia
- Lecture / King Houndekpinkou: Connecting with the Clay, Beyond all Borders Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan
- Lecture / King Houndekpinkou: Connecting with the Clay, Beyond all Borders Seika Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
- Panel / Trans-Pacific Dialogue: Marrying Form and Surface Across the Globe Panel discussion featuring Glenn Barkley (AUS), Virginia Leonard (NZ), Andrew Casto (USA), David Hicks (USA) and Mindy Solomon (USA) The University of Iowa / NCECA 2019, Minneapolis Convention Center, USA

2018

- Lecture / Clay Gulgong 2018 Gulgong New South Wales, Australia

2017

- Lecture / Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary Ceramics in the Spirit of the Mad Potter Florida Atlantic University, Florida, USA

2016

- Residency conference / Terre de Mémoire Le Centre Arts & Culture, Cotonou, Benin

Selected Exhibitions



International Exhibition

Fovever is Now

2025

Giza Plateau, Egypt



International Exhibition

Fovever is Now

2025

Giza Plateau, Egypt



Solo Exhibition

Six Prayers

2024

Southern Guild Gallery

Cape Town, South Africa



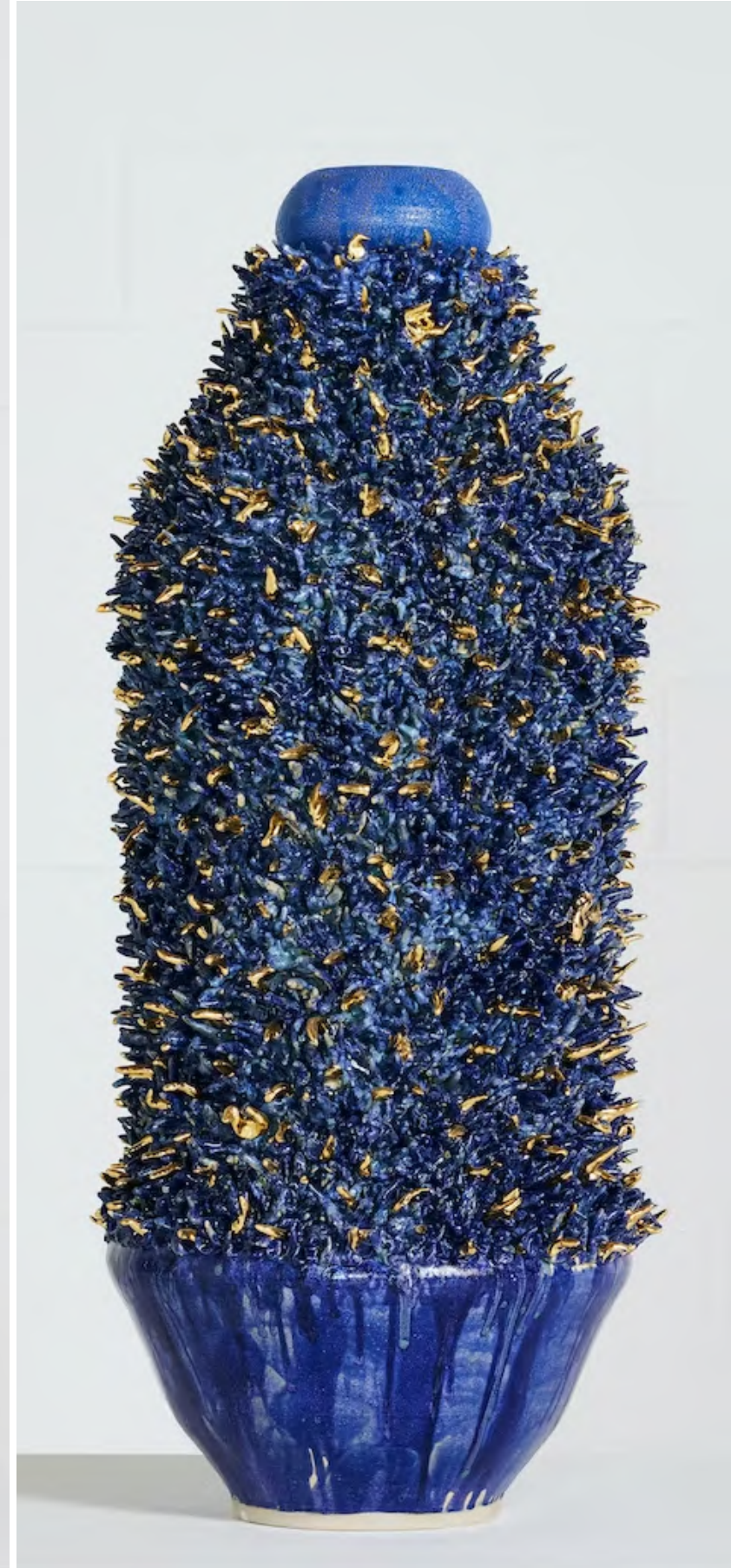
Solo Exhibition

Six Prayers

2024

Southern Guild Gallery

Cape Town, South Africa



Institutional Exhibition

Révélations! Art Contemporain du Bénin

2024

La Conciergerie – Palais de la Cité
Paris, France



Institutional Exhibition

Révélations! Art Contemporain du Bénin

2024

La Conciergerie – Palais de la Cité
Paris, France



KING HOUNDEKPINKOU



Né en 1987 en France, à Montreuil, dans une famille béninoise qui parle fon et mina, King Houndekpinkou est fasciné dans sa jeunesse par les jeux vidéo japonais. Il s'est formé auprès de la maître céramiste japonaise Kayoko Hayasaka, qui utilise la cuisson au bois et recherche l'harmonie dans la diversité. Diplômé de l'école parisienne des Arts et techniques céramiques (ATC), et membre de l'Académie internationale de la céramique (AIC), Houndekpinkou travaille en France, au Japon et au Bénin. Mélangeant les argiles du Bénin à celles du monde entier, ses productions interrogent les frontières entre l'art et l'artisanat et représentent une expérience unique d'hybridation culturelle : « L'argile est comme une encyclopédie. La matière dit d'où l'on vient ».

Born in Montreuil, France, in 1987 to a Beninese family that speaks Fon and Mina, King Houndekpinkou was fascinated in his youth by Japanese video games. He studied under Japanese master ceramist Kayoko Hayasaka, who fires pottery with wood and seeks harmony in asymmetry. A graduate of the Arts et Techniques Céramiques (ATC) ceramics school in Paris, and a member of the International Academy of Ceramics (AIC), Houndekpinkou works in France, Japan, and Benin. Blending clays from Benin with clays from around the world, his productions examine the borders between art and artistry, and represent a unique experience of cultural hybridisation. "Clay is like an encyclopedia, its content tells us where we come from."

GRAND TOTEM

Céramique émaillée et peinte, mélange d'argiles béninoises, japonaises et nord-américaines, émaux blancs, peintures bleues mates, cr. 2020
Collection par l'artiste
© ADAGP

Ceramic Biennale

10th Korean International Ceramic Biennale

2019

Incheon World Ceramic Center
Incheon, South Korea



Ceramic Biennale

10th Korean International Ceramic Biennale

2019

Incheon World Ceramic Center
Incheon, South Korea



Solo Exhibition

Thank You for the Clay

2018

Fujiki Gallery
Shigaraki, Japan



Solo Exhibition

Thank You for the Clay

2018

Fujiki Gallery
Shigaraki, Japan



Museum Exhibition

*Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary
Ceramics in the Spirit of the Mad Potter*

2017

Boca Raton Museum of Art
Florida, USA



Museum Exhibition

*Regarding George Ohr: Contemporary
Ceramics in the Spirit of the Mad Potter*

2017

Boca Raton Museum of Art
Florida, USA



Solo Exhibition

Time on Earth

2017

Vallois America
New York, USA



Solo Exhibition

Time on Earth

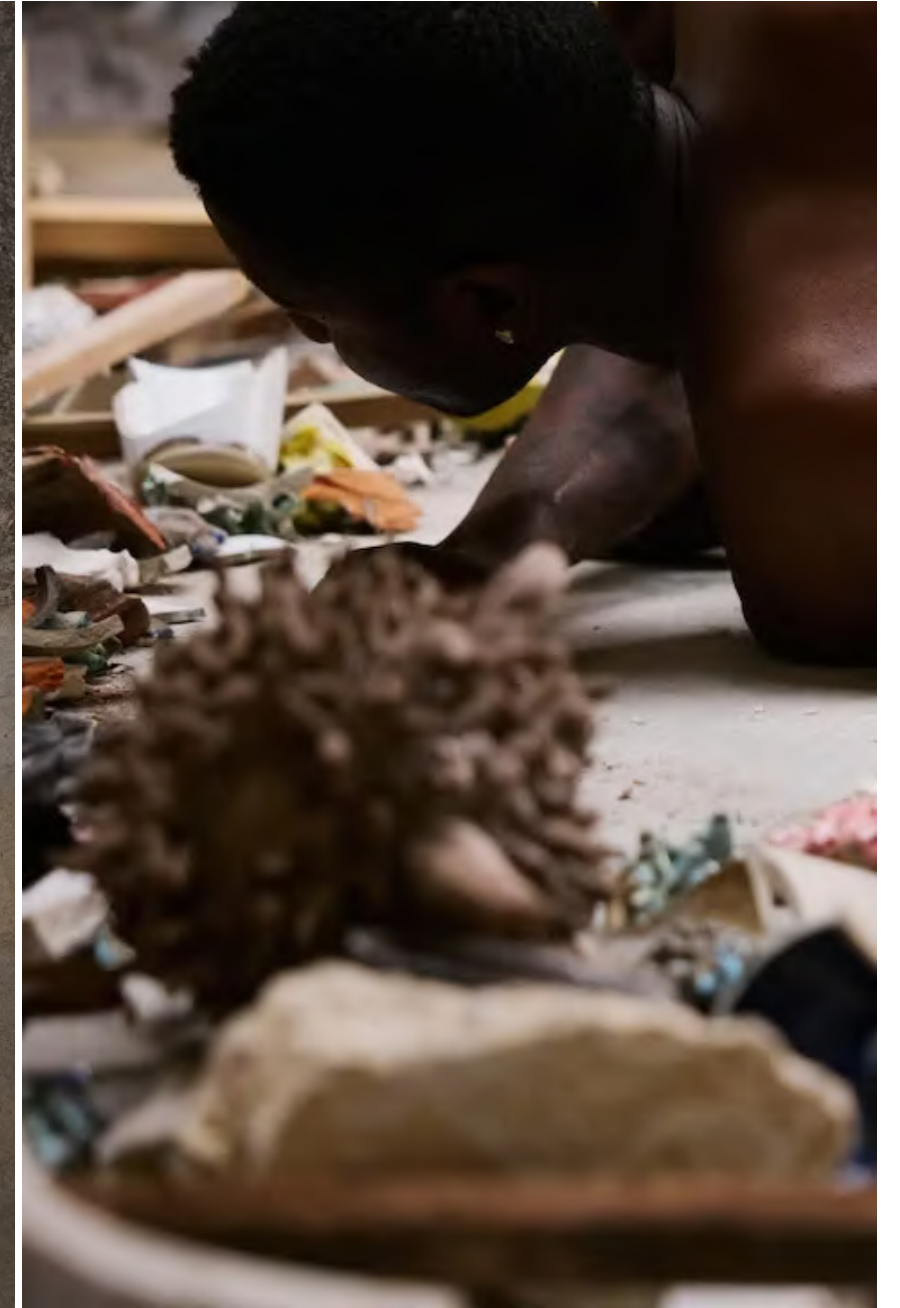
2017

Vallois America
New York, USA



Selected Projects





King Houndekpinkou x Alex Huanfa Cheng

Let My Soul Shatter..., 2025
Melun, France

Let My Soul Shatter... is a deeply personal photo project by King Houndekpinkou, in collaboration with photographer Alex Huanfa Cheng, born from the creation of his new studio, A GOOD SPACE®, in Melun. Transforming chaos into art, he reimagines fragments of renovation debris and unused ceramics into a work that explores resilience, healing, and the restorative power of making.



King Houndekpinkou x Glenfiddich

Tokyo After Dark, 2023
Harrods, London, UK

The collaboration between the Japanese-inspired ceramicist and the single malt Scotch whisky Glenfiddich, finished in exceptionally rare ex-Awamori casks (Japan's oldest spirits, it is said to have a history of 600 years) is a celebration of their shared respect and knowledge of Japanese culture, concepts and traditions. The installation is a luxury reimagining of an izakaya, infused with King's experiences in Japan and the inspiration he has taken from Hanami: the ancient tradition where Japan appreciates the fleeting beauty of nature through the cherry blossom, a time for renewal and optimism. King also re-interprets Yakishime, a wood firing technique of ancient Japanese pottery, which gives a specific raw texture to his ceramics.



King Houndekpinkou x Alex Huanfa Cheng

Dans Mon Jardin, 2021
Paris, France

Photo project led by photographer Alex Huanfa Cheng for the eponymous exhibition *Dans Mon Jardin* in Paris, France.



King Houndekpinkou x The Republic of Benin Embassy to Japan

Benin Embassy to Japan, 2019
Tokyo, Japan

Sculptures commissioned by the Benin Embassy, offered as official gifts to his Japanese counterparts. The sculptures were made out of clays from Benin and Japan and symbolise the friendship between both countries. They represent a traditional Beninese saying of King Ghézo, a rough translation follows - "The holed jar contains the water that will give the country happiness. If all the children came, with their fingers assembled to plug the holes, the liquid would not flow and the country would be saved"



King Houndekpinkou x Alex Huanfa Cheng

De Passage sur Terre, 2017
Etretat, France

Photo project led by photographer Alex Huanfa Cheng for the eponymous exhibition *De Passage sur Terre* in Paris, France and New York, US.



King Houndekpinkou

Terres Jumelles, since 2016
Benin and Japan

Terres Jumelles (eng. Twin Soils) is a creative journey that consists in fostering cross-cultural dialogue between Benin and Japan by creating bonds between local ceramic practitioners in both countries. Initiated in 2016, *Terres Jumelles* highlights the similarities and the differences that exist in the traditions of Beninese and Japanese ceramics. To achieve this, the projet documents various practices of clay work (artistic, utilitarian...) via crossed interviews, stories, short documentaries and photographs.

Contact details

For studio visits or access to the online viewing room, please email
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Instagram: [king.houndekpinkou](https://www.instagram.com/king.houndekpinkou)

