

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, Japan

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 Prizes, Competitions

**2019**

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

### 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

*Forever 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

*Révélation! Art Contemporain du Bénin*

2024

La Conciergerie – Palais de la Cité  
Paris, France



## Institutional Exhibition

*Révélation! Art Contemporain du Bénin*

2024

La Conciergerie – Palais de la Cité  
Paris, France



### KING HOUNDEKPINKOU



- FR 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 Hayasaki, 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 est d'où l'on vient ».
- EN 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 ceramicist Kayoko Hayasaki, who fires pottery with wood and seeks harmony in asymmetry. A graduate of the Arts and Techniques Ceramics (ATC) 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, émail blanc, peinture bleue mate, or, 2020  
Collection par roulotte  
© 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 Works



**Selected Works**

*Tears of Angels on My Beautiful Skin*

2025

Glazed ceramics

90 x 48 x 48 cm



**Selected Works**

*Tears of Angels on My Beautiful Skin*

2025

Glazed ceramics

90 x 48 x 48 cm



**Selected Works**

*My Hands Will Heal It Back - Blue*

2025

Glazed ceramic shards on painted wooden  
canvas

40 x 40 x 5 cm



**Selected Works**

*Bubble Tea Doll Totem*

2025

Glazed ceramics

63 x 40 x 40 cm



**Selected Works**

*Bubble Tea Doll Totem*

2025

Glazed ceramics

63 x 40 x 40 cm



**Selected Works**

*Where Do You Choose to Stand in Chaos? I*

2025

Clay, acrylic paint on canvas

100 x 100 x 5 cm



**Selected Works**

*Where Do You Choose to Stand in Chaos? I*

2025

Clay, acrylic paint on canvas

100 x 100 x 5 cm



**Selected Works**

*The Widow of Light: A Shining Light to the World in Troubled Times*

2024

Glazed ceramics

61 x 41 x 41 cm



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 [info@kinghoundekpinkou.com](mailto:info@kinghoundekpinkou.com)

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Instagram: [king.houndekpinkou](https://www.instagram.com/king.houndekpinkou)

