

extraspazio

via san francesco di sales 16 a

I – 00165 roma

+39 06 68210655

info@extraspazio.it

www.extraspazio.it

Edson Chagas & ENSA-Art collection

curated by Guido Schlinkert

in collaboration with Manrica Rotili

extraspazio gallery

catalogue ESPERA

The exhibition is promoted by the Embassy of Republic of Angola in Italy

Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico Luigi Pigorini, Rome

Piazza Guglielmo Marconi 14, 00144 - Rome EUR

Salone delle Scienze, 1st Floor

Monday to Saturday from 9am to 7pm

Sunday from 9am to 1.30pm

"Much of contemporary art is hardly aesthetic at all, but it has in its stead the power of meaning and possibility of truth, and depends upon the interpretation that brings these into play"  
(Arthur Danto, What Art Is)

*Agenda Angola* sets up dialogues between the works of **Edson Chagas** and the works of **Masongi Afonso "Afó", Costa Andrade "Ndunduma", Zan Andrade, Hildebrando De Melo, António Gongá, Jorge Gumbe, Paulo Jazz, Marco Kabenda, Sozinho Lopes, Sónia Lukene, João Mabuaka "Mayembe", Guilherme Mampwya, António Ole, Vítor Teixeira "Viteix", Fineza Teta "Fist", António Toko, Francisco Van-Dúnem "Van", Telmo Váz Pereira, Amândio Vemba, Landa Yetó**. The first named is a young artist who at the age of sixteen left Luanda, the capital of Angola where he was born, to study in London and Newport (Wales) while the others are mainly artists trained in Angola, where they live and work, and winners of the ENSA-Art Prize which for twenty-two years has been awarded to emerging artists by the Angolan insurance company of the same name. The first prize, in 1992, went to António Ole when he was not yet an artist appreciated worldwide.

Edson Chagas returned to Luanda in 2007 and was surprised to note that now, unlike during wartime (until 2002 Angola was torn by a civil war that lasted nearly thirty years), even the less well off among the city's seven million plus inhabitants could allow now themselves the luxury to throw away broken things.

The artist thus realised the storytelling potential of ruined objects, collected them and set them in pose: deflated footballs, empty bottles, broken-down chairs, iron piping and so on, everything against a background of coloured plasterwork and old peeling doors, in the dirt tracks that resist in the shadow of the capital's new skyscrapers, creating not so much a reconstruction of reality as a new relationship between objects and context.

The documentation of this new work, entitled *Found Not Taken, Luanda*, shows these finds

at the centre of the images, as idols worthy of regard which invite us to redefine our relationship with things and with the spaces around us.

Not dissimilar to the expressive capacity of Chagas' *objets trouvés*, but with greater, almost flaunted indolence with regard to the aesthetic dimension, the works of the ENSA Collection artists – often constructed with demolition material – stand out for their militant and direct poetics, almost bitter, which tackles the problems of striking social and urban change in the new Angola. Starting with the titles: *Homenagem a Viriato da Cruz* (co-founder of the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola), *Terra queimada*, *Elogio ao Nkisi Nkonde* (a traditional figure capable of neutralising anyone harmful to the community), *Terra, guerra, corda e povo*, *E agora, que futuro?*, *Em busca de um futuro melhor*, to mention only a few.

The exhibition title *Agenda Angola* grew out of awareness that the new Republic of Angola has shown itself to be decisive about asserting its own agenda and, in fact, it appears among the main items on the agendas of half the world (China first and foremost).

Over and above "economic expansion" (the country has huge mineral and natural resources, is seething with building sites and investors are queuing to take part in the fastest growing economy in Africa and one of the fastest on the planet) the Angola Agenda also includes the provision: "internationalisation of our art and culture!".

Guido Schlinkert