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1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, The Only International Art Fair To Open In London This Autumn



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Travel

I write about travel, food, culture and fashion.



Stephen Towns, Let Us Cheer the Weary Traveler, mixed media, presented by De Buck Gallery, New York ... [+] PAUL.ALLEN/ANDFOTOGRAPHY.COM

It's "Frieze week" in London but thanks to the current global pandemic, this year there's no physical [Frieze art fair](#) in Regent's Park. There is the annual [Frieze sculpture exhibition](#) outdoors in the park (until 18 October), commercial shows opening and of course Frieze has a super online presence but it is still a thrill to be able to visit an actual art fair. So what a joy that the brilliant [1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair](#), now in its eighth year, opened yesterday at historic Somerset House and runs until 10 October. Founding Director of 1-54, Touria El Glaoui, commented: "Given the incredible challenges and uncertainty posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic, we are delighted to have been able to find a way to welcome visitors back to our

spiritual home at [Somerset House](#) in London this October whilst also amplifying our online presence in partnership with [Christie's](#) to ensure that art lovers from all over the world will be able to join us too.”

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Nelo Teixeira, Untitled, from the series Lost Fragments, mixed media at 1-54 art fair, London ... [+]

NELO TEIXEIRA

1-54 launched in London in 2013 as the first major international art fair dedicated to contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora. Taking its name from the 54 countries that make up the African continent, there have also been annual fairs in New York since 2015 and Marrakech since 2018. The plan is to open the next [Marrakech edition](#) in March and the [New York edition](#) in May 2021.



Peju Alatise, *If Nigeria Will Not Wear Her Cloth*, acrylic on stone and wood at Sulger-Buel, London ... [+] [PAUL ALLEN/ANDFOTOGRAPHY.COM](http://PAUL.ALLEN/ANDFOTOGRAPHY.COM)

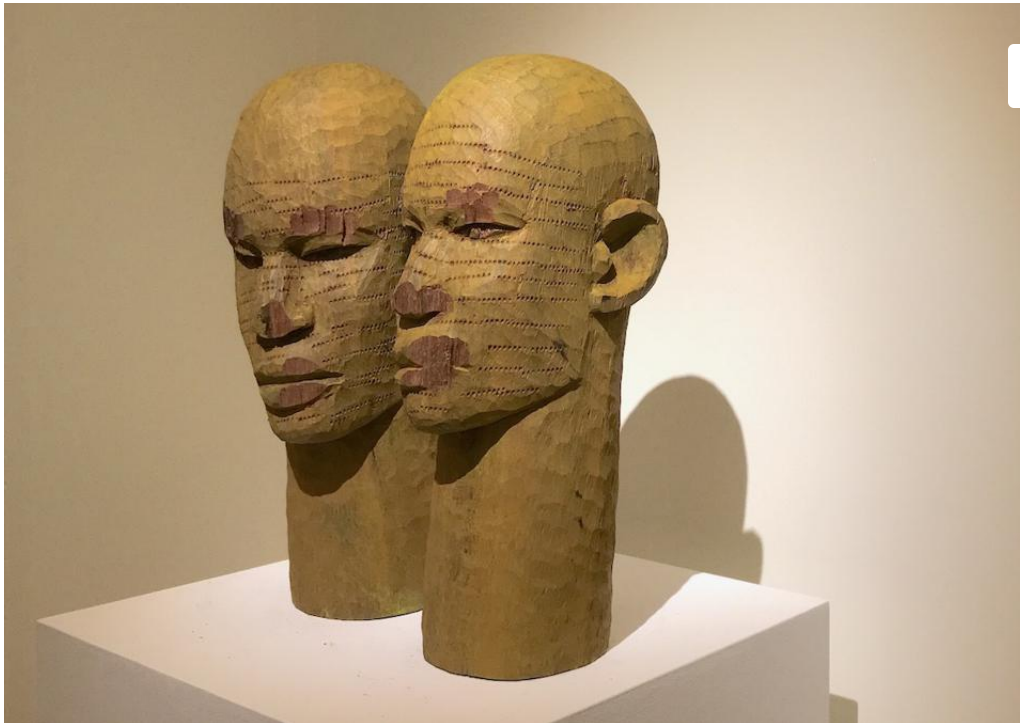
As the only offline art fair in the capital, 1-54 has partnered with [Christie's auction house](#) who are showing all the art fair works on their website and a highlights show at their Duke Street location (on until 12 October). If you aren't able to attend in person, online art platform, [Artsy](#), are also featuring works from the fair until 22 October.

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Alimi Adewale, wooden sculptures presented by Nil Gallery, Paris at 1-54 Art Fair, Somerset House, ... [+] JOANNE SHURVELL

The art fair at Somerset House is understandably a pared-down version of the usual annual London event. But the work on show by the 30 exhibitors at Somerset House is outstanding.

Emerging and established artists from Africa and its diaspora show work across a wide variety of mediums and from a range of geographical backgrounds. Some exhibiting galleries are showing more than one artist and there are four impressive solo exhibitions: DuduBloom More ([Berman Contemporary](#)), Stephen Towns ([De Buck Gallery](#)), Anya Paintsil ([Ed Cross Fine Art](#)) and Ekene Maduka ([Polartics](#)).



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Anya Paintsil, punch needled acrylic artworks at Ed Cross Fine Art, 1-54 Art Fair, London ROCIO CHACON

Highlights of 1-54 are numerous so it's difficult to choose the best works on show. A standout at New York's De Buck Gallery is a beautiful quilted work, *Let Us Cheer the Weary Traveler*, by American artist [Stephen Towns](#) who explores African-American cultural issues. At London's Ed Cross, Welsh-Ghanaian artist [Anya Paintsil](#) has created fantastic textile pieces that incorporate rug-hooking and embroidery. And be sure to spend some time with Nigerian-born [Wole Lagunju](#)'s large colorful paintings at New York gallery Montague Contemporary. The large paintings combine Western and Yoruba cultural artifacts with numerous historical references ranging from the Dutch Golden era, to fifties America to Nigerian batik. At Ghanaian [Gallery 1957](#), it's no surprise that a row of striking figurative

portraits by Accra-based painter [Serge Attukwei Clottey](#) quickly sold out when the fair opened.

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Installation view at Addis Fine Art with work by Tsedaye Makonnen and Tesfaye Urgessa, at 1-54 Art ... [+] A RAZVI/ ADDIS FINE ART

[1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair](#), Somerset House runs until 10 October 2020. [Tickets are on sale](#) for the public day on Saturday 10 October, with 2-hour time slots are going fast (10:00-20:00). Online showcase and sales will continue at Christie's (until 12 October) and Artsy (until 22 October).

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I've been writing on travel, food, fashion and culture for the past decade or so for a variety of publications. I co-founded PayneShurvell, a contemporary art gallery in... **Read More**

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