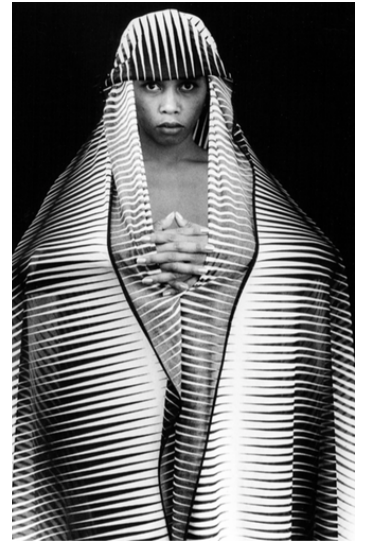

AFRICANESSE



Doyle Wham is proud to present *Africanesse*: the UK's first solo exhibition of renowned Cameroonian artist Angèle Etoundi Essamba.

The exhibition showcases Essamba's groundbreaking series of vintage silver gelatin prints: black and white photographs of non-professional models, who range from family members to friends and acquaintances of the artist, to acquaintances she encountered on the streets of Amsterdam. Throughout her career, Essamba has foregrounded the female narrative, reflecting on the complex cultural identities of the modern African woman and inspiring subsequent generations of women photographers. Under the artist's loving gaze, Black skin itself becomes the subject of the collection, questioning the traditional parameters of portraiture. Alongside the beauty of lustrous bare skin, Essamba's accessories her subjects with swaths of fabric, traditional headwear, jewellery or body paint, challenging stereotypical presentations of Black women.

The exhibited artworks were hand-developed by the artist between 1985 and 2006, and are the last in her possession. These rare remaining works have received significant institutional interest in the last year, entering the prestigious collections of MoMA, The Boca Raton Museum of Art, and the Møller Collection in Norway, to name a few. In the artist's own words:

I have always believed that black and white photography has a special, timeless power, lending itself intensely to imagination and containing an undeniable mystery. In 1985, I felt compelled to explore this mystery more deeply, leading me to create my first darkroom. It was a laborious process. I converted a storage unit myself, and for the next twenty years, I was engrossed in my darkroom practice. I spent weeks at a time on the development of each artwork, from preparing the baths, to choosing the right paper, then developing, stopping, fixing, rinsing, and drying each print in turn. Finally, the breathtaking moment when the image arose out of the bath was one of pure enjoyment and magic.

In 2006, my darkroom era came to an end and I transitioned to digital photography. Today, each lovingly developed vintage print from that period is special, and reflects the formation of an intimate relationship with my craft.

ANGÈLE ETOUNDI ESSAMBA: AFRICANESSE

DOYLE WHAM, 91A RIVINGTON STREET, LONDON, EC2A 3AY
21ST SEPTEMBER - 18TH NOVEMBER 2023

CONTACT DETAILS

FOR ANY ENQUIRES, INCLUDING PRESS AND SALES:
HELLO@DOYLEWHAM.COM



ABOUT ANGÈLE ETOUNDI ESSAMBA | @ANGÈLE.ESSAMBA



Angèle Etoundi Essamba was born in 1962 in Douala, Cameroon. She was educated in France and graduated from the School of Photography of Amsterdam where she lives and works today. In 2016, she was awarded the 'National Knight of the Order of Valor' by the President of the Republic of Cameroon, and in 2022, she had the honour of representing Cameroon at the 59th Venice Biennale.

Selected solo exhibitions include The Guggenheim (Bilbao), the African Union (Addis Ababa), the Musée National of Cameroon, Fototeca de Cuba, Museum Fünf Kontinente (Munich), the National Museum of Kenya (2011), LI-SPACE (Beijing), Museet for Fotokunst (Denmark), Contemporary Art Museum (Spain), Institut Français (Benin), Museum of Modern Art (NL), Tenerife Espacio de las Artes (Spain), BOZAR (Belgium) and Philadelphia Museum of Art (USA).

ABOUT DOYLE WHAM | @DOYLEWHAM

Doyle Wham is the UK's first and only contemporary African photography gallery. The gallery was founded in October 2020 with an itinerant programme of physical and digital exhibitions. Doyle Wham launched its first permanent location in Shoreditch, London, in February 2022.

The gallery exhibits both emerging and established artists from Africa and across the African diaspora. The intersection of photography and culture, including fashion, art and music, is a particular focus of the gallery's programme.

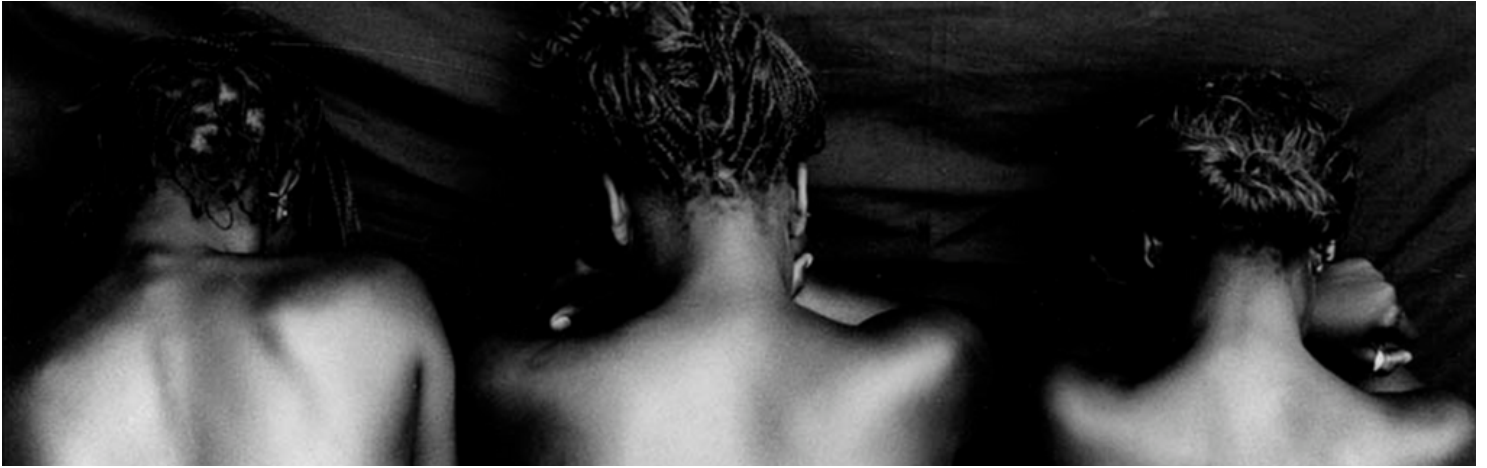
Doyle Wham is dedicated to celebrating photography in all its forms and to advancing the contemporary African photography market through regular exhibitions and events, the introduction of new artists, and the development of a robust collector-base. Doyle Wham participates in international art fairs including Photo London, RMB Latitudes, 1-54 London and Scope Miami.

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ARTISTIC STATEMENT

Angèle Etoundi Essamba is a committed artist involved in a reflection on the identity of the black woman:

"The Black woman is at the heart of my artistic expression. She remains an inexhaustible source of inspiration, she is the bearer, the guardian and the transmitter and I celebrate her naturally. My work challenges and breaks with stereotypical representations of Black women who are often depicted by western media as submissive, passive, dependent, exotic, and confined to certain roles. Instead, I use the camera to reappropriate the Black body and to deconstruct and break these stereotypes by showing active, proud, and determined women who take up daily challenges, show their place and their role in society, take charge of their own narrative and rewrite history."

Essamba's work lies at the intersection of the social/gender and the artistic field. She uses photography to bring her message across in a creative way. Her varied background (Cameroon, France, the Netherlands) and various travels have not only profoundly shaped her eye, but also mean her vision is simultaneously aesthetic, idealistic, realistic, and societal. She joins the spirit of humanist photography with a strong attachment to the values of communion. Keywords for Essamba's work are pride, strength and awareness. She focuses exclusively on what the human radiates, whether alone, as a couple or as a group. Her approach is always based on a sense of proximity, reciprocity.

Born in Cameroon and educated in France, Angèle Etoundi Essamba is a graduate of the Dutch Photography School in Amsterdam where she lives and holds a bachelor's degree in History of Art. Since her first exhibition in 1985 in Amsterdam, her work has been frequently exhibited in museums, institutions, Biennales (Venice Biennale 2022, Havana Biennale and Johannesburg Biennale), fairs and galleries in Europe, Africa, the United States, Latin America and Asia.

Essamba's photographs have been featured in various publications among which: Passion 1989; Contrasts 1995; Symboles 1999; Noirs 2001; La Métamorphose du sublime 2003; Dialogues 2006; Voiles & Dévoilements 2008; Africa rising 2010; I- dentity 2010; As it is 2010; Africa see you, see me 2011; Desvelos 2011; Black & Red beyond colour 2012; Women of the water 2013; Invisible, African women in action 2015; Strength & pride 2016; Daughters of life 2018; Renaissance 2019.

Her work is also included in renowned public collections such as the Museum of Modern Art, (MoMA) New York; Memphis Brooks Museum of Art; Boca Raton Museum of Art; The National Museum of Women in the Arts; Fitchburg Museum of Art; Hood Museum, Dartmouth New Hampshire, the World Bank Art Program.

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