



DIRECTOR'S DESK: MEETING AIMÉ MPANE AT (E)MERGE

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Aimé Mpane, *Mapasa (Twins)*, 2012. Photo: courtesy (e)merge art fair

(e)merge is such a great addition to the arts ecology of D.C. It generates excitement, knowledge, contacts, and, I dare say, a significant economic impact, as well. The Phillips is so proud to receive [Gallerist's](#) Herb and Dorothy Vogel Award and thrilled to add a work by the [Belgian-Congolese artist Aimé Mpane](#) to our collection. Phillips curators Vesela Sretenovic and Klaus Ottmann and I vetted many works at the fair. It was a hard decision, but we all fell in love with the diptych called *Twins* by Mpane. (I actually love his more straightforward portraits, too, and really hope we can find a way to add one of them to the collection on top of the diptych.)



One of Aimé Mpane's portraits also on view in Nomad Gallery at (e)merge. Photo: Dorothy Kosinski

It was very special to meet the artist and discuss his ideas and process at length. He showed us photos of himself working in [Kinshasa](#) in an open air studio surrounded by the kids whose spirit and energy he captures in his works. His process is especially fascinating. . . he uses a small pick or awl to gouge into the different colored layers of an ordinary piece of plywood. He captures with remarkable elegance the movement and character of each face through (or despite?) the primitive edges of the splintered wood. He is a skilled and highly trained artist who responds to the humble circumstances and traditional methods of the Congo. His work reflects a personal and historical voyage between continents and cultures. I can imagine this work in dialogue with Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration Series*. At the same time, the highly patterned headdress and scarf that Mpane depicts makes me think of the dense patterning that [Vuillard](#) so favored. Needless to say, we're excited to hang this new acquisition at the Phillips.

And we are grateful to [Gallerist](#) and [\(e\)merge art fair](#) for making this exciting and important new acquisition possible.

Dorothy Kosinski, Director