

ADVISORY

Meurice Prize For Contemporary Art



"Le Meurice belongs to Paris as Paris belongs to Le Meurice. Each one has written the other one's story, has celebrated its glory days, its taste for freedom, and most of all its French genius. That Paris is the one that sets the tone, that beats, that vibrates, that shines and Le Meurice is now much more than just an address; it is a signature, a style. There is really something in the spirit of Le Meurice that embraces pleasure and sharing ideas of arts and spirit. Meurice Prize for contemporary art is only the extension of this urbane and intellectual effervescence. Today, past sublimates present and present advances the past. Le Meurice reties with its history, and finds again its creativity and its wave of madness for everyone's delight."

— Francka Holtmann, General Manager, Le Meurice



The Meurice Prize judge panel

THE CREATION OF THE MEURICE PRIZE FOR contemporary art is part of Le Meurice's resolutely forward-looking movement and concerns all disciplines in the visual and plastic arts (painting, sculpture, installation, photography, video, etc.).

For the fourth consecutive year, the first Parisian palace hotel has awarded the Prize to help an emerging artist on the French scene gain international recognition. The Prize, which has an endowment of 20,000 Euros, was jointly awarded on October 10th to Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc for his project *Looking for Awa* and to Galerie Marcelle Alix.

Judges Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, Ambassador for the award; Montse Aguer, Director of the Centre for Dali Studies; Renaud Auguste-Dormeuil, Artist and Winner of the Prize in 2009/10; Colette Barbier, Director of the Ricard Corporate Foundation; Philippe Dagen, Writer and Lecturer at University of Paris I; Jennifer Flay, General Manager of FIAC; Marta Gili, Director of the Jeu de Paume; Henri Loyrette, President of the Louvre; Maryvonne Pinault, Collector; Marc-Olivier Wahler, Director of the Palais de Tokyo; and Franka Holtmann, General Manager of Le Meurice, awarded Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc among the 50 outstanding projects that were submitted for the Prize.

Influenced by "creolization", Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc structures his work around notions of collective and individual memory. For the past two years, his work has centered on Sarah Maldoror's militant filmmaking in a context of liberation movements in Portuguese-speaking Africa.

Looking for Awa, his project for the Meurice Prize, is a feature-length film that reprises the original script for *Guns for Banta*, a film (now lost) shot in 1970 in Guinea-Bissau by Sarah Maldoror. It returns to the various narratives and ideals of a troubled time: the end of struggles for independence in Africa, America's defeat in Vietnam, and the intensification of the Cold War, which it sets against Africa's economic and political upheavals at the turn of the 21st century. Forty years on, *Looking for Awa* is a "future remake," as much an examination of militant filmmaking of the 1960s and '70s as of Pan-Africanism, to better identify its contemporary legacy. It will be shown at the Serralves Foundation in Porto in March 2012.

The six finalists of the fourth edition of the Meurice Prize received exposure at the hotel during the FIAC contemporary art fair as a VIP private exhibition.

Le Meurice will celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Meurice Prize for contemporary art in 2012 and is planning a huge dedication on the occasion. ●



Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc, whose "Looking for Awa" feature-length film won the 2011 Meurice Prize (above); Le Meurice (below)

