
MOOD INDIGO: Shades of Blue

Renowned textile artist, Aboubakar Fofana, brings the Malian art of indigo dyeing to BOZAR, as the International Trade Centre and the European Union help create job opportunities for youth in Mali and Burkina Faso by promoting traditional skills

Textile artist, Aboubakar Fofana, has been invited to showcase the artisanal Malian tradition of indigo dyeing in the context of the Yves Klein "Theatre of the Void" exhibition at the BOZAR in Brussels.

(Brussels-Geneva) – As BOZAR celebrates the work of Yves Klein, the International Trade Centre's Ethical Fashion Initiative and the European Commission have invited Malian textile designer and Indigo Master, **Aboubakar Fofana**, to share his art in Brussels. Join us in a celebration of the colour blue, which connects **Europe** with **Africa**, and traces the ancient traditions of Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, up to the modern day works of **Yves Klein**.

On Thursday 29 June, BOZAR will host a live indigo-dyeing demonstration starting at 17:00, followed at 18:30 by an artistic performance by Aboubakar Fofana, in which he will transform swaths of white cotton into varying shades of blue. Duke Ellington's classic "Mood Indigo" will be reworked by the "thermo-electrical" duo **Oopopoiooo** to accompany the performance. BOZAR's Horta Hall will be transformed into a floating indigo forest, displaying hand-dyed fabric strips in every shade of blue possible with natural indigo. Guests will be able to continue their exploration of the colour blue with a visit to the Yves Klein exhibition.

The demonstration and exhibition will showcase the unique artisanal tradition of indigo-dyed fabric from Mali. This textile art is promoted by the **Ethical Fashion Initiative** as part of an EU co-funded project focused on developing handwoven textile capacities in Burkina Faso and Mali and connecting them to international fashion markets.

The reception will be opened by Paul Dujardin, Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for Fine Arts, Sophie Lauwers, Head of Exhibitions at the Centre for Fine Arts, Stefano Manservigi, Director General for International Cooperation and Development at the European Commission, and Simone Cipriani, Chief Technical Advisor at the International Trade Centre's Ethical Fashion Initiative.

This event is part of the promotional activities for the International Trade Centre and European Commission's "Ethical Fashion Initiative" programme, co-funded by the **European Union, in order to create sustainable jobs to tackle root causes of irregular migration in the regions of Mali and Burkina Faso.**

The Yves Klein "Theatre of the Void" exhibition will be open to the public (exceptionally) **until 22:00** and will run at the BOZAR **until 20 August 2017.**

About the Ethical Fashion Initiative

A flagship programme of the International Trade Centre, the Ethical Fashion Initiative enables artisans living in urban and rural poverty to connect with the global fashion chain. The Ethical Fashion Initiative also works with the rising generation of fashion talent from Africa, encouraging creative collaborations with artisans on the continent. Under its slogan, 'Not Charity, Just Work', the Ethical Fashion Initiative advocates for a fairer global fashion industry. The European Commission has supported this programme in order to promote skills in West Africa related to the cotton value chain promoting international market access for local products and to create more than 4000 new decent jobs for youth and women, starting with Mali and Burkina Faso.

About Aboubakar Fofana

Aboubakar Fofana is a multidisciplinary artist and designer whose working mediums include calligraphy, textiles and natural dyes. He is best known for his work in reinvigorating and redefining West African indigo dyeing techniques. Much of his focus is devoted to the preservation and reinterpretation of traditional West African textile and natural dyeing techniques and materials. Aboubakar Fofana's work and talent has been recognised internationally at craft and art fairs and exhibitions, most recently at the latest contemporary art biennale, *documenta (14)*, in Kassel and Athens. Aboubakar Fofana also spent a significant time in Japan where he had the opportunity to study with master dyer Akiyama Masakazu.

All of his work takes its inspiration as well as its raw materials from the natural world, and revolves around the cycles of nature, the themes of birth, decay and change, and the impermanence of his materials. He is currently deeply involved in creating a farm in conjunction with the local community in the district of Siby, Mali, in which the two types of indigenous West African indigo will be the centrepiece for a permaculture model based around local food, medicine and dye plants. This project hopes to contribute to the rebirth of fermented indigo dyeing in Mali and beyond, and represents his life's greatest project to date.

About Ooopoiooo

Ooopoiooo is a surreal, dada musical practice conveyed through Theremins (an electronic musical instrument controlled without physical contact), voice and other eclectic electroacoustic instruments. Valeria Sturba and Vincenzo Vasi are the Italian duo, based in Bologna, behind this unique musical project. They combine Theremins, a violin, bass, voices, and other musical instruments, and use loops and electronic music played in real time to create goosebump-making music. Fearless experimentation is the *mot du jour* with Ooopoiooo.

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