



Wise Two
TIME TRAVEL

26 September - 16 October 2018

circle art gallery



Untitled, 2018

WiseTwo – TIME TRAVEL

Australia, Canada, Colombia, France, Malaysia, Mexico, Rwanda, Singapore, South Africa, the United States of America, Tunisia and Kenya. In each of these countries, street artist and muralist, WiseTwo has created work in public spaces, and in each of these cities he has found himself one among a community of storytellers, many of them itinerant, whose work is nurtured within the full glare of the public. As with other types of art, street art and graffiti attempt to narrate our lives and experiences. The public nature of their work – its life and afterlife – further speaks to the need to leave something of oneself in whichever space one has occupied – to claim that at a point in time, recently, or in the distant past, someone was present, alive and made his or her mark.

The above claims are, of course, grand and loaded and one could be forgiven for expecting to encounter sweeping historical narratives or political commentary in the work of WiseTwo. Not so. Deliberately avoiding compositions that insist on singular, linear narratives, he approaches his works as the beginning of a journey for his audience, a means to find their way back to themselves.

Numerous influences pervade the work of WiseTwo – both overtly and more subtly. From the iconography of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, to the mythology of Meso-American communities (the Aztecs are one of his current

preoccupations), by way of the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt, WiseTwo is an excavator of symbols and language. This wealth of references is not always apparent as one looks at his work. All these and more, are parsed and redeployed as part of an intricate system of patterns and symbols.

His compositions, often large-scale portraits in which a mask occupies a central position, rely on geometric patterning and symbols, and a controlled colour palette. The densely packed compositions invite the viewer to go on a kind of cognitive adventure, the multiplicity of references igniting associations that range from the minute to the grand.

Two symbols to which he returns regularly are trees and masks: The trees hint at the vicissitudes of life, cycles of bounty and scarcity, beginnings and ends, life and death. The masks, in turn, appear, both as disguises and talismans. On the one hand, WiseTwo treats these masks as a metaphor for the identities that we take on, shifting and substituting one for another as we move through the world. On the other hand, he draws on the histories of masks as objects of utilitarian, aesthetic, and spiritual value, they are treated here as conduits through which we are able to access other modes of being, different psychic spaces.

WiseTwo's work has found an audience in countries where muralism and graffiti are part and parcel of the urban landscape. Often countries with a socialist history or a history of revolution, where this kind of art is taken seriously and street artists treated with respect. His most recent sojourn was to Mexico, home of the great Mexican muralists whom he counts among his influences, he created work in multiple sites. His work has also taken him to over ten countries as far away as Adelaide in Australia and to Paris where he had his first solo exhibition.

'Time Travel' at Circle Art Gallery is his first ever exhibition in Kenya, where he began his career creating artwork in estates such as Jericho and Maringo before taking on a hotel in upmarket Westlands. In this exhibition, WiseTwo invites us into his world, a realm of myth and fantasy, where his compositions take us on a journey through geography and time, offering glimpses into cultures outside our own.

Don Handa, September 2018

*Untitled mural Bogota, Colombia, 2016
overleaf*





ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

WiseTwo is an internationally acclaimed street and studio-based artist. Following an active street art career spanning more than 10 years, his work can now be found in major cities around the world.

Through his work, WiseTwo attempts to decipher ancient cultures, rhythms, codes, hieroglyphs, symbology, mystical and ritual objects of a deep and powerful continent, Africa. In his striving for personal growth and knowledge, he is interested in spiritual release and meditation and the complexities of the human condition.

WiseTwo's first solo show in Paris, France, entitled 'Exposition: WiseTwo', dealt with the balance of life, and the creation of a different universe, influenced by culture, spirituality and pureness. Elements that we constantly encounter and subconsciously take for granted.

WiseTwo's recent travels to Mexico have inspired him to freely express different elements in his work. He wants the richness of experiencing such a beautiful culture to flow from his mind and heart into his canvases and on to walls; to adorn the souls of those who view his new work.

WiseTwo

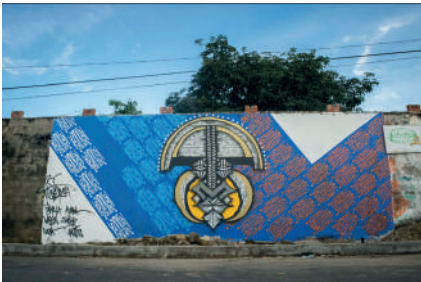
Untitled mural Nairobi, Kenya, 2017, progress overleaf



Untitled, Rochester, New York, USA, 2013



Untitled, Mexico City, Mexico, 2018



Untitled, Vistahermosa, Meta, Colombia, 2016





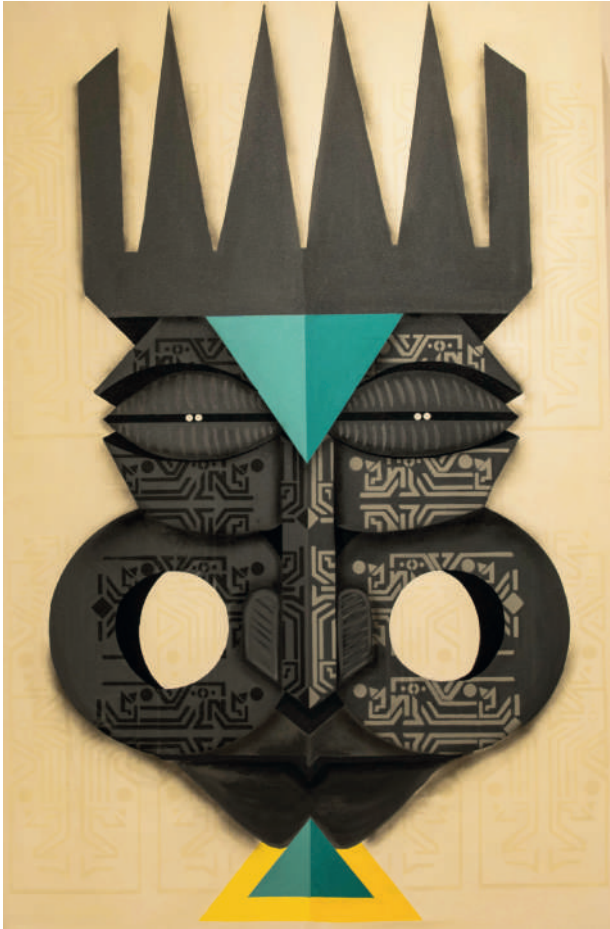
Mural for Djerbahood Project, Djerba, Tunisia, 2015



Untitled, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2016



Untitled, Adelaide, South Australia, 2017



Untitled, 2018

Untitled, 2018
overleaf







Untitled mural with Lesuperdemon, Mexico City, Mexico, 2017



Founded in 2012, and based in Nairobi, Kenya, Circle Art Gallery promotes contemporary art from Eastern Africa.

Through group and solo exhibitions, as well as participation in various international art fairs, the gallery has increased local and international visibility for established and emerging artists. Working closely with local and international collectors, curators, we are building a strong and sustainable market for East African artists.

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Gallery hours: Monday to Friday 10am - 5pm, Saturday 12 - 5pm

Overleaf: *Untitled mural*, Paris, France 2017 | Front cover: *Untitled*, 2018 | Back cover: *The Sleeping Giants*, 2018

Text by Don Handa. Catalogue designed by Jonathan Gathaara Sölanke Fraser. Images courtesy of the artist.

