

Biography

Koyo Kouoh (Cameroon, 24 December, 1967 / Switzerland, 10 May, 2025) was the Executive Director and Chief Curator of Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) in Cape Town. Prior to this appointment, she was the founding Artistic Director of RAW Material Company, a centre for art, knowledge and society in Dakar, Senegal, as well as part of the curatorial teams for documenta 12 (2007) and documenta 13 (2012). Kouoh is the recipient of the Grand Prix Meret Oppenheim 2020, the Swiss Grand Award for Art that honours achievements in the fields of art, architecture, critique, and exhibitions.

Koyo Kouoh has organised meaningful and timely exhibitions such as *Body Talk: Feminism, Sexuality and the Body in the Works of Six African Women Artists*, first shown at Wiels in Brussels, Belgium in 2015. She curated *Still (the) Barbarians*, 37th EVA International, the Ireland Biennial in Limerick in 2016 and participated in the 57th Carnegie International in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States, with the deeply researched exhibition project *Dig Where You Stand* (2018), a show within a show, drawn from the collections of the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History. She has served as Curator of the Educational and Artistic Programme of 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair in London, UK and New York, US, from 2013 to 2017.

She was the initiator of the research project *Saving Bruce Lee: African and Arab Cinema in the Era of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy*, co-curated with Rasha Salti at Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow, Russia, and Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, Germany (2015-2018).

Active in the critical field of the arts community in a pan-African and international scope, Kouoh had a remarkable list of publications under her name, including *When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting* (2022), which accompanied the eponymous show that opened at Zeitz MOCAA in November 2022; *Shooting Down Babylon* (2022), the first monograph of the work of South African artist Tracey Rose; *Breathing Out of School: RAW Académie* (2021); *Condition Report on Art History in Africa* (2020); *Word!Word?Word! Issa Samb and The Undecipherable Form* (2013); and *Condition Report on Building Art Institutions in Africa* (2012), to name a few.

During her tenure at Zeitz MOCAA, her curatorial work focuses on in-depth solo exhibitions by African and African-descent artists. As such, she has organised exhibitions with Otobong Nkanga, Johannes Phokela, Senzeni Marasela, Abdoulaye Konaté, Tracey Rose, and Mary Evans.

She lived and worked alternately in Cape Town, South Africa; Dakar, Senegal; and Basel, Switzerland.