

Press release, 12.02.26

Spring Program 2026

KW

KW Institute for Contemporary Art's Spring Program 2026 explores Berlin—its materials, people, and histories—alongside KW's own building as an active framework for artistic inquiry. Centered on artists and their processes, exhibitions by **Klara Lidén**, **Jean Katambayi Mukendi**, and **Else Marie Pade** engage with the social, technological, and ecological conditions shaping the present, situating artistic practice within the lived realities of the city.

– Emma Enderby, Director



KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2025; photo: Frank Sperling.

Exhibition 21.02.–10.05.26

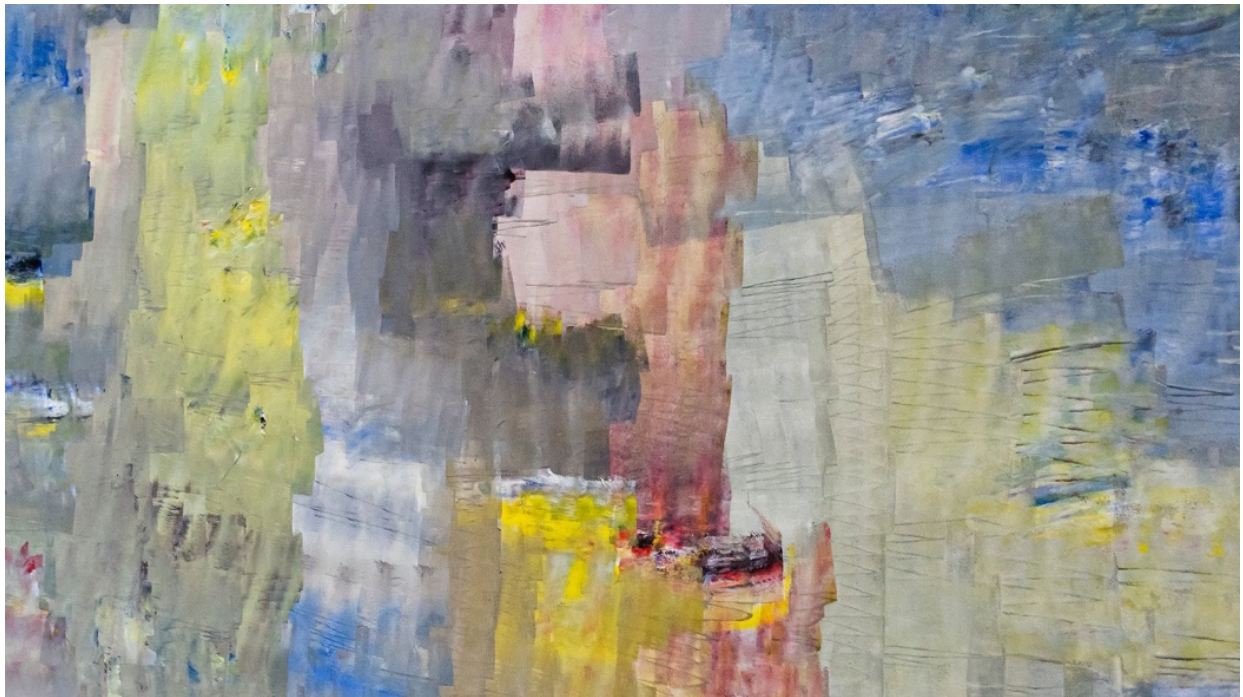
Opening 20.02.26

Jean Katambayi Mukendi

RATIO

Curators: Emma Enderby, Linda Franken

A ratio is a relationship between two elements. Today, many kinds of relationships are at play. We can speak of the North-South relationship, the economic relationship, the balance of power, but also, possibly, of support—the relationship of backing or care. – Jean Katambayi Mukendi



Jean Katambayi Mukendi, artist residency for *RATIO* (Detail) at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin 2025.

Photo: David von Becker.

In *RATIO*, Congolese artist Jean Katambayi Mukendi (b. 1974, DRC) questions the dualities that shape our world—the natural and the artificial, growth and destruction, wanted and discarded materials, and the relationship between resources and power.

Katambayi's practice is deeply informed by his training as an electrician and his sustained interest in engineering and mathematics. His work examines contemporary technological developments, while simultaneously addressing the social, economic, and ecological imbalances he witnesses as consequences of global structural inequities in resource extraction and power distribution. For Katambayi, there is a direct correlation between who possesses literal power (energy)—copper is extracted from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to power other nations,

yet he lives with permanent power outages—and the broader geopolitical axes along which power is distributed between countries.

The sculptures, paintings, and drawings featured in *RATIO*, the first exhibition by the artist in Germany, were created during a residency at KW in 2025, using materials gathered from various locations in Berlin, such as KW's storage and the city's recycling yards. At its center sits *mukendi kabongo Air hybrid Wings RDC26FG*, a large sculpture inspired by machines from the fields of aviation, agriculture, and the military. Katambayi merges and combines components of these machines to imaginatively multiply their functions, exploring the ecological potential of technology through a process of recycling and repurposing.

Two large-scale paintings frame the installation. *Divina* resembles a printed circuit board, a structure fundamental to nearly all electronic devices. Its title is an anagram of Nvidia, a leading US-based technology company for AI computing hardware. Combining technical schematics with spiritual symbolism—most notably the hand at its center, evoking the divine—the painting draws attention to the extraction of raw materials such as copper and cobalt in the DRC, essential to global electronics production. With *Vita*, Katambayi reflects on the social fracture shaped by competition over natural resources and living systems within a capitalist order that struggles to find balance. The painting evokes tectonic, floral, and faunal illusions to suggest nature's own capacity for equilibrium, structured through invisible axes that govern the Earth. Growing from geometric figures and lines, the artist's drawings—placed between windows—form speculative reflections on human experience in relation to ecology, technology, and the economy, ranging from the impact of climate on human routines to cryptocurrency.

Artist Biography

Jean Katambayi Mukendi (b. 1974, DRC) is a Lubumbashi-based artist working across sculpture, painting, and drawing. Recent solo exhibitions include Micki Meng Gallery, Paris (2024); Ramiken Gallery, New York (2023); Waldburger Wouters, Brussels (2022); Kunsthalle Kohta, Helsinki (2022); and SALTS, Basel (2022). His work was included in the Congolese pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2024 and in the Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana (2024), and has been featured in group exhibitions such as *To Leave a Space in Which the Din of War Might Die Down*, NS-Dokumentationszentrum, Munich; *The Geopolitics of Infrastructure. Contemporary Perspectives*, M HKA – Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp; and *The Gatherers*, MoMA PS1, New York (all 2025); and *Energies*, Swiss Institute, New York (2024). Katambayi is a member of Picha, an artist-run association, which organizes the Lubumbashi Biennial.

Press contact

Head of Communications and Press

Marie Kube

Tel. +49 30 243459-41

press@kw-berlin.de

KW Institute for Contemporary Art

Auguststraße 69

10117 Berlin

www.kw-berlin.de

The exhibition *Jean Katambayi Mukendi – RATIO* is supported by KW Friends



Thanks to Micki Meng, Ramiken and Wouters Gallery.

Co-produced by KW and M HKA – Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp, Belgium, where the exhibition will be presented in summer 2026.

M HKA

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is institutionally supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion, Berlin.



Titles and Dates are subject to change