Kapwani
Kiwanga

The sum
and its parts
Kapwani Kiwanga (b. 1978) studied Anthropology and Comparative Religions at McGill University, Canada. Kiwanga was the 2016 Commissioned Artist at the Armory Show, New York and recently presented her work in solo exhibitions at The Power Plant, Toronto; Le Frere de Rousseau, Brussels; South London Gallery, London; and the Jan-de-Pauw, Paris. Recent group exhibitions include ZVA, historical, Limieh, 5th Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; MALT, Izmir; and the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Castilla y Leon. She has been artist-in-residence at L’Ecole National Superieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, Le Pauvre National Commmunity Art Studio, Tresinng, Mf Foundation, Exhitions, and Le Manteau, Dakar. Kiwanga lives and works in Paris, and is represented by Gaetan Pigg, Paris and Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin.

About the Artist

Kapwani Kiwanga, The sum and its parts.

For her first solo exhibition in the United States, Kiwanga presents a site-specific installation, video, and prints that trace her research into the design of institutional spaces. Across Kapwani Kiwanga: The sum and its parts, the artist investigates the physical and psychological qualities of different built environments including schools, prisons, hospitals, and mental health facilities. In the main gallery, Kiwanga brings together architectural elements from historical and contemporary versions of these spaces including wall sections, lighting fixtures, and surface treatments, creating a spatial collage that evokes the sum of its fragments.

A distinctive feature of the exhibition is the artist’s manipulation of two-tone color palettes, often used in the interiors of institutional spaces, onto the gallery walls. The resonant horizontal lines throughout subtly refer to the “line,” however arbitrarily construed, also relates to the selection of seemingly ineffective patches on the walls. The green and beige that make up the dado panels are chosen from colors introduced in industry as a result of social hygiene movements and hospital reform at the turn of the 20th century that sought to improve public hygiene and public health while establishing institutional environments for care. And indeed, the Baker Miller Pink that adorns some of the walls in the large floor works, are derived from the optician’s premise that such colors on either peripheral vision, and the workplace. Referencing color design studies by Faber Birren and company held at the University’s Special Collections Library, Kiwanga recalls the application of color theory to the conditions of work, learning, surveillance, healing, and care. Birren’s colors and their derivations continue to be used today, conditioning our acquiescence to our designed environments.

For her installation, Kiwanga has also drawn from her extensive research into disciplinary architectures throughout time, extracting specific details from the designs of late 19th century workhouses and reformatories schools in Britain and France respectively. One such reference is the grouping of hanging fabrics intended to mimic the hammocks featured in an archival image of the former Mattei Prison Cellar in France. These objects suggest abodes that were subject to state-sanctioned detention and enforced labor in order to self-struggle behavoir.

While Kiwanga deploys these vocabularies, her work tends less towards objectivity but rather worked with flatness and industrial materials. At once arresting and sublime, Kapwani Kiwanga: The sum and its parts exposes the subjective forces of color and design. The artist’s transposition of two-tone color palettes, neutral environments for care. And indeed, the workhouse and reformatory schools in Britain and France respectively. One such reference is the grouping of hanging fabrics intended to mimic the hammocks featured in an archival image of the former Mattei Prison Cellar in France. These objects suggest abodes that were subject to state-sanctioned detention and enforced labor in order to self-struggle behavoir.

While Kiwanga deploys these vocabularies, her work tends less towards objectivity but rather worked with flatness and industrial materials. At once arresting and sublime, Kapwani Kiwanga: The sum and its parts exposes the subjective forces of color and design. The artist’s transposition of two-tone color palettes, neutral environments for care. And indeed, the workhouse and reformatory schools in Britain and France respectively. One such reference is the grouping of hanging fabrics intended to mimic the hammocks featured in an archival image of the former Mattei Prison Cellar in France. These objects suggest abodes that were subject to state-sanctioned detention and enforced labor in order to self-struggle behavoir.

While Kiwanga deploys these vocabularies, her work tends less towards objectivity but rather worked with flatness and industrial materials. At once arresting and sublime, Kapwani Kiwanga: The sum and its parts exposes the subjective forces of color and design. The artist’s transposition of two-tone color palettes, neutral environments for care. And indeed, the workhouse and reformatory schools in Britain and France respectively. One such reference is the grouping of hanging fabrics intended to mimic the hammocks featured in an archival image of the former Mattei Prison Cellar in France. These objects suggest abodes that were subject to state-sanctioned detention and enforced labor in order to self-struggle behavoir.

While Kiwanga deploys these vocabularies, her work tends less towards objectivity but rather worked with flatness and industrial materials. At once arresting and sublime, Kapwani Kiwanga: The sum and its parts exposes the subjective forces of color and design. The artist’s transposition of two-tone color palettes, neutral environments for care. And indeed, the workhouse and reformatory schools in Britain and France respectively. One such reference is the grouping of hanging fabrics intended to mimic the hammocks featured in an archival image of the former Mattei Prison Cellar in France. These objects suggest abodes that were subject to state-sanctioned detention and enforced labor in order to self-struggle behavoir.

While Kiwanga deploys these vocabularies, her work tends less towards objectivity but rather worked with flatness and industrial materials. At once arresting and sublime, Kapwani Kiwanga: The sum and its parts exposes the subjective forces of color and design. The artist’s transposition of two-tone color palettes, neutral environments for care. And indeed, the workhouse and reformatory schools in Britain and France respectively. One such reference is the grouping of hanging fabrics intended to mimic the hammocks featured in an archival image of the former Mattei Prison Cellar in France. These objects suggest abodes that were subject to state-sanctioned detention and enforced labor in order to self-struggle behavoir.

While Kiwanga deploys these vocabularies, her work tends less towards objectivity but rather worked with flatness and industrial materials. At once arresting and sublime, Kapwani Kiwanga: The sum and its parts exposes the subjective forces of color and design. The artist’s transposition of two-tone color palettes, neutral environments for care. And indeed, the workhouse and reformatory schools in Britain and France respectively. One such reference is the grouping of hanging fabrics intended to mimic the hammocks featured in an archival image of the former Mattei Prison Cellar in France. These objects suggest abodes that were subject to state-sanctioned detention and enforced labor in order to self-struggle behavoir.

While Kiwanga deploys these vocabularies, her work tends less towards objectivity but rather worked with flatness and industrial materials. At once arresting and sublime, Kapwani Kiwanga: The sum and its parts exposes the subjective forces of color and design. The artist’s transposition of two-tone color palettes, neutral environments for care. And indeed, the workhouse and reformatory schools in Britain and France respectively. One such reference is the grouping of hanging fabrics intended to mimic the hammocks featured in an archival image of the former Mattei Prison Cellar in France. These objects suggest abodes that were subject to state-sanctioned detention and enforced labor in order to self-struggle behavoir.

While Kiwanga deploys these vocabularies, her work tends less towards objectivity but rather worked with flatness and industrial materials. At once arresting and sublime, Kapwani Kiwanga: The sum and its parts exposes the subjective forces of color and design. The artist’s transposition of two-tone color palettes, neutral environments for care. And indeed, the workhouse and reformatory schools in Britain and France respectively. One such reference is the grouping of hanging fabrics intended to mimic the hammocks featured in an archival image of the former Mattei Prison Cellar in France. These objects suggest abodes that were subject to state-sanctioned detention and enforced labor in order to self-struggle behavoir.