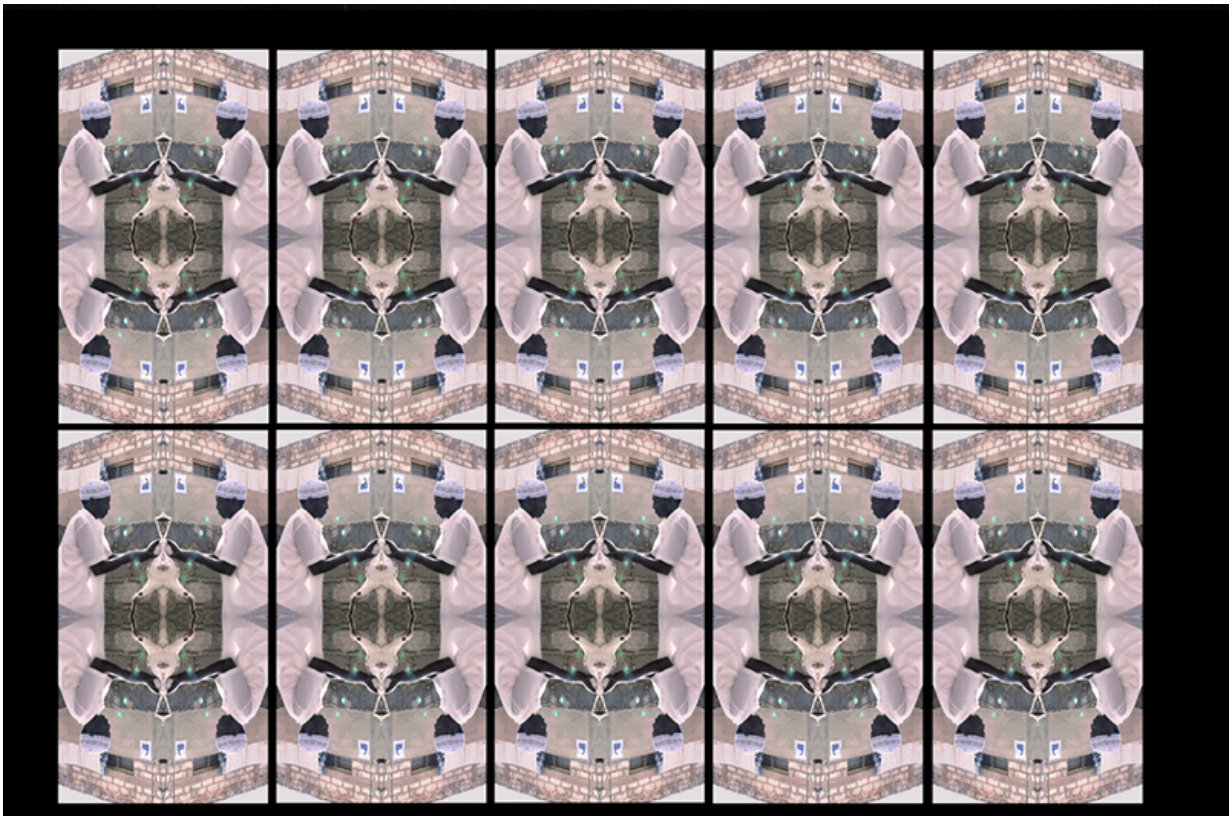


ART from ESLEWHERE: Mexico City
The MOMENTUM Collection at LAGOS

THEO ESHETU



***Festival of Sacrifice* (2012), HD Video, 18'**

The *Festival of Sacrifice* was originally made as a 6-channel video installation, depicting the ritual slaughter of a goat during the celebration of Eid-ul-Adha, the Islamic Festival of Sacrifice. Through multiple mirroring, the extreme footage is sublimated into a series of images that resemble traditional Islamic ornamentation. The skilled dissection of the animal body is reflected in the kaleidoscopic dissolution of the video image. The emotional and aesthetic aspects of ritual religious practices are here heightened by the musical soundtrack of the work.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

The celebration of Sacrifice harks back to the very origins of religious thought. All religions begin with a sacrifice. *Festival of Sacrifice* is part of a series of videos that looks at aspects of Islamic culture as a source to explore formal qualities of representation and the underlying links between cultures. Filmed on the Kenyan island of Lamu during the celebrations of Eid-ul-Adha, the video recreates, through the multiplication of images, the kaleidoscopic patterns that highlight the spiritual aspect of the event. Intercultural relations, whether seen as an exchange or a battle, are strongly influenced by the impact of images and their use. While religion and technological development are often used to reinforce differences, electronic inter-connectivity has created a platform for mutual interaction and transformed the very concept of landscape.

– Theo Eshetu

Theo Eshetu (b. 1958 in London, England. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.)

<https://axis.gallery/artists/theo-eshetu/bio/>

Ethiopian artist Theo Eshetu was born in London, and grew up in Addis Ababa, Dakar, Belgrade and Rome. A pioneer of video art, Eshetu explores the relationship between media, identity, and global information networks. After studying Communication Design, Eshetu began making videos in early 1982, seeking to deconstruct the hegemonic status of television, which he viewed as a state apparatus. Forging a hybrid language to merge practices of video art and documentary filmmaking, Eshetu explores perception, identity, and notions of the sacred through electronic time-based media and optical devices and effects. He draws from anthropology, art history, scientific research, and religion—Catholic, African, Muslim, Buddhist—to explore clashes and harmonies of human subjectivity between world cultures in the global context. Though essentially conceptual, and often exploring video's formal components of time and light, Eshetu's work is often focused on cultural displacement, and is always grounded in compelling aesthetic components, often achieved through fractal repetition, such as kaleidoscopic mirroring, multi-screen projections, or mosaic-like patterning of images.



Among numerous prestigious international awards, Theo Eshetu is a fellow of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC, USA, and was Artist in Residence at Tarabya Cultural Academy, Turkey, between 2016 and 2018, where he completed *Altas Fractured* (2017), which was featured in Documenta 14, Athens and Kassel in 2017. In 2012 he was Artist in Residence at the DAAD program in Berlin, where he exhibited *The Return of the Axum Obelisk* at DAAD Gallery in 2014.

Theo Eshetu's installation *Till Death Us Do Part* (1980s) has become part of the permanent collection of MoMa, New York. His work has been shown at major museums worldwide, including: The New Museum, NY; the New York African Film Festival; DIA Foundation's Electronic Arts Intermix, NY; Snap Judgments at ICP (International Centre for Photography), NY; BAM Cinemateque, NY; Brooklyn Museum of Art, NY; Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland USA; Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington DC; the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; *Africa Remix* at the Hayward Gallery, London; Tate Britain, London; the Venice Film Festival; Roma Film Festival; Museum of Modern Art in Rome; the American Academy in Rome; Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Nice, France; the UNESCO headquarters in Paris; BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels; the Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin; the Humboldt Forum, Berlin, among many others. Eshetu has participated in major international Biennials, including: the Gwangju Biennale, Korea (2020), Shanghai Biennale, China (2017), Documenta14 in Athens and Kassel (2017), Dak'Art (2016), the Kochi Muziris Biennial, India (2014-15); the Italian Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011); the 10th Sharjah Biennial, UAE (2011); amongst others.