

Boris Nzebo is a portrait artist who creates paintings and collages that reflect the vibrant visual life of his hometown, Douala, in West Africa. Nzebo's artworks explore portraits and urban culture, particularly the intricate hairstyles of men and women. He then integrates the hairstyles into cityscapes as part of the city architecture. Nzebo's paintings and collages are a dynamic blend of visual layers that unite people with their environment.

Boris Nzebo is a painter and collage artist hailing from Douala, Cameroon's largest city. His portrait paintings captivate audiences with his unique blend of urban culture, vibrant colours and traditional influences. Nzebo skillfully merges elaborate hairstyles of men and women into city scenes, creating a distinctive connection between individuals and the bustling street life.

Nzebo's portrait paintings often show the subject in profile or from behind, allowing him to focus on the detailed patterns and complex shapes found in their hairstyles. The portraits have a 'cut out' effect, making use of negative spaces which Nzebo fills with intricate architectural designs.

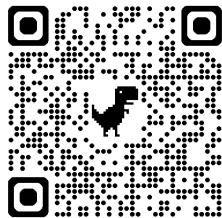
Nzebo's stylized work is influenced by hand-painted haircut signs and adverts outside barber shops and beauty salons in Cameroon. Being inspired by advertising imagery, he creates portraits based on traditional African hairstyles and mixes them with casual photos of local neighborhoods, urban buildings, and daily life.

His paintings highlight the strong bond between people and street life, allowing for various interpretations about how individuals connect with their surroundings.

#### **Top facts about Boris Nzebo:**

- Nzebo was born in 1979 in Port-Gentil in Gabon
- He is a self-taught artist working in Douala, Cameroon.
- He worked as a sign painter before working as an artist full time.
- His work is heavily influenced by African popular culture and traditional art forms, particularly the murals and barbershop signboards common in African cities.
- Boris Nzebo has exhibited his work internationally, including notable exhibitions at Jack Bell Gallery in London, Manchester Art Gallery and the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul.
- His art often explores themes of identity and community.
- Nzebo employs a collage-like technique in his work, layering different outlines and patterns.
- He is recognized as a leading contemporary artist from Africa, praised for his ability to capture the essence of urban life.
- Nzebo meticulously plans his compositions, using sketches and considering the placement of each element.

If you look at Nzebo's artwork closely, you will see that he confidently uses colour and line to emphasise certain parts of his paintings. In the painting Madame Trottoir Nzebo has predominantly used a cool colour scheme with greens, blues and purples. To draw attention to the shape of the face, he uses a contrasting, light warm peach colour. He also



uses bold accents of yellow and red to draw attention to the hair details.

Even though there is a lot of detail in the background and foreground of the piece, the clever use of colour and line means that the composition is well balanced and nothing in the painting is too overpowering.

As well as often using contrasting / complementary colour schemes, Nzebo is well known for creating an overlapping, 'cut-out' effect in his paintings. Think about the use of positive and negative space and colour in the painting Chateau d'Eau (above)... the full figures are solid colours rather than just being drawn as an outline. How does this help to create a 'see-through' effect in the piece?

Nzebo's portrait paintings have a distinctive style, created by merging hairstyles and vibrant fashion into his compositions. He overlays architectural elements with human figures, symbolizing the ways individuals are connected with spaces they live in.

Nzebo delves into themes rooted in his hometown Douala, Cameroon's largest city. He creates portraits by carefully studying traditional African hairstyles and combining them with casual snapshots of local neighborhoods, urban architecture, and everyday life scenes.

His recent artworks tackle pressing issues such as violence, social disparities, and political instability. His paintings provide a multi-layered and thought-provoking commentary on contemporary society.





