



Berlin/Germany

Kéré Architecture

Now based in Berlin, Kéré rose to prominence with the prestigious Serpentine Pavilion commission. But some of his most noteworthy buildings are those in his home country of Burkina Faso.



Trees from Burkina Faso have informed some of Berlin-based Burkinabé architect Diébédo Francis Kéré's recent works in the US and UK. His installation for the 2017 Serpentine Pavilion in London was inspired by a tree in Gando, the village where he grew up, where members of the community meet to reflect on their days. For his 2019 installation at the Coachella music festival in California's Colorado Desert, Sarbalé Ke, Kéré found inspiration in the baobab tree, whose trunk hollows as it ages. His ancestral roots are clearly close to his heart.

Growing up in Gando as the eldest son of the village chief, Kéré was one of very few children afforded the opportunity of being educated outside the village, where there was no electricity or running water. Gaining a scholarship for a carpentry apprenticeship in Germany, he went on to study architecture in Berlin, graduating

from Technische Universität (TU Berlin) with a vision: to give back to the community that had supported him.

"I started my architecture career with the desire to build a school for my people that would result in little maintenance and few running costs," Kéré explains of the Gando Primary School project he began while he was still at university, for which he obtained private funding, and that won him the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2004.

In a study that has become his standard operation, he looked at the resources available in the area and used them to their full potential. Kéré invented a new way to build mud bricks by hand with local soil that would not be compromised by the region's rainfall; this enabled him to avoid using concrete, which is commonly used in the rural village even though it is expensive and keeps