

An abstract graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy, hand-drawn style lines in blue, red, and yellow/gold. These lines flow from the top left towards the bottom right, weaving around the text.

**UNUSUAL
MATERIALS AND FORMS
FOR A NEW
AESTHETIC**

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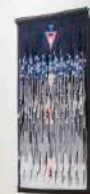
COMING FROM SELECTED AFRICAN ARTISTS



UNUSUAL
MATERIALS AND FORMS
FOR A NEW
AESTHETIC

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UNUSUAL MATERIALS AND FORMS

for a new Aesthetic

Once, it was said that Contemporary Art had to break away from the confines of a precise and defined aesthetic. It had to dare, provoke, astonish, and disorient the viewer.

Today, this belief still holds, but subtly, there's a sense that something has changed.

The “challenge” each artist faces seems at times to be well-defined by a geometric scheme of ideas and visions. There appears to be a preconceived notion, an unwritten rule, something rigid that imposes limits or boundaries on an artist's vision. This obstacle is generally only overcome in the creation of sculptures.

Certainly, throughout the history of art, numerous artists have ventured beyond the horizontal, square, or circular canvas. However, these instances have often been personal explosions, unique concepts, occasionally reaching high levels, but not necessarily giving rise to a defined movement.

Then, at a certain point, Africa Continent comes into play, devoid of readily available materials and pre-established tracks for artistic creation. For some, this lack might be seen as a curse, but for others, it's a blessing. An artist's capacity becomes evident in observing the universality of thought that permeates them—how their vision expands, regardless of their situation, life, or place of belonging. This, in turn, shaped the avant-garde of the past into what they are today in terms of critical and artistic recognition.

There's a powerful force, a potent will to express oneself through every available means. This might evoke the concept of “Arte Povera” at first glance, and indeed, it does, but the discourse is much broader in this case.

The use of unusual materials is a hallmark of these artists. It's not merely a “Plan B” but a choice that, though preceded by economic challenges, starts with the principle of creating something new, unseen, unique in the contemporary artistic panorama. In the lives of these artists, there has never been a preconception, a foundation indicating precise rules, as they operate in a realm devoid of such constraints. I refer to the realms of creativity and art.

“Once you free your mind about the concept of harmony and of art being ‘correct,’ you can do whatever you want” (Giorgio Moroder)

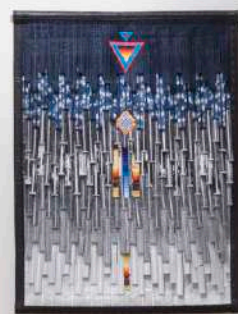
And so it has been for these artists. What we celebrate with this exhibition is not only the innovative use of materials but the great ability for spatial composition and the clear vision accompanying the utilization and juxtaposition of different mediums. The judicious use of these materials is the result of this creation, wherein artists generate compositions with indefinite, variable, yet undoubtedly intriguing and intricate geometries.

The interweaving of various materials tells a unique story within the artworks, where each characteristic is highlighted yet simultaneously amalgamated in the artist’s imaginative composition. A bottle cap is no longer waste; the same goes for fabric or a plastic bag. All become fundamental chords in the artist’s imaginary firmament, where each object is meticulously positioned and imbued with personal significance for their work.

This indicates, more than ever, two aspects: first, a freedom of thought devoid of rules, and second—beyond great mastery—an incredible capacity for evolution and innovation that lays the groundwork for the birth of an informal movement. The gallery proposes this based on its in-depth study of these artists because these practices are changing the perception of the usual form, offering a new interpretation and direction to the dogmatic canons of current aesthetics.

Daniele Marella





IFEOMA U. ANYAEJI

Growing up as an artist, Ifeoma she has always being intrigued by the intricacies of traditional craft processes and the use of unusual materials as art mediums. She also envisioned creating forms that communicate with and integrate elements from her environment, using the language of lines to replicate and transcribe societal and political occurrences and experiences of nature.

These visions and interests still abounds, continuously shaping her existence and creative attitude to life. Identifying as a Neo-traditional artist, her creative practice is about the transitions of African culture, within a globalized society, particularly Nigerian traditional aesthetics and cultural environmental ideologies. Such as material and non-material object reuse and repurposing, an ideology that focuses on formulating “new values” and extending the significance for objects assumed to have lost their “newness”. Her works are sculpted to encourage multiple interpretations from the viewer, with the aim to convey the importance of value preservation while stimulating a positive catalytic collective response towards eco cultural issues. Furthermore, it joins other similar aesthetic practices interested in probing the psychological and material appreciation of African cultures in post-colonial contemporary societies. Noting reductive effects of the very politicized historical study and archiving of the continent including today’s compulsory ethnic assimilations, disguised as globalization, on the composition of varied identities, whether gender or racial oriented. The compositions she is creating are intricate sculptures and installations that are vibrant and conceptual yet organic. Rhythmically infused with traditional metaphors, which continuously echo her ‘Igboness’ and craft-art ideologies, these works reference architectural forms, domestic spaces and furnishings, including silent discourses on the human body. By spontaneously engaging the “old”, Ifeoma’s works question the implications of modernity’s consumptive systems of mass accumulation and waste generation, definitions of cultural assimilation and society’s attitude to value, the expiration-date syndrome, colonial orientations on beauty, adaptation, authenticity, and newness.

The artist creates colourful-handcrafted sculptures and installations from non-biodegradable plastics such as bottles and plastic bags. Applying a unique practice, which she describes as Plasto-art, Anyaeji experiments with these global pollutants, binding the

plastic with thread into woven braids and transforming them into vibrant, malleable textiles. Anyaeji uses a Nigerian hair-plaiting technique called Threading (Ikpa Owu in Igbo language), an increasingly obsolete hair-craft. These plastic braids are shaped and layered into densely textural sculptural forms, which encapsulate vibrant colours, spirals, coils, circles and loops. Combining hair threading with traditional West African basketry and fabric weaving techniques, Anyaeji reflects on the loss of such traditions as well as the environmental problems she encountered in her community in Nigeria. Weaving together personal and collective experiences, her distinctive sculptures also embrace forms and influences from West African culture, specifically the performance, folklore, music, textiles and the domestic and communal spaces of Nigeria.

“I was immediately drawn to the use of waste to create these larger-scale sculptural forms, to make something beautiful that has something to say about our environment and material reuse. References have also been made to the human body, architecture and domestic spaces. This idea that the sculptural forms are never complete was interesting as the pieces are often adapted, re-edited and reworked so they are always in process”.

– Ifeoma U. Anyaeji

She inventively combines her materials to form bold compositions that demonstrate persistent experimentation and mastery of technique that go beyond accepted boundaries of the medium, while weaving together personal and collective experiences that celebrates openness to the world and to diversity. Allusions and metaphors abound with reflections on universal experiences that celebrate openness to the world and to diversity.





Ifeoma U. Anyaeji

Eze Fuo eze anochie, (When a king leaves another replaces him – no condition is permanent)

2013 (edited 2015, 2019, 2021/2022)

Plasto-yarning, Repurposed used non-biodegradable plastic bags bottles, wire mesh, twine

150 × 435 × 18 cm

JOËL ANDRIANOMEARISOA

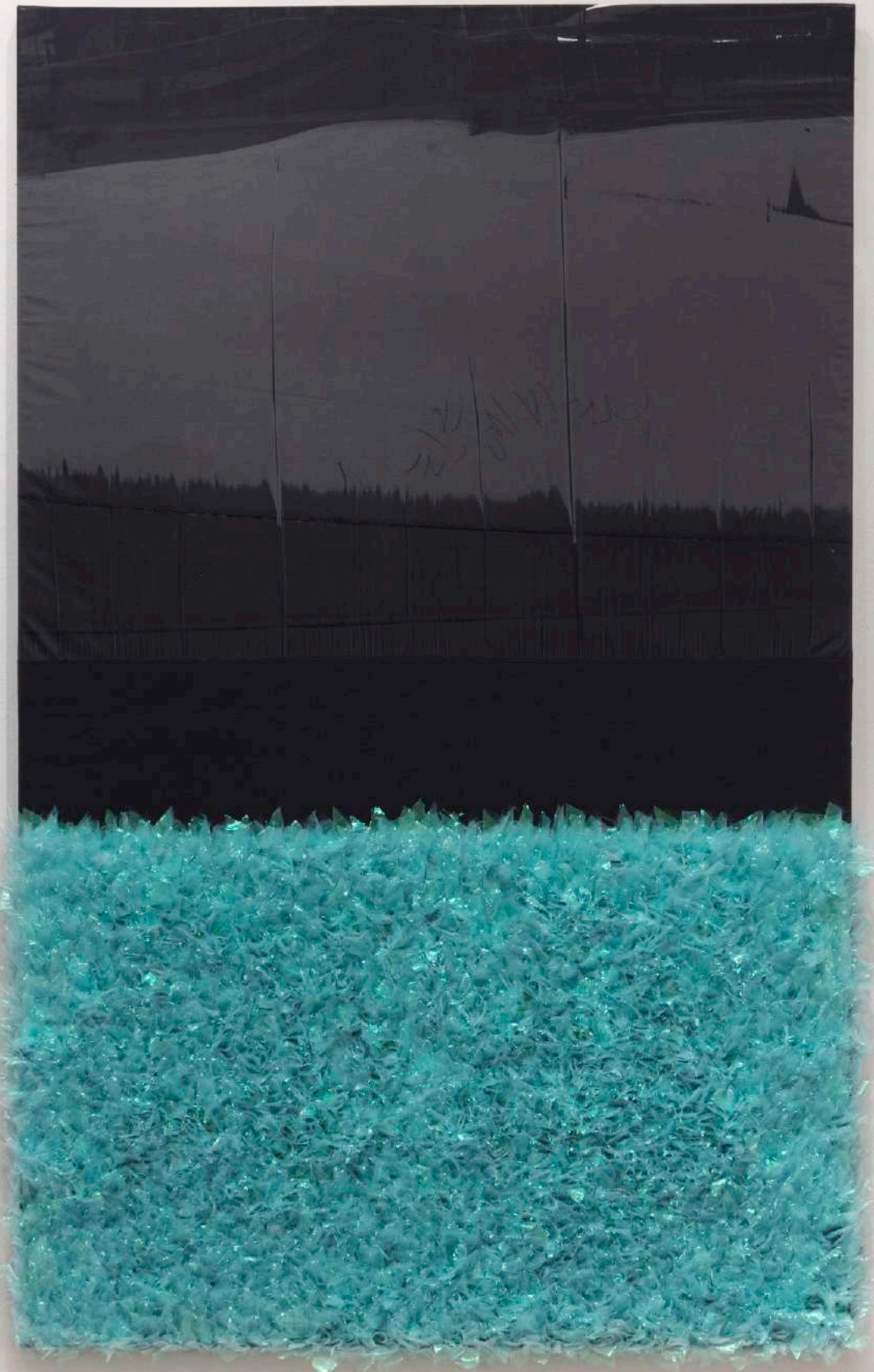
“It is neither a painting, a sculpture nor an architectural assemblage ... it is an installation that has different elements that refer to architecture, painting and sculpture but also to love, desire, loss, despair, hope”

– Joël Andrianomearisoa

Joël Andrianomearisoa expresses his art in an infinite number of ways. Although fabric is considered his main choice, he has never let this become a comfort zone, expanding his artistic elaboration through the use of different materials, all chosen with a precise study and purpose. Andrianomearisoa is a poet of the material, the compositions with which he designs and constructs his works are wisely studied in such a way as to be able to convey an emotion, a feeling, whether hopeful or dramatic, through the compositional arrangement of his creations.

The material becomes the aesthetic medium of his creed, the composer of his ideas, the communicator of a subtle and suave message. Many of his works are driven by an aesthetic credo, something that is animated by elegance, refinement, but also by the power of a subtle communication, conveying his philosophical facets without externalizing them immediately, but almost whispering softly and harmoniously to the viewer his allegory.

Through his work, Andrianomearisoa aims to be unique in the artistic and world panorama. He does not categorise his works in a segmented manner, but refers to them as installations, singular elements that are the result of a long and well-considered elaboration in order to best communicate his artistic being. The artist expresses how he does not like to necessarily give a meaning to everything. He does not obsessively seek an explanation for what he creates and what surrounds him. However, this does not mean that what he generates arises without a thought or a concept. What he wants is to invite the viewer to be carried away by emotion, by the sublime, by what he feels and perceives. To rationally explain something that happens emotionally in the artist's mind is sometimes counter-intuitive. Art is visual communication, a type of communication that



is received in a totally different way than any other way. It speaks to our subconscious and we, emotionally, react accordingly, through our perceptions. How often do we say: 'I could describe what I feel with a thousand words, but they would not be enough'. This is because emotion manifests itself in a different code, it is not expressed by a clearly delineated language, but by a cognitive flow that lives within us, which is often something undeciphered and that we must learn to know.

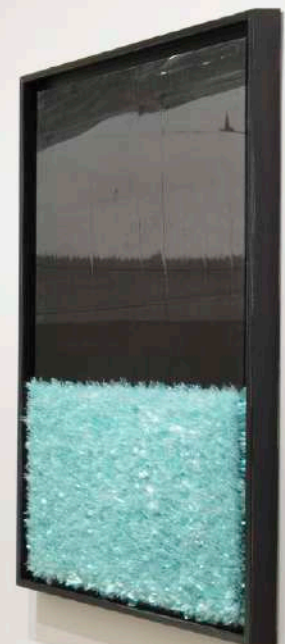
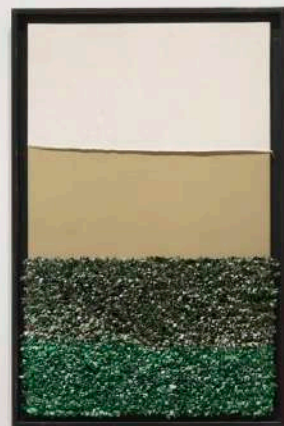
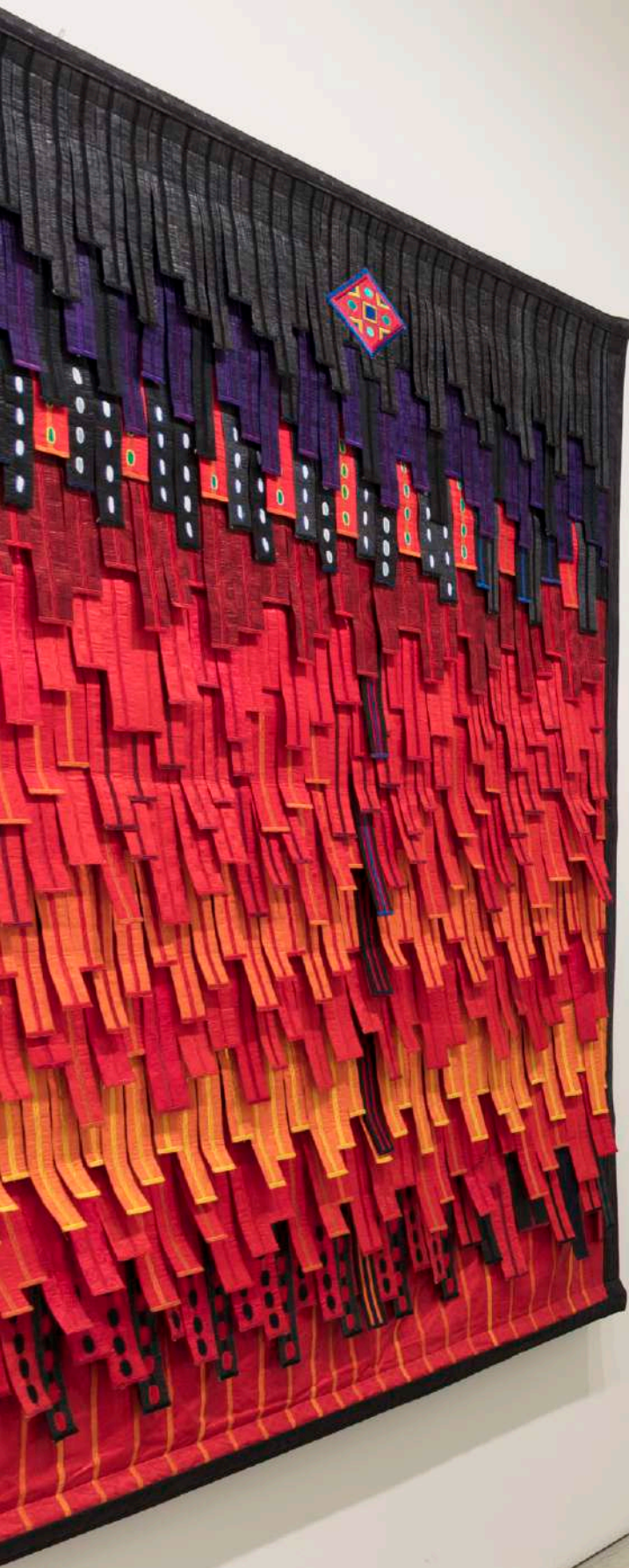
What Joël's works convey is precisely this. He does not want to shout his thoughts at the viewer, but wants to express them with great class, through a great study of detail, calibration and decision-making in the positioning of the various elements that make up his works. An innate feeling of harmony, delicacy, elegance and dispositional refinement. When you create something subtle, delicate, it is normal for the message to be enigmatic, sometimes unsettling, but this is the rational part of our body that responds and speaks to us. Instead, what does the heart, our emotional part, think? It is a well-planned, sentimental work that speaks to a viewer through an intimate exchange of emotions. The heart of the artist and the heart of the viewer 'meet' the moment the viewer sees Joël's work. The latter decides to communicate through two signals: the aesthetic one, i.e., 'the installation' and the emotional one, i.e., what the work wants to convey (love, desire, loss, despair or hope).

Joël Andrianomearisoa
Fahavaratra Acte, 2018
Textile
160 × 100 cm



Joël Andrianomearisoa
Sérénade des hauts plateaux, 2018
 Textile
 160 × 100 cm each.





Joël Andrianomearisoa
Untitled, 2010
Textile
202 × 303 cm





Joël Andrianomearisoa
Maison Imaginaire, 2020
Mixed media
54 × 90 × 49,5 cm

RANOMASO
SISA
TEARS ARE MADE
FOR HIS
TOUT
COMMENCE PAR
UNE LARME
TSIARO
MEMORIES OF
OUR ETERNAL
AFFECTION
FA MBOLA HO ANY
ILAY ANDRO
THIS
DAY



EVOCATION D'UN
MONDE
PLURIEL
ILAY TONTOLO
YOU ARE MY
WORLD
LOKO IRY
PERFUMES
SONGES
UNE BALLADE
SUR LA
PEAU

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Joël Andrianomearisoa
Black Poems, 2021
Paint on textile
130 × 90 cm each.



Joël Andrianomearisoa
Untitled, 2010
 Textile, buttons
 80 × 80 cm

Joël Andrianomearisoa
Sentimental Negotiations Act VII, 2013
 Wood, paint, pocket mirrors
 250 × 5,5 × 5,5 cm





Joël Andrianomearisoa
Vertigo, 2022
Natural fibers
40 × 40 × 40 cm

ABDOULAYE KONATÉ

Konaté is known for his large-scale compositions that use a highly accentuated figurative and symbolic language. His textile installations explore socio-political and environmental issues, both specific to Mali and wider Africa; scenes of social unrest, military conflict, sovereignty, faith, globalization, ecological change, and epidemic all become objects of semiotic investigation and deconstruction. Employing materials typical of Mali, namely fabrics dyed, embroidered and hand-sewn together, Konaté is inspired by the West African tradition of using fabrics as a mode of communication and commemoration. Its reference to a localized cultural technique is then astutely realigned to meet a broader geopolitical framework, where the material acts as an intercessor between local and global structures. One day, while he was drawing with pencil and trying to create volume through shades of grey, a teacher looked at his work and said: “you can get more depth if you understand colour”. The young artist Abdoulaye Konaté thus understood that by broadening his palette he could broaden his expression. He began incorporating textiles into installations tearing the colour fabric into small fragments. This idea came to him while observing the traditional clothing of Senoufo musicians. Abdoulaye Konaté’s work speaks to us via the senses rather than reason. And the colours, that feature as a leit-motiv, in a rhythmical line that is the motif, are like a musical variation around which the artist’s symphony revolves. Colours that underscores, intensifies, brightens. A turbulent silence, an eclectic joy, the meaning of which vanishes with the end of the spectator’s sight. In Konaté’s impressive Fiber Art installations, colour is a harbinger of feelings, pacifist messages and high ideals, a symbolic vector of the semantic content of the work: blue, available in multiple shades, is the color of the typical Tuareg clothing, the yellow is that of the desert, the green of the Niger river, the white of the Arabs.

Other cultural influences from West Africa and elsewhere have fuelled his aesthetic research: music, dance and even the Korodouga, a highly respected brotherhood in Mali and Ivory Coast, which uses satire to challenge power and behaviour social. Their costumes are dotted with amulets, fetishes or abandoned objects and plastic, making these “sacred buffoons a sort of landfill for society”, says the artist, who praises their total freedom of expression. The colourful textile stripes covering his “canvases” have become a favourite form of expression for Konaté, with some critics using the term “tapestry” or “patchwork” to describe his monumental compositions. The artist insists that he did not

actually choose this vocabulary; rather he worked on his palette like a painter. Konaté's work is poetic, mythical and ancestral, which takes fabric as a medium of expression and communication, a key element of his artistic research and of a narrative of singular evocative force.

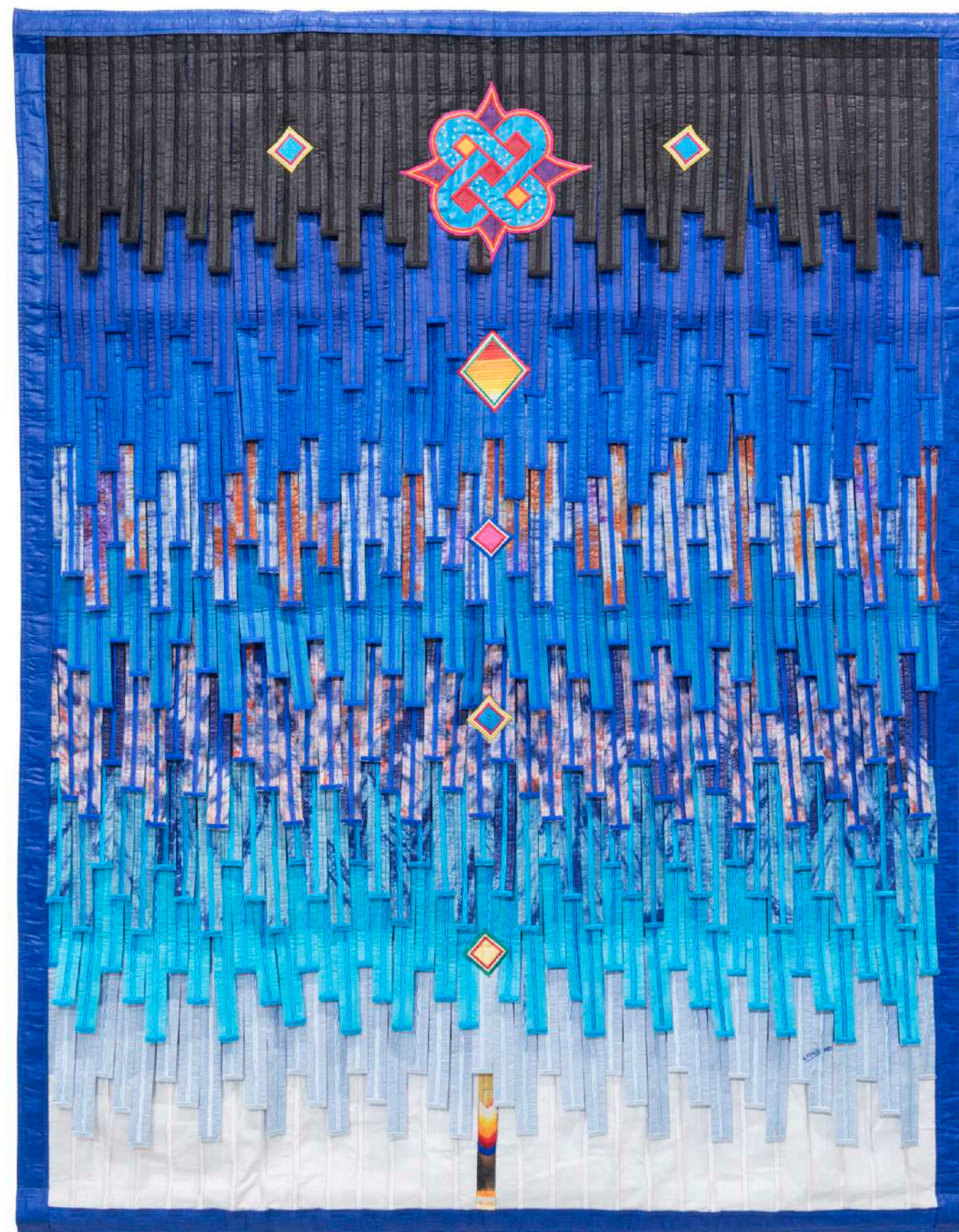
"The process of working leads to discoveries or solutions," he states simply. "I never thought I would stop painting acrylics or oils." But this vibrant and moving material, common and familiar throughout the world, especially in Mali, a major producer of the widely exported bazin cotton fabric, has the advantage of creating secret correspondences between everyday reality and abstraction. A chaotic world, one that this great figure of the contemporary African scene tries modestly to translate, without attempting to take on a role other than of a citizen, who observes his environment and tries to find a non-violent way of showing everything relating to human suffering. A symphony of colours, a wide deep research through symbol and essence, this is the path Abdoulaye Konaté is crossing in his latest works. It's impossible to look at his artworks remaining emotionless. Konaté's compositions bring us in a universe filled with symbols, in an atmosphere charged of significances. Even if the political issue is cast aside, his language is unchanged, always strong, substantial, stripped of every unfoundamental decoration, forged to speak of Human and Nature through a simple medium, such as the colour. The language of colours is made of extrinsic impressions but also internal affections.

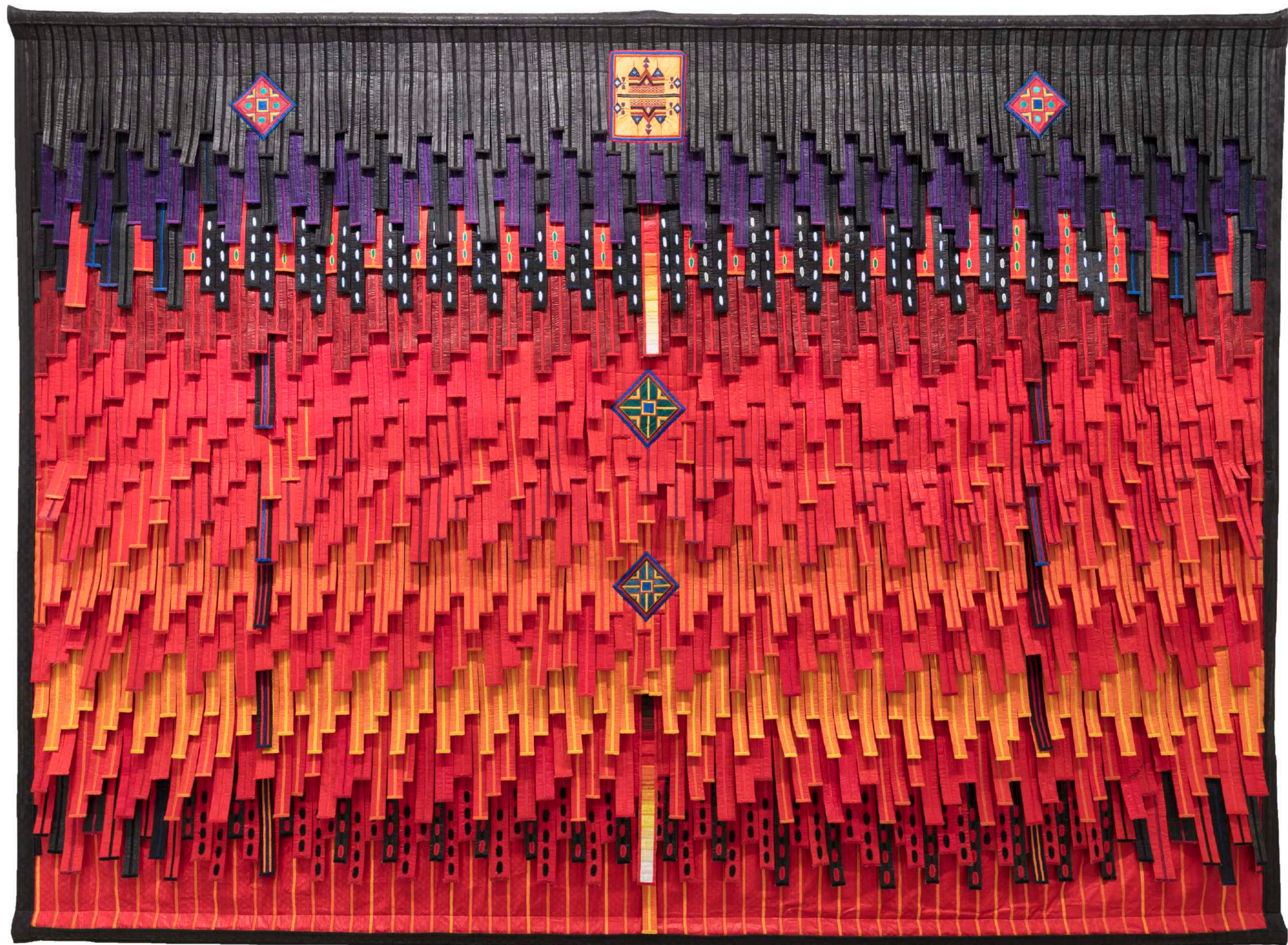
"We are symbols and inhabit symbols; workmen, work, and tools, words and things, birth and death, all are emblems; but we sympathize with the symbols, and, being infatuated with the economical uses of things, we do not know that they are thoughts. The poet, by an ulterior intellectual perception, gives them a power, which makes their old use forgotten, and puts eyes and a tongue into every dumb and inanimate object".

– Abdoulaye Konaté

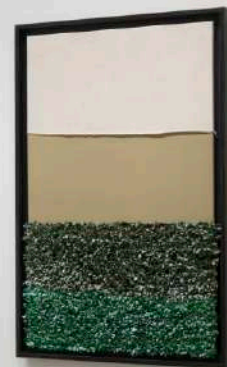
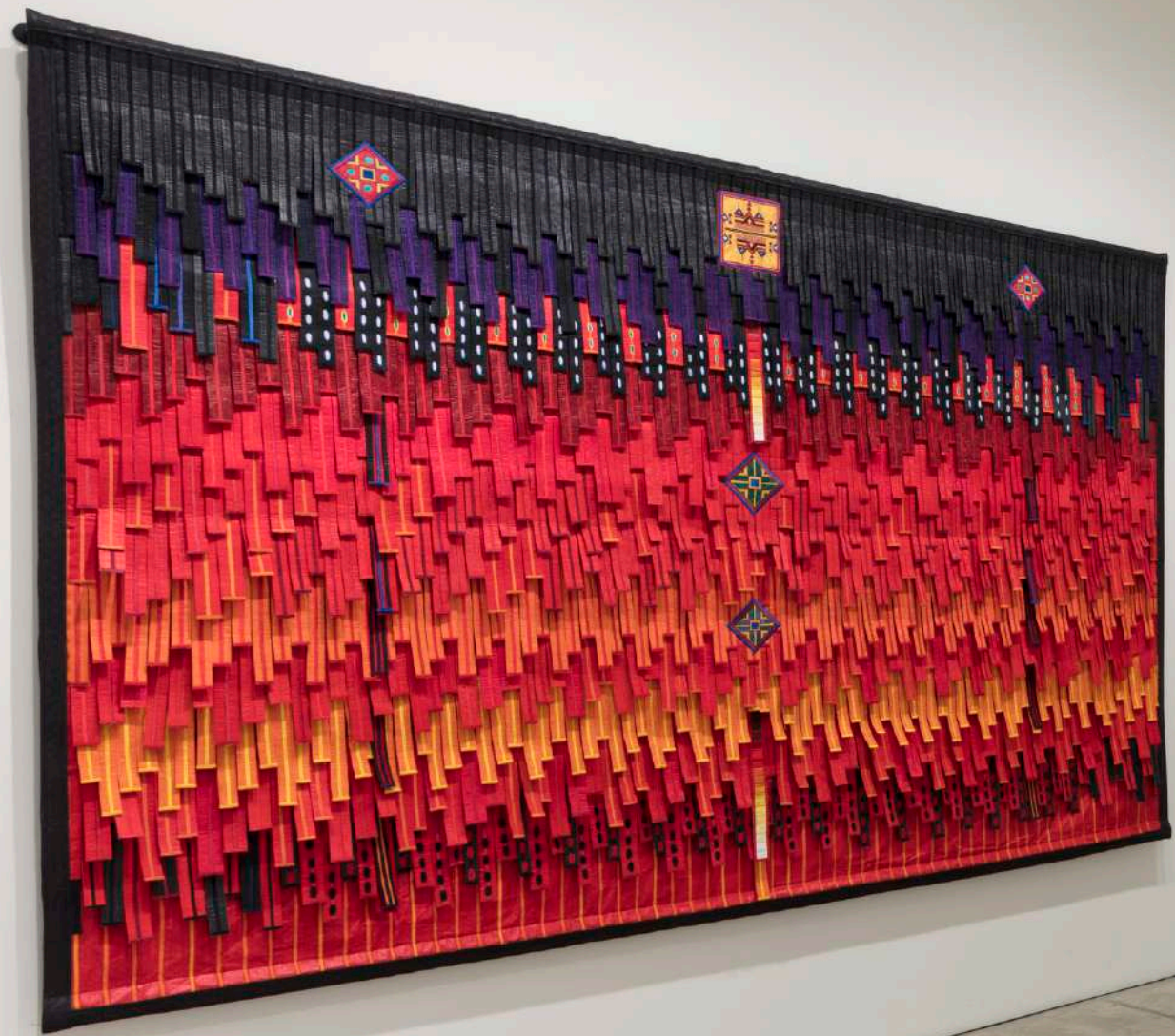
The power of these compositions, where traditional and contemporary layers of interpretation intersect where each of the thousands of pieces of fabric seems to find its perfect place, as if entrusted with a testimony that is essential to the harmony of a whole.

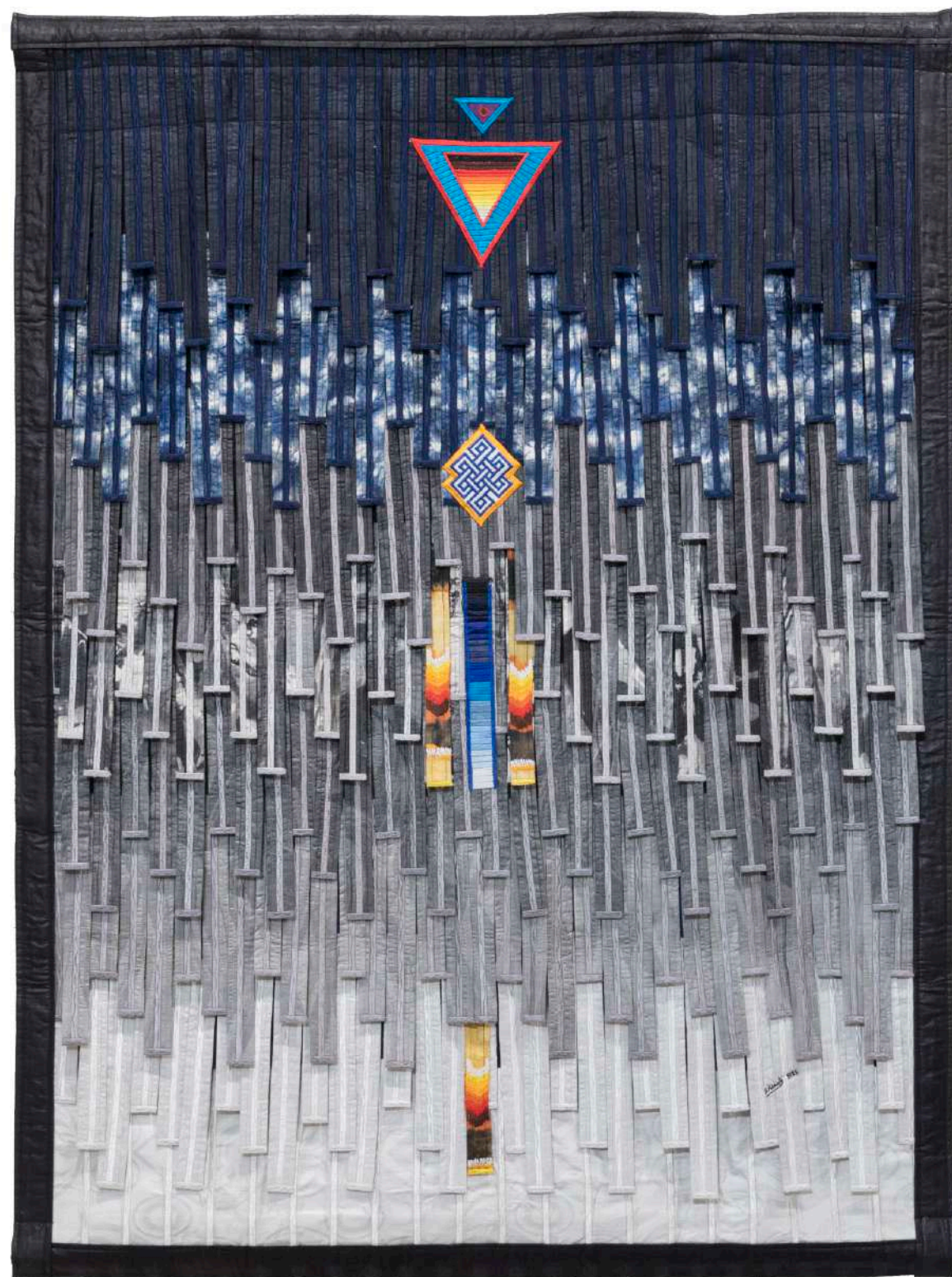
Abdoulaye Konaté
Motif Nigeria, 2023
Textile
193 × 150 cm





Abdoulaye Konaté
Motif central Peulh, 2021
Textile
237 × 334 cm





Abdoulaye Konaté
Triangles et signe Tibet, 2023
 Textile
 156 × 117 cm



TROY MAKAZA

“The medium is very intimately connected to my work on a number of levels. First of all, it combines a traditional art medium with a novel one. This is something that I am really conscious of doing as a contemporary Zimbabwean artist, bridging tradition with contemporary practice. Secondly, this medium allows me to move between sculpture and painting and to disrupt categories set up by people who are not us, so in a way it is me asserting my right as an artist to determine how I am seen and not allow myself or my content to be categorized. My subject matter is equally fluid moving between abstraction and figuration because neither category is, in fact, pure and the formality of these definitions doesn’t make sense to me.”

- Troy Makaza

The surreal works of Troy Makaza, woven with painted silicone cords, inhabit the space between painting and sculpture, creating a threadlike structure. His creations maintain diverse narratives, ranging from issues of a socio-political nature to more personal stories and visions, determined by the artist’s experiences. This was well expressed in the solo exhibition “Instinct of a Great Survivor” held in 2022 at Primo Marella Gallery - Lugano. On the occasion of the exhibition, the artist explained how, throughout his life, he had learned to accept the challenges presented to him, always striving to find a solution. Similarly, this part of the artist’s life becomes a metaphorical element of the Zimbabwean people, who must necessarily find a way to move forward, even in a situation of enormous difficulty within the country’s social landscape. The reason Troy developed such a particular technique lies in the fact that he does not believe in formal classifications in art. And so, he invents in a completely original way a medium that can unite two elements: painting & sculpture, classifications that, in the artist’s disregard, have never existed. His imagination did not want to have a limit of form, and through this “instinct of survival,” he found his own way.

Within his technique, which may seem alien to many, lies the incredible will of the artist to come forward, overturning beliefs of a purely formal nature. While the viewer may feel disoriented in front of Makaza’s works, at the same time, they immediately begin to understand his radical perspective on the conception of art. Silicone is disconcerting,

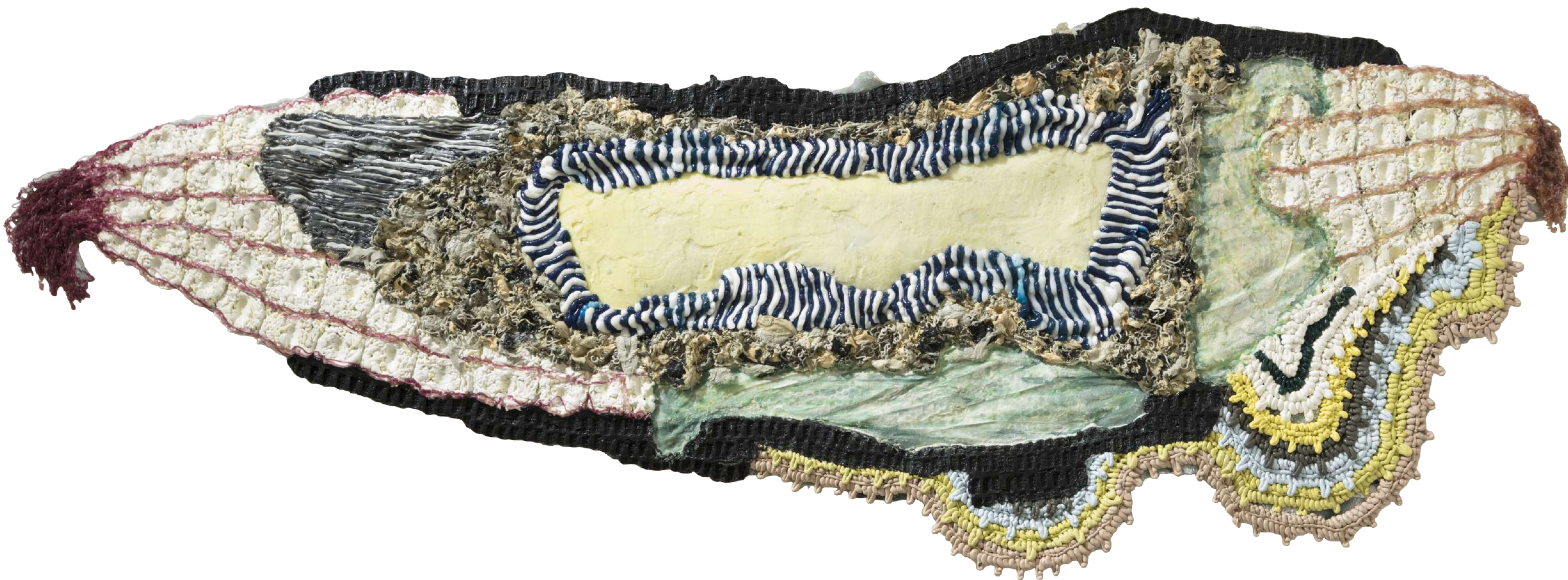
but thinking about it, it is a brilliant solution. It is malleable and liquid during application, allowing the artist to “paint” his visions. At the same time, it becomes solid and three-dimensional during drying, giving concreteness and depth to the works. Faced with a challenge, Makaza seeks to find a solution. He himself does not know if what he will do will be correct or not, but what is certain is that he will tirelessly try to solve what is presented to him. The choice of an unusual material like silicone represents the very personal challenge that the artist has with himself.

Besides being an alternative solution, it is a signal indicating that African art, especially that of Zimbabwe, does not adhere to dogmatic principles on how to conceive a work. Instead, it is a vision uncontaminated by an aesthetic canon imposed by the past. It is a new world, a new way of creation, free from preconceptions and barriers, of which Troy is an ambassador.

Troy Makaza
Untitled, 2023
Silicone infused with paint
208 × 78 cm







Troy Makaza
Untitled, 2023
Silicone infused with paint
103 × 276 cm





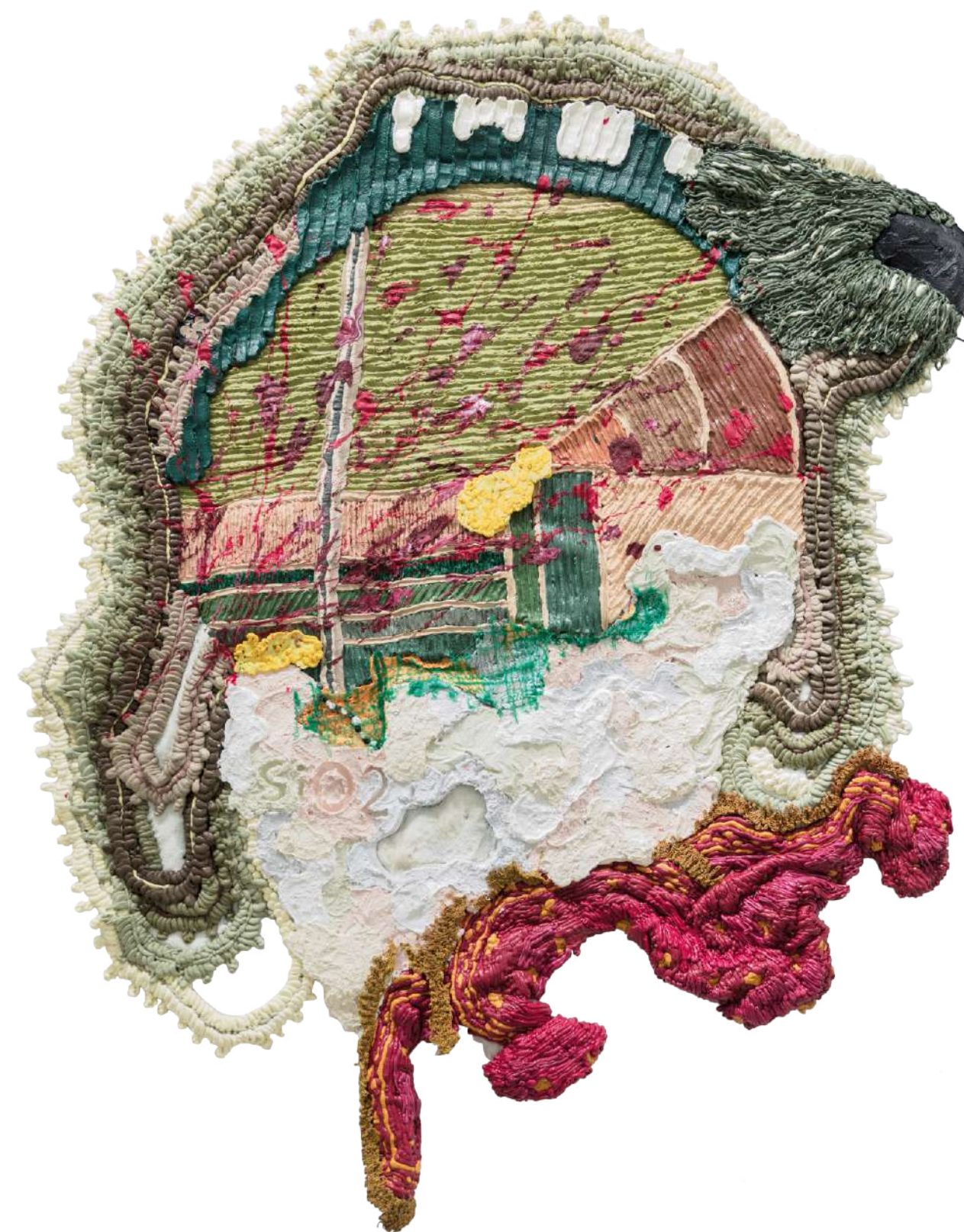
Troy Makaza
Meaning responsibility and contentment part 3, 2022
 Silicone infused with paint
 218 × 114 cm



Troy Makaza
Delusions of decisions part 2, 2022
 Silicone infused with paint
 129 × 123 cm



Troy Makaza
Untitled, 2022
 Silicone infused with paint
 162 × 112 cm



Troy Makaza
Pageantry of the daily bread part 3, 2022
 Silicone infused with paint
 186 × 143 cm

SAMUEL NNOROM

As a child growing up in Nigeria, Samuel Nnorom’s artistic sensibilities emerged from observing the creative processes of his father, a shoemaker, and his mother, a tailor. Realizing his natural propensity for life drawing and sewing through these early explorations, Nnorom later developed his artistic skillset in art school, apprenticeships, and residencies. An element of his practice that has remained constant throughout his career is his dedication to textiles and unusual materials and their capacity as social agents in society.

His art is identified with textile sculptures made from Ankara/African wax fabric sourced from tailors or from off-cast clothing that is wrapped around recycled foam into balls or “bubbles” of various dimensions. These textile orbs are formed into clusters that appear like dense land masses with differently coloured textiles suggesting people, mountains, streams, islands, and peninsulas. As a fabric that is used to drape the body, it is noteworthy that Nnorom sees the weft and weave of his fabrics as akin to a social structure. In his latest work, Nnorom looks at how his sculptures can be considered a metaphor for a “fabric of society,” made up of individual lives united in space. For him, the history and social statement relayed in each fabric print becomes a visual language much like a written text. Nnorom’s work intersects the boundaries between tapestry, painting, and sculpture; similar to the way his work surpasses the bounds of representation, symbols, or exact points of reference. He began to challenge conventional thinking, blurring borders and creating unconventional structures that incorporate artistic elements from different ecosystems.

The methods he uses to cluster the orbs in space vary greatly: some are densely packed, while others are spaced apart and connected by web like tendrils. We can observe multitude of variations through colour, scale, and form demonstrate Nnorom’s capacity to push his chosen material and artistic strategy into infinite directions and shapes. Nnorom’s fast-rising profile and legitimate posturing as one of the most exiting contemporary Nigerian artists derive from the dynamic and fascinating landscape of his textile-based sculpture installations. The stylistic architecture of his art is firmly rooted in the culture of radical practice that foregrounds the art tradition of Fine and Applied Arts Department of the University of Nigeria where he pursuing a master in sculpture. He saw

in the visible and hidden attributes of the textile bubble a metaphorical codification of the litany of truths, half-truths, lies, denials. A continuously expanding universe where the material element becomes the centre of the investigation that supports the entire structure. The sculpture is the Omega but also the Alpha, it is a part but also the whole. The exploration on the synergic materiality in relation to the structural formation of bubbles into sculptural piece gives the idea of thought of what Plato consider as “the real world of the forms, which are perfect and unchanging and the sensible world that we all perceive around us which is an imperfect copy of forms and insofar as the copy is imperfect so is its illusion”. This is what the artist states:

“I hope for my works to inspire endless possibilities in the minds of audiences by promoting self-interrogation and critical thinking while appreciating artistry at its finest”.

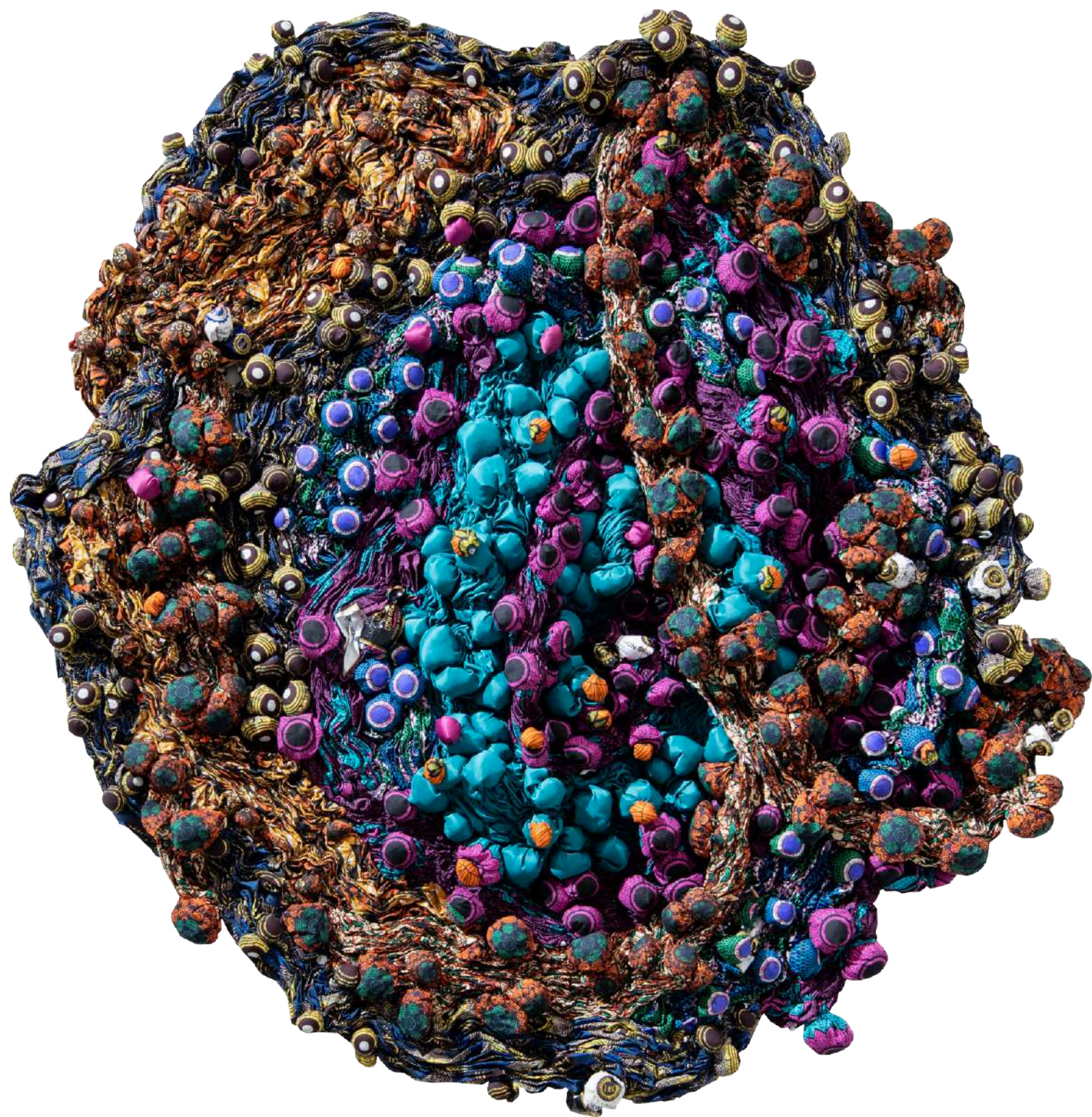
– Samuel Nnorom

His interest lies in the history, value, meaning, politics, consumption, power, and identity represented on the wax prints or African print fabric (Ankara) and the second-hand or used clothes (Okirika), which are predominantly consumed within the local community and West Africa. Fabrics evoke a sense of social structure or organisation that interlaces humanity into society; however, when referring to the “fabric of society” or “social fabric,” it is unique to different societies that inform his contemplation on socio-political structures, consumerism, industrialization, and colonial remnants. These themes are sometimes expressed through metaphors such as bubble forms, bindle forms, lines of fabric strips, exploded bubbles, and tied clothes on architectural structures or canvases using techniques such as cutting, rolling, stitching, tying, and installation. Such expressions respond to our daily lives and struggles while fostering commonality and social connection. His mission is to engage viewers in self-interrogation, bringing different techniques and the use of different and unusual materials and finally design a new unique aesthetics into the world of Art.

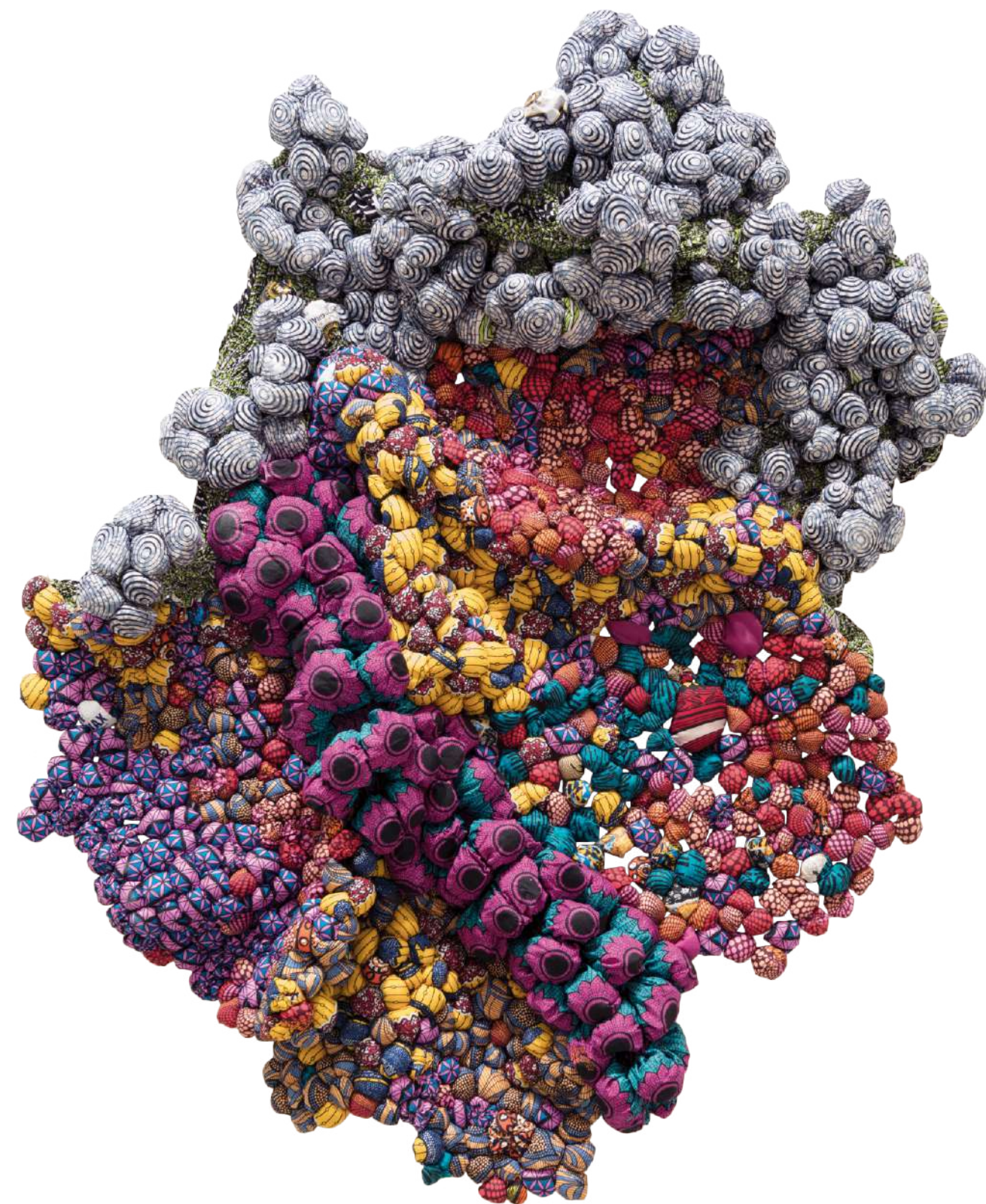
Samuel Nnorom
Moving Form, 2023
African wax print fabric
60 × 72 × 15 cm



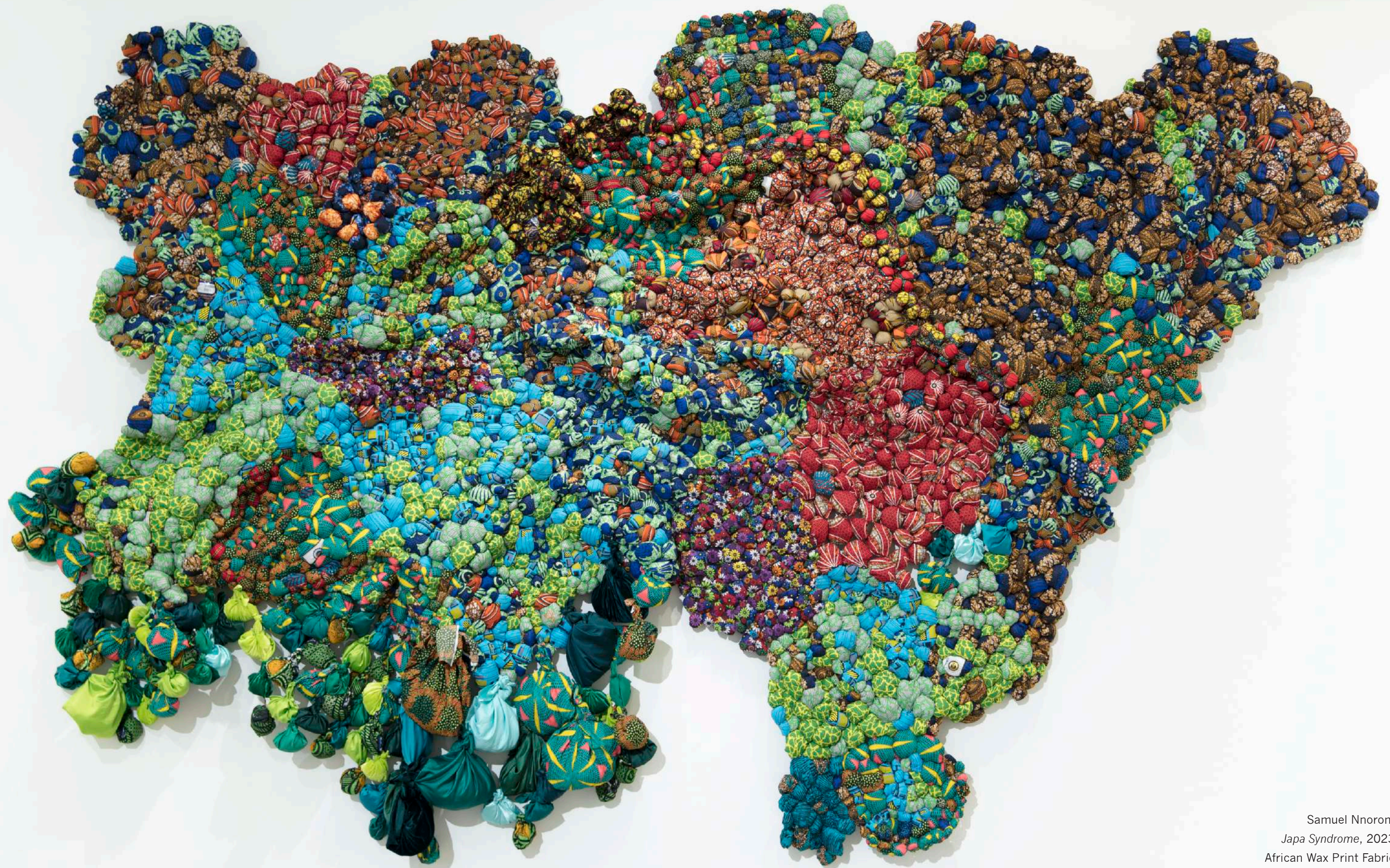




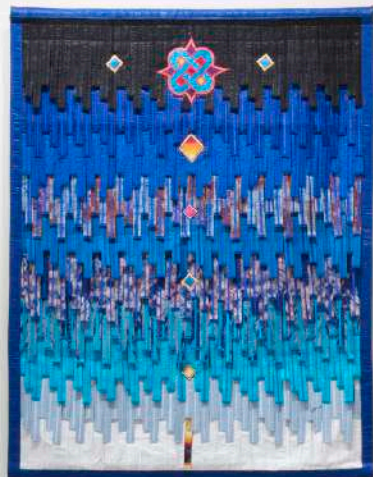
Samuel Nnorom
Earth Component, 2023
 African Wax Print Fabric
 163 × 140 × 14 cm



Samuel Nnorom
Clouded thought, 2023
 African Wax Print Fabric
 152 × 122 × 23 cm



Samuel Nnorom
Japa Syndrome, 2023
African Wax Print Fabric
315 × 510 × 30 cm





Samuel Nnorom
Organize patch, 2023
 African wax print fabric
 85 × 77 × 15 cm

Samuel Nnorom
The Dancer, 2023
 African Wax Print Fabric
 230 × 83 × 83 cm

MOFFAT TAKADIWA

Since the beginning, Moffat has distinguished himself from every other artist through his work of reusing materials and the ability to create something incredible out of nothing. Moffat is one of the initiators of this movement. We must consider him one of the most dedicated representatives of a movement whose distinctive feature is highlighted by the use of unusual materials. Undoubtedly, at present, in Africa, this trend is developing rapidly, thanks in part to the enormous success of El Anatsui, whom we can consider the founding father of this unofficial movement.

The decision to include Moffat in this project does not stem exclusively from his use of recycling art. Takadiwa (just like Anatsui) carries profound messages: imagination beyond every barrier and social condition. The artist himself stated that the reason that drove him to use these types of mediums was the impossibility of finding artistic materials to create classic “oil on canvas” paintings. However, with the refinement of his practice over the years, the artist understood that this was no longer just a necessary choice but something that belonged to him and represented him, a means to shape an identity, a narrative of himself and his country.

Moffat’s art is vibrant, dreaming of the rebirth of his country, Zimbabwe, currently oppressed by hyperinflation and opaque government mechanisms distant from the needs of the people. Moffat manages to see beauty in difficulty, in what might seem like trivial rejection to us -Europeans. His works now more than ever indicate the incredible imaginative and creative potential that the best African artists can express. “Unusual Materials and Forms for a new Aesthetic” encapsulates all of this.

The exhibition aims to broaden the horizons of art, highlighting how this artistic conception represents the true identity of the African people. Zimbabwe has produced two high-caliber artists in this regard, Troy Makaza and Moffat Takadiwa. Both work with decidedly unusual materials, not producing a new sophisticated and technological technique but using elements that go beyond the classic conception of artistic material. The works of Makaza and Takadiwa are not limited to isolated experiences, a solo excursion aiming to take random materials with which to forge their own works.

The difference is as subtle as it is vital: the work is no longer conceived starting from the subject to be represented but from the object, the medium used, the unusual material. The genesis revolves around this. Computer keys, bottle caps, silicone, and brushes constitute the order of a very personal artistic vision that is extraordinarily original and pioneering. The strength of African artists lies precisely in this approach: finding a means, whatever it may be, to convey an authentic, true message intrinsically linked to themselves and their land.

“I believe that I am not making objects exactly, but statements which are meant to change the lives of my people, the image of my country, and the world at large. Through my work I collide the laws and policies of my country against the excretes of its society.”

– Moffat Takadiwa

Moffat Takadiwa
Judging by Language, 2017
Computer keys and plastic cord
330 × 190 × 20 cm



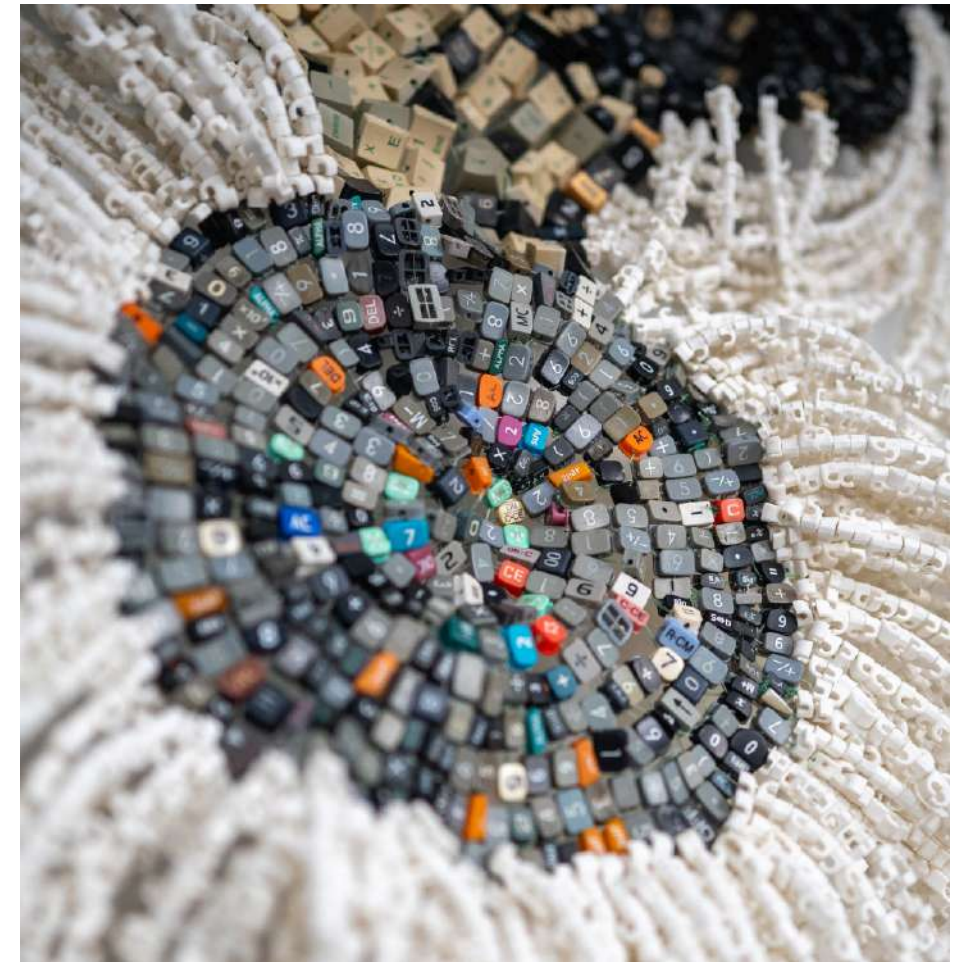




Moffat Takadiwa
Cross boarder hustlers, 2015
Found spray-can debris, plastic bottle tops, trolley and light bulbs
Variable Dimension

Installation view at Primo Marella Gallery on the occasion of the exhibition
La Sfinge Nera - from Marocco to Madagascar, 2017





Moffat Takadiwa
The Brain Drain, 2022
 Computer, calculator and telephone keys
 270 × 220 cm

courtesy dela.art collecion



TEXT TRANSLATIONS

TRADUZIONI IN ITALIANO

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MATERIALI E FORME INSOLITE PER UNA NUOVA ESTETICA

Un tempo si diceva che l'arte contemporanea dovesse essere qualcosa che rompesse gli schemi di una visione precisa e delineata di estetica. Doveva osare, provocare, stupire e spiazzare lo spettatore.

Tutt'oggi si ha questo credo, ma in maniera subdola si percepisce che qualcosa non è più lo stesso. La "sfida" che ogni artista ha con sé stesso pare che a volte sia ben definita da uno schema geometrico, di idee e di visioni. Sembra esserci un preconconcetto, una regola non scritta, qualcosa di ferreo che pone dei limiti o confini nella visione di un artista. Ostacolo che generalmente viene superato solo nel caso della creazione di sculture.

Certamente nel corso della storia dell'arte sono stati innumerevoli gli artisti che si sono spinti al di fuori della tela orizzontale, quadrata o circolare. Tuttavia, sono quasi sempre state esplosioni personali, concezioni uniche, di alto livello in determinati casi, ma che non hanno dato vita a una corrente definita.

Fino a quando a un certo punto entra in gioco l'Africa, priva di disponibilità di materiali e di binari precostituiti per la creazione di un'opera. Per altri sarebbe stata una maledizione, per loro invece è stata una benedizione. La capacità di un artista la si può comprendere nell'osservare l'universalità di pensiero che lo invade, ovvero come la propria visione si espanda qualunque essa sia la sua situazione, vita, luogo di appartenenza.

Del resto questo rese le avanguardie di un tempo ciò che sono oggi sotto un punto di vista di riconoscimento critico/artistico.

C'è una forza, una volontà potente di potersi esprimere, attraverso ogni modo e mezzo disponibile. Ciò potrebbe ricordare l'arte povera ad una prima impressione, ed è corretto, ma il discorso è ben più ampio in questo caso.

L'utilizzo del materiale inusuale è qualcosa che appartiene a questi artisti. Non si tratta semplicemente dell'opzione "B", ma di una scelta che seppur anticipata da difficoltà economiche, parte con il principio di creare qualcosa di nuovo, non visto, unico nel panorama artistico contemporaneo. Nell'esistenza di questi artisti non è mai vissuto un preconconcetto, un fondamento che indica delle regole precise, in qualcosa che regole non ne ha. Mi riferisco alla creatività e all'arte.

"Once you free your mind about the concept of harmony and of art being "correct" you can do whatever you want" (Giorgio Moroder) e così è stato per questi artisti. Ciò che più celebriamo con questa mostra è la pura capacità d'innovazione di pensiero. Non è solo ciò che riguarda il materiale, ma è la grande abilità di composizione spaziale e la chiara visione che accompagna l'utilizzo e accostamento dei diversi medium l'uno accanto all'altro.

Il sapiente utilizzo di questi materiali è il risultato di questa creazione, con i quali gli artisti generano composizioni dalla geometria indefinita, variabile, ma indubbiamente intrigante e intricata.

L'intreccio dei vari materiali crea un racconto unico all'interno delle opere, dove ogni caratteristica viene risaltata ma al contempo amalgamata nell'immaginaria composizione dell'artista. E così un tappo di bottiglia non è più un rifiuto, lo stesso vale per il tessuto o per un sacchetto di plastica. Tutti diventano dei fondamentali accordi nel firmamento immaginario dell'artista, il quale meticolosamente posiziona e conferisce una personale

appartenenza ad ogni oggetto per una sua opera.

Ciò indica più che mai due aspetti: il primo, una libertà di pensiero priva di regole, il secondo - oltre che una grande maestria - un'incredibile capacità evolutiva e innovativa che pone le basi per la nascita di una corrente non formalizzata, ma che la galleria propone grazie al proprio studio approfondito su questo genere di artisti, perché queste pratiche stanno cambiando la percezione della forma usuale e dando una nuova interpretazione e direzione ai canoni dogmatici dell'estetica corrente.

Daniele Marella

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IFEOMA U. ANYAEJI

Ifeoma è stata da sempre affascinata dall'intreccio intricato dei processi artigianali tradizionali e dalla magia di materiali inusuali trasformati in opere d'arte. Ha sognato di plasmare forme in grado di dialogare con il suo ambiente, usando il linguaggio delle linee per tradurre e trascrivere gli eventi sociali, politici e le esperienze della natura.

Queste visioni e passioni hanno permeato da sempre la sua esistenza, scolpendo costantemente il suo essere e il suo approccio creativo alla vita. Definendosi un'artista neo-tradizionale, la sua pratica creativa esplora le transizioni della cultura africana in una società globalizzata, concentrandosi soprattutto sulle estetiche tradizionali nigeriane e le ideologie ambientali culturali. Un'ideologia che abbraccia il riutilizzo e il riposizionamento di oggetti materiali e non materiali, creando "nuovi valori" e prolungando la rilevanza di oggetti ormai considerati "usati".

Le sue opere sono scolpite per incoraggiare interpretazioni multiple, mirando a trasmettere l'importanza della conservazione dei valori, mentre stimola una risposta collettiva positiva alle questioni eco-culturali. Queste composizioni intricate sono sculture e installazioni vibranti, concettuali ma al contempo organiche. Intrise di metafore tradizionali, che riecheggiano costantemente la sua "Igboness" e le ideologie dell'arte artigianale, queste opere fanno riferimento a forme architettoniche, spazi domestici, arredi e discorsi impliciti sul corpo umano.

L'artista crea con maestria usando plastica non biodegradabile, trasformando bottiglie e sacchetti di plastica in sculture e installazioni a mano e colorate. In questa pratica unica, che definisce Plasto-Art, Anyaeji sperimenta con questi "elementi inquinanti", intrecciando la plastica con fili in braid e trasformandoli in tessuti vivaci e plasmabili. Utilizzando la tecnica di intrecciatura dei capelli nigeriana chiamata Threading (Ikpa Owu nella lingua Igbo), queste trecce di plastica prendono forma in strutture scultoree densamente testurizzate, ricche di colori vivaci, spirali, bobine e cerchi.

Combina l'intrecciatura dei capelli con le tecniche tradizionali di cesteria dell'Africa occidentale e di tessitura di stoffa, riflettendo sulla perdita di tali tradizioni e sui problemi ambientali nella sua comunità nigeriana. Intrecciando esperienze personali e collettive, le sue sculture distintive abbracciano forme e influenze della cultura dell'Africa occidentale, dall'arte scenica al folklore, dalla musica ai tessuti, agli spazi domestici e comunitari della Nigeria.

"Io sono stata subito attratta dall'idea di trasformare rifiuti in sculture su larga scala, creando

qualcosa di bello che parlasse del nostro ambiente e del riutilizzo dei materiali. Viene fatto anche riferimento al corpo umano, all'architettura e agli spazi domestici. L'idea che le forme scultoree non siano mai complete è affascinante, poiché spesso i pezzi vengono adattati, riellaborati e rimaneggiati, sempre in un processo continuo.”

– Ifeoma U. Anyaeji

Con una combinazione inventiva di materiali, forma composizioni audaci che vanno oltre i confini del medium, tesse esperienze personali e collettive che celebrano l'apertura al mondo e alla diversità. Allusioni e metafore si intrecciano in riflessioni su esperienze universali, celebrando l'apertura al mondo e alla diversità.

Pag.20

JOËL ANDRIANOMEARISOA

“Non è né un quadro, né una scultura, né un assemblaggio architettonico... è un'installazione che ha diversi elementi che si riferiscono all'architettura, alla pittura e alla scultura, ma anche all'amore, al desiderio, alla perdita, alla disperazione, alla speranza”.

– Joël Andrianomearisoa

Joël Andrianomearisoa esprime la propria arte attraverso infiniti modi. Seppur il tessuto venga considerato la sua scelta principale, egli non ha mai lasciato che ciò diventasse una zona di comfort, espandendo la propria elaborazione artistica attraverso l'uso di diversi materiali, tutti scelti con un preciso studio e scopo.

Andrianomearisoa è un poeta del materiale, le composizioni con cui progetta e costruisce le sue opere, vengono saggiamente studiate in modo tale da poter trasmettere un'emozione, un sentimento, che sia di speranza o drammatico, attraverso l'accordo compositivo delle sue creazioni.

Il materiale diventa il mezzo estetico del proprio credo, il compositore delle proprie idee, il comunicatore subdolo di un messaggio fine e soave.

Molte delle sue opere sono mosse da un credo esteta, qualcosa che è animato dall'eleganza, dalla raffinatezza, ma anche dal potere di una comunicazione sottile, che trasmette le proprie sfaccettature filosofiche senza esternarle in maniera immediata, ma quasi sussurrando dolcemente e armoniosamente allo spettatore la propria allegoria.

Andrianomearisoa attraverso il suo lavoro mira ad essere unico nel panorama artistico e mondiale. Non categorizza le proprie opere in maniera segmentata, ma si riferisce ad esse come installazioni, elementi singolari, frutto di un'elaborazione lunga e ben meditata in modo da comunicare al meglio il proprio essere artistico.

L'artista esprime come non gli piaccia dare necessariamente un significato a tutto. Non cerca in maniera ossessiva una spiegazione su ciò che crea e ciò che lo circonda. Tuttavia, questo non significa che ciò che genera nasca senza un pensiero o un concetto. Quello che egli vuole, è invitare lo spettatore a lasciarsi trascinare dall'emozione, dal sublime, da ciò che sente e percepisce. Spiegare razionalmente qualcosa che avviene emotivamente nella mente dell'artista, a volte, è un po' contro intuitivo. L'arte è comunicazione visiva, un tipo di comunicazione che viene recepita in maniera

totalmente differente rispetto a qualsiasi altro modo. Parla al nostro subconscio e noi, emotivamente, reagiamo di conseguenza, attraverso le nostre percezioni.

Quante volte ci capita di dire: “potrei descriverti ciò che provo con mille parole, ma non basterebbero”. Questo perché l'emozione si manifesta in un codice diverso, non è espressa da un linguaggio ben delineato, ma da un flusso cognitivo che vive in noi, che spesso è qualcosa di indecifrato e che dobbiamo imparare a conoscere.

Ciò che le opere di Joël trasmettono è proprio questo. Non vuole urlare allo spettatore il suo pensiero, ma vuole esprimerlo con grande classe, attraverso un grande studio del dettaglio, della calibrazione e decisione di posizionamento dei vari elementi che compongono le proprie opere.

Un'innata sensazione di armonia, delicatezza, eleganza e raffinatezza dispositiva.

Quando si crea qualcosa di sottile, delicato, è normale che il messaggio risulti enigmatico, a volte spiazzante, ma questa è la parte razionale del nostro corpo che risponde e parla a noi. Invece cosa pensa il cuore, la nostra parte emotiva?

È un lavoro sentimentale ben pianificato, che parla ad uno spettatore attraverso un intimo scambio di emozioni. La psiche dell'artista e quella dello spettatore si “incontrano” nel momento in cui lo spettatore vede l'opera di Joël.

Quest'ultimo decide di comunicare attraverso due segnali: quello estetico, ovvero, “l'installazione” e quello emozionale, ossia, ciò che l'opera vuole trasmettere (amore, desiderio, perdita, disperazione o speranza).

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ABDOULAYE KONATÉ

Abdoulaye Konaté si distingue per la maestria nell'utilizzo di materiali unici e distintivi, che conferiscono alle sue opere un'identità visiva inconfondibile. Le sue grandi composizioni tessili, realizzate principalmente con tessuti tinti, ricamati e cuciti a mano, testimoniano un'approfondita esplorazione del linguaggio figurativo e simbolico. I materiali utilizzati riflettono la tradizione artistica di Mali, ma la loro disposizione e manipolazione conferiscono loro un nuovo significato in un contesto più ampio.

Il lavoro di Abdoulaye Konaté può essere considerato un dialogo tra il locale e il globale, tra le tradizioni artistiche africane e le sfide contemporanee. La sua abilità nell'uso dei materiali va oltre la mera creazione visiva, trasformando tessuti ordinari in opere d'arte straordinarie e cariche di significato. E' noto per le sue composizioni di grandi dimensioni che utilizzano un linguaggio fortemente accentuato sia figurativo che simbolico. Le sue installazioni tessili esplorano questioni socio-politiche e ambientali, specifiche del Mali che dell'intera Africa; scene di agitazione sociale, conflitti militari, sovranità, fede, globalizzazione, cambiamenti ecologici ed epidemie diventano oggetti di indagine semiotica e destrutturazione. Utilizzando materiali tipici del Mali, ovvero tessuti tinti, ricamati e cuciti a mano, Konaté si ispira alla tradizione dell'Africa occidentale di utilizzare i tessuti come mezzo di comunicazione e commemorazione. Il riferimento a una tecnica culturale localizzata è poi abilmente riallineato per incontrare un quadro geopolitico più ampio,

dove il materiale agisce come intermediario tra strutture locali e globali.

Un giorno, mentre disegnava a matita cercando di creare volume attraverso sfumature di grigio, un insegnante guardò il suo lavoro e disse: “puoi ottenere più profondità se capisci il colore”. Il giovane artista Abdoulaye Konaté capì così che ampliando la sua tavolozza avrebbe potuto espandere la sua espressione. Iniziò a incorporare tessuti nelle installazioni, strappando il tessuto colorato in piccoli frammenti. Quest’idea gli venne osservando i tradizionali abiti dei musicisti Senoufo. Il lavoro di Abdoulaye Konaté ci parla attraverso i sensi piuttosto che la ragione. E i colori, che fungono da leitmotiv in una linea ritmica che è il motivo, sono come una variazione musicale attorno alla quale ruota la sinfonia dell’artista. Colori che sottolineano, intensificano, illuminano. Un silenzio turbolento, una gioia eclettica, il significato del quale svanisce con la fine della vista dello spettatore.

Nelle sue imponenti installazioni il colore è un araldo di emozioni, messaggi pacifisti e ideali elevati, un vettore simbolico del contenuto semantico dell’opera: il blu, disponibile in molte sfumature, è il colore dell’abbigliamento tipico Tuareg, il giallo è quello del deserto, il verde del fiume Niger, il bianco degli Arabi.

Altre influenze culturali provenienti dall’Africa occidentale e da altre parti hanno alimentato la sua ricerca estetica: musica, danza e persino il Korodouga, una confraternita molto rispettata in Mali e in Costa d’Avorio, che utilizza la satira per sfidare il potere e il comportamento sociale. I loro costumi sono punteggiati di amuleti, feticci o oggetti abbandonati e plastica, rendendo questi “buffoni sacri una sorta di discarica per la società”, dice l’artista, che elogia la loro totale libertà di espressione.

Le strisce colorate di tessuto che coprono le sue “tele” sono diventate una forma espressiva preferita per Konaté, con alcuni critici che utilizzano il termine “tappeto” o “patchwork” per descrivere le sue monumentali composizioni. L’artista insiste sul fatto che non ha scelto effettivamente questo vocabolario; piuttosto, ha lavorato sulla sua tavolozza come un pittore. Il lavoro di Konaté è poetico, mitico e ancestrale, che prende la stoffa come mezzo di espressione e comunicazione, un elemento chiave della sua ricerca artistica e di una narrazione di singolare forza evocativa.

“Il processo di lavoro porta a scoperte o soluzioni”, afferma semplicemente. “Non ho mai pensato che avrei smesso di dipingere acrilici o oli.” Ma questo materiale vibrante e commovente, comune e familiare in tutto il mondo, specialmente in Mali, un importante produttore del tessuto di cotone bazin ampiamente esportato, ha il vantaggio di creare corrispondenze segrete tra la realtà quotidiana e l’astrazione. Un mondo caotico, uno che questo grande personaggio della scena africana contemporanea cerca modestamente di tradurre, senza cercare di assumere un ruolo diverso da quello di un cittadino che osserva il suo ambiente. Cerca così di trovare un modo non violento di mostrare tutto ciò che riguarda la sofferenza umana. Una sinfonia di colori, una profonda ricerca attraverso simbolo ed essenza, questo è il percorso che Abdoulaye Konaté sta attraversando nelle sue ultime opere. Le composizioni di Konaté ci portano in un universo ricco di simboli, in

un’atmosfera carica di significati. Anche se la questione politica viene messa da parte, il suo linguaggio è inalterato, sempre forte, sostanziale, privo di ogni decorazione infondata, plasmato per parlare dell’Umano attraverso un mezzo semplice, come il colore. Il linguaggio dei colori è fatto di impressioni estrinseche ma anche di affetti interni.

“Siamo simboli e abitiamo simboli; operai, lavoro e attrezzi, parole e cose, nascita e morte, tutto sono emblemi; ma simpatizziamo con i simboli e, essendo infatuati degli usi economici delle cose, non sappiamo che sono pensieri. Il poeta, mediante una percezione intellettuale ulteriore, gli conferisce un potere, che fa dimenticare il loro vecchio uso e mette occhi e lingua in ogni oggetto muto e inanimato.”

– Abdoulaye Konaté

La potenza di queste composizioni, dove si intersecano strati tradizionali e contemporanei di interpretazione, dove ciascuno dei migliaia di pezzi di stoffa sembra trovare il suo posto perfetto, come se fosse affidato con una testimonianza essenziale all’armonia di un tutto.

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TROY MAKAZA

“Il medium è intimamente connesso al mio lavoro su diversi livelli. Innanzitutto, combina un medium artistico tradizionale con uno innovativo. Questa è una cosa di cui sono davvero consapevole come artista contemporaneo dello Zimbabwe, che cerca di collegare la tradizione con la pratica contemporanea. In secondo luogo, questo medium mi consente di muovermi tra la scultura e la pittura e di disturbare le categorie imposte da persone che non ci comprendono, quindi in un certo senso è la mia affermazione del diritto di un artista di determinare come voglio essere visto e di non permettere che io o il mio contenuto venga categorizzato. Il mio soggetto è altrettanto fluido nel passare dall’astrazione alla figurazione, perché nessuna delle due categorie è in realtà pura e la formalità di queste definizioni per me non ha alcun senso”.

– Troy Makaza

Le opere surreali di Troy Makaza, tessute con corde di silicone dipinte, abitano lo spazio tra pittura e scultura, creando una struttura filiforme. Le sue realizzazioni mantengono narrazioni eterogenee, che spaziano da problemi di natura politico-sociale, a racconti e visioni più personali, determinate dal vissuto dell’artista. Questo è stato ben espresso nella solo exhibition “Instinct of a Great Survivor” allestita nel 2022 presso Primo Marella Gallery di Lugano. In occasione della mostra l’artista ha spiegato come nel corso della sua vita ha imparato ad accettare le sfide che gli sono poste impegnandosi sempre nel trovare una soluzione a esse. Allo stesso modo, questa parte di vita dell’artista diventa un elemento metaforico del popolo dello Zimbabwe,

che necessariamente deve trovare un modo per andare avanti, pur trovandosi in una situazione di enorme difficoltà all'interno del panorama sociale del paese.

Il motivo per cui Troy ha sviluppato una tecnica così particolare risiede nel fatto che lui non crede nelle formali classificazioni poste nell'arte. E così arriva a inventarsi in maniera completamente originale un medium che possa unire due elementi: la pittura & la scultura, classificazioni che nella sregolatezza dell'artista non sono mai esistite. La sua immaginazione non voleva avere un limite di forma e categorizzazione e lui attraverso questo suo "istinto di sopravvivenza" ha trovato la propria via. All'interno della sua tecnica, che magari a molti risulterà estranea, si cela l'incredibile volontà dell'artista di uscire allo scoperto, rovesciando credenze di puro carattere formale. Seppur lo spettatore si ritrovi spaesato di fronte alle opere di Makaza, allo stesso tempo, inizia subito a comprendere il suo radicale punto di vista sulla concezione dell'arte. Il silicone risulta spiazzante, ma pensandoci bene è una soluzione geniale. È malleabile e liquido nel momento della stesura e permette all'artista di "dipingere" le proprie visioni. Al contempo è solido e tridimensionale nel momento dell'asciugatura, conferendo concretezza e spessore alle opere.

Di fronte ad una sfida, Makaza cerca di trovare una soluzione. Egli stesso non sa se ciò che farà risulterà corretto o meno, ma quello che è certo, è che proverà incessantemente a risolvere ciò che gli viene posto.

La scelta di un materiale inusuale come il silicone rappresentata la sfida personalissima che l'artista ha con se stesso. Oltre che essere una soluzione alternativa, si tratta di un segnale che indica come, l'arte africana, in particolare quella dello Zimbabwe, non nasca con dei principi dogmatici su come concepire un'opera. Bensì si tratta di una visione incontaminata da un canone estetico imposto dal passato. È un nuovo mondo, un nuovo modo di creazione, libero da preconcetti e barriere, del quale Troy ne è ambasciatore.

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SAMUEL NNOROM

Cresciuto in Nigeria, la sensibilità artistica di Samuel Nnorom è emersa dall'osservazione dei processi creativi di suo padre, un calzolaio, e di sua madre, una sarta. Realizzando la sua propensione naturale per il disegno dal vivo e la sartoria attraverso queste prime esplorazioni, Nnorom ha successivamente sviluppato le sue abilità artistiche nella scuola d'arte, negli apprendistati e nelle residenze. Questo è il mondo di Samuel Nnorom, artista che sta sfidando il convenzionale, dissolvendo confini e creando strutture che ignorano la gravità artistica. Nelle sue opere, la tradizione si fonde con l'innovazione, il tessuto si trasforma in metafora, e ogni piega racconta una storia dove l'arte diventa un caleidoscopio di possibilità infinite. Elemento distintivo della sua pratica che è rimasto costante per tutta la sua carriera, è la dedizione ai tessuti e ai materiali insoliti e alla loro capacità di agire come agenti sociali nella società. La

sua arte è identificata con sculture tessili realizzate con stoffa Ankara e cera africana proveniente da sarti o da abiti scartati che vengono avvolti attorno a schiuma riciclata formando palle o "bolle" di varie dimensioni. Questi orbite tessili sono plasmate in ammassi che sembrano masse terrestri dense, con tessuti di colori diversi che suggeriscono persone, montagne, ruscelli, isole e penisole. Come tessuto usato per avvolgere il corpo, è degno di nota che Nnorom veda la trama dei suoi tessuti come simili a una struttura sociale. Nei suoi più recenti lavori, Nnorom esplora infatti come le sue sculture possano essere considerate una metafora per un "tessuto della società", composto da vite individuali unite nello spazio. Per lui, la storia e l'affermazione sociale trasmesse in ogni stampa tessile diventano un linguaggio visivo simile a un testo scritto. Il lavoro di Nnorom interseca i confini tra arazzo, pittura e scultura; in modo simile al modo in cui la sua opera supera i limiti di rappresentazione, simboli o punti di riferimento precisi. Ha iniziato a sfidare il pensiero convenzionale, sfumando i confini e creando strutture non usuali che incorporano elementi artistici provenienti da ecosistemi diversi. I metodi che usa per raggruppare le orbite nello spazio variano notevolmente: alcune sono dense, mentre altre sono distanziate e collegate da tentacoli simili a ragnatele. Possiamo osservare una moltitudine di variazioni attraverso colore, scala e forme che dimostrano la capacità di Nnorom di spingere il suo materiale scelto e la sua strategia artistica in direzioni e forme infinite. Il profilo in rapida ascesa di Nnorom e la sua legittima posizione come uno degli artisti nigeriani contemporanei più eccitanti derivano dal paesaggio dinamico e affascinante delle sue installazioni scultoree basate sui tessuti. L'architettura stilistica della sua arte è saldamente fondata nella cultura della pratica radicale che mette in primo piano la tradizione artistica del Dipartimento di Belle Arti e Arti Applicate dell'Università della Nigeria, dove ha perseguito un master in scultura. Ha visto negli attributi visibili e nascosti della bolla tessile una codificazione metaforica della litania di verità, mezze verità, bugie e negazioni. Un universo in continua espansione in cui l'elemento materiale diventa il centro dell'indagine che sostiene l'intera struttura. La scultura è l'Omega ma anche l'Alpha, è una parte ma anche il tutto. L'esplorazione della materialità sinergica in relazione alla formazione strutturale delle bolle in un pezzo scultoreo dà l'idea di ciò che Platone considera come "il mondo reale delle forme, che sono perfette e immutabili, e il mondo sensibile che tutti percepiamo intorno a noi che è una copia imperfetta delle forme e nella misura in cui la copia è imperfetta lo è anche la sua illusione". Questo è ciò che l'artista afferma in seguito:

"Spero che le mie opere ispirino possibilità infinite nelle menti degli spettatori promuovendo l'auto-interrogazione e il pensiero critico mentre apprezzano l'arte nella sua forma più raffinata."

– Samuel Nnorom

Il suo interesse si concentra sulla storia, sul valore, sul significato, sulla politica, sul consumo, sul potere e sull'identità rappresentati dalle stampe di cera o dal tessuto africano (Ankara) e dai vestiti di seconda mano o usati (Okirika), che sono consumati prevalentemente nella comunità locale e nell'Africa occidentale. I tessuti evocano un senso di struttura sociale o organizzazione che intreccia l'umanità nella società; tuttavia, quando si fa riferimento al “tessuto della società” o alla “struttura sociale”, è unico per le diverse società che informano la sua contemplazione sulle strutture socio-politiche, sul consumismo, sull'industrializzazione e sui resti coloniali. Questi temi sono talvolta espressi attraverso metafore come forme di bolle, forme di bindle, linee di strisce di stoffa, bolle esplose e vestiti legati su strutture architettoniche o tele, usando tecniche come il taglio, il rotolamento, la cucitura, la legatura e l'installazione. Tali espressioni rispondono alla nostra vita quotidiana e alle lotte, promuovendo nel contempo comunanza e connessione sociale. La sua missione è coinvolgere gli spettatori nell'auto-interrogazione, portando tecniche diverse e l'uso di materiali diversi e insoliti e infine progettando una nuova estetica unica nel mondo dell'arte.

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MOFFAT TAKADIWA

Sin dal principio, Moffat si è contraddistinto da ogni altro artista per il lavoro di riutilizzo dei materiali e la capacità di creare dal nulla qualcosa di incredibile. Moffat è uno degli iniziatori di questa corrente. Lo dobbiamo considerare uno dei più convinti esponenti di un movimento il cui tratto distintivo è evidenziato dall'uso del materiale inusuale. Indiscutibilmente, ora come ora, in Africa questa tendenza si sta sviluppando in maniera rapida, anche grazie all'enorme successo di El Anatsui, che possiamo ritenere il padre fondatore di di tale movimento non ancora ufficializzato.

La scelta dell'inserimento di Moffat in questo progetto non arriva dunque dall'esclusivo motivo di essere un utilizzatore della recycling-art. Takadiwa (proprio come Anatsui) si è fatto portatore di un grande messaggio: l'immaginazione oltre ogni barriera e condizione sociale. L'artista stesso ha affermato come il motivo che lo ha spinto ad utilizzare questi tipi di medium fosse l'impossibilità di reperire materiali artistici con cui realizzare i classici “oli su tela”. Tuttavia, col perfezionamento della sua pratica negli anni, l'artista capì come questa non fosse più solo una scelta dovuta, ma qualcosa che gli apparteneva e lo rappresentava, con cui plasmare un'arte identitaria, narratrice di sé e del suo paese.

Quella di Moffat è un'arte vibrante, che fa sognare la rinascita del proprio paese, lo Zimbabwe, attualmente oppresso da un'iperinflazione e da meccanismi governativi opachi e distanti dai bisogni del popolo. Moffat riesce a vedere la bellezza nella difficoltà, nel nulla, in ciò che per noi europei potrebbe sembrare un banale rifiuto. Le sue opere indicano, ora più che mai, l'incredibile potenziale fantasioso e creativo che i migliori artisti africani sono in grado di esprimere. “Unusual Materials and Forms for a new Aesthetic” racchiude tutto ciò.

L'esibizione mira ad ampliare gli orizzonti dell'arte, evidenziando come questa concezione artistica rappresenti la vera impronta identitaria del popolo africano. Lo Zimbabwe ha prodotto due artisti grande caratura sotto questo punto di vista, Troy Makaza e Moffat Takadiwa. Entrambi lavorano con dei materiali decisamente inusuali, senza produrre una nuova tecnica sofisticata e tecnologica, ma utilizzando elementi che vanno al di fuori della classica concezione di materiale artistico. Le opere di Makaza e Takadiwa non si limitano a essere esperienze isolate, un'escursione solista che mira a prendere materiali casuali con cui forgiare le proprie opere.

La differenza è sottile quanto vitale: non si concepisce più l'opera partendo dal soggetto che si vuole rappresentare, bensì dall'oggetto, dal medium che si utilizza, dal materiale inusuale. La genesi ruota tutto intorno a questo. I tasti di un computer, il tappo di una bottiglia, il silicone, le spazzole costituiscono l'ordine di una personalissima visione artistica, che risulta straordinariamente originale e pionieristica. La forza degli artisti africani risiede proprio in questo approccio; nel trovare un mezzo, qualsiasi esso sia, per trasmettere un messaggio autentico, vero, intrinsecamente legato a loro stessi e alla proprio terra.

“Credo di non creare oggetti in modo preciso, ma dichiarazioni destinate a cambiare la vita della mia gente, l'immagine del mio paese e del mondo in generale. Attraverso il mio lavoro, scontro le leggi e le politiche del mio paese contro gli scarti della sua società.”

– Moffat Takadiwa



BIOGRAPHIES

IFEOMA U. ANYAEJI

Born in 1981, Benin City, Nigeria.
Living and working between Benin City and Montréal

Ifeoma U. Anyaeji is a Nigerian neo-traditional artist born in Benin City. Growing up in a society fueled by the dualities of excesses and repression, where art was yet to be accepted as a “decent” profession, Ifeoma decided to take-up art as a full-time career exploring her boundaries, as a female artist beyond the conventions of her initial academic training in painting. She later went on to pursue her earlier interest in sculpture and engaging further her passion for non-conventional art making and repurposing discarded objects, an interest stimulated by the constant environmental problems she encountered around her community particularly from non-biodegradable plastic bags and bottles which were in abundance. While experimenting with these environmental pollutants, engaging possible processes of object remaking and reuse especially with non-conventional art making techniques and traditional craft processes, Anyaeji developed a style of art she calls “Plasto-Art”. This is an eco-aesthetic process of remaking, where she transforms her primary medium - used non-biodegradable plastic bags and bottles - by applying her crafting skills in a receding traditional Nigerian hair plaiting technique called Threading, combined with traditional basketry and fabric weaving techniques. Using this technique, with an experimental approach to object-making that most often excludes anticipated conventions, Ifeoma creates very conceptually complex and organic sculptures and installations, with intricate textures and colours, that reference architectural forms, domestic spaces and furnishings, reiterations of cultural experiences, and discourses about the human body. And by spontaneously engaging the “old”, she questions the implications of modernity’s: consumptive systems of mass accumulation and waste generation, definitions of cultural assimilation and attitude to value, the expiration-date syndrome, and colonial orientations on beauty, authenticity, and newness.

Recent solo and group exhibitions include: 2023: Ijem nke Mmanwu m (The Journey of my Masquerade), Tramway, Glasgow, Scotland; Threads: Breathing Stories into Materials, Arnolfini Arts (International Center for Contemporary Arts), Bristol, UK; 2022: Radar, Galerie Hugues Charbonneau, Montréal, Canada; 2021: Recyclage-Surcyclage – Exposition 2021, Fondation Villa Datris pour la sculpture, Espace Monte-Cristo, Paris, France; Af-flux Biennale Transnationale Noire - CIRCA Art Actuel, Montréal, Canada; Africa Universe II (Virtual exhibition) - Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy; UBUNTU – (Harry David Art Collection) National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (EMST); 2020: Nzuko Umuada, nke abo (the Second Meeting of the daughters of the land); Africa Universe, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, IT; 2019: Ezu hu ezu – In(complete), BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, United Kingdom; Filament / Fil amant: between the seams, Fondation Blachère art centre, Apt, France; Africa! Grieder Contemporary, Zurich, Switzerland; Plastic Entanglements: Ecology, Aesthetics, Materials (Traveling group exhibition till 2020); Smith College Museum of Art, Massachusetts; Chazen Museum of Art, Wisconsin; The Black Sphinx II, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy; The Black Sphinx II, Primae Noctis Art Gallery, Lugano, Switzerland; Traveling group exhibition till 2020 Plastic Entanglements: Ecology, Aesthetics, Materials, Palmer Museum of Art, Chazen Museum of Art, Smith College Museum of Art, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, USA; Les Éclaireurs – sculpteurs d’Afrique (collection Fondation Blachère), Palais des Papes, Avignon, France; 2017: Courtyard Project - Swirl Bin, FOFA Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada; 2016: A no m’eba... (I am here..., Presence, Absence), Galerie d’Art LSB, Montreal, Quebec, Canada; 2015: Owu, Skoto Gallery, Chelsea, New York.

JOËL ANDRIANOMEARISOA

Born in 1977, Antananarivo, Madagascar
Living and working between Paris and Antananarivo

Born in 1977 in Antananarivo, Madagascar, Joël Andrianomearisoa is an artist living and working between Paris, Antananarivo and Magnat-l’Étrange. Andrianomearisoa’s work encompasses different mediums and materials, seeking to give form to non-explicit, often abstract, narrations. His mixed-media approach – encompassing sculpture, installation, craft, textile, and through unprecedented collaborations – is informed by his Madagascan roots, itself a country of diverse cultural influences. Imbued with complex emotional experiences, his delicate, often ambiguous works are considered an ongoing series of ever-evolving exercises, which consider the aesthetic and architecture of feelings that all perceive, yet cannot put a name to. In 2019, Andrianomearisoa represented Madagascar at the 58th Biennale di Venezia, and his work has been exhibited in leading global institutions including MAXXI, Rome (2018); Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2010); the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington DC (2015) and the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2005) and more recently at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2021). In 2022, beside OUR LAND JUST LIKE A DREAM at the MACAAL (Morocco), Joël Andrianomearisoa also has a solo exhibition on the continent. Therefore THE FIVE CONTINENTS OF ALL OUR DESIRES overlooked in the Zeitz MOCAA’s atrium (Cape-Town, South Africa). Joël Andrianomearisoa also launched two public sculptures in Antananarivo in October 2021, supported by the Fonds Yavarhoussen. His work forms part of important international collections including the Smithsonian (Washington DC), The Studio Museum in Harlem (New York), or even Yavarhoussen Collection (Antananarivo) and the Museum Sztuki (Łódź). In 2016, he received the Arco Madrid Audemars Piguet Prize. He obtained a diploma degree in architecture from Ecole Spéciale d’Architecture (Paris) in 2003. Since 2020, Joël Andrianomearisoa is also the founder and artistic director of Hakanto Contemporary, a non-profit independent space for artists in Antananarivo, Madagascar supported by the Fonds Yavarhoussen.

Recent solo and group exhibitions include: 2023: Hirafen, Atelier Du Centre Technique Du Tapis Et Du Tissage, Tunis, Tunisie / Il cielo in una stanza, Primo Marella Gallery, Lugano, CH / Le Crepuscule Des Promesses Éternelles, Flow, Antananarivo, Madagascar / Ngv Triennial, Ngv, Melbourne, Australia / Decay : An Ode To The Impermanent, Buro Stedelijk, Amsterdam, The Netherlands / Litanie des horizons obscurs, Almine Rech Gallery, Paris, France / Legends from W A to X, Museum of the Fondation Zinsou, Le LAB, Ouidah, Benin / My heart belongs to the other, Church Projects, Cape Town, South-Africa; 2022: Our land just like a dream, Macaal, Marrakech, Morocco / The Five Continents Of All Our Desires, Zeitz Mocaa. Cape Town / Les Prémices D’une Mélancolie Infinie, Standing Pine Gallery, Japan / Les herbes folles du vieux logis, Primo Marella. Milan, Italy / Au Rythme de nos Dèirs Dansons sur la Vague du Temps, Chateau de Villers-Cotterets, France / Josep le Monde et Moi, Josep the World and I, Josep el Mon i Jo, Josep el Mundo y Yo, Centre Grau-Garriga d’Art Tèxtil Contemporani, Barcelona, Spain; 2021: Les Herbes Folles du Vieux Logis / Salon d’art 2021 / Domaine de Chateau-mont-Sur-Loire / Translations Of All Our Lost Passions and Our / Future Desires / Kunsthalle Praha, Czech Republic / Histoire d’un Départ, Toulouse Blagnac Airport, Toulouse, France (until 2023) / Zaridaina, Geography of Desire, Le Silo U1, Chateau Thierry, France / Pour ne Jamais Rencontrer la Dernière Heure, Maison Maria Casarès, Alloue, France / Dancing with the Angels, Sabrina Amrani Gallery, Madrid, Spain / Ubuntu, A Lucid Dream, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France / Africa Universe - Part 2, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy / Dear Summer, Standing Pine, Nagoya, JP / Signs of Times, Apalazzo Gallery, Brescia, Italy / Christian Dior, Designer of Dreams, M7, Doha, Qatar / The Black Era, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy / Voyages Immobiles, Le Grand Tour, Diptyque, Poste Du Louvre, Paris, France Socle du Monde Biennale, Heart Museum of Contemporary Art, Herning, Denmark / Revue Noire, A History of Contemporary African Art 2021, Musée les Abbatoirs, Toulouse, France.

ABDOULAYE KONATÉ

Born in 1953, Diré, Mali

Living and working in Bamako, Mali

Konaté was born in 1953 in Diré, Mali. He graduated from Institut National des Arts de Bamako with a degree in painting and went on to study for several years at the Higher Institute of Plastic Arts in Cuba. In Havana, he experienced the marvel of multidisciplinary art that left a lasting impression on him. In his early works on paper, the artist used acrylic to paint colourful signs, symbols, and motifs used predominantly in Malian society. Some of the most common ancestral images are the traditional dance masks adorned with elegant lines evoking the image of antelope. In the 1990s, his focus shifted from painting to large traditional Malian cotton tapestries. The space and volume became the heart of his artistic expression. Throughout his career, Abdoulaye Konaté has covered themes that deeply affect individuals and society, such as globalization, war, hunger for power, and the AIDS epidemic. In 1995 the artist created large textile work *Lutte contre de HIV*. The figurative artwork shows all the elements related to the struggles and suffering brought on by the disease, such as the red target on the man's chest marking him as infected. Konaté's work is exceptional for his skillful use of color. The layered hand-embroidered cotton ribbons artworks are bursting with a vibrant palette. Every colour has a meaning, and in a composition, they are carefully placed to tell a story. Abdoulaye Konaté make himself stand out for the use of cottons stripes that determines and creates shapes and volumes, on an aesthetic line affected from the traditional clothing of the native populations of Mali. He refuses to approach the rid of images available today. He works with simple and terribly effective means. He creates spaces for reaction, offers new perspectives inviting the viewer to make a thorough investigation of the meaning of art and of the place of man in the world. Influenced by the interest of the artist for the different gradations of colours, works cover a special narrative, telling a story more faint and less figurative to the eyes of the observer. Furthermore, the different shades will create a silent dialogue made by suggestions and emotions, direct to investigate and catch the closer gaze of the people, that astonished, will admire his artworks.

Recent solo and group exhibitions include: 2023: Abdoulaye Konaté: *Prélude*, LGDR, Paris, France; Abdoulaye Konaté - Recent works, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, IT / *Soft and weak like water*, 14th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, KR; 2022: Dakar Biennale, Senegal / *Still Alive*, Aichi Triennale, Aichi, Japan / Documenta Kassel 15, Kassel, Germany / *des Petits Fromats à Dakar*, Grand Théâtre National, Doudou Ndiaye Coumba Rose, Dakar, Senegal; 2021: Abdoulaye Konaté - *Les petits tableaux*, Primae Noctis Art Gallery, Lugano, Switzerland / Abdoulaye Konaté - *Lune Bleue*, Espace Dominique Bagouet, Montpellier / Abdoulaye Konaté , *The Diffusion of In- finite Things*, Standing Pine, Nagoya, Japan / *Africa Universe, Part II*, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy / *Next World – Taguchi Art Collection x Iwaki City Art Museum*, Iwaki City Art Museum, Fukushima, Japan; 2020: *Idéogrammes, signes, symboles et logos*, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town / “*Global(e) Resistance*” at Centre Pompidou, Paris / 14th Dak’Art Biennale of Contemporary Art 2020, Dakar, Senegal; 2019: *Couleurs d’âme*, Blain|Southern New York, US / *Africa Universe*, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan & Lugano; 2018: *Textile in Art*, The Red Door Gallery, Lagos, NG; 2017: *Etoffe des songes*, Galerie 38, Casablanca, MA; *Espace Expressions* CDG, Rabat, MA; 2016: Abdoulaye Konaté, Primae Noctis Art Gallery, Lugano, CH / Abdoulaye Konaté: *Symphonie en couleur*, Blain|Southern London, UK / Abdoulaye Konaté, Arken Museum for Moderne Kunst, Copenhagen, DK.

TROY MAKAZA

Born in 1995, Harare, Zimbabwe

Living and working in Harare, Zimbabwe

Troy Makaza is a graduate of the National Gallery School of Visual Art and Design (NG- SVAD), where he studied painting and sculpture. During his student years Makaza set about developing his own visual language, where sculpture and painting, abstract and figurative, mix in a new and innovative idiom. Troy Makaza has been mentored by senior artists such as Wycliffe Mundopa, Moffat Takadiwa and Gresham Tapiwa Nyaude. In 2015 he received the National Certificate in Fine Art from the National Gallery of Zimbabwe Visual Arts Studios. Through experimentation, Makaza came up with silicone infused with ink and paint, which he is able to mould, paint, weave and sculpt, thus allowing him to use a totally innovative medium, which leads to new shapes, structures and textures. Troy Makaza’ surreal works, woven from painted silicone strings, inhabit the space on both side of painting and sculpture, creating a threadlike spider web.

His is a broader examination of the fluid and in-flux relationships in contemporary Zimbabwe that bound together powerful metaphors for social and intimate spaces, where traditional values and liberal attitudes are no longer assured.

In his recent works, Troy has reflected on the cataclysmic events of November 2017 (and beyond), which saw the end of the 37-year rule of Robert Mugabe and the interplay between the military and people’s peaceful protest in bringing about the change. While abstract, his works pick up on and merge the colors of military fatigues and those of every day clothing as rumination on what it meant and what it will mean for Zimbabwe going forward. In all of Makaza’s works we find a very strong connection to his land, to his origins, to what is happening today or to what happened in the past.

Selected collections include: Fondazione Fiera Milano, Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden, Tiroche De Leon Collection, Jorge Perez Collection, Rollins Museum of Art, Florida, USA.

Recent solo and group exhibitions include: 2024 (upcoming): Zimbabwe Pavilion at the 60th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia, Italy; *Untwisting the Fantasy*, Galerie Poggi, Paris, France; 2022: Troy Makaza. *Instinct of great survivors*, Primo Marella Gallery, Lugano, Switzerland / *Kufa izuva rimwe*, First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare, Zimbabwe; 2021: *Africa Universe, Part II*, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy / Troy Makaza. *Dispatches from Zambesia*, Art Basel, Miami Beach, USA; *Age of Displacement*, First Floor Gallery Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe / 2020: *Africa Universe Chapter 2*, Troy Makaza: *Visceral Politics*, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan / 2019: *Welcome Home*, Museum of Modern African Art al Maaden, Macaal, Marrakesh, Morocco; *Kubatana*, Contemporary African Art Survey, Kunstlaboratorium, Norway / 2018: *Five Bhob*, Zeitz MoCAA, Cape Town, South Africa; *The Black Sphinx II*, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan; *Right at the Equator*, Depart Foundation, Los Angeles, USA; *Forever Neverland Solo*, First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare / 2017: *Another Antipodes*, PS Art Space, Fremantle, Australia; FNB Joburg Art Fair, First Floor Gallery Harare, Johannesburg, South Africa / 2016: *Bound Together solo*, First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare, Zimbabwe / 2015: *But He’s Got No Clothes On*, Commune 1 Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa; *Harare No Limits*, Harare International Festival of the Arts / *Kuyaruka: Age of Accountability*, First Floor Gallery Harare, Harare, Zimbabwe; 2014: *Green Shoots* (NGZ Visual Art Certificate Graduate exhibition), National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe; *Young Artists*, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

SAMUEL NNOROM

Born in 1990, Isiukwuato, Nigeria
Living and working in Nsukka, Nigeria

Samuel Nnorom studied sculpture at the University of Nigeria. He cumulates numerous workshops and residencies in England, South Africa and Nigeria, notably integrating G.A.S. in early 2022, the residency founded by Yinka Shonibare whose renowned exploration of wax fabric echoes that of Nnorom. He also took part in numerous group shows and art fairs between Nigeria and France, as well as being commissioned several times for public works in his home country. Nnorom is a three-time Life in My City Art Festival awardee and was the first-prize recipient of the iCreate Africa prize in 2019. In December 2022, he was named the overall winner of the annual international art initiative Art for Change Prize, his work being selected from over 2500 entries across 130 countries. He discovered his talent at the age of 9 years while assisting his father in his shoe workshop – where he started making life drawings of customers that visited the shop. He was also influenced by his mother tailoring workshop – as a kid who played with colourful, fabrics and sewing needles and thread. Since early childhood, elements that now shape his contemporary practice have surrounded him. Self-proclaimed “custodian of material culture”, Nnorom draws upon materiality in a unique way, dedicating his art to textile recycling and a sociological reflection on the human condition. Through actions like sewing, tying and cutting, the rising artist creates intricate constellations of fabric-covered foam balls meticulously stitched together, evoking a metaphor for a “fabric of society” composed of closed social structures forming the bubbles in which our daily lives are wrapped in. He navigates the boundaries between textiles, painting and sculpture in a poetic rendition. Using Ankara textiles – whose origins are complex in the history of the continent, Nnorom explores its protean symbolism and reappropriates a contemporary fabric omnipresent in his community. He is interested in the identity and meaning that fabrics represent especially the Ankara fabric which is mostly consumed in his local community and west Africa. Fabric suggests to him a social structure or social organization that weaves humanity into society; in the case of “fabric of society” or “social fabric”, it is peculiar to different societies while bubble suggests a structure that holds or stores something for a period of time. His mission is to engage viewers questioning the socio-political structures and the human conditions of our life: of what truth and conspiracy connote to our daily lives wrapped in bubbles.

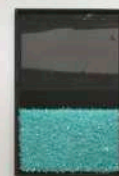
Recent solo and group exhibitions include: 2023, BISO International Biennial of Sculpture of Ouagadougou, Burkina-Faso; 2023: Truth and Conspiracy, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy / Matérialités, Galerie Revel, Paris, France / Points of Departure, Art Mûr, Montreal, Quebec, Canada / Dark Matter, Kates-Ferri Projects, New York, USA; 2022: Recycle Matter, Alexis Gallery Lagos, Nigeria / Matters of Essential, a Salon Show at Ko Artspace, Lagos Nigeria / Voices of Textile, Gallery Marion Chauvy, Paris, France; 2019: Wielding Power, Gallery At The Landmark, Lagos, Nigeria / Best work, Life in My City Art Festival, Enugu, Nigeria / First prize, Leatherworks, Icreate Africa, Landmark Centre Oniru Lagos, Nigeria / United States International Institute for Creative Development Exhibition, 4 Oguda Close Maitama Abuja, Nigeria / One Environment Hybrid Art Exhibition, Ceddi plaza Abuja, Nigeria / Top 100 - Life in My City Art Festival, 2018, Enugu, Nigeria; 2017: NNPC and Chevron Art Teacher's Certificate of Achievement, Lagos, Nigeria / Top 50 - Life in My City Art Festival, Lagos, Nigeria / African Art Resource Centre, National Museum Onikan Lagos, Nigeria; 2016: Spanish Art Competition, Thought Pyramid Art Center Abuja, Nigeria / Life in My City Art Festival, Enugu Nigeria; 2013: Contemporary Renaissance, FAA Departmental Gallery (October 9-11), Plateau, Nigeria / Splendid Art Exhibition, Faculty of law, University of Jos, Plateau, Nigeria / Puscat Art Competition, 2nd Prize Winner, Plateau Nigeria / African Art Resource Center, Art for Life, Lagos, NG.

MOFFAT TAKADIWA

Born in 1983, Karoi, Zimbabwe
Living and working in Harare, Zimbabwe

Born in 1983, Moffat Takadiwa lives and works on the outskirts of Harare in Mbare, one of the largest recycling centers in the country and an important hub for the informal economy. As one of the most acclaimed artists on the emerging African art scene, Takadiwa is known for his conceptual and intricate wall sculptures that are made from discarded materials, which often include spray-can debris, bottle caps and computer keyboard pieces. Exemplified in many of his works Takadiwa's practice draws attention on themes of spirituality, colonialism, cultural identity and environmental issues. Belonging to the post-independence generation, Since the earliest days of his artistic career, he has used his practice as a platform for the rehabilitation of his community, working with young local artists and designers, with a view to founding the world first artistic center based on the use of reclaimed materials. Takadiwa skilfully transforms the results of post-colonial disregard into free-flowing, earth-toned mosaics and other criss-cross patterns that connect us to current movements in Africa designed to decolonise the cultural landscape. Initially, the artist used found materials due to inaccessibility of what is considered 'conventional mediums' (like oils, acrylic and canvases) during difficult times in Zimbabwe. Takadiwa admits that, “Now, I think found materials help me say what I want to say...I use them more like evidence of how my society is living.” After gathering great quantities of these small objects and sorting them by color and shape, the artist weaves these discarded scraps into rich wall hangings. Once suspended, these post-industrial fabrics, through their intricate beauty, acquire an aura of ritual or totemic artifacts. Bottle caps, lids, medicine caps, toothpaste tubes, toothbrushes, rings and other disposable, everyday objects are given longevity and a second chance, by being weaved into organic forms and becoming part of detailed compositions that speak of Zimbabwean life and tradition. When describing his work, Takadiwa tells, “I feel my country background still dominates in my work. Reminiscences of tobacco farms and issues of the land and the environment are all influenced from my farm background.” In one of the largest landfills in the country, Takadiwa found beauty and his artistic aesthetic while shining light on the massive dumping grounds that cripple local industries in Zimbabwe, encouraging the viewer to question consumerism, commodity distribution and the imbalances in trade. The assembled tapestries play on the contrast between necessities and our daily vanities, questioning the distance between abundance and poverty.

Recent solo and group exhibitions include: 2024 (upcoming): Zimbabwe Pavilion at the 60th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia; 2023: Vestiges of Colonialism, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare (ZA) Zero Zero, Semiose, Paris, FR / 2022: The Bull, Semiose, Paris (FR) / Brutalized Language, Nicodim Gallery, New York, USA; Imagine !, FITE (Festival International des Textiles Extraordinaires), Musée Bargoin, Clermont-Ferrand, FR / Nous sommes tous des lichens, Musée d'art contemporain de la Haute Vienne - Château de Roche - chouart, FR; 2021: VaForomani ndimi mawondonga purazi / Mr. Foreman, you have destroyed the land, Semiose, Paris, FR / Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, USA / Old Growth - New Decay: Environmental Justice, Environmentalism and Sustainability, Guggenheim Gallery, Orange, USA; 2019: Son of The Soil, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, USA; 2018: Framed in Colonial Lenses, Raw Spot Gallery, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, ZA; 2017: Say Hello to English, Tyburn Gallery, London, UK; La Sfinge Nera: dal Marocco al Madagascar, Primo Marella Gallery, Milano, IT / Chinafrika, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, DE / Chinafrika, Kunstfest Weimar, DE / De Nature en Sculpture, Villa Datris Foundation, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, FR / Le jour qui vient, Galerie des Galeries, Galeries Lafayette, Parigi, FR / Collector's Stage, Art Stage Singapore, SG; 2016: Across Borders, Whatiftheworld, Città del Capo, ZA / Dear Europa..., Whatiftheworld, Città del Capo, ZA.



UNUSUAL MATERIALS AND FORMS FOR A NEW AESTHETIC

COMING FROM SELECTED AFRICAN ARTISTS

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