

TEMPLON

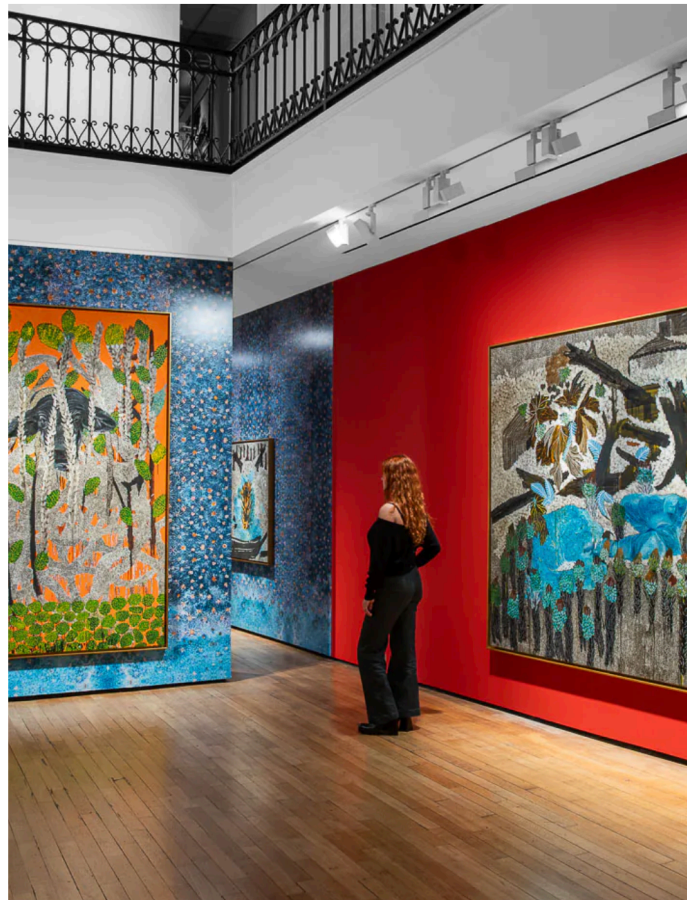


OMAR BA

WAAU, December 12, 2024

TEMPLON presents "Kaïdara" by Omar Ba

Omar Ba is returning to Paris after a six-year absence with a brand-new project. Leading light of the French art book world Diane de Selliers invited Omar Ba to illustrate the famous Fulani narrative, Kaïdara, as collected and transcribed by Malian writer Amadou Hampâté Bâ.



Omar Ba has dedicated more than a year to the creation of a magnum opus comprising nearly forty works inspired by this now-classic of African literature.

Mirroring the free verse allegorical poem from 1968, the exhibition recounts the story of three traveling companions guided by a mysterious and omniscient voice to the hidden land of the dwarf-spirits. They meet eleven enigmatic figures, including a chameleon, a scorpion and an inexhaustible spring, embodying a philosophical and spiritual significance that encourages them to continue their journey until they finally meet Kaïdara, the god of knowledge and gold. On their return journey the only traveller to survive will be the one who aspires to nothing more than knowledge and has rid himself of his material possessions.

Omar Ba depicts an array of hybrid figures and ancestral references emerging from backgrounds first covered in black, yellow and orange paint. He offers us a poetic cosmogony in an explosion of colours, motifs and textures, subtly translating the mysteries and lessons that pave the path to Kaïdara. The exhibition, far more than a simple illustrative work, gives the artist an opportunity to explore African realities and myths.

Omar Ba is one of the African painters whose complex oeuvre has captivated the international contemporary art scene since the 2010s. After studying at the École nationale des beaux-arts in Dakar, he furthered his training in Geneva, Switzerland. His unique style merges African and Western influences in a body of work that explores themes such as international politics, demographic challenges, societal changes, and the environment. Questioning notions of identity and power, his art, often metaphorical and dreamlike, offers a politically engaged perspective on the place of the African continent in today's world.