

TEMPLON



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ALIOUNE DIAGNE

JOKKOO

6 March – 27 April 2025



Basketball Duality - Bère Basket, 2024, acrylic on canvas, 152 x 152 cm

After the resounding success of Alioune Diagne’s Senegalese pavilion at the 60th Venice Biennale international art exhibition, TEMPLON New York unveils the very first show of this rising star of the African art scene on American soil. “Jokkoo”, which means connection or linking in Wolof, features a group of approximately thirty canvases, that offer a cross-examination between of the artist’s home country and the United States.

As soon as the visitors step through the door, they are immersed in the dynamic universe of the artist filled with an infinite array of “unconscious signs” that blend writing and enigmatic symbols. They reveal complex and personal perspectives on the African diaspora, from scenes of local markets to seascapes populated by boats used for clandestine immigration.

Diagne focuses on the intermingling of cultures between Afro-American and continental African communities. The thousands of pastel-colored calligraphic patterns illustrate the artist’s unique standpoint, one that emphasizes the similarities between these communities, which have been scared by centuries of colonial violence and are now in search of a new identity on the international stage. Diagne reflects on one facet of this forged identity: sports and its culture. The Afro-American basketball players subtly revealed in his canvases represent the American dream, success, and the very essence of freedom. They serve as a source of inspiration for the younger generation of Senegalese, who, when asked about their future, gaze across the Atlantic.

In other paintings, scenes of wrestling - one of the most popular combat sports in Africa and a practice taught at American universities – can also be observed. Through this cultural lens, Alioune Diagne portrays a shared culture, a pan-African identity increasingly asserted in the vibrant protests of Black Lives Matter.

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“The younger generations in Africa no longer envisage a career on their continent,” explains Alioune Diagne. “Their sights are set on the success of the Afro-American community in cultural fields such as sports and music. I want to show them that there is a future for them on the African continent. They need to believe and invest in their countries. There’s no reason there can’t be an African dream, just like the American dream.”

Born in 1985 in Kaffrine, Senegal, Alioune Diagne lives and works in Senegal and France. After studying at the Dakar École des Beaux-Arts in 2008, Alioune Diagne developed an imaginary script as a universal language and intimate account of fragments of his life in Dakar and on his travels. A socially engaged artist, he opens the door to a deep-seated exploration of the major challenges facing the world today: ecology, the place of women in society, racism and the notions of transmission and heritage. His work has featured in a variety of solo and group exhibitions in Europe, Africa and Asia since 2011, including Sink or Swim at the 11th Dakar Biennale, Villa Spivey, Dakar, Senegal (2014), Itinéraire en Couleurs at Espace Jean Drevon, Saint-Jean-de-Bournay, France (2014), the off-site show at Art Basel, Switzerland (2017), and Un nouveau regard, Aosta, Italy (2017). His work has also been part of the national art collection of Senegal since 2019 and featured in the 2022 Dakar biennale exhibition at the national theatre in Dakar. In 2023 he won the Norval Foundation Public Vote Prize and saw his work exhibited in the Netherlands as part of the group exhibition Africa Supernova and at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen with the solo exhibition Ndox-Glint. Galerie Templon in Paris held the Seede exhibition of his work in January 2024. And in April 2024 the artist had the honour of representing his country on the Senegalese pavilion at the 60th Venice Biennale international art exhibition with the project Bokk - Bounds. He has been represented by Galerie Templon since 2022.