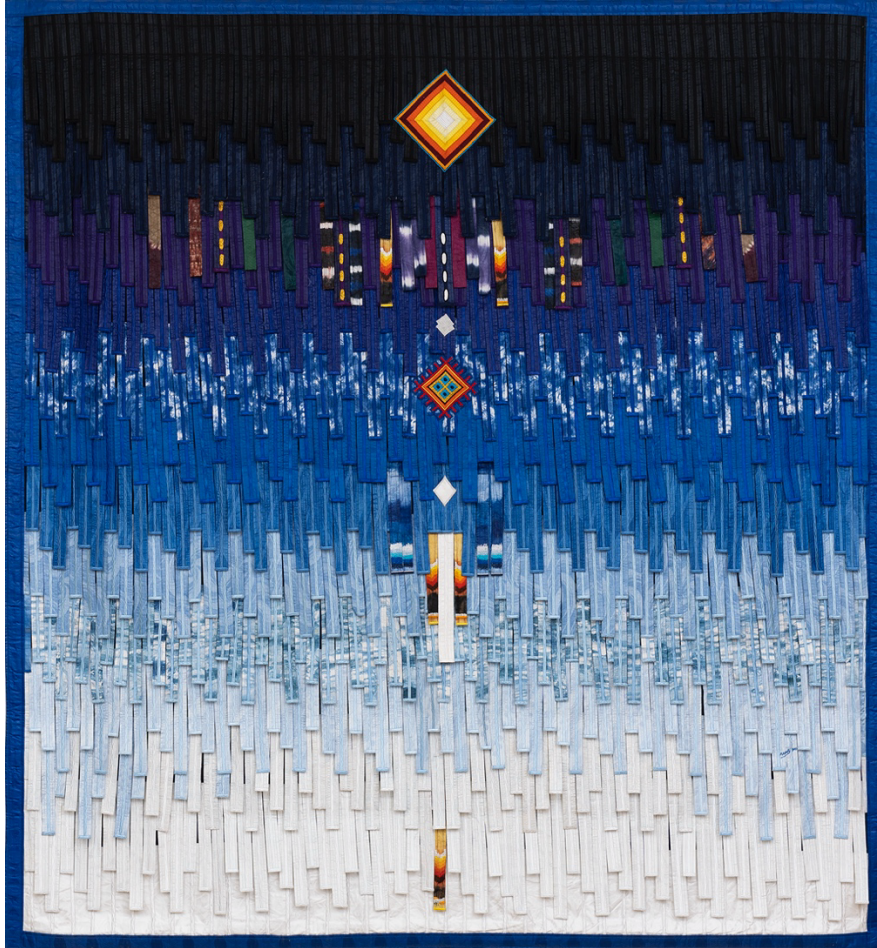


TEMPLON



Press release
29 March 2024

ABDOULAYE KONATÉ
L'âme des signes/The Soul of Signs
24 April – 15 June 2024



Composition bleue avec losanges - motif Tibet, 2023
Textile (Bazin and Kente), 95 × 88 in.

Malian artist Abdoulaye Konaté is exhibiting his work for the very first time at Galerie Templon. The gallery's Brussels space is hosting the L'Âme des Signes/The Soul of Signs exhibition, a brand new series of eight textile pieces.

Abdoulaye Konaté, known as the Master, was born in 1953 in Diré, Mali. He is a leading figure on the African contemporary art scene. In the 1990s, he swapped canvas and brushes for needle and thread as fabric developed into his favourite medium. His work combines Western modernism with African symbolism, addressing social and political issues such as religious fanaticism and social justice with a complex and shimmering palette that has become his signature over the years.

The Soul of Signs exhibition covers the gallery walls in majestic hand-embroidered canvases. The artist creates them using offcuts of African Bazin fabric which he dyes then rearranges in entrancing shaded tones, from fiery red to midnight blue, emerald green to golden yellow. "Nature is an endless source of colour inspiration to me," explains the artist. "A butterfly, a bird, a chameleon or a starry sky inspire me every day to come up with new pigments."

Konaté uses fine thread to embroider mysterious linguistic symbols on his multi-hued canvases. He finds the symbols during his travels, on the rim of 16th-century Tunisian ceramics, for instance, or at the heart of Berber art museums. "These marks have their own soul because they bear within them the heritage of a culture," explains the artist. "Today's generations have a duty to ensure that not everything is forgotten, to make use of these keys to our past and adapt them to contemporary society."

Born in 1953 in Diré, Mali, Konaté lives and works in Bamako. He is a visual artist and major figure on the contemporary art scene of his country and the African continent. After graduating from the Institut National des Arts of Bamako in 1976, he studied at the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba, from 1978 to 1985. He headed the Exhibitions Division at the Musée National du Mali from 1985 to 1997 before taking charge of the Palais de la Culture in Bamako and Rencontres Photographiques de Bamako from 1998 to 2002. He then took up the post of head of the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers Multimédia "Balla Fasseké Kouyaté" in Bamako, Mali.

His work has been shown in numerous solo exhibitions, including at the Espace Dominique Bagouet in Montpellier (2021), Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town (2020), Fondation CDG in Rabat, Morocco (2017), Arken Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen(2016), Fondation Festival sur le Niger in Mali (2012), Galerie Nationale d'Art in Dakar (2011), Biennale d'Art Contemporain in Dakar (2010), Forum für Kunst in Germany (2009), Musée National du Mali in Bamako (1992), and Musée de l'IFAN in Senegal (1992). He has been invited to take part in a wide range of group exhibitions, such as at La Villette in Paris (2017), 57th Venice Biennale (2017), Biennale d'Art Contemporain in Dakar (2016), Norrköping Konstmuseum in Sweden (2015), National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute in the USA (2013), Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2013), Stedelijk Museum in the Netherlands (2012), Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris (2011), Bienal de La Habana in Cuba (2009), Gwangju Biennale in South Korea (2008), Documenta – Kassel in Germany (2007), and Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels (2003).

His work features in public collections at institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the USA, Smithsonian Museum in the USA, Stedelijk Museum in the Netherlands and D'ak'art, Biennale de l'Art Africain Contemporain in Senegal.