

# TEMPLON



Press release

July 15, 2025

OMAR BA

PROMISES AND GLORY

3 September – 25 October 2025

Opening reception 3 september from 5 to 8pm



*Promises and Glory*, 2025, acrylic, pencil, oil, indian ink and bic pen on canvas, 200 × 150cm—78 ¾ × 59 in.

Exactly three years after his exhibition *Right to the Soil, Right to Dream*, Omar Ba returns to Galerie Templon's New York space with a compelling ensemble of approximately thirty new and previously unseen works, signalling a defining moment in the artist's practice. Recently established in New York, Ba now positions his work in direct engagement with the city's cultural and political landscape—a shift palpable throughout the exhibition, which navigates the tensions and affinities between local rootedness and transatlantic resonance.

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## II

Oscillating between Dakar and New York, Ba unveils a body of work informed by his attentive exploration of the historical and contemporary ties between African communities on the continent and the African diasporas of North America. Deeply imbued with the texture of this American context, his paintings probe overlapping memories, shared legacies, and the often-unseen bonds of diasporic kinship.

Executed in a range of media—including acrylic, oil, pencil, Indian ink and Bic pen—Omar Ba's canvases depict striking portraits, both bust-length and full-figure, that appear to emerge from void-like grounds, suspended within richly layered pictorial spaces. Some meet the viewer's gaze with a disarming directness, drawing us into their contemplative presence. While his earlier oeuvre was populated by chimerical, hybrid beings, this new series embraces an unprecedented realism—manifested through frontal, pared-down figures that speak with quiet intensity.

The visages on display carry the weight of a shared transatlantic history. They embody the aspirations, struggles, disillusionments and enduring hopes of a fragmented yet culturally united diaspora. Through these works, Ba invokes a subterranean sense of fraternity—one frequently overshadowed by political divisions and identity fractures, yet persistently alive. Rather than emphasising discord or separation, Ba chooses to illuminate resonance and proximity, offering a vision of dignity and possibility. It is a call to build solidarity through recognition of what binds rather than what divides.

Born in Dakar in 1977, Omar Ba is widely recognised as one of the most singular voices in contemporary African painting. Having studied at the École nationale des beaux-arts in Dakar and later in Geneva, Ba has exhibited extensively, both individually and collectively. His work has been shown at major institutions including the United Nations Headquarters, New York (2024); Kunsthalle de Mulhouse, France (2023); the Baltimore Museum of Art; FIAF Gallery, New York (2022); the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (2022); Contemporary Calgary, Canada (2020); the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (2019); The Power Plant, Toronto (2019); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2020); Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (2017); Bozar, Brussels (2017); Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan (2017); the Natural History Museum of Le Havre (2017); the Royal Academy of Arts, London; and the Dakar Biennale (2014, 2022). His works are held in numerous public collections, including those of the Centre National des

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Arts Plastiques (France), the Centre Pompidou, the Louis Vuitton Collection (Paris), the Swiss National Collection (Basel), and the Louvre Abu Dhabi.