CARAVAN & DAKART NEWS present

SYMBOLS OF LIFE
Beyond Perception

An Artistic Exploration of The Human Soul

Djibril Coulibaly & Tidiane Ndongo

Curated by Rémy Mallet

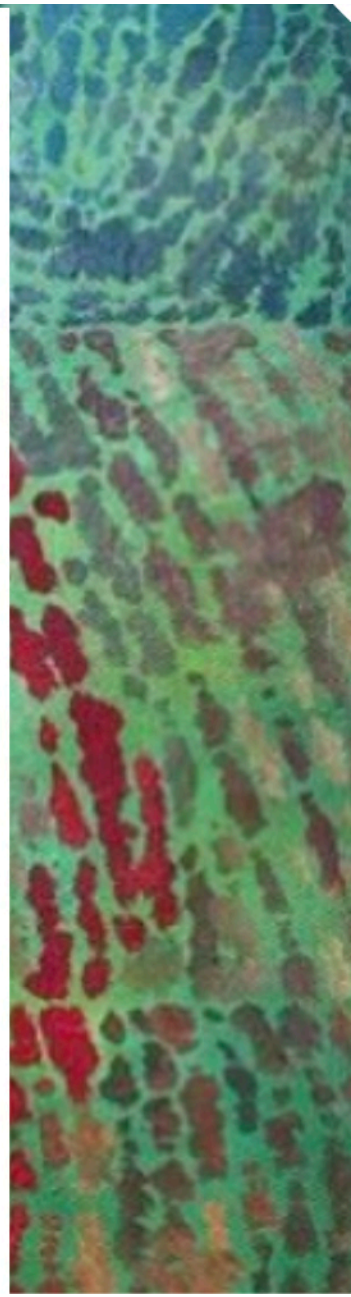
DAKAR SENEGAL | HOTEL Le Djollof

7 November - 7 December, 2024

In the context of the DAK'ART 2024, the Dakar Biennale of Contemporary African Art, as part of the OFF program, CARAVAN & DAKART NEWS are proud to present the "**Symbols of Life: Beyond Perception**" which brings together the work of two remarkable artists whose creations delve into the heart of symbols and the essence of life itself: Djibril Coulibaly & Tidiane Ndongo.

Symbols are more than mere visual elements; they are the language through which humanity expresses and understands its deepest truths. What concerns these artists' approach is less the imitative reproduction of objects than the vitality that animates them. They invite an alternative relationship with our world. Their images are not equations of objects, to quote the late president Léopold Sédar Senghor, but "symbols and suggestions." Their artwork, rich in symbolism, encourages us to look beyond the surface and reflect on universal themes such as identity, resilience, transformation, heritage, and transmission. Each piece tells a story, using powerful symbols to evoke reflections on the human condition and shared experiences. The artists employ various media and techniques, offering a unique visual and sensory experience that resonates well beyond the initial glance.

"**Symbols of Life: Beyond Perception**" is an invitation to contemplate and engage with works that, by their very nature, prompt us to reflect on and appreciate life, and its multiple facets more deeply.



The Artist

Djibril Coulibaly

Djibril COULIBALY, born in 1996 in Dakar, Senegal, is an emerging artist, a member of the Mouride Sufi brotherhood. His artistic practice is deeply rooted in his faith and spirituality. Throughout his artistic journey, he has been on a quest for a personal imprint, an original touch that would distinguish his work.

This search led him to deep spiritual meditation and perpetual solitude, relentlessly exploring the various facets of his artistic expression. Day after day, he immersed himself in reflection and creation, seeking a unique signature that would speak to his inner essence and his connection with the world.

In 2024, after meditating on Surah Al-Imran, which speaks of God's signs in creation and the alternation of day and night, he had a revelation. Contemplating his fingers, he discovered a whirlwind of signs in his fingerprints, a natural and universal motif that could embody his artistic vision. He creates unique fingerprint art.

"*My works are not meant to be looked at but to be meditated upon.*"

- Djibril Coulibaly

The Art of Djibril Coulibaly

The Artist

Tidiane Ndongo

Tidiane NDONGO was born in 1970 in Bamako, Mali. In 1994, he decided to learn the bogolan (mudcloth) technique from Youssouf Sidibé Nelly in Bamako-Coura, a popular neighborhood in the Malian capital. Bogolan is a traditional indigenous painting technique using clay, plants, roots, and more.

While adhering to the traditional techniques Tidiane developed his own unique style, which he named "Dogodogoni," meaning labyrinth, in the language of Bambara. For him, it is a labyrinth that hides behind geometric signs, an entire history, wealth, tradition, and even a civilization. For Tidiane, Dogodogoni is akin to a chameleon: a symbol of surprise, discovery, reflection, change, and adaptation. In essence, Dogodogoni represents both the style and philosophy of Tidiane.

An avid reader and admirer of sacred texts, Tidiane sometimes incorporates writings into his canvases, blending them with his visual expression. For him, meeting, observing, listening, walking, touching, speaking—all are forms of reading. Tidiane's motto is: "To know myself, to be myself, for myself." This is not selfishness; he believes that self-knowledge is the best way to progress and open up to others. This is the path he tries to follow to free himself from the physical, cultural and religious barriers around him. Tidiane is convinced that "humans are a mix of flaws and qualities, which they display according to circumstances." His work continuously develops this conviction, aiming to make it universal and timeless.

The Art of Tidiane Ndongo

The Curator & Organiser

Rémy Mallet

Rémy Mallet is an art journalist. He worked several years in Bonn, for Deutsche Welle, the German public international broadcaster. Mallet is the founder of DakartNews, an online platform that promotes contemporary African visual artists.

Through DakartNews, Mallet is dedicated to showcasing contemporary African artists, from Senegal and West Africa, firmly believing in the ability of art to unite people and act as a powerful catalyst for intercultural dialogue. The platform operates in English to reach a global audience, bridging diverse cultures and fostering cross-cultural understanding on an international scale.

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Transformation through the Arts

The International Art Partner

CARAVAN

CARAVAN is an international arts non-profit/NGO recognized as a global leader in using the arts to further our global quest for a more harmonious future, both with each other and with the earth. CARAVAN's mission is based on the belief that the arts can be one of the most effective mediums to heal our world and to creatively foster peace, harmony, wholeness and health in all its forms. CARAVAN's experience demonstrates that the arts can be one of the most strategic approaches to enhance understanding, bring respect, enable sharing, and deepen relationships between diverse peoples, cultures and spiritual traditions. CARAVAN's artistic initiatives have resulted in unprecedented partnerships with renowned and emerging artists from all over the globe, using art to transform our world.

Paul G. Chandler is the Founding President of CARAVAN. He is an author, curator, non-profit executive, interfaith peacemaker, intercultural bridgebuilder, and authority on the Middle East, Africa and the Abrahamic spiritual traditions. He is also a sought-after guide on the all-embracing spirituality of the early 20th century Lebanese born poet-artist Kahlil Gibran, the best-selling author of *The Prophet*.

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THE VENUE

Hotel Le Djoloff, Dakar

Le Djoloff Hotel is located in Dakar, in the heart of the vibrant Fann Hock district. It had been a very popular venue for bar-dancing during the early 1980s and 90s. It is truly an architectural pearl combining tradition with modernity, for this establishment was completely rehabilitated in 2008 by Yves and Ella Laplace—aficionados of the African continent.

Transformed into a charming hotel, Le Djoloff mixes a West African-inspired architecture with local materials and furniture created by Senegalese artists, whose works decorate its walls and fill its furniture. Today, Le Djoloff hosts a vibrant mix of distinguished travelers and renowned artists, offering an ambiance that is both intimate, artistic, and welcoming.

In 2017, it has also opened up a jazz club in its basement, thereby resurrecting the hotel's long musical tradition. This unique place, with its terrace overlooking Dakar's Soumbédioune Bay, offers an experience that combines elegance, comfort, and an ethical and ecological approach, including its newest buildings made of compressed earth bricks and its environmentally-friendly air conditioning system.

Le Djoloff

HOTEL LE DJOLOFF

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EXHIBITION TIMELINE

START DATE: 7 November 2024
OPENING EVENT: 9 November 2024
END DATE: 7 December 2024

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