

Exhibitions and Visual Arts Development: “Narrating History in the Mirror of Own History”

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Abstract

Grounding the account of Dak'Art on Exhibitions that showcased emergent African and Other non-western art productions, processes and styles, this article avers a history. Instrumental to impacting visibility for modern and contemporary African art in the international arena and the comprehensive contexts of African artistic modernity in the 20th century, these shows are grounds for feasible links of African history and art historical developments. In the creation of storylines, shows in the past did not only function as locations of display but conveyor-belts of repeats, reincarnations and recalibrations characteristic of African art and its histories in perpetual flux (Belting 2009:54). Dak'Art 2022 narrates the deft celebration of diversity, liberty and freedom of expression. This essay looks at the works of three (3) artists to reflect Art That Speaks in Many Voices' and its paradigm shifts. Indeed, Dak'Art 2022 constructs narratives of art modernism, modernity and contemporaneity that significantly make exhibitions active means in those narratives.

Keywords:

Modernity,
Contemporaneity
repeats,
Reincarnations and
Recalibrations;
Perpetual flux

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Background to the Study

The first *Dak'Art* (December 1990) *Biennale des Lettres Dakar*, was dedicated to first Senegalese president Leopold Senghor (1960-1980). Staged as a literary festival made-up of four panels: African languages, cultural production, African aesthetics, and the connection between Africa and its Diaspora. *Dak'Art* was geared to present an Africa-centered vision of international contemporary art by concentrating on artists with ties to Africa.

Tendances et Confrontations, was organized as a module of the 1966 festival. That exposition is viewed by many art historians as foreshadowing *Dak'Art* biennials with major exhibitions of modern and contemporary African art that have bloomed: *Africa Explores* at Museum of African Art in New York (1991); *Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa* at the Whitechapel gallery, London (1995); *The Short Century* (Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, 15 February-22 April 2001; Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin 18 May-29 July 2001; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 8 September-30 December 2001; P.S.1 New York 10 February-5 May 2002); and *Africa Remix* (Museum Kunst Palast, Dusseldorf, 24th July-7th November 2004; Hayward Gallery, London 10th February-17th April 2005; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris 25th May-8th Aug. 2005; Mori Art Museum 27th May-31st August 2006; Johannesburg Art Gallery 24th June-30th September 2007).

Presenting African artistic modernism in the 20th century these shows maintained fairs as epistemological grounds for congenial links of African history and art history. As art chronological storylines, however, Belting (2009:54) emphasizes that Exhibitions in the past did not only serve as sites of display but were active agents in telling stories that reflected the times and spaces of emergent visual histories.

Following that trend, this article tracks exhibitions as significant sites of knowledge construction and mechanisms inputting narratives of art modernism, modernity and contemporaneity. The emergence of *Dak'Art* as the first biennial in Africa, in the 1990s, re-shaped Africa's engagement with the international art world. It catalysed changes in artistic identity, proficiency, and mobility by African artists everywhere, who began to construct new forms of social engagement and aesthetic production.

This paper focuses on (I) a discourse of *Dak'Art* 2022, its intellectual groundings, practice and processes; art and art history as an elongation of the discourses initiated by key artists of *Dak'Art* 2016: Ehikhamenor (Nigeria) and Limoud (Egypt); and (II) a hermeneutic discourse of the artwork of Abdoulaye Konate (Mali) a participating visual artist; to demonstrate the inflection of the new regime of images and imageries that state the spirit of the age. *Dak'Art*, now in its 14th edition, is funded solely by the government of Senegal. Artists and cultural producers from the continent and its diaspora converge in Dakar for the fiesta. 2022's biennale (postponed from 2020 due to the pandemic) titled "*I Ndaffa*", a *Serer* expression, resonates as "*Out of the Fire*", alluding to a blacksmith's forge, where material is transformed, and meanings are made. Dakar itself is metaphorically its cauldron, with sprawling shows and events known as "*Le OFF*".

An intellectual sparkle, the sense of myriad projects hatched and advanced with a pan Africanist/ global South orientation energy that booms beyond its main curated events. Most regulars come for the *OFF*. The lead curated show is held in a former courthouse now maintained in an evocative state of decay. *OFF* spans a display of ground-breaking conceptual projects that echo the ethos and regime of the epoch. Reflecting the millennium and man's being-in-the-world is symbolized in the artworks. These works are the icons that tell of that time and space. Space permits understanding of how things and events relate to one another. The concept of time plays a crucial role in that analogy. Exhibitions are readings of the sequence of arty things. The celebration of happenings defines time. Hence, defining time relative to happenings, events appear as demarcations. Space renders a void when lacking occasions that delineate time. Space as an accessory to things locates images forged in time. Consciousness of time crystallizes in what humans do. Such awareness undergirds the expectations in exhibition. Artists' creations translate as cultural codes. These define time within the limitlessness of space in graphic Lines, shapes and forms.

"In a bloom of one thousand flowers", Dak'Art 2022 artists in a fever of post-independence expressed in their art the ethos of freedom and in personal expressions reflected spontaneous emotions and sensibilities that echoed the remnant of self. Art aggregates to the remnants of an artist's encounter with the sensible world of sight, touch, and feeling (Shahn, 1957). The effect was romanticism undergirding personal self-interests unpacked narcissisms inflecting a withdrawal to interiority, subjectivism and the interrogation of self. In celebrations of diversity the artists presented ways of seeing their art worlds. In adroit narratives and engaging new materials: the renewables and the ready-mades, artists broke away from the One Story/ One Narrative and "totalizations of knowledge".

Indeed, with a nose in the air for the spirit of the dawn, artists foisted their own discourses. Hence, in unique feats of shapes and forms, and authentic visual metaphors crystallise the accumulation of human actions symbolically arrested and stored as cultural codes that the artworks recite. This is the demand that this study as *"history of things"* in history represents.

The visual artist plays diverse roles as a visible member of community, within its social and cultural space. Artists generate metaphors, as much as they make up the ever-changing identity of themselves and society. Artists' memories instinctively stored are dependable retrievers of memory as Images and imageries driven on as visual information for all to see and read.

Gleaning the Artistic Substance

Disaggregation of the colonial world was initiated with independence in the colonial territories; but the intellectual leadership of that world remained in the hands of the former masters. However, the collapse of the Enlightenment paradigm forced emancipation and a revelation of truth: the Black contribution to the dynamism of the intellectual new world order was a *sine qua non* to the future. It is on this threshold that the philosophical posture *Negritude* rebounds. Engagement with literary paradigms, specifically Texts that charge black resistance, such as the philosophy of *Negritude*, with

inspiration from Philosophy and Poetry, particularly Jean-Paul Sartre's ground-breaking *Anthology of African and West Indian Poetry*, edited by Sedar-Senghor (1948); and Aime Cesaire's *Poetry and Knowledge*; extensive in anti-Cartesian knowledge that inspired the cultural roles of the poetic imagination. It is, therefore, necessary to briefly discuss Sartre's "aesthetic historicism" and its response to the Enlightenment paradigm that informed the "natural synthesis" 1960s regarding the place of imagination, poetry and myth-making to bear on a conversation on the inflection of Cesairean poetry and Sartre's essay *Black Orpheus* (1967). Indeed, *negritude* is key to black consciousness, and points to its entrenching of poetry and myth in the creation of awareness, culture and community.

Sartre like the anti-Platonic philosophers insisted that to understand earlier societies, a study of language and myth were indispensable, while emphasising the role of imagination and mythopoeic creation in the development of history. That vision is appropriately called "aesthetic historicism". Grant (2018) claims that such a man-made method of historical criticism presents a history that connects mind's eye, metaphor and myth to the creation of the gods by the poet. This suggests ways of knowing that connects reason. Like the anthropologists and psychologists that emerged in the 20th century, the unconscious communicates the unknown by way of symbols. These symbols purchase a social function. Living symbols compel unconscious participation and bestow a life-enhancing effect. Symbols of this latter kind, woven into mythic structures shape culture. Myth is the ruling element of the individual and society; worked over and explicated by awareness and group consciousness. Myths, poetry, and art are the dynamics for understanding the spirit of a culture in a given age. Hence, in the search for truth, it is authoritative to begin with imagination. This is the search for and the figural significations whereby they are incarnated in their symbolic transformations in history".

The Texts and Poetry

Let's explore how the foregoing notions of poetry and myth to see how insightful they are to how the poetry of *negritude* accomplishes the task of imaginatively reconstituting the identity, culture and history of people despite colonial domination. I hope to show that poetry fits the model of a myth-making poetic. Hence, the visual artist in attempting to "reinvent" himself/ herself engages the force of lyrical language akin to the manner of the myth-making power of the *negritude* poets, who actively evoke and elevate black identity. The humanistic study of Language and its undercurrents of poetry gives the study of man and nature a fuller discursive frame. Coupled with poetic imagination and its profound knowledge, its lyrical language deepens the nature of being.

Cesaire claimed that "at the heart of poetic knowledge" lies a mobilisation of cosmic and human forces. This governs the poem in the entirety of experience that it unknots. Further claiming that myth binds us to the source of being the mythopoeic imagination connects us to nature, ancestry and history. Cesaire points out that the unconscious which all poetry appeals to is the receptacle of the kinship that connects man to nature. Poets have long known that life cannot proceed with-out symbols and myth.

Great poetry, like Sedar-Senghor's *Anthology of the New Black and Malagasy Poetry* and its Introductory essay *Orphee Noir* culled from Jean-Paul Sartre's *What is Literature and Other Essays* (1988); and the Poetry of Aime Cesaire create a living counter-myth from the insights, sentiments, thoughts and visions of black poets. Hutton (1972) reminds us that it is not man's existential involvement with the physical world that is crucial for the way man fashions his own nature. Instead, Hutton insists that the process of creation is entirely the product of imagination; indeed, imaginative creation is the means by which man's consciousness of the world unfolds. Reminiscent of the Negro Renaissance poet Langston Hughes' *A Dream Differed*, the black artists' dream of a renaissance does not die, instead it explodes in ground-breaking spectacles. These feverish reincarnations are imploded in cyclic fluxes akin to the python's movements in feats "*resumptions, disappearances, and repetitions*", all captured and metamorphosed in spite of their evanescent memorials in symbols.

How Did the Artists Do It

The artist in Sartrean language is likened, thusly:

"Orpheus going to claim Eurydice from Plato....it is by letting himself fall in trance, by rolling on the ground like a possessed man tormented by himself, by singing his own anger, by exhibiting his wounds, his life torn short, by becoming most lyrical, that the black poet is most certain of creating a great collective poetry" (Sartre, 1967)

In dream-like fashion, the artist's decent into himself dares like Sartre's "*Orpheus to claim Eurydice from Pluto*"; transposes the pictorial elements, for example, the artist Abdoulaye Konate engaging traditional African fabrics such as the *Ewe Kente*. Simulating the "weave and weft processes" of *Kente* and its design elements onto his artworks by becoming lyrical in thoughts and imaginative creation, the consciousness of his world develops. In rejection of rationalist "*natural synthesis*", but in espousal of the mythopoeic imagination Konate plunges deep into his true world of "*dream and childhood innocence*", connecting to nature, culture, ancestry and history. True to the *Sankofa* dicta, a resort to "*the aesthetic principles and values of the past*", as a groundswell for understanding the intuitions of modern expression; Konate tapped into the "*collective consciousness*" to recast cultural memories engaging the strategies and media of modernism. Thusly, enacting a personalised discursive space for the narrating of postcolonial visual production that shocked the world, Abdoulaye made Africa's contribution to "*universal civilization*".

Konate's art offers nuanced commencements in surfeits of fleeting memorials that set a razor-cutting *pictorial turn*. Challenging the neocolonial power games, *No to Terrorism* and *Death Sentence* (Figs. 4 & 5) unveil and devastate the traditional western compartmentalisation system of signs. In fact, the artworks discuss African artistry as the overarching mechanism of change that affects a de-centering point of view from the erstwhile "*natural synthesis*" cognomen. In *reale politique*, these position-takings framed in artistry; symbolically recast the Sartrean and Foucaultian metaphor of power through the opposition *invisible/ visible* in political assertiveness. Indeed, these images inflect on Black arts contemporaneity by simply "*unpacking*" coloniality. These works replete the

framing of expressions of consciousness recited in international Shows like *Magicienne de la Terre* (1989) and *Africa Remix* (2007)

Historical and Geo-Political Contexts

The Texts: *Revue Noire* and *NKA* (henceforth, *RN & N*) and Konate's *oeuvre* inspired the collapse of the “*Dakario*” paradigm hyped on the simulacra's of Kwame Nkrumah's *Sankofa* ideological *cultural turn* (1965) with its idiosyncratic notions of consciousness in self-independence, project the plurality of the personality of the artist.

Abdoulaye's expressions force to the notice Simon Njami's distinctions between Africa and Africans, between identity and nationality; between expression and politics (2016). Hence, by dint of artistic intuition and “*the critical light shed by anthropology on cultural relativity and intercultural relationships*”, the *Magicienne de la Terre* Show (1989) heuristically legitimized and synchronically established the direction of the *oeuvre* of artists and the discourses of art.

Parting ways with the French academy and set traditions of exhibition-making, inserting a storyline rooted in idiosyncrasies of artistic slants reflecting distinctive *oeuvres*, contexts; history and styles, emerged. Hence, with perspectives that recognized the former colonial places' sovereignty, and the critical lenses of academe's leading lights like Jean-Paul Sartre and a host of others debunking western arrogance, the West made gestures supportive of art and artistic styles from the emergent world of Africa.

Well-travelled artists, therefore, became the meteors of the new art world canvassed by *RN* and *N*. Crucial to the role of providers of essential changes and of transformations heralded by the exhibitions and the Texts that they recited, there was the urgency to take a critical look at the complex phenomena represented by *transvanguardism*. Konate should be perceived as a qualified individual straddling the hypothesized tracks of artistic globalizations initiated by *RN & N*, all hemmed on the coattails of key European sponsored Shows of the time: *Seven Stories about Africa* (1969), *Magiciens de la Terre* (1989) and *Africa-Remix* (2007) offer a short-term reaping of that artistic substance.

Dak'Art 2016 and the Pale of history” (Graves, 2016), maintained that the unravelling from the Negritude foundations of Dakarois modernist ideology and universalistic hypothesis, artworks by Victor Ehikhamenor and Youseff Limoud hailed an emergent pictorial turn. Indeed, in the re-calibrations of imageries, the diverse paintings of Ehikhamenor declaim the universalist dicta of Dakarois negritude inflecting the outlining of *RN & N* as the intellectual grounds that inspired the breakup of that paradigm. With conceptual picture making tooling mechanisms and the story-telling traditions of Nigeria, Ehikhamenor affected a cutting-edge vista in imageries and language reminiscent of. *RN & N*; Limoud's artwork reflect the poetics of the three dimensional cardboard style of Body Isek Kingelez, and the “fun cities” of Peter Fischli & David Weiss.

Furthering that discourse, artists of *Dak' Art 2022* in sync with the pursuit of a *Trans avant-gardist* trail strengthen in deft embrace that reality. With heroic verve and the ludic playfulness of art, these artists employed commonplace materials, recycled, and factory ready-mades as art materials and tools to bear witness to the joy, anxiety and worry in our reality of independence and freedom. In this presence they cause a reflection upon the relationship between life and death, between tradition and the reality of a postindustrial age. Indeed, one artist, Obinnah Makata (Nigeria) uses factory crafted plastic mold fillets to convey the radical and subversive themes of a protest narrative. In an increasingly fragile, polarized world, the same artist engages a nuanced discourse of the ever-tense relationship between the natural ecosystem and man's use and abuse of it; hence, venturing to discourse the darker, lesser reported history of development and international Humanitarian Aid in a revolutionary narrative.

Makata's *piece de resistance Medicine After Death* (Fig.3) a 9-meter-high installation composed of machine crafted fiber-glass molds represent a sinister theater of objects: bones, the human skeleton effigy; sub-machine gun and cartridge chain recharge carrier. This installation defies definition. With a name suggestive of an ancestral shrine, the mystery of a first look is deepened. Only a critical re-look unravels the message in this assemblage. Steering emotions that bring the *literati* and everyday people to the reality of our African, albeit the developing world, the viewer's come to terms not only of own mortality but the part our own lives have to play in the larger theater of human history. *Dak' Art22* demonstrates how artists in heroic gestures have engaged the material resources of the millennium as tools of narration. Indeed, this is hermeneutically espoused in the Ibo metaphor, "*nku di naamba ne yellum mba nnee*" appropriately inflects cleverly "*it is the people's wood that is the source of their cooking fire*".

Preceding the details of this essay, it is important to situate the biography of Konate. However, Kubler (1962:6-7) notes that artists' lives are the knitting mechanisms that hold together traditional and progressive art practices, while reflecting contemporaneity. The biographies of artists, offer a provisional gleaning of their artistic substance. These masters are qualified individuals bestriding the new tracks of development emanating from the *Negritude* canon inspired by RN & N and Principal European sponsored exhibitions of the time, for example, *the Seven Stories about Africa*. This essay, therefore, asserts that if the biography of artists is sufficient provisionary means of gleaning the groundings of artistic substance; then their artistry reflects conscious masterpieces that ingrain symbolic codes in narratives, metaphors, storytelling mechanisms and vestigial content.

Abdoulaye Konate

Graduate of the Mali National Art Institute, Bamako; and Plastic Arts School, Havana, Cuba. Konate emphasised that nights spent in childhood desert camps was key inspirations for his partiality for "Blue". A septuagenarian, Cuba broadened his perceptions of Africa, and how her art and cultural traditions affected the art world. Abdoulaye, steeped in the ancient artistic traditions of the Sahel found his *oeuvre* in her

textile's traditions and the autography of local cultures to undergird presence, immortalizing oral history while showcasing 'social engagements and concerns'.

Many Voices, Art Speaks

Beyond the pale of contemporary African art and its validation by western standards *via* galleries, collectors and auction houses whose attention oils stars and apportions values, *Dak'Art 2022*'s artists deftly speak in distinctive and varied voices. With a nose in the air for the epistemic pool of *R N* and *N dicta*; they imbibed the overarching political consciousness of afrocentricism framed in the pan Africanist stances of leading independent African countries like Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana, art speaks!

Artists absorbed the turn of the century intellectual revelations in Anthropology and advances in Phenomenology and Psychology; and simulacra's of the Kwame Nkrumah (1965) ideological *cultural turn*. In fact, African artists were bent on asking the question "where we are today, hence what is the discursive binge that enflames our consciousness? What art to expect in this spirited consciousness is the anxiety and expectation of the astounding world art viewers? African artists and their artistry keen on reflecting the ethos took on the mantra of the rebel *a la Zarianists*, 1960s Nigeria. Konate and Makatah indulged "*Sankofa*" "*Go home and pick*" and *the fever of independence*, reflecting ways of being African in particular expressions that affect differences between Africa and Africans, between identity and nationality; between expression and politics (Njami, 2016).

Victor and Youseff; Abdoulaye and Obinnah made existential choices by grounding their discourses on assemblages of "*Forgotten Biography*" in recalibration of personal expressions; in language and imageries that inflect individual spiritual ties to ancestry and the reality of cosmopolitan inflexions with a global world view. Wresting it all into a moment and a symbol, *registering* knowledge production, art and art history as groundings that intuit display, these artists stated the icons of the soul of African artists (Belting, 2009).

Interpretations

Abdoulaye Konate

Gangs of men (under the master's gaze) produced screens towering up to 6 meters high, fashioned from colors and patterns formatted on giant fabrics, machine sewn to create massive yardages. Terrorism in the Sahel; the traditional costumes of artists and hunter societies the life practices of ethnic Fulani, Berber, Malinke, Soninke and the *Tevarik* society are Abdoulaye's inspirations.

'*Death Sentence*', Fig.4: and '*No To Terrorism*', Fig. 5: These installations resemble paintings when viewed from a distance. Made-up of hundreds of rectangular synthetic pieces sewn from colorful bright fabrics called *Bazin*, native to West Africa. Konate employs Sahel specific colours and ready-made fabrics to stress themes of Terrorism and Insecurity. He connects African symbolisms with western modernist graphic elements in compositions

of colours akin to a symphony, the layering inflects sculptural tactility, but Tapirs-like create a playground for light and shadow Rembrandt like, Konate simulates compositions to look like music scores.

Exhibiting under the title "*The Master/ Le Maitre*", Abdoulaye's artworks were displayed under special flood lighting in the largest courtroom spaces, indeed, in the halls where trials were held in the 1950s to 1990s. Privileged, an artwork in the *Palias de Justice*'s ample courtroom spaces directed the appropriateness of the messages: '*Death Sentence*' on the wall of an old courtroom that beheld such trials.

Declaiming all mimetic representation, abstract motifs and symbols water-mark like invoke absolute music. Only the weave-on shapes and colour repeats remain as a kind of visual music that addresses the viewers in this soft-touch tableau, in dadaistic playfulness that only the initiates know, all in literalist precepts culled from Tawaric dirges. Without the trivia of modernist Pop Art, or even symbolic associations; *Sentence* is tethered to the traditional architecture and decorative tableau of the locale. In synchronizations; crossing boundaries in spite of confluences of West African traditions, Tawaric envelopes and shapes; and the Canon by way of pigments stir the artwork.

Claiming that *tawaric* lyrical poetics is the groundings of his works, Abdoulaye offers a prophylactic feat for the mega-immersion of his audience. In embedded imageries culled from *Tevaric* and Islamic cosmology in adaptive human play, *any one artwork* is expressive of that heartfelt polemic and its rhetoric's. In gigantic montage installations that echo atypical Sahel hollowed reliefs commonplace on mud walls are honed memorializations of Tawaric artistry.

Engaging the viewer's eyes is an encounter simulacra's of reading a book, watching a movie, or even dreaming (Bishop, 2005). Affecting illusionary picture making techniques of post antiquity civil architecture paintings corporate in Papal palaces but standard in Jesuit Baroque architecture (Grau, 2003), an illusionary immersion of the viewer, implodes. In fact, this technique of affective "*total immersion and illusion*" is ingenious of filmic landscape vistas.

Konate exploits creative artistry engaging synthetic materials to create an alternative scenery. In a direct response to Simon Njami's curatorial concept of a reincarnation grounded in the poem, *The City in the Blue Daylight* (Guily: 2016) the artwork is a poetic reflection utilizing material full of aesthetic qualities. The engagement of that metaphor compliments the use of the old courtroom as symbolism of nostalgia. The suitability of the dream scenario as an enabling instrumentality foregrounding Abdoulaye's installations is hinged on the total effect of the artwork on the viewers.

Calling forth the sensory immediacy of conscious perception, a composite structure, absorption and immersion in this massive scene, forces a "mental landscape" making the viewers to indulge a deployment of creative free association of the images in playful display in front of them. Hence, a taking-on of the assemblage one by one and as a whole

read “symbolically” as metonymic parts of a story-line. The appropriation of dream as an analogy affirms how this assemblage of innumerable “art works” forces cultural and specific associations on the beholder. Abdoulaye makes the audience phantasy on the complex emotional interiority of the artwork. Reminiscences and reflections on the familiar past are the burden of the audience!

Expressing the Show kernelled on the general theme of reinvention *via* protean inventiveness, Abdoulaye echoes Limoud: “An artist has to be a visionary. Someone who sees things without looking but senses their materiality” (2016). Utilising that metaphor, therefore, Konate makes critical statements on the state of the Sahel's every day. In 'Death Sentence' (Fig. 4), however, *Le Maitre* in formalistic graphic marks incorporated bold and obvious symbols: the Hangman's noose, the Sabre sword of justice and equity and the Plaques of state Sovereignty, authority and justice.

Bathed in Light, however, an immersive enforced gaze effect is heightened by the share audacity of repeats. While enunciating a decorative repertoire. Abdoulaye's artistry is distinctive for its metaphysical significance and portrayal of a spectacle of depth in his own “global locality”; suffused in the disentanglement from the *Dakario* narrative, the artist engaged heterogeneous iconographies. Konate's work forces environments in an all-over engulfment that even absorbs the viewers. Unlike commonplace art where the ethos of the work is located in itself, *le maitre's* artwork simulates a “situation” that virtually incorporates the viewers. The audience is, in fact, not wandering into sacred site where art is usually contemplated like a museum; but an affective theatrical absorption where viewers encounter an experience (Grau, 2003). Bathed in Fluorescent Lighting Aboutolay's art works initiate “gallery” all their own both temporal and ephemeral. They are site reliant.

Conclusion

Konate makes visible the emancipation of the autonomous African voice, debunking universalisations of *oeuvre*. Hard-nosedly, his works project the recalibration of *Africanite* from the stand-point and sensibilities of codes, individual tastes and choices, imploding *transavant-gardesism*. In shapes and volumes reminiscent of the playfulness of art Abdoulaye returned to “childhood innocence” saying “Dada” like the Zurich artists 100 years ago. In concert with the kin-folk consciousness of the erstwhile cultural policies of Senghor, the artist utilised endogenous cosmological imageries, even synthetic materials to create artworks. These creations, distinguished by their characteristic transience, simply played out the texts of the fiesta.

Reflecting the effects of *R N & N* schemes, Konate's seminal works focused energies on the celebration of an African nationalistic consciousness grounded on independence and freedom. Sequel to that ethos, it remained the responsibility of artists from the nations to vent unique ways of expression in music, dance, theatre, literature and aesthetics. Thusly imposing a reconstructive “seeing process” with ingenuity, while in varied portmanteaus, bestride the tracks of development of art for that process in a

postmodernist paradigm. That process took on a dual toll (I) a retooling process in the present and (II) beyond the present in an attempt to re-see in the nodes of culture and aesthetics; daring a reconciliation between African identity and cosmopolitanism in language, colour and native imaginary, as a mastery of that ontological reality. Hence, moving forward the artist with line/lines, colour, and iconography that eludes “*universalisation and uniformisation*” re-appropriating the moment of consciousness, counters his education and training; but engaged in a production of own vision.

Responding to the mythical “*eternal return of the same*”, in a polytemporal analogy (Latour,1993) I involved the metaphor of the “Python's Eye” (Alagoa, 1997) to kernel the discourse of the new imaginary. Insisting on own way of “seeing”, artists gave meaning to it in their work through the consciousness of this new gaze. This is the penumbra, resorted to for illumination and rootedness. Beset, therefore, in deconstructing a past and daring to invent a future in a present time that is synced to perpetual renewals akin to the symbolic python movement, artists dared to create art that speaks for the times. That demanded a reinvention of self, fusing a language that echoes that aspiration in a lexicon logy decipherable by all, irrespective of history and milieu. Simon Njami (2016) writes, myths and legends, even the esoteric realms of belief systems of thought must be demystified so as to become vehicles of self-expression. It is the burden of the creative artist to unravel the codes in which tradition was set forth.

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