

Gallery 1957

Abdoulaye Konaté

New dates: 25 September – 18 December 2020

Gallery II



Abdoulaye Konaté, 2016, Courtesy the artist, Photo Peter Mallet

Gallery 1957, Accra are excited to announce the rescheduled dates for an exhibition of new works by Malian artist Abdoulaye Konaté, now running from 25 September – 18 December. The exhibition, held in the Gallery II space, presents new large-scale, site-specific commissions, and sees the artist employing Ghanaian Kente cloth in his works for the first time.

Questioning the way in which societies and individuals, both in Mali and beyond, have been affected by factors such as war, the struggle for power, religion, globalisation, ecological shifts and the AIDS epidemic, Konaté's fabric-based installations are delicately cut and sewn to present a powerful language of colour and texture. Employing woven and dyed cloths native to Mali, here presented alongside materials found in Ghana and beyond, the artist creates large-scale abstract and figurative compositions, referring to West African textile traditions, whereby material is a means of commemoration and communication, balancing global political and social reflections with a reference to his own local and cultural history.

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Abdoulaye Konaté, *Rouge bleu au kente* (2020), courtesy the artist and Gallery 1957

For this exhibition, Konaté has created new commissions activating both the gallery space and the adjoining Kempinski Hotel. Many of works incorporate abstract shapes and geometries – as seen in *Gris au kente (cercle et triangle)*, and *Jaune kente (arc et triangle)* – whilst others introduce glimpses of figuration; in *Ghana 1 Kente, poids et couronne* a discernibly regal figure occupies a work exploring sovereignty and responsibility, whilst *Rouge kente et monde* embraces concepts of the global. In *Coucher de soleil (Ghana)*, Konaté presents a reworking of more traditional landscape painting, with a Ghanaian horizon glowing across his large-scale textile.

In several works, Konaté imbues west African textiles with motifs used in the artistic traditions of the African region known as the Sahel, a vast area on the southern edge of the Sahara desert that includes present-day Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, and Niger. Lengths of material in jewel-like blues and greens or arid reds and golds, overlap both literally and metaphorically - reflecting the interweaving of material cultures and wider societies across the continent.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue.

About Abdoulaye Konaté

Konaté (b. 1953 Diré, Mali) first studied painting at the Institut National des Arts in Bamako and then at the Instituto Superior des Arte, Havana, Cuba, where he lived for seven years before returning to Mali. In 2008, he was nominated for the *Artes Mundi 3* prize, Cardiff. He has received several awards, including the prestigious Léopold

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Sédar Senghor Prize at the *Dak'Art* Biennale in Dakar (1996), the Officier de l'Ordre National du Mali (2009) as well as the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de France (2002).

Konaté's work has featured in numerous international group exhibitions including: *On the Spiritual Matter of Art*, MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome (2019), *KUBATANA: An Exhibition with Contemporary African artists*, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Oslo (2019), *Lend Me Your Dream / Prête-moi Ton Rêve*, Le Studio des Arts Vivants, L'Artorium, Casablanca, touring (2019), *Pulling at Threads*, Norval Foundation, Cape Town (2018); *Mobile Worlds*, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg (2018); *The Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London (2017); *L'Afrique en capitale*, Musée Mohammed VI d'Art moderne et contemporain, Rabat (2017); and *The Divine Comedy: Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell Revisited by Contemporary African Artists*, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington (2015). Recent solo exhibitions include *Couleurs d'âme* at Blain|Southern, New York (2019) and a retrospective at Arken Museum for Moderne Kunst, Ishøj (2016).

Abdoulaye Konaté has previously participated in the 13th Havana Biennial and in the 3rd Hangzhou Triennial of Fiber Art, China in 2019 and in *Viva Arte Viva*, the central exhibition in the 2017 edition of Venice Biennale.

Abdoulaye Konaté lives and works in Bamako, Mali and he was the Founding General Director of the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers Multimédia Balla Fasseké Kouyaté in Bamako.

About Gallery 1957

Based in Accra and working internationally, Gallery 1957 has a curatorial focus on West Africa. The gallery presents a programme of exhibitions, installations and performances by the region's most significant artists currently bridging the gap between local and international practices. Founded by Marwan Zakhem in 2016, Gallery 1957 has evolved from over 15 years of private collecting. Opened in 2017, Gallery 1957 II is the gallery's second space, situated in Accra's Galleria Mall. The gallery serves as a vital platform, promoting West Africa's presence within the art scene by hosting ambitious exhibitions, providing resources for residencies and participating in international art fairs.

www.gallery1957.com

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Dates: 25 September to 18 December 2020

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