

ARKEN

PRESS RELEASE

ABDOULAYE KONATÉ AT ARKEN

Colour harmonies and genocide, materiality and geopolitics, beauty and the environment. Malian artist Abdoulaye Konaté combines patches and swaths of dyed cloth as a painter uses oils, to create large, radiantly coloured textile works with a political edge. From 21 April Konaté's fascinating art can be experienced at ARKEN in what will be the artist's first Danish solo exhibition.

Abdoulaye Konaté (b. 1953) is one of the big names in African contemporary art, and his works have been shown in prestigious exhibitions all over the world. In Konaté's textile works beautiful colours go hand-in-hand with hard-hitting political messages. The artist, who lives and works in the capital of Mali, Bamako, creates textile works and installations. He follows formal Malian traditions and uses local materials yet addresses global issues and universal messages in his work. Some works take the form of abstract compositions, in others the individual forms become clear symbols and comment on the great political, environmental and humanitarian disasters such as wars, drought, pollution and AIDS. Mali is a country with a history that includes the slave trade, French colonialism, warring population groups and religious controversies. In his art Konaté reacts on the huge sociopolitical challenges faced in his country and beyond. Konaté is a citizen of the world who is affected by international tragedies and injustices, and the genocide in Bosnia or the conditions of the Guarani people in Brazil are examples of the material on which Konaté draws in his works.

Konaté works in cotton, which is an important export for Mali and part of the identity of the nation. He dyes it in all possible shades and shapes: blood-red swaths, yellow sparks or graduated colour scales from the deepest blue to white. We see clear traces of the work of the sewing machine with the cloth and the signature that Konaté himself embroiders by hand. Konaté's textile works have a special painterly quality and alternate between the surface-oriented and the rendering of spatial depth.

ARKEN's exhibition presents selected major works from Konaté's artistic activities over the past two decades, and a few new works that have not previously been exhibited. The exhibition runs from 21 April to 18 September 2016 and is the artist's first Danish solo exhibition.

About Abdoulaye Konaté

Abdoulaye Konaté trained as a painter at the Institut National des Arts in Bamako, the capital of Mali, and then at the Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana, Cuba. He has received the prestigious Léopold Sédar Senghor Prize and has been honoured with l'Ordre National

du Mali and l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de France. Konaté has participated in exhibitions at among other places the Hayward Gallery, London, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo and the National Museum of African Art, the Smithsonian Institution, Washington and at Documenta 12 in Kassel. Konaté is today principal of the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers Multimédia Balla Fasseké Kouyaté in Bamako, Mali.

The exhibition has been created in collaboration with Blain|Southern and the artist.

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