

THE AFRICAN CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY AFIKARIS OPENS A NEW SPACE IN THE HEART OF PARIS

PRESS RELEASE





MOUSTAPHA BAIDI OUAMROU

JE CULTIVE MON AVENIR, 2020

Acrylic and posca on canvas

H: 120 cm; W: 180 cm

Courtesy : AFIKARIS (Paris)

Paris - December 16th, 2020

In January 2021, the opening exhibition *Quitter la ville* deviates from the bustle of the city, offering a complete immersion into the welcoming and lush nature depicted by artists Moustapha Baidi Oumarou and Omar Mahfoudi. While it is settling up in the heart of the city at 38 rue Quincampoix in the 4th arrondissement, this first show embodies the will of the gallery to be a place of surprise and discovery.

In both of their work, nature embodies an ideal. If one reinterprets the world and the other captures the “mystical beauty” with his brushes, both of them explore this *flower boy*: sensitive being, a symbol of humanity and joy, who conveys hope and optimism.

It echoes its goal to carry the speech of the artists and to invite thought as well as discussion.

In the middle of dense vegetation, the characters of Moustapha Baidi Oumarou leave the city. These fashionable outlines are deepened into nature. There is something unreal in the jungle he depicts. It is almost supernatural, between tale and utopia. Characters hide in this artificial nature, sheltered from the perturbations of the outside. This cocoon out of the world protects them from the city and its threats.

If he lives in Maroua - a city located in the extreme north of Cameroon, exposed to political conflicts - Moustapha Baidi Oumarou seeks above all to provide happiness to those who look at his paintings. Thus, the hope of a world where only moments of joy and friendship exist in his work. From this composition emerges mystery, goodwill and serenity. Far from the chaos of the city, under Moustapha Baidi Oumarou's brushes, an ideal world appears: a collection of happiness and love.

“MY CHARACTERS REPRESENT THE “FLOWER BOY.” THEY EMBODY MOMENTS OF HUMANITY, MOMENTS OF JOY AND PICTURES OF LOVE.” MOUSTAPHA BAIDI OUMAROU

Men and women in the forest or young swimmers alone in the middle of a lake are as many figures displayed in Moroccan artist Omar Mahfoudi's work. Intriguing, these phantasmagorical bodies are immersed in an unknown environment. There is a call to nature emerging from the paper. That is a call to come back to the origin of the world, to

rethink the universe facing its instability. Behind his work, an ecological consciousness arises. He initiates, throughout, the idea to side with nature.

“IN A GENERAL WAY, THESE PAST YEARS I HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY, THE IDEA OF LEAVING THE CITY AND A MYSTICAL EXILE. WE LIVE IN A WORLD WITH LOTS OF ISSUES: EPIDEMICS, POVERTY, EXODUS. I AIM TO TALK ABOUT A KIND OF MYSTICAL BEAUTY AND TO DEPICT IT IN MY PAINTINGS.”

OMAR MAHFOUDI

The city, as Emile Durkheim noticed, has this capacity to anonymise individuals, to make them one being among million others. Would leaving the city be finally finding oneself? Thus, in his style and sensitivity, Moustapha Baidi Oumarou and Omar Mahfoudi both invite the viewer to see the world differently.



OMAR MAHFOUDI

SANS TITRE, 2020

Ink on paper

H: 176 cm; W: 150 cm

Courtesy : AFIKARIS (Paris)

ABOUT AFIKARIS

AFIKARIS is a young contemporary art gallery created in 2018, promoting emerging artists whom Africa has been influencing life and work. From young talents to already renowned artists, Afikaris fosters many different perspectives on Contemporary Africa in its various facets. Previously located in a showroom in the north of Paris, it opens in January 2021 a space in the heart of the city at 38 rue Quincampoix, close to Centre Pompidou.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

"QUITTER LA VILLE"

From January 9th to February 10th, 2021

38 rue Quincampoix, 75004 Paris

Open from Tuesday to Sunday - 11am-7pm

Online - www.afikaris.com

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