

AFIKARIS

AT AFIKARIS GALLERY, THE CAMEROONIAN ARTIST MOUSTAPHA BAIDI OUMAROU DISPLAYS A RAINBOW OF POSITIVITY CALLING FOR TENDERNESS, LOVE AND SHARING

AFIKARIS Gallery presents the second solo exhibition in France of the Cameroonian artist Moustapha Baidi Oumarou. From November 10 to December 10, *Après la pluie* (After the Rain) will be held in the gallery's new Parisian space at 7 rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth in the 3rd arrondissement. A call to tenderness, love and sharing, the exhibition reminds us that happiness is never far away.

10 November – 10 December, 2022



Left. Moustapha Baidi Oumarou, *Picasso en atelier*, 2022. 120x100 cm. Acrylic and pen on canvas.

Right. Moustapha Baidi Oumarou, *Au-dessus de nos poubelles*, 2022. 120x100 cm. Acrylic and pen on canvas.

Courtesy of AFIKARIS Gallery.

31 October, 2022 (Paris, France) - Committed to promoting young talent, AFIKARIS gallery presents the second solo exhibition of Moustapha Baidi Oumarou (born in 1997, Cameroon) in the continuity of *Un Monde Bleu* which was held last year at 38 rue Quincampoix (2 October - 2 November 2021). From 10 November to 10 December, 10 works will occupy the 180m² of the gallery's new Parisian space at 7 rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth - which will become the gallery's permanent home from December 2022. *Après la pluie* is a call to tenderness, love and sharing. Through everyday scenes, Moustapha Baidi reminds us that happiness is never far away.

In parallel with the exhibition, the gallery is publishing the artist's first monography. Under the title *Cliché idéal*, it brings together a hundred works created since the beginning of his career. This book contextualizes the work of Moustapha Baidi Oumarou through essays by Joseph Patrice Fouman and Fouzia Marouf.

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Moustapha Baidi Oumarou imbues his work with sincere optimism. Traditionally associated with the gloom and spleen of poets - an analogy of tears - rain is also a symbol of renewal. Rain nourishes the soil and makes it fertile. Colours bloom as it passes. Petrichor perfumes the air with its reassuring fragrance. The expectation of respite settles in. After all, the rain is only a temporary state, a transitional moment before the arrival of the sun. Metaphorically, it is the hope and joy of a better tomorrow that Baidi Oumarou encapsulates in his paintings. He thus composes a visual promenade to the heart of his utopia. He creates a mirror work, reflecting an idealized replica of the real world in order to lead to change one's perspective. Why linger in the meanders of melancholy when the rainbow dawns through the clouds?

Baidi Oumarou's works precisely embody this rainbow. Composed of the same primary and secondary colours, the pieces unfolding on the white walls of the gallery materialise the young painter's desire to enlighten the world with his art and exalt the beauty of any moment. In Baidi Oumarou's paintings, colours give a glimpse of a dreamy and happy world in which they are invested with healing power. The powerful hues bathe the characters in a halo of benevolence, just as they invite the viewer to figure out a future where acceptance of the other is at the centre of social life. The artist balances between non-colour and intense pigment - leaving black and white predominant. In the manner of Picasso - who appears in the work of Moustapha Baidi Oumarou, sitting in his studio, deep into his thoughts - he paints 'en réserve'. If the Harlequin (1923) by the Spanish master displays the genesis of its creation, the canvas left blank in the work of the Cameroonian artist brings respiration to the imposition of colour. It brings a breath. The artist plays with the composition and leaves room for the viewers' imagination. Their unconscious will colour the void, fed by their own expectations. In the same way, they will project themselves onto the anonymous silhouettes emerging from Baidi Oumarou's imaginary forests.

Ces figures sans visage se rattachent à une vision universaliste. Simplifiées à l'extrême pour n'être que signifiées par leur contour, le peintre leur confère



Above. Moustapha Baidi Oumarou, *Après la pluie*, 2022.
150x100 cm. Acrylic and pen on canvas.
Courtesy of AFIKARIS Gallery.

These faceless figures mirror a universalist vision. Stripped to the extreme to finally be represented only by their outline, the painter provides them with a global identity. Himself a witness to the consequences of inequality, proselytism, and ideological struggles Baidi Oumarou erases any geographical, cultural or religious distinction. By distancing himself from any particularism, he lends everyone the same identity. Beyond considering humans in their individuality, his art speaks of humanity and addresses humanity by establishing new icons.

Thus, *Après la pluie* narrates the joy of moments of sharing and meditation. Whatever the world's turmoil, the art of Moustapha Baidi Oumarou resists them, praising cohesion rather than adversity.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Moustapha Baidi Oumarou:

Moustapha Baidi Oumarou (1997, Maroua, Cameroon) is a multidisciplinary artist who lives and works in Maroua. Self-taught, he describes himself as a “humanist and conscious painter”.

This humanism shines through in his paintings and drawings, which reflect his desire to express what the forgotten and the most vulnerable cannot say in their own words.

Mostly showing monochrome backgrounds and human forms decorated with flowers, his colourful acrylic paintings canvases convey the good in all of us. Naturally, the delicate and subtle contours, immersed in a luxuriant nature, evoke a moment of sharing, conviviality, or introspection. By anonymising his characters, these nameless but deeply human forms suggest a universal message of peace and humanity.

Moustapha Baidi Oumarou’s work has been presented in various international fairs such as Art Paris (Paris); 1-54 London (London); Investec Cape Town (Cape Town) and AKAA (Paris).

Après la pluie (after the rain) is the second solo exhibition of Moustapha Baidi Oumarou at AFIKARIS Gallery. At the same time, *Cliché idéal*, his first monographic book, will be published.

About AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris:

Founded in 2018 by Florian Azzopardi, to promote emerging and established artists from Africa and its diaspora, AFIKARIS Gallery opened a dedicated Paris-based gallery space in 2021. Engaged in promoting cross-cultural and disciplinary exchange, AFIKARIS acts as a platform for artists to engage with the wider public. A mirror onto and space for reflection on the contemporary African art scene, it provides artists with a space to address the topical local and international issues at the heart of their art.

The AFIKARIS programme includes group and solo exhibitions, art fairs, publications and institutional partnerships.

Moustapha Baidi Oumarou, *Après la pluie* | 10 November — 10 December 2022

PRESSE OPENING: Thursday 10 November, 3 PM — 6 PM

PUBLIC OPENING: Thursday 10 November, 6 PM — 9 PM

AFIKARIS Gallery

7 rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth

75003 Paris, France

From Tuesday to Saturday: 11 AM — 7 PM

Ongoing exhibitions:

Une odyssée de l'espace | Hyacinthe Ouattara’s Solo Show

AFIKARIS Gallery | 38 rue Quincampoix, 75004 Paris

From 22 October to 26 November 2022

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