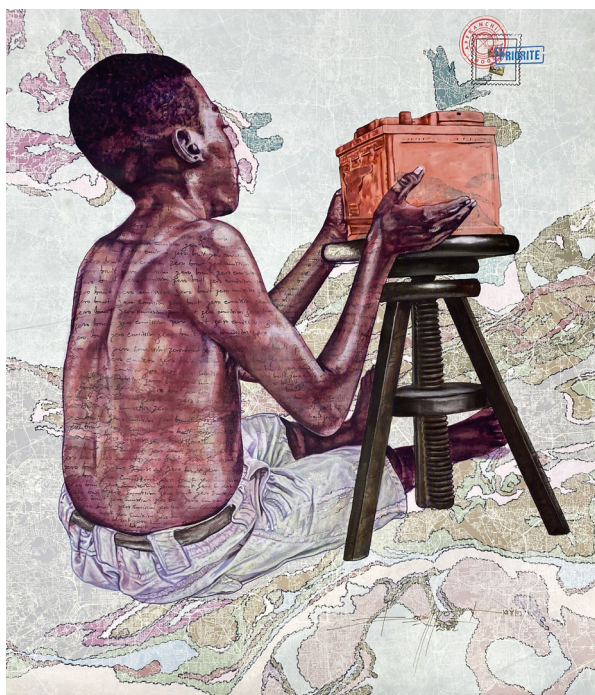


# AFIKARIS

## AT AFIKARIS GALLERY, JEAN DAVID NKOT OPPOSES THE STRENGTH AND THE RESILIENCE OF THE BODIES, TO THE DEPLETION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

*In the continuity of his solo show, which took place last year at the same period at AFIKARIS Gallery (HUMAN@CONDITION, 29 May – 7 July, 2021), Jean David Nkot leads through his new solo show – 11 June to 16 July – a scientific work inspired by an archaeological approach. Under the title Les pommes de la discorde, the artist links the ores and the bodies he presents as objects of contemplation. He magnifies their strength and resilience defying their instrumentalisation. By confronting viewers with these bodies, turned into tools for a capitalistic economy, Jean David Nkot invites them to face the violence standing behind mining*

11 June – 16 July, 2022



Left. Jean David Nkot, [www#Pomme de la discorde.org](http://www#Pomme de la discorde.org), 2022. 160x140 cm. Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas. Courtesy of AFIKARIS Gallery.  
Right. Jean David Nkot, [##Pharaons@des crevasses.org](http://##Pharaons@des crevasses.org), 2022. 200x240 cm. Acrylic, silkscreen printing and posca on canvas. Courtesy of AFIKARIS Gallery.

2 June, 2022 (Paris, France) – If it represents Jean David Nkot (b. 1989, Cameroon) since its creation in 2018, AFIKARIS Gallery hosts, from June 11<sup>th</sup> to July 16<sup>th</sup>, his second major solo show in France. *Les pommes de la discorde* is in the continuity of the thematic exploration of the artist around ore extraction – which gave place to a solo show in 2021 (*HUMAN@CONDITION*, 29 May – 7 July, 2021) – and marks a technical progression. The artist's monograph, published in November 2021, invites to track his artistic journey.

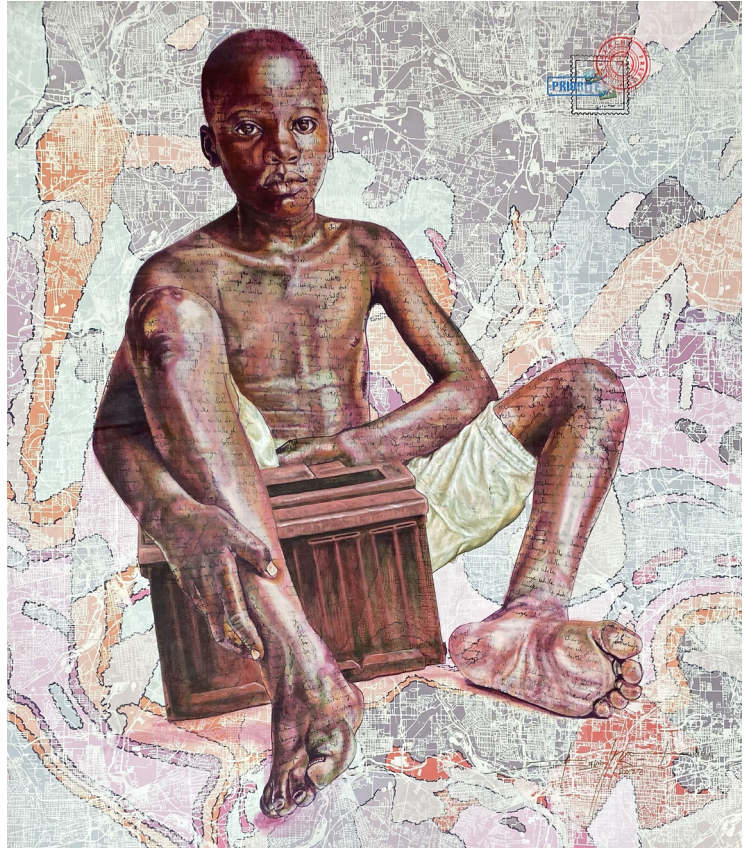
Through a dozen of new canvases that unfold through the 130m<sup>2</sup> space, the motif of the car battery – as it gathers different minerals – embodies what Jean David Nkot calls the *Contemporary Apple of Discord*. The body, at the heart of the canvas, carries the suffering linked to the depletion of natural resources. The body is at the same time the matter and the tool used to answer the needs of an economy where overconsumption is a norm. This new body of work is about meeting those who evolve underground looking for precious stones. In this way, the artist contributes to documenting his time and plunges viewers between the upper and the under, on the steps of these heroes who make the modern economy possible.

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Jean David Nkot's work puts forward the invisible figures of the market economy. He recalls the fight between bodies over the territory. If he dedicates his large-scaled portraits to representing those whose work serves a consumption society with endless needs, the Cameroonian artist extends his research on ore extraction started in 2020. He explores and documents the life trajectory of people working under the ground, seeking the ores that will give life to the technological goods distributed over the world.

Jean David Nkot starts from the Greek myth - introduced by Homer in his *Illiade* - of the Apple of Discord, said to have provoked the Trojan War - and makes it the metaphor for the issues underlying the ore extraction on the African continent. He challenges who benefits from these natural resources and what is the real price of their extraction in terms of human and natural capital.

This Contemporary Apple of Discord comes with consequences and reveals the limits of an economy based on the exploitation of raw materials. Thus, Nkot denounces the domination system that rules the modern world, where economic interests are more important than respect for human lives and nature. Despite the constant arbitrage between economic value and human value, he calls for the protection of this ecosystem.



Above. Jean David Nkot, *Po.box.Pomme de la discorde*, 2022. 160x140 cm. Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas. Courtesy of AFIKARIS Gallery.

The consumers, seduced by the final product - computers, phones, electric cars and other electronic goods, which embody the very notions of technological progress and comfort - ignore their origins and the conditions that make their existence possible. Nkot corrects this lack of visibility and sheds light on the miners through the suffering of the bodies. However, the bodies displayed do not seem to be harmed. In that way, Nkot steers away from Francis Bacon's and Jenny Saville's influences, whose tormented bodies inspired his first paintings. The bodies Nkot depicts, suffer more from the inside than from the outside. They face the shocks and internalise the traumas to which they are being exposed. Nkot details:

*"The body most to be pitied today is the one presented as an ideal body, a healthy body. My bodies have no stigma, but they are the ones that suffer the most."*

While he adorns the bodies with writings - advertising slogans, chemical symbols or documentary narratives - Nkot testifies to the scars the mining industry leaves on the bodies. In his series of three canvases showcasing a young boy next to a car battery, he addresses the efforts of companies to produce 'cleaner' goods. He ironically notices that these efforts finally deplete natural resources more than they save them. Thus, Nkot invites his viewers to remain careful regarding commercial speeches promoting a 'greener' consumption. He denounces a misleading ecology and compares the prices of electric cars to the salaries of those who extract the elements used to produce these cars, pointing out the enormous gap that is appearing.

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## NOTES TO EDITORS:

### About Jean David Nkot:

Jean David Nkot (b. 1989, Douala, Cameroon) est is an artist who works and lives in Douala. After a painting A-level at the Institute of Artistic Training of Mbalmayo (IFA), he joined the Institute of Fine Arts Foumban, where he obtained a degree in drawing and painting. In 2017, he joined the “Post-Master” Moving Frontiers organised by the National School of Arts of Paris-Cergy (France) on the theme of borders.

Jean David Nkot’s work depicts the human condition. If he used to deal with the theme of migration, since 2020, he is interested in the exploitation of raw materials in Africa and the economical and political stakes underneath. He sheds light on the sufferings the bodies have to go through in order to answer contemporary needs in technological goods within a capitalistic system. He shows how financial interests predominate and took over life itself including humans and nature.

Jean David Nkot’s work has been presented in key international institutions including: Institut des Cultures d’Islam, Paris, France; SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, Germany; Doual’art, Douala, Cameroon; National Museum of Cameroon, Yaounde.

### 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.

AFIKARIS’s curated program includes group and solo exhibitions; art fairs; publications; as well as institutional partnerships.

Jean David Nkot, *Les pommes de la discorde* | 11 June — 16 July 2022

**PRESS OPENING: Friday 10 June, 14h — 19h**

**BOOK SIGNING: Saturday 11 June, 14h — 18h**

**PUBLIC OPENING: Saturday 11 June, 18h — 21h**

AFIKARIS Gallery  
38 rue Quincampoix  
75004 Paris, France

Tuesday - Saturday : 11h — 19h

Sunday : 14h — 18h

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