

# JEAN DAVID

# NKOT

PORTFOLIO



# JEAN DAVID NKOT

JEAN DAVID NKOT WAS BORN IN 1989 IN DOUALA (CAMEROON) WHERE HE LIVES AND WORKS.

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. Throughout his training in the fine arts of Foumban, he received several artistic distinctions (Best sculptor, installer and painter). 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. Conscious of what his elders can bring him he is frequently in the workshops of Hervé Youmbi, Salifou Lindou, Jean Jacques Kanté, Pascal Kenfack, Ruth Belinga.

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.

With his work, Nkot compensates for the lack of visibility and recognition of those who work in the shadows. By giving them the status of contemporary icons, he invites us to rethink our economic model to protect Men and the planet together. If a deep sensitivity to humanity has never ceased to tint his work, ecology is a new component in the work of this painter of the human condition. Nkot reminds us that Men cannot be considered independently from their environment and that the protection of one comes with the conservation of the other.

Through his art, Jean David Nkot wants everyone to understand the reality of what happens in different territories. He aims to shake consciences and make people react. His work also conveys hope. It is an invitation to go beyond despite our differences and be inspired by other stories and life trajectories.

# JEAN DAVID NKOT

b.1989  
Douala, Cameroon

A painter of the human condition, Cameroonian Jean David Nkot's work is easily recognisable, with his hyperrealist portraits over mapped backgrounds. He builds through his work, the archives of the anonymous of his time. He exposes the faces history will forget. Those the governments ignore. Workers, migrants, but above all, human beings.



## ACADEMIC EDUCATION

2017-2018 - Post-Master *Moving Frontiers*, National School of Arts of Paris-Cergy, Cergy-Pontoise, France

2013 - Institute of Fine Arts Foumban, Foumban, Cameroon

2007-2010 - Institute of Artistic Training of Mbalmayo, Mbalmayo, Cameroon

## SELECTED RESIDENCIES, WORKSHOPS AND PROJECTS

2022 - African Art Space Project

2018 - Cité internationale des arts of Paris, Paris, France

2016 - *Effet ciseaux*, Bandjoun station, Bandjoun, Cameroon

2014 - Bandjoun Station, Bandjoun, Cameroon

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

*The New African Portraiture. Shariat Collections*. Kunsthalle Krems, 2022. Heike Dempster. Jean David Nkot.

*Jean David Nkot, Human@Condition*. AFIKARIS Publishing, 2021. 215 p.

*À rebrousse-temps*. AKAA, 2021. Jean David Nkot.

## COLLECTIONS

FRAC Sud Cité de l'art contemporain, Marseille, France

Fondation H, Madagascar & France

Almas Foundation, UK

West Collection, USA

The Jean Pigozzi Collection, Switzerland

Blachère Foundation, France

The Collezione Genesi, Italy

Gervane + Matthias Leridon Collection, France

Anne-Céline and Pierre Donnersberg Collection, France

Amir Shariat Collection, Austria

Chris Moser Collection, Austria

Olym Collection, Belgium

## SELECTED SOLO SHOWS

2023

*Les Dompteurs de nuages*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

2022

*Corps de P@ge*, The Melrose Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

*Les pommes de la discorde*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris

2021

Untitled Miami art fair, Miami, United States

*État des lieux*, Jack Bell Gallery, London, United Kingdom

*Human@Condition*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

*Le dessous des cartes*, Espace Bolo, Douala, Cameroon

*Corps et Espace*, Espace doual'art

2020

*Esprit rêveur*, Jack Bell Gallery, London, United Kingdom

1-54 Marrakech Art Fair, AFIKARIS Gallery Marrakech, Morocco

2019

*Voyage en léthargie*, Jack Bell Gallery, London, United Kingdom

2018

*Cartographies mentales*, Jack Bell Gallery, London, United Kingdom

2016

*À fleur de peau*, Doual'art, Douala, Cameroon

## SELECTED GROUP SHOWS

2024

1-54 Marrakech, Marrakech, Morocco

2023

1-54 London Art Fair, London, United Kingdom

*Ce que nous donne la terre*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

ArtBrussels, Brussels, Belgium

*L'Art dans la Cité*, La Rotonde des arts, Fondation Dapper, Abidjan, Ivory Coast

ZonaMaco art fair, Mexico City, Mexico

2022

*The New African Portraiture. Shariat Collections*, Kunsthalle Krems, Vienna, Austria

Art x Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria

Akaa art fair, Paris, France

*Classique !*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

*Shout Plenty*, African Artists' Foundation, Lagos, Nigeria

1-54 Paris Art Fair, Paris, France

*One song is very much like another, and the boat is always from afar*, Guangdong Times Museum, China

Investec Cape Town art fair, Cape Town, South Africa

2021

Akaa art fair, Paris, France

1-54 London Art Fair, London, United Kingdom

1-54 New York Art Fair, New York, United States

2020

1-54 London Art Fair, Jack Bell Gallery, London, United Kingdom

*Raupe-nimmersattism*, SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, Germany

Art Paris Art Fair, AFIKARIS Gallery Paris, France

*We Paint Humans*, Afikaris, Paris, France

1-54 New York Art Fair, Jack Bell Gallery, New York, United States of America

Investec Cape Town Art Fair, AFIKARIS Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2019

AKAA Art Fair, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

1-54 London, Jack Bell Gallery, London, United States of America

1-54 New York, Jack Bell Gallery, New York, United States of America

2018

World Bank, Yaoundé, Cameroon

*Urban attitude*, RAVY (Rencontres d'art visuel de Yaoundé), Yaoundé, Cameroon

2017

*SUD*, Urban Salon of Douala, Douala, Cameroon

*Mémoires Libérées*, National Museum of Cameroon, Yaoundé, Cameroon

*Cheminement*, Contemporan Art Gallery of Yaoundé, Yaoundé, Cameroon

*Behind the portail*, Bandjoun Station, Bandjoun, Cameroon

*Our Wishes*, Léopold Museum, Vienne, Austria

2016

YIA art fair, Paris, France

*Congo – Cameroun : Esthétique en partage au-delà des Géographies*, Dakar Biennale, Dakar, Senegal

*BIND : Images contemporaines*, Dakar Biennale, Dakar, Senegal

*Dialogue(s)*, Bandjoun Station, Banjkoun, Cameroon

Ravy (Rencontre d'Art Visuel Yaoundé), Yaoundé, Cameroon

2015

Cape Town art fair, Cape Town, South Africa

*Jeune regard urbain II*, Espace doual'art Art, Douala, Cameroon

2016

*Cameroun un regard contemporain*, World Bank of Yaoundé, Yaounde, Cameroon

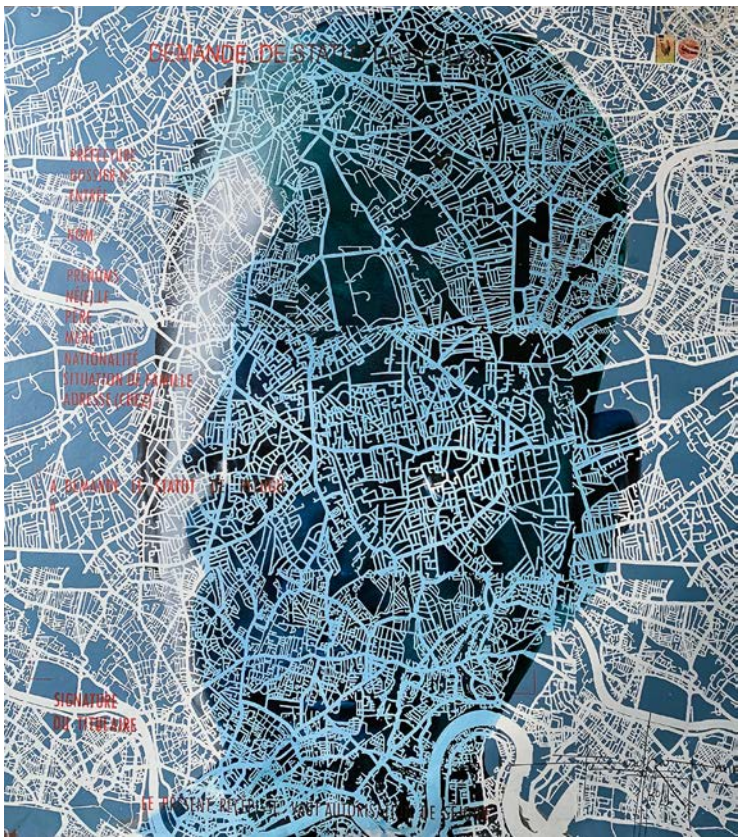
2014

*Ca-me-dit martyrs*, Espace doual'art, Douala, Cameroon

*L'eau*, Espace jeune Fouban, Fouban, Cameroon

2013

Salon urbain de Douala, off, Douala, Cameroon



LEFT

*#GHOST OF SPACE#, 2019*

Acrylic, Indian ink and silkscreen printing on canvas  
100x100 cm / 39x39 in

RIGHT

*#MENTALMIRAGE@YAHOO.SPACE, 2019*

Acrylic, Indian ink and silkscreen printing on canvas  
160x140 cm / 63x55 in

Jean David Nkot anonymises these “undesirables” by only keeping their silhouette. The territory wins. This welcoming land, the promise of better days, makes them suffocate until they forget who they are.



LEFT  
*THE SHADOWS OF SPACE #2, 2019*  
Acrylic, Indian ink and silkscreen printing on canvas  
70x60 cm / 27x24 in



RIGHT  
*THE SHADOWS OF SPACE #13, 2019*  
Acrylic, Indian ink and silkscreen printing on canvas  
70x60 cm / 27x24 in

The character gets lost in this chaotic urban geometry. While the cartography was until then very personal, filled with anecdotes, it now becomes a generalised and repeated motif, applicable to all. These personal stories become a story among many others. As a way of denouncing the fatalism and inactivity of governments regarding the migratory situation.



*WWW.JOUEURS@DELUDO.COM, 2020*  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
200x250 cm/ 79x98 in

From these abstract figures, he only keeps the silk-screened maps. The bodies take over. They rise to the surface and come back to the front of the canvas. However, the map, in transparency, makes their outlines look phantasmagorical.







**##ETAT MONDE##**, 2021  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
220x290 cm / 87x114 in

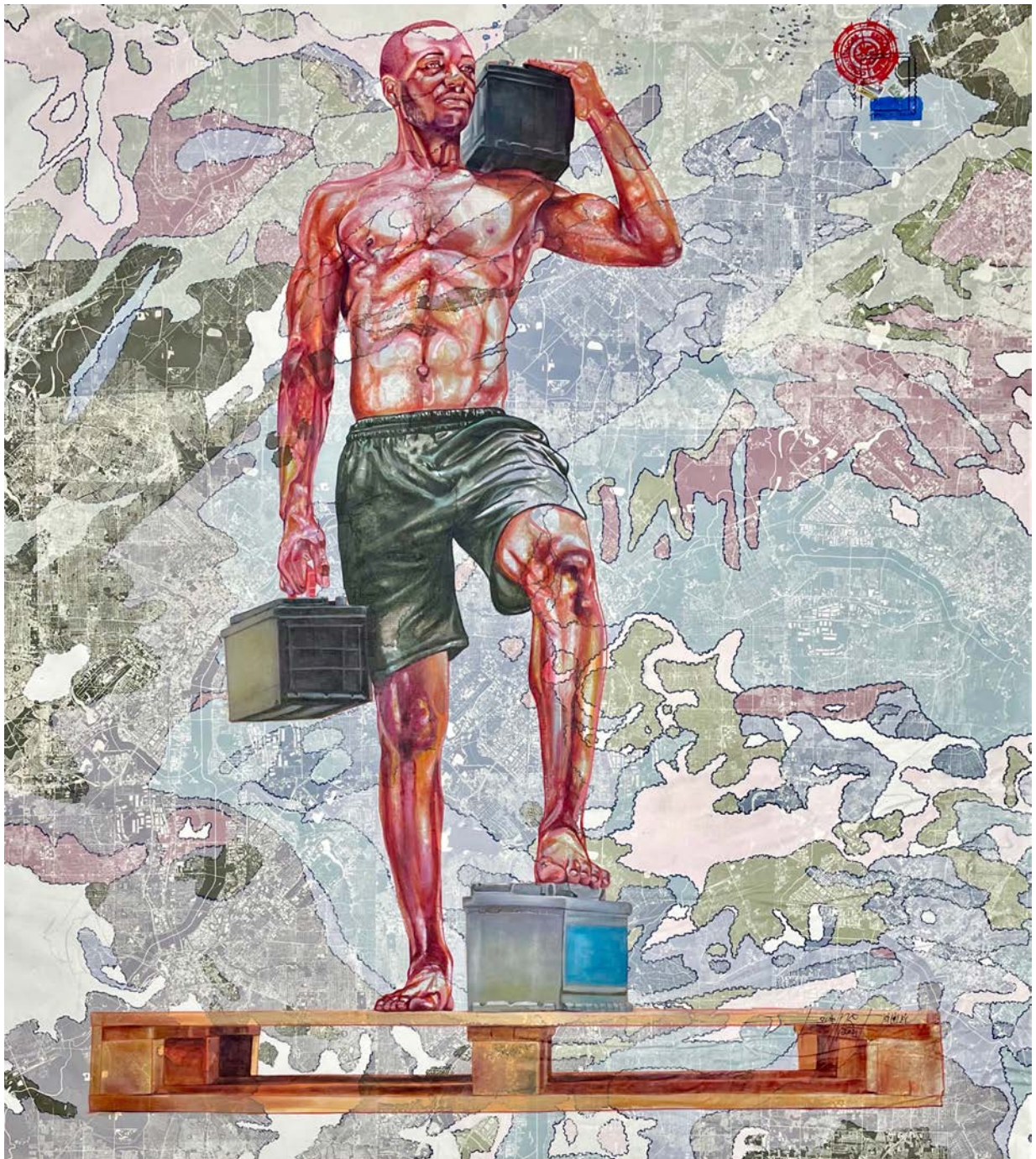


VIEW OF AFIKARIS' BOOTH AT THE UNTITLED MIAMI ART FAIR  
Miami, USA  
December 2021

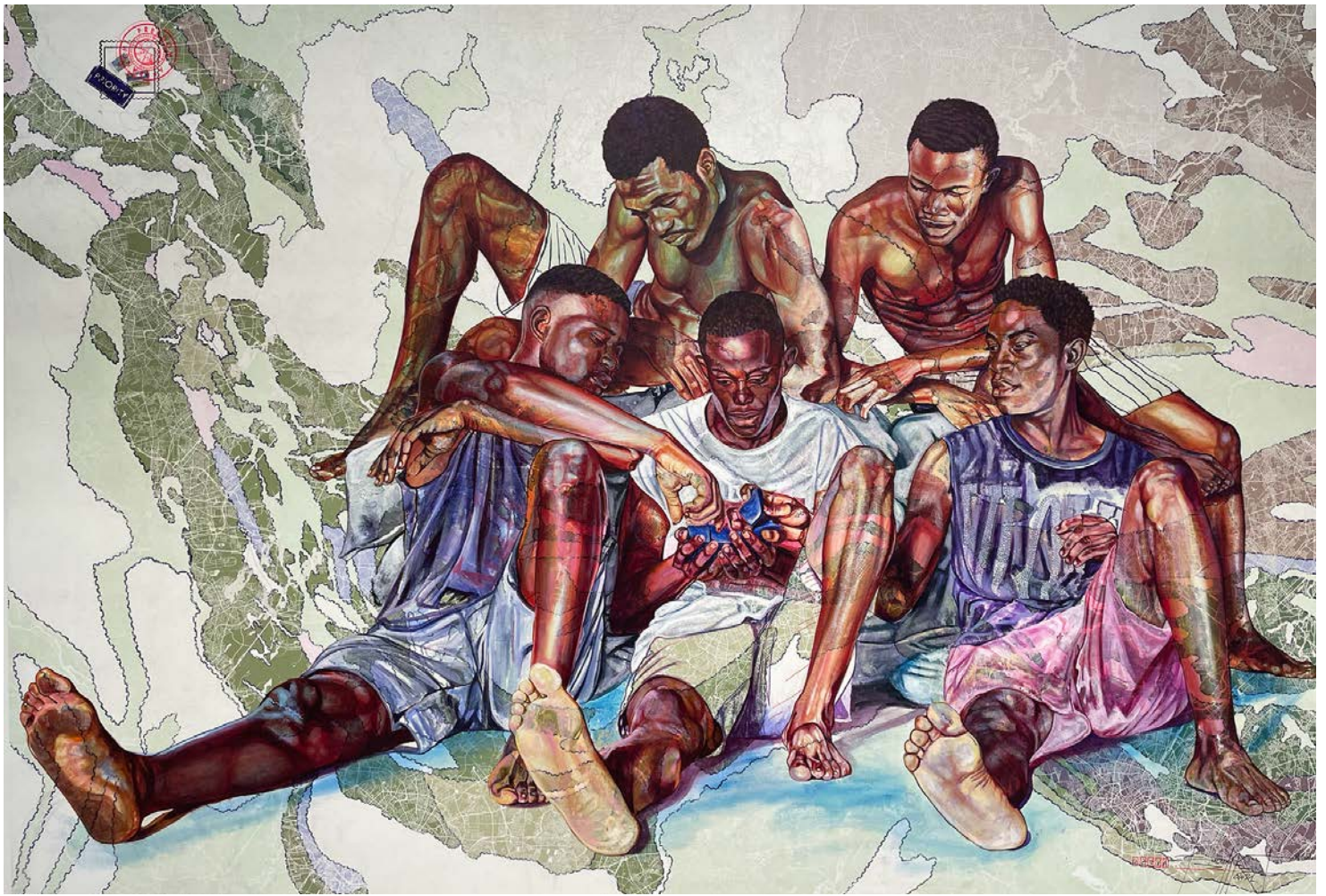


*WWW.TRANSPORTEUR À TITRER.CM.ORG, 2021*  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
200x338 cm / 79x133 in

Nkoti compensates for the lack of visibility and recognition of those who work in the shadows. By giving them the status of contemporary icons, he invites us to rethink our economic model to protect Men and the planet together. If a deep sensitivity to humanity has never ceased to tint his work, ecology is a new component in the work of this painter of the human condition. Nkoti reminds us that Men cannot be considered independently from their environment and that the protection of one comes with the conservation of the other.

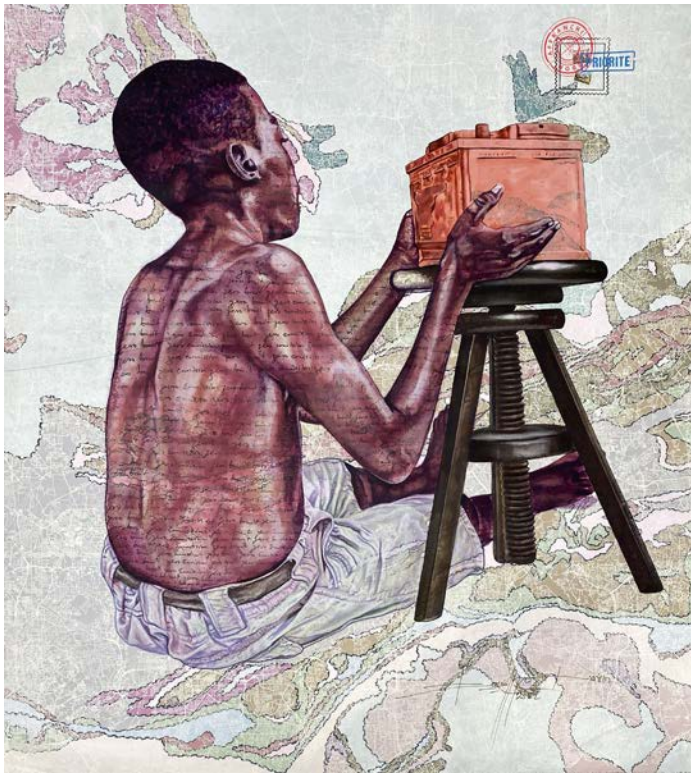


*@HERCULE.COM, 2021*  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
235x200 cm / 92x79 in

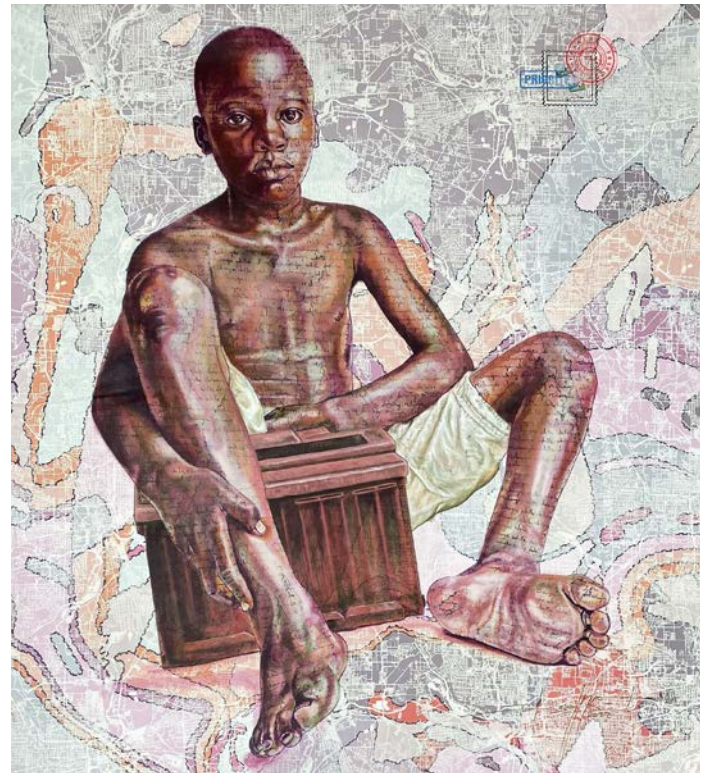


*WWW. UN MILLIER @ POUR UNE POIGNÉE D'OR BLEU.CM, 2021*  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
200x285 cm / 79x112 in

For Nkoti, the new Hercules are those who run the contemporary economy. Akin to the multifaceted Greek divinity, their abnegation and suffering comes at the service of others. Just as the demigod was said to achieve insurmountable tasks – freeing the people from desolation – to get his own redemption, today's heroes extract the raw materials that ensure modern societies' shared comfort, be it at the hands of an ever-exploitative market economy. Recording his own Odyssey, a contemporary iteration of Homer's Twelve Labours of Hercules, Nkoti frees them from the weight of their work, emphasizing their triumph over a hostile environment.



LEFT  
*WWW#POMME DE LA DISCORDE.ORG*, 2022  
Acrylic, silkscreen printing and posca on canvas  
160x140 cm / 63x55 in



RIGHT  
*PO.BOX.POMMEDE LA DISCORDE*, 2022  
Acrylic, silkscreen printing and posca on canvas  
160x140 cm / 63x55 in

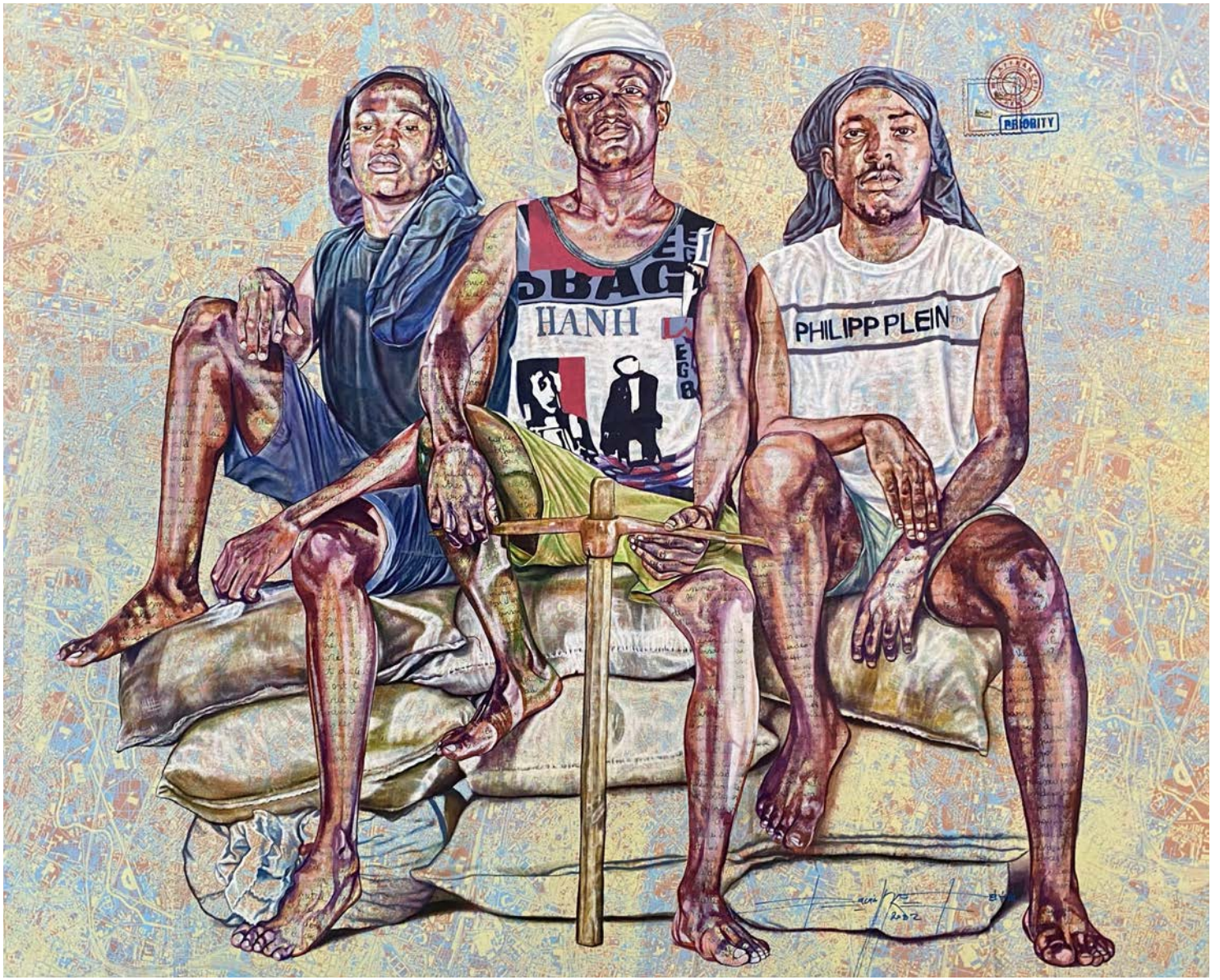
While he adorns the bodies with writings - advertising slogans, chemical symbols or documentary narratives - Nkot testifies to the scars the mining industry leaves on the bodies. In his series of three canvases showcasing a young boy next to a car battery, he addresses the efforts of companies to produce '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.



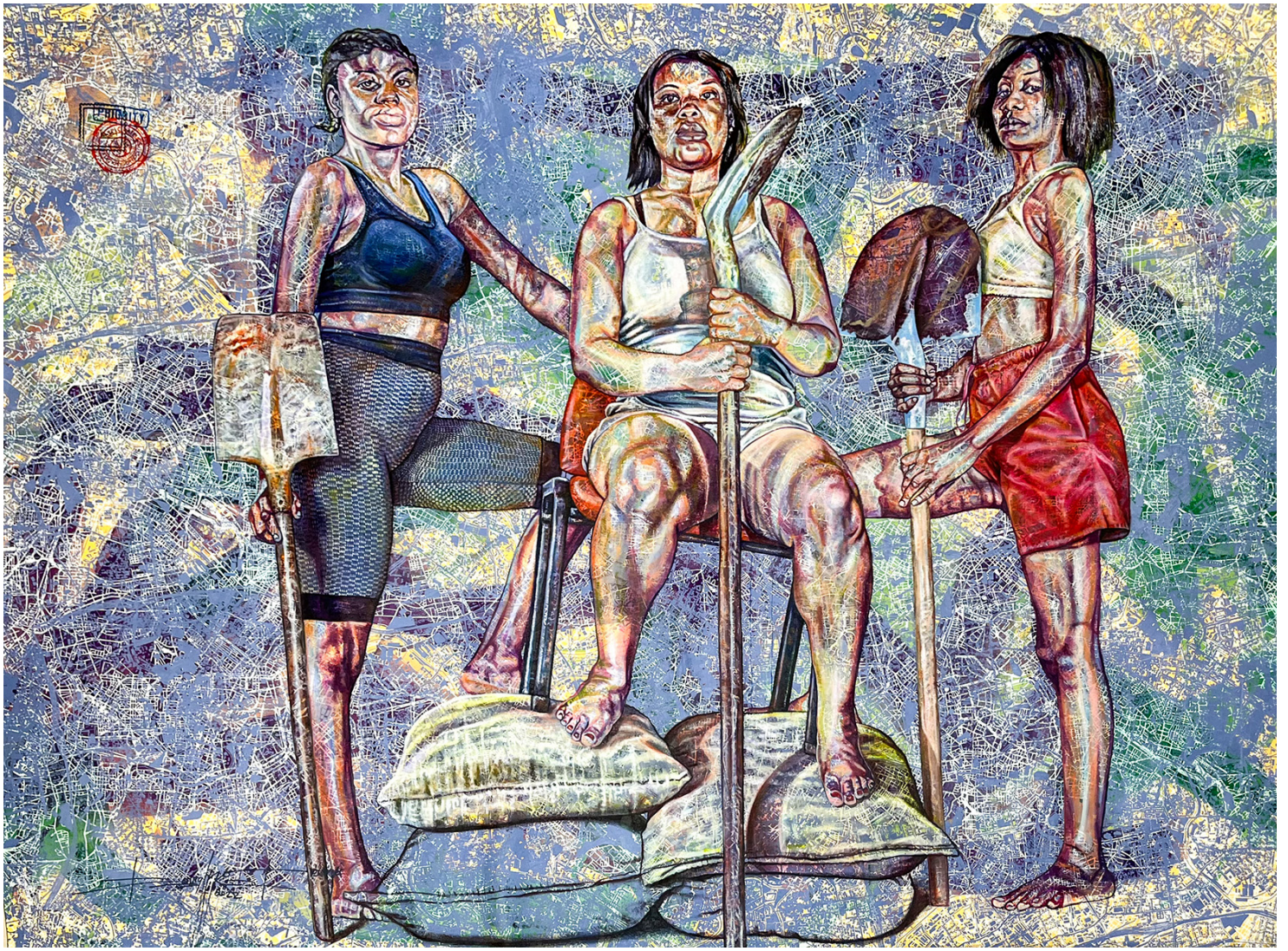
VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION *LES POMMES DE LA DISCORDE*  
AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France  
June 2022

Photo Credit: Studio Vanssay





*##PHARAONS@DES CREVASSES.ORG, 2022*  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
200x240 cm / 79x94 in



*FR.M. THE AMAZONS OF THE MINES.ORG, 2022*  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing and Indian ink on canvas  
200x290 cm / 79x114 in



VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION *LES POMMES DE LA DISCORDE*  
AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France  
June 2022

Photo Credit: Studio Vanssay



## @LES ENJEUX DE LA MONDIALISATION, 2022  
Acrylic, silkscreen printing and ink on canvas  
170x200 cm / 67x79 in



*PO. BOX PLAN D'AIDE HUMANITAIRE@YAHOO.COM, 2022*  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
200x240 cm / 79x94 in

The blue body turns into matter, echoing the colour of cobalt. The title of the work suggests the existence of an “aid plan”, Nkoti questions: “Are we helping the workers or are we looking to control the raw materials? This is not the body that is being supported but the materials. While the matter is being exploited, the body is also exploited as a raw material.”

The body appears exhausted, deprived of its vital energy. It mirrors the overexploitation of human beings and natural resources, Nkoti highlights this through the curves and muscles in the body. Despite carrying its suffering and deprivation, it is magnified and erected as a divinity. Reinterpreting a mannerist pictorial tradition, he represents moving bodies, in contradiction to a fixed body, until he entangles them. Analogous to the pedestal, the wooden pallet on which the silhouettes stand sacralised them and gave them the status of icons.



*BP.CORPS MATIÈRE.CM.GMAIL.COM, 2021*

Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas

200x255 cm / 79x100 in

Nkoti progressively turns the bodies into matter. Their roughness and skin tone bring them closer to the rock itself. The yellowish bodies echo, hence, the gold. While the ores are exploited, the bodies are themselves exhausted, depleted of their own energy. They carry in them the critical gaze of the artist who makes a parallel between the overexploitation of human beings and natural resources in a globalised system, led by overconsumption of manufactured goods.



[WWW.@COTTONBACKGROUND.COM.FR](http://WWW.@COTTONBACKGROUND.COM.FR), 2023  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
200x330 cm / 79x90 in



*#@#CHIC GL@MOUR##*, 2023  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
200x350 cm / 78x138 in

The cotton flower has a strong symbolic value, both historical and economical. Simultaneously, it carries in itself the weight of slavery, the Industrial Revolution, the beginnings of capitalism and environmental issues due to intensive farming. Jean David Nkot, whose art invokes both the violence in the world and the human condition, chooses the motif of cotton as a commodity and the allegory for the domination of human beings over other human beings and humans over nature.

On the canvas, the archival photographs sometimes mix with the map that features within Nkot's portraits. If he used to underline the influence of territories over individuals, he highlights now the consequences of History. When the works' title mentions the fashion universe – [www// ballot fashion//.fr.org](http://www.ballotfashion.fr.org), *#@#chic gl@mour##* – Nkot relates cotton growing to the final product, linking the material to the textile industry.





EXHIBITION VIEW

*Les dompteurs de nuages*, AFIKARIS Gallery  
October 2023

Photo credit: Studio Vanssay



*#@EPIGRAPHIE DES MAINS.COM,, 2023*  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
85x93 cm / 33x37 in



EXHIBITION VIEW

*Ce que nous donne la terre*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France  
July 2023



*PO. BOX // AU RYTHME DU MONT BLANC.COM, 2023*

Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas

200x280 cm / 78x110 in



EXHIBITION VIEW  
*Les dompteurs de nuages*, AFIKARIS Gallery  
October 2023

Photo credit: Studio Vanssay



*WWW.EPIGRAPHIE@MAIN.COM, 2023*  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
93x85 cm / 37x33 in



@ÂME DE LUXE @.FR.COM, 2023  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
170x205 cm / 79x100 in



*#WWW.DOMPTEUR DE NUAGE#, 2023*  
Acrylic, Indian ink and silkscreen printing on canvas  
D 110 cm / D 43 in





*@.COM.CM//DE LA POUSSIÈRE AUX PODIUMS.COM, 2023*

Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas

200x300 cm / 78x118 in



[WWW.L127.2@THEBOLLWEEVIL.COM](http://WWW.L127.2@THEBOLLWEEVIL.COM), 2023

Acrylic, silkscreen printing and archival photographs silkscreen printed on canvas  
133x163 cm / 52x64 in

In the continuity of his paintings depicting workers, Jean David Nkot presents scenes based on photographs shot in cotton fields in Cameroon. The portraits of these men weighing and lifting mountains of cotton arise in transparency on archival images. In this way, the artist confronts the past with the present, opening up a dialogue on agricultural issues and the legacy of the colonial model.



*#@L112-7 SONG FROM A COTTON FIELD.COM, 2023*

Acrylic, silkscreen printing and archival photographs silkscreen printed on canvas  
133x163 cm / 52x64 in

The archival photographs mingle with the cartographic characteristic of his work. By melting with the portraits, the map leaves a mark on the individuals. Hence, Nkot challenged the impact of territory over identity. By applying the same process to archival images, he underlines the aftereffects of history in contemporary times.

Nkot underlines that cotton is at the origin of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of international trade. The historical dimension suggested through the archive's use, points out the role that slavery played in this model and how the capitalist economy arose on inequalities and violence.



*#WWW.DOMPTEUR DE NUAGE#*, 2023  
Acrylic, Indian ink and silkscreen printing on canvas  
D 110 cm / D 43 in



WWW// L.111-07 // @ SONG FROM A COTTON FIELD.FR, 2023

Acrylic, silkscreen printing and archival photographs silkscreen printed on canvas  
163x133 cm / 64x52 in

The titles of Nkot's artworks mirror this constant questioning between past and present. The codes mentioned within the titles of the canvases – 'L.212-04', 'L.111-07' – echo the archive classification codes. He then adds the title of a work song, linking the present to the past.



EXHIBITION VIEW

*Les dompteurs de nuages*, AFIKARIS Gallery  
October 2023

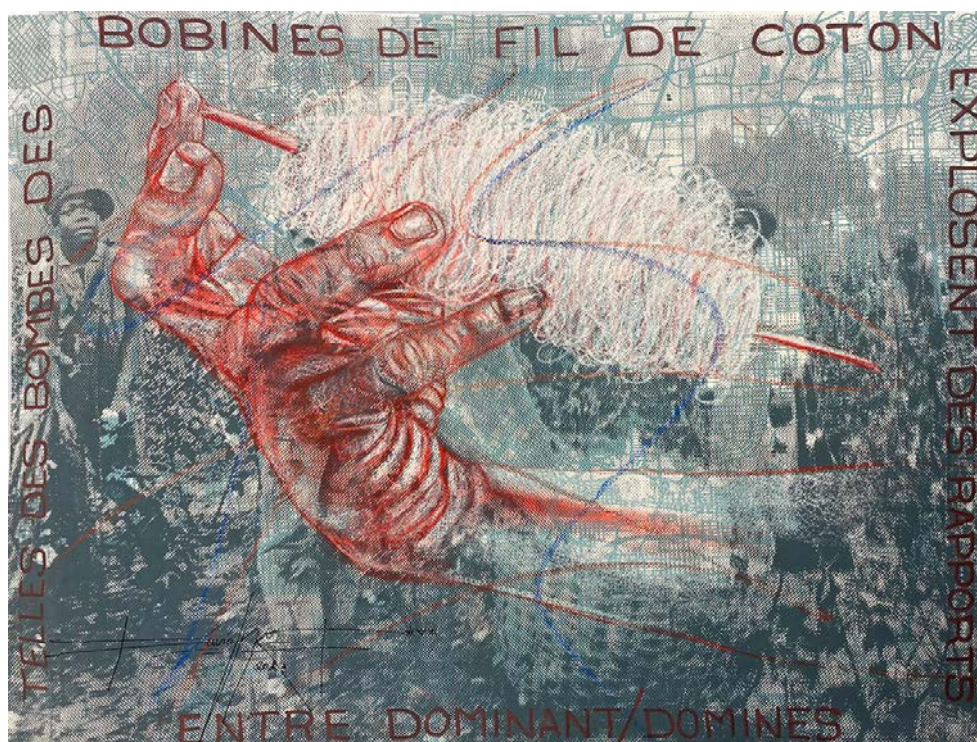
Photo credit: Studio Vanssay



*WWW.//L.203-7//HISTORY OF THE BLACK HAND//, 2023*

Dry pastel, posca and silkscreened archival photographs on paper

71x88cm / 27x34 in



UP

#L-901-4@HISTORY OF THE BLACK, 2023

Dry pastel, acrylic, posca and archival photographs silkscreened on paper

69x83 cm / 27x32 in

DOWN

L.707-9# HISTORY OF THE BLACK HAND, #, 2023

Dry pastel, acrylic, posca and archival photographs silkscreened on paper

70x89 cm / 27x35 in





EXHIBITION VIEW

*Les dompteurs de nuages*, AFIKARIS Gallery  
October 2023

Installation *The Railroad*, 2023

Silkscreen printing on jute bags filled with recycled clothes, framed hoe tool, video and sound installation of work songs

Photo credit: Studio Vanssay



UP  
*IN THE LONELINESS OF THE QUAY*, 2023  
 Silkscreen printing on jute bag and painted natural cotton flowers  
 96x55 cm / 38x22 in (each)

DOWN  
*EPIGRAPHY OF MEMORY*, 2023  
 Posca on hoe tool and silkscreen printing  
 37x37 cm / 15x15 in

Part of *The Railroad* installation



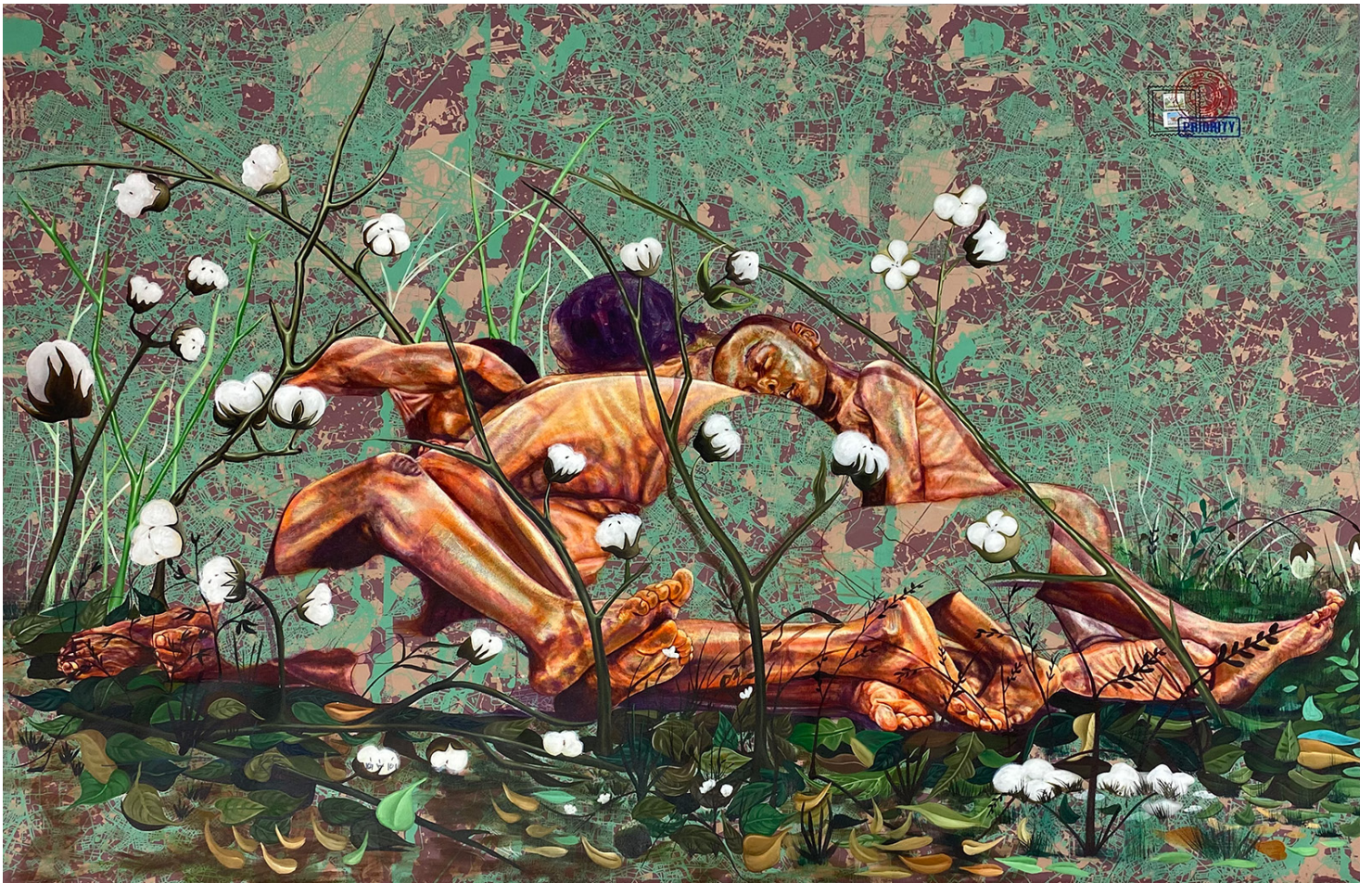
[WWW.T@IE D'OREILLER.COM](http://WWW.T@IE D'OREILLER.COM), 2023  
Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas  
170x200 cm / 67x78 in



*BP. L.111-074@ IT MAKES A LONG TIME MAN FEEL BAD, 2023*

Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas

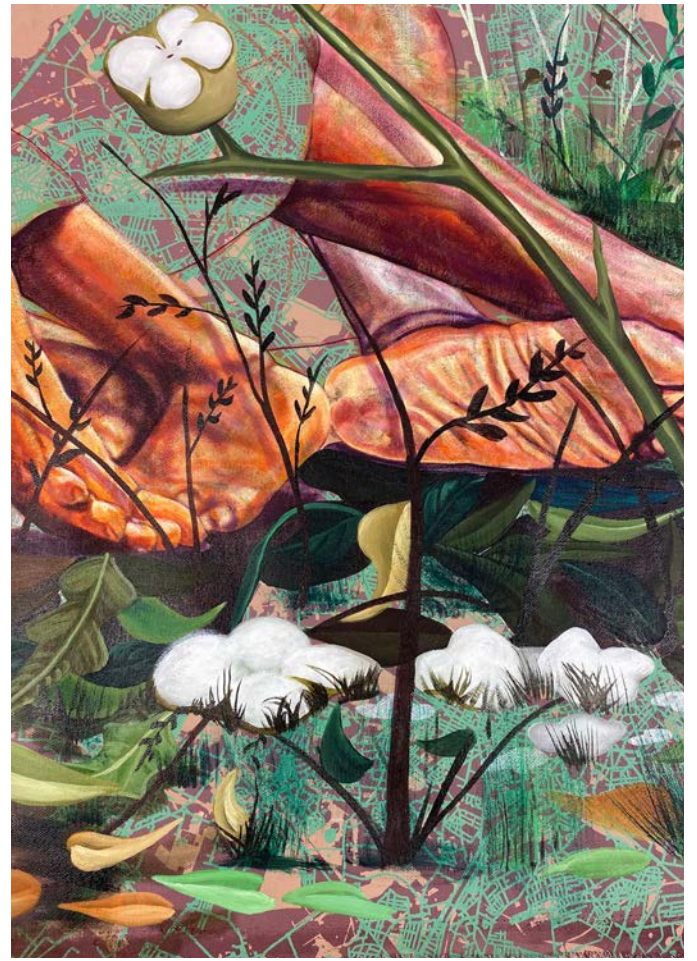
170x200 cm / 67x78 in



*THE SWEAT OF MY BODY IN THE COTTON FIELDS, 2023*

Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas

160x250 cm / 63x98 in



*THE SWEAT OF MY BODY IN THE COTTON FIELDS*  
(details)



WWW. [@BODY IN THE SOLITUDE OF COTTON FIELD.COM](https://www.bodyinthelatitudeofcottonfield.com), 2023

Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas

160x250 cm / 63x98 in



[WWW.\\_\\_@BODY IN THE SOLITUDE OF COTTON FIELD.CM](http://WWW.__@BODY IN THE SOLITUDE OF COTTON FIELD.CM)  
(detail)





*PO.BOX, IN THE SOLITUDE OF THE COTTON FIELD, 2023*

Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas

160x250 cm / 63x98 in