# JEAN DAVID NKOT

#### **PORTFOLIO**



## BIOGRAPHY

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



#### 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

Africa Supernova: the contemporary African painting collection of Carla and Pieter Schulting. Kuntshal KAdE, 2023. Jean David Nkot.

*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

Imago Mundi Collection

#### **SELECTED SOLO SHOWS**

#### 2025

Théâtre des corps - Drame de la matière, AFIKARIS Gallery, France Map of Resources, Espace doual'art, Douala, Cameroon Épigraphies des corps, Espace Annie Kadji, Douala, Cameroon

#### 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

Inhabiting the World, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France 1-54 NY, AFIKARIS Gallery, New York, United States Miart, AFIKARIS Gallery, Milan, Italy 1-54 Marrakech, AFIKARIS Gallery, Marrakech, Morocco

#### 2023

Africa Supernova : the contemporary African painting collection of Carla and Pieter Schulting, Kunsthal KAdE, Amersfoort, Netherlands

1-54 London, AFIKARIS Gallery, London, United Kingdom *Ce que nous donne la terre*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

ArtBrussels, AFIKARIS Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

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

ZonaMaco art fair, AFIKARIS Gallery, Mexico City, Mexico

#### 2022

The New African Portraiture. Shariat Collections, Kunsthalle Krems, Vienna, Austria Classique!, Galerie AFIKARIS, 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, AFIKARIS Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

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

#### 2019

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

#### 2017

SUD, Urban Salon of Douala, Douala, Cameroon Mémoires Libérées, National Museum of Cameroon, Yaoundé, Cameroon Behind the portail, Bandjoun Station, Bandjoun, Cameroon Our Wishes, Léopold Museum, Vienne, Austria

#### 2016

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



My wish is to convey a humanitarian message and for people, in a certain way, to truly question the place they occupy in the world and the role they have to play within a group or a community.



BP.THE-STORY-OF-A-TREASURE@FR.COM, 2025 Acrylic, screen printing, and silkscreened archival photographs on canvas 205x280 cm / 81x110 in

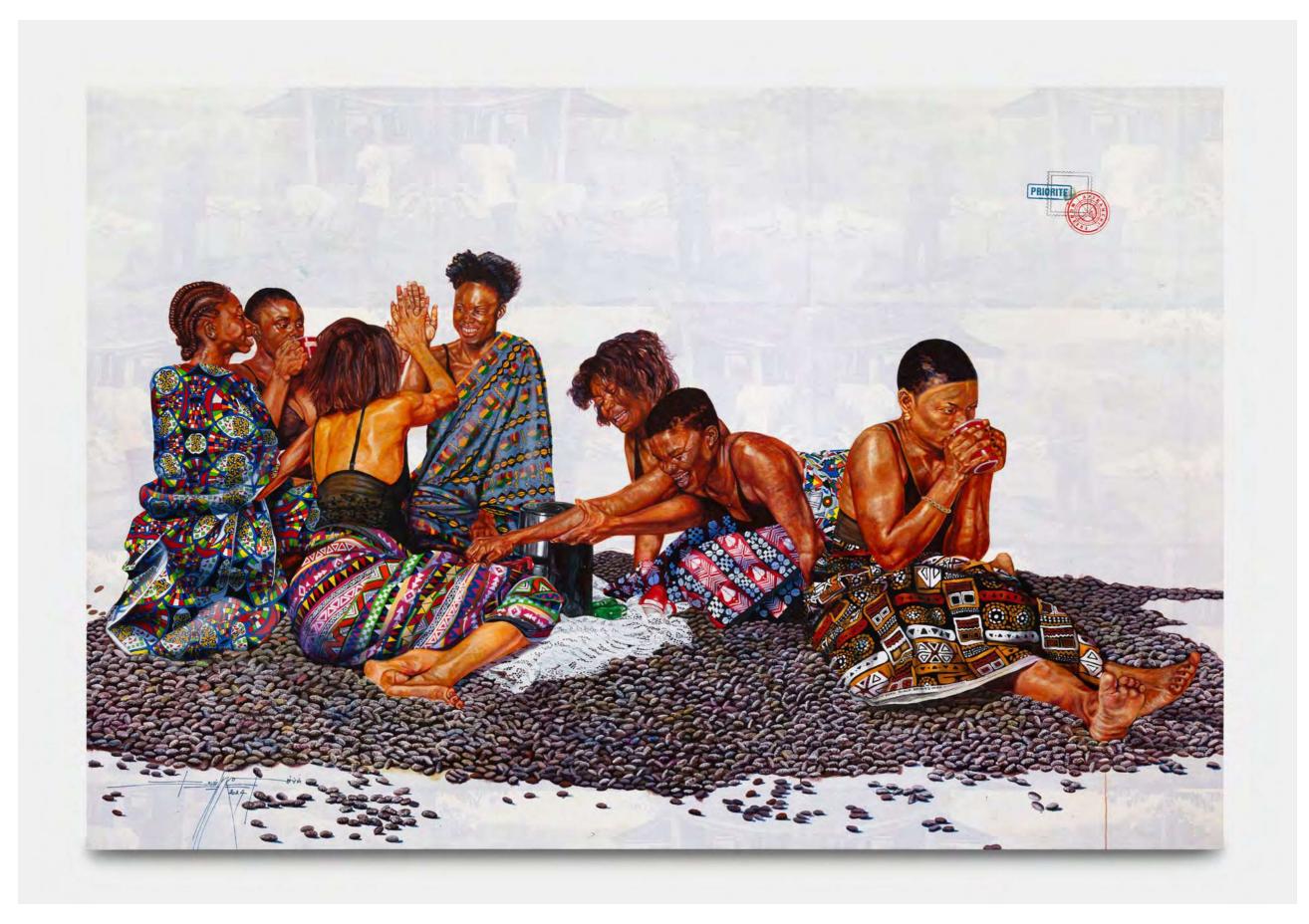




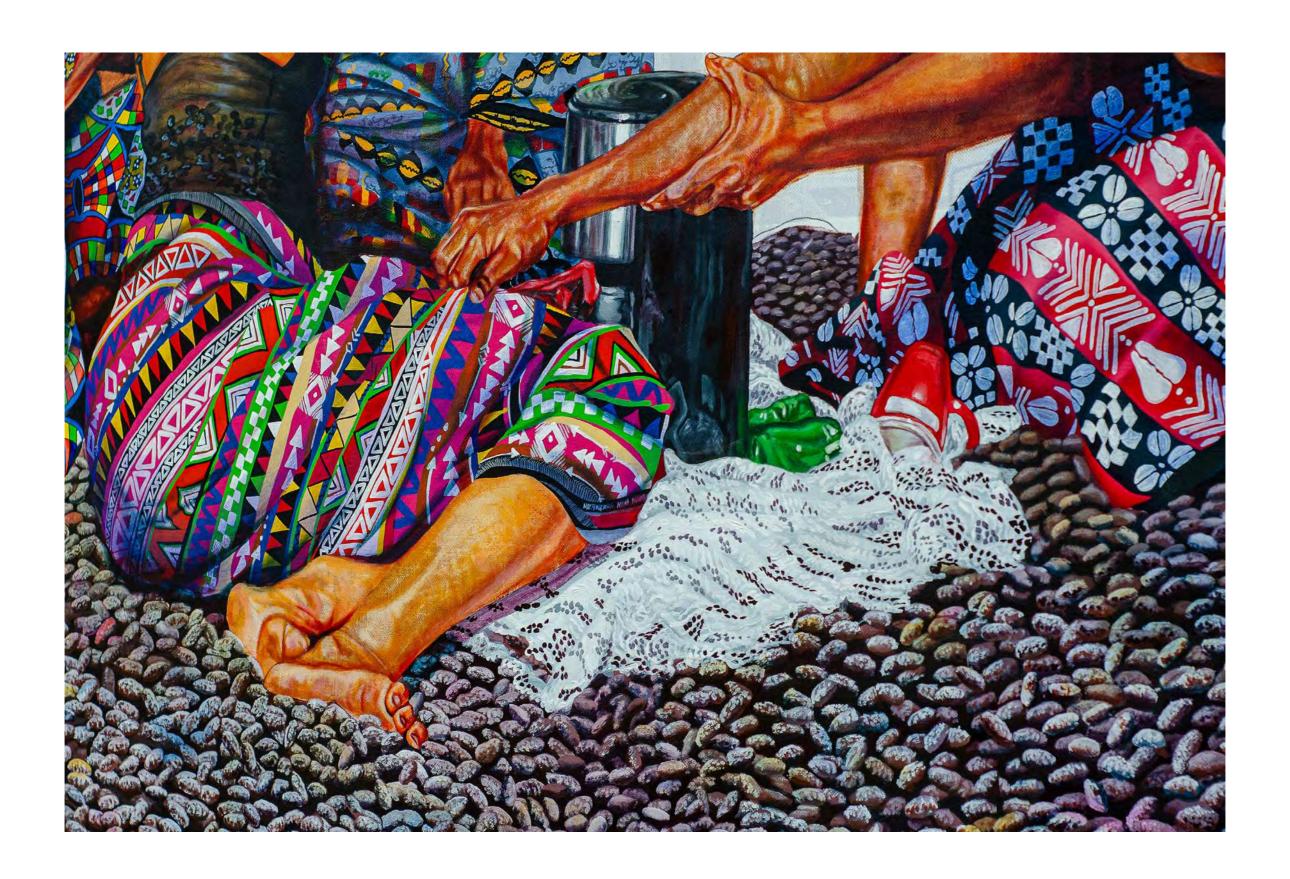
The realism of this work is revealed in the meticulous detail, the treatment of shapes, volumes, and shadows — from the folds in the clothing and the ridges of the cacao pods, to the moss growing on the branches of the cacao tree. The vivid colors immerse us in the immediacy and contemporary reality of agricultural labor in Cameroon today and, by extension, in other countries across Africa and the Global South.

In the background of this painting, as if in watermark, appears a series of black-and-white images repeated in a Warholian manner. Referencing archival photography, these images seem to link the colonial past — where industrial plantations originated — with the present-day extractive practices driven by capitalism and globalization.





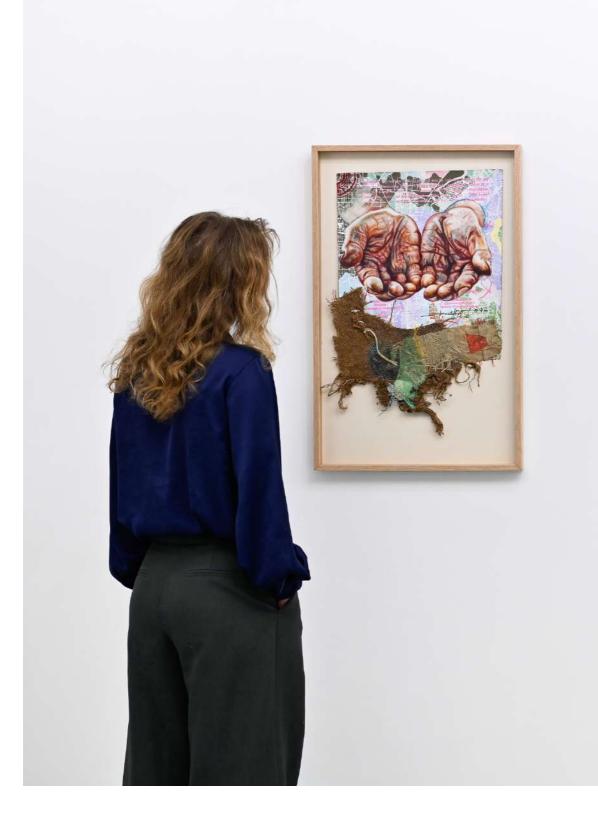
PO.BOX. PAIN-AND-FALSE-LAUGHTER.ORG, 2024 Acrylic, screen printing, and silkscreened archival photographs on canvas 205x305 cm / 79x118 in





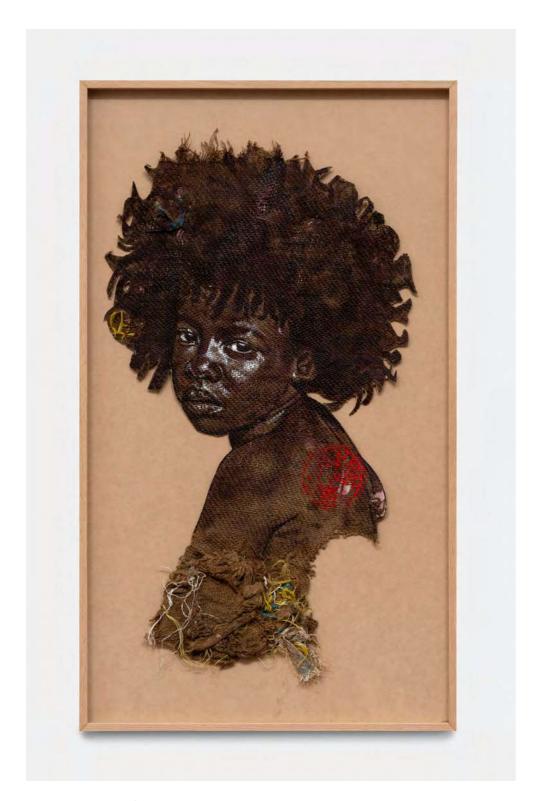
#@L'ORIGINE DE NOS DÉLICES.FR, 2025 Mixed media on canvas

60x48 cm / 24x19 in Framed: 81,5x52,5 cm / 32x20,6 in









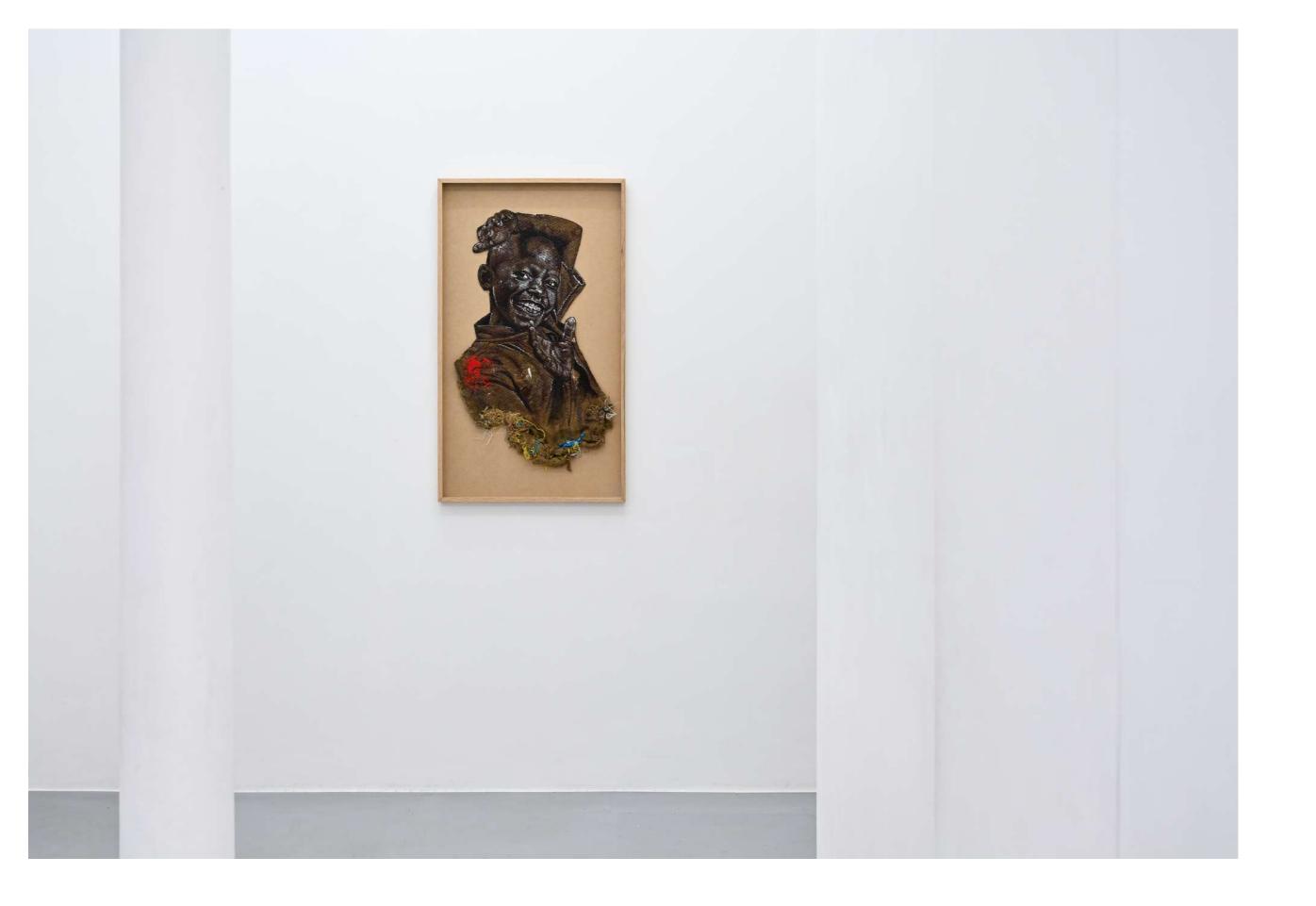
CORPS//MATIÈRE.CM.ORG, 2025 Acrylic painting on jute bag 98x58 cm / 39x23 in Framed: 116x67,5 cm / 46x26 in



The artist places us before the paradox of a childhood that is both joyful and powerless in the face of a burdensome existence. Through their posture, two of these portraits strangely echo the image of the *Muzzled Slave* published in *Souvenirs d'un aveugle, voyage autour du monde* (1839) by Jacques Arago, as well as Caravaggio's **Young Sick Bacchus** (1593–94), though seen from a reversed angle. The gaze implicates us and prompts us to reflect on our lifestyle habits, our daily consumption, and their impact on the innocent lives caught in the gears of the capitalist machine.

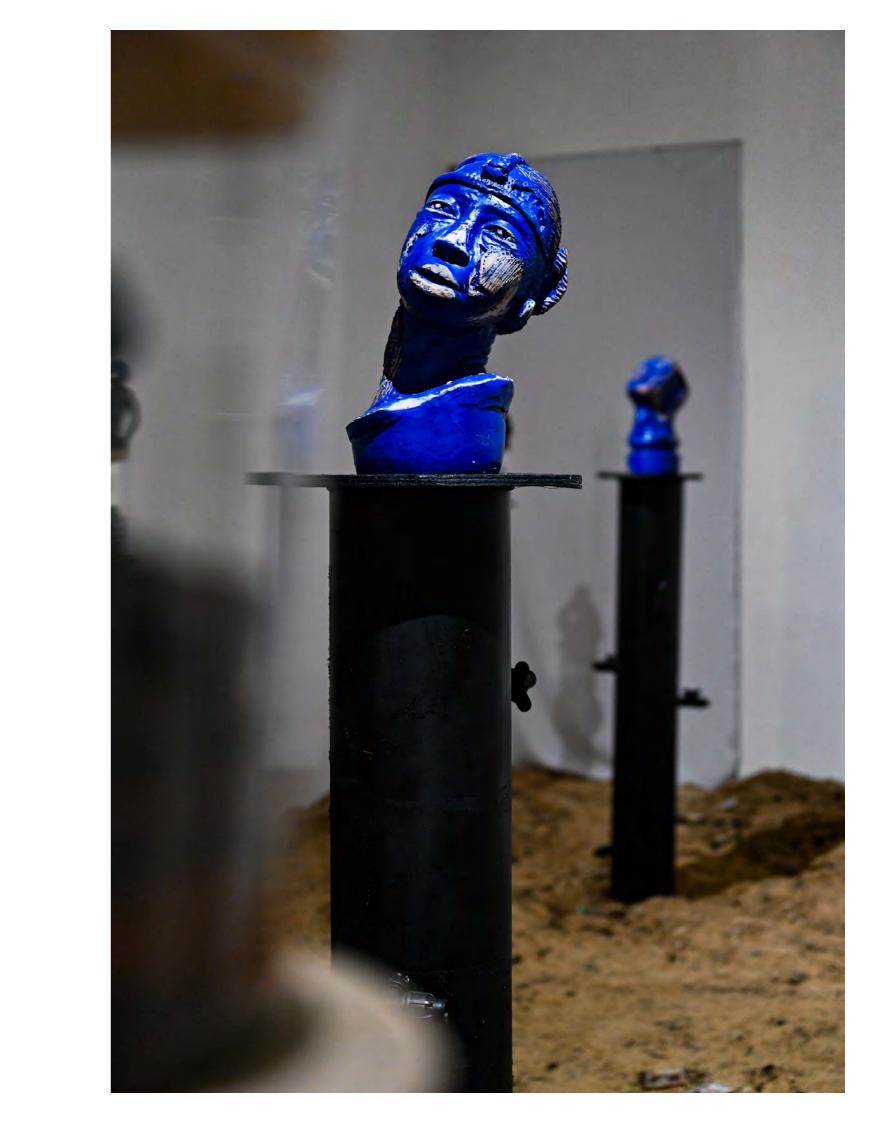
Here, the burlap canvas is not merely a support. It evokes tattered garments and leaves no doubt about the condition of the children wearing them. The artist conveys this without stripping the children of their dignity or the hope for better days.

To carry this ever-relevant message, Nkot uses a visual symbol characteristic of his aesthetic—a seal, a stamp from a postage mark, or, in his titles, the at-sign of an email address.



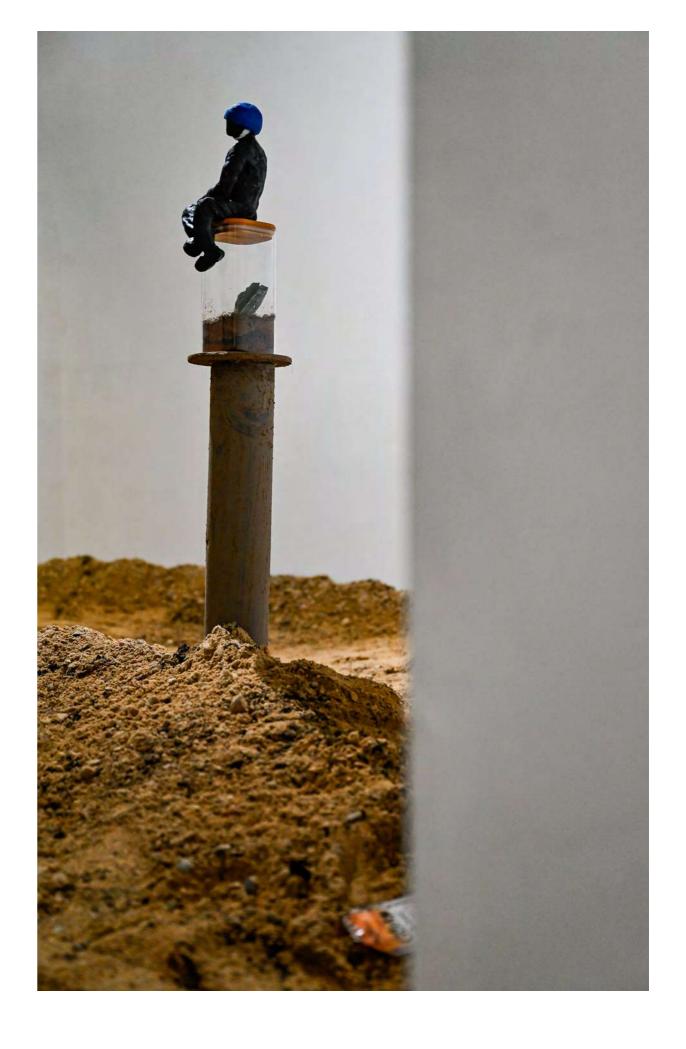


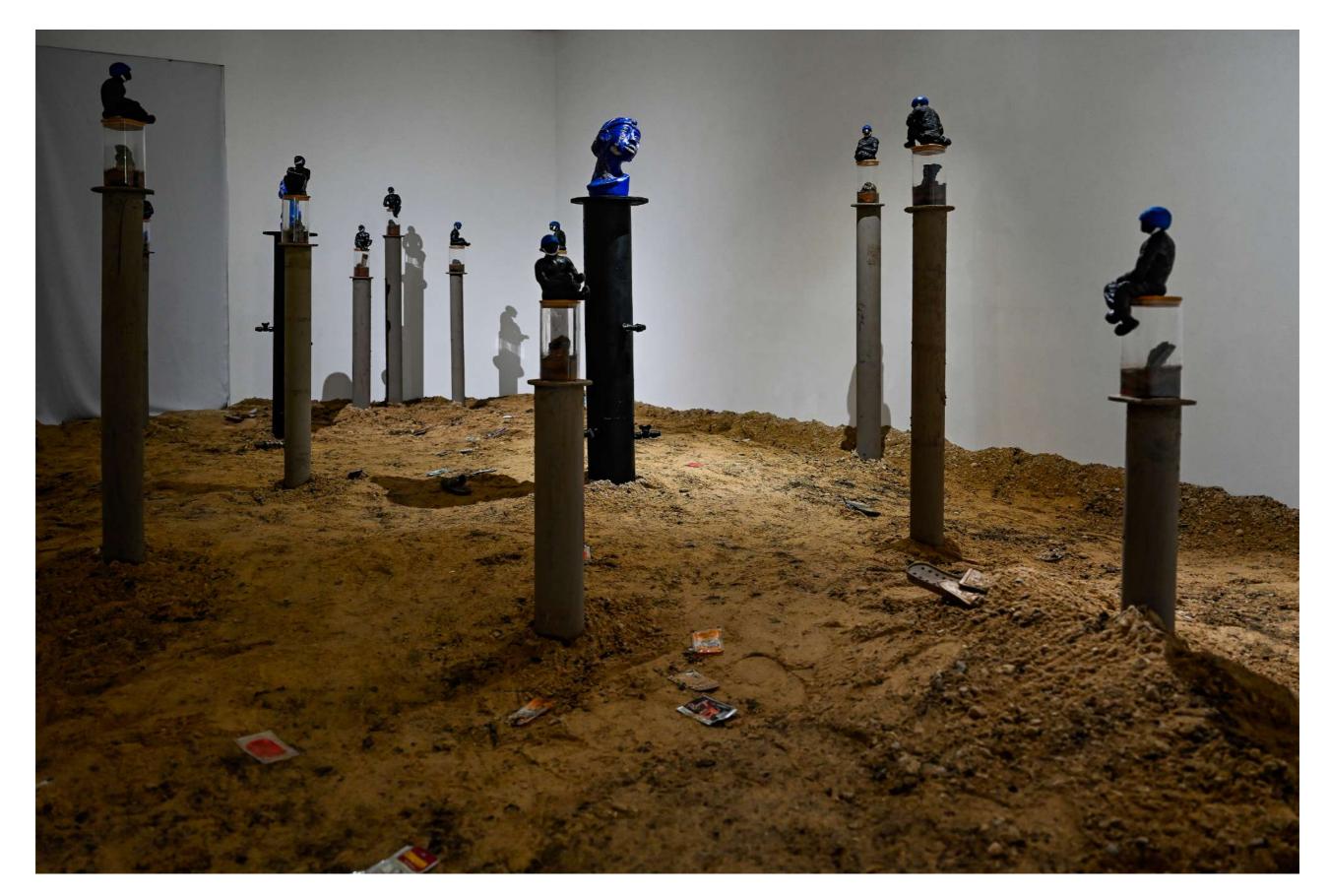






BYERI MINE, 2025 Mixed media Around 38x13x13 cm / 15x15x5 in





EXHIBITION VIEW

Théâtre des corps - Drame de la matière, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France
May 2025
Installation Map of Resources, 2025

Photo credit ©Studio Vanssay



#@#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, #@#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



PO.BOX\_\_\_\_ DOMPTEUR DES NUAGES.CM, 2023 Acrylic, ink, and silkscreen printing on canvas D 110 cm / D 43 in

When one takes an interest in agricultural materials, and in particular the issue of cotton, it naturally leads to uncovering an entire chapter of human history. This includes the era of slavery and the deportation and displacement of Black peoples. We must therefore question the role these events have played in the development of today's Western economy.





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

Elements from the installation Le chemin de fer



Installation *Le chemin de fer*, 2023 Screen printing on jute sacks filled with recycled clothing, framed hoe tool, video, and sound installation of *work songs* 



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

Elements from the installation *Le chemin de fer* 



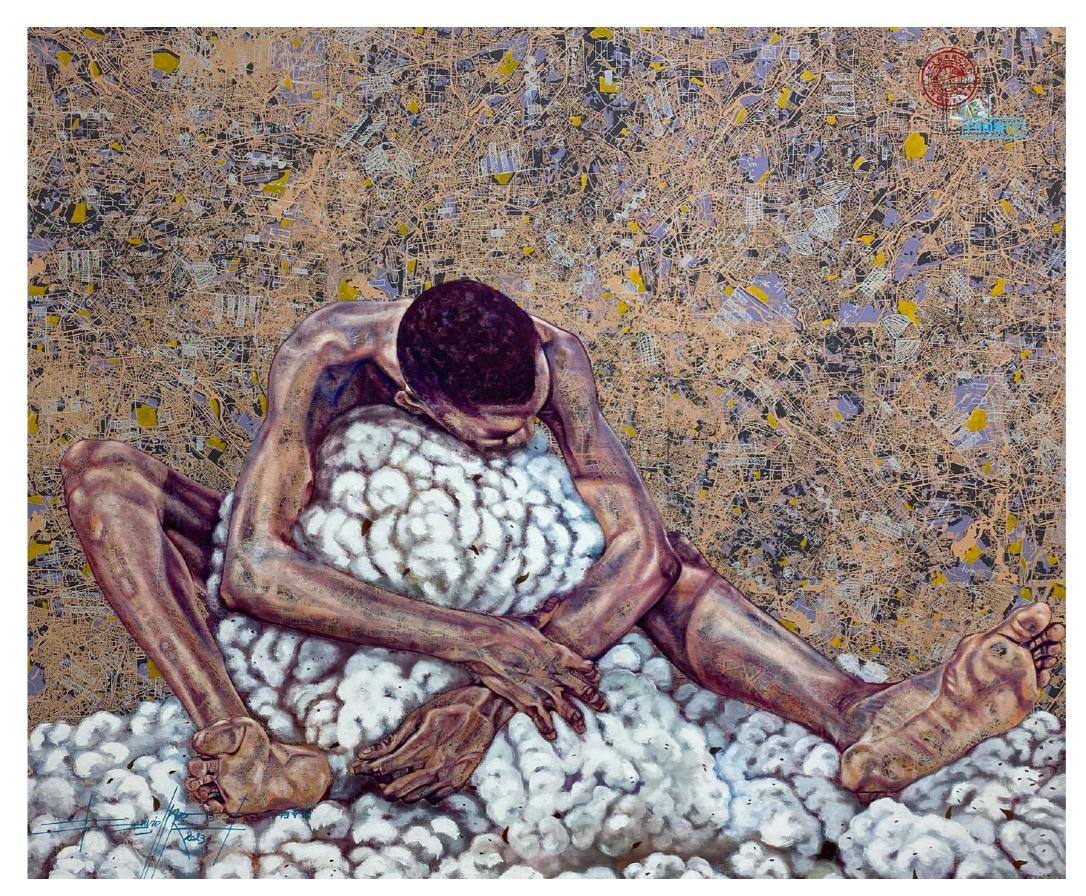




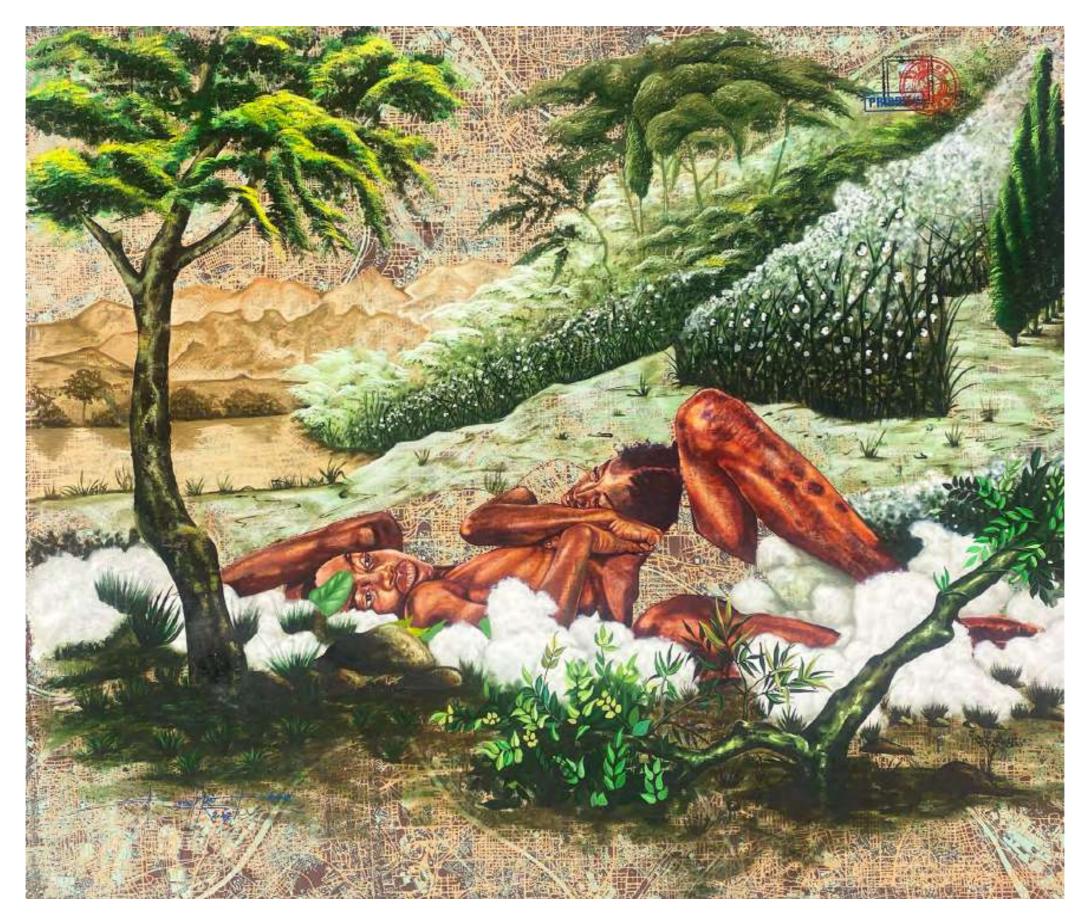
WWW.@COTTONBACKGROUND.COM.FR, 2023 Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas 200x330 cm / 78x130 in



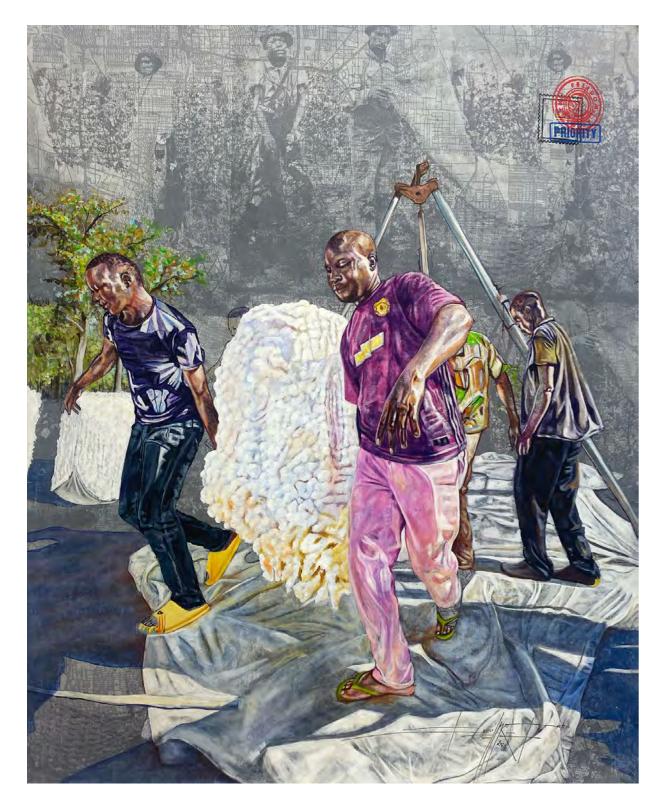
@.COM.CM//DE LA POUSSIÈRE AUX PODIUMS.COM, 2023 Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas 200x300 cm / 78x118 in



WWW. T@IE D'OREILLER.COM, 2023 Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas 168x200 cm / 66x79 in



P.O.BOX.EFFETNUAGEUX.CM, 2024 Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas 160x200 cm / 63x78 in



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

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.

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.



WWW.L127.2@THEBOLLWEEVIL.COM, 2023
Acrylic, silkscreen printing and archival photographs silkscreen printed on canvas 133x163 cm / 52x64 in



WWW.//L.203-7 //HISTORY OF THE BLACK HAND //, 2023
Dry pastel, posca and silkscreened archival photographs on paper 71x88cm / 27x34 in



WWW.//L.203-7 //HISTORY OF THE BLACK HAND //, 2023
Dry pastel, posca and silkscreened archival photographs on paper 71x88cm / 27x34 in

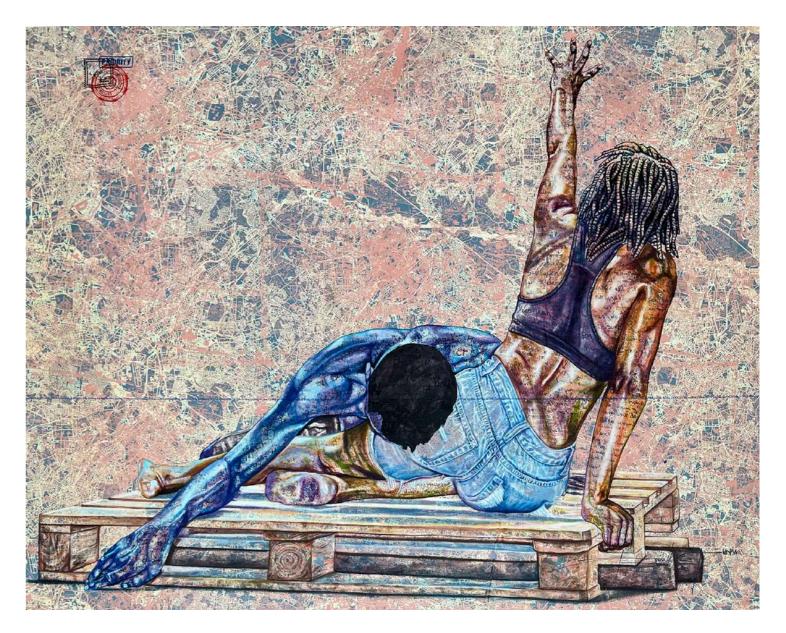




##ETAT MONDE##, 2021 Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas 220x290 cm / 86x114 in

The blue body turns into matter, echoing the colour of cobalt. The title of the work suggests the existence of an "aid plan", Nkot 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, Nkot 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.

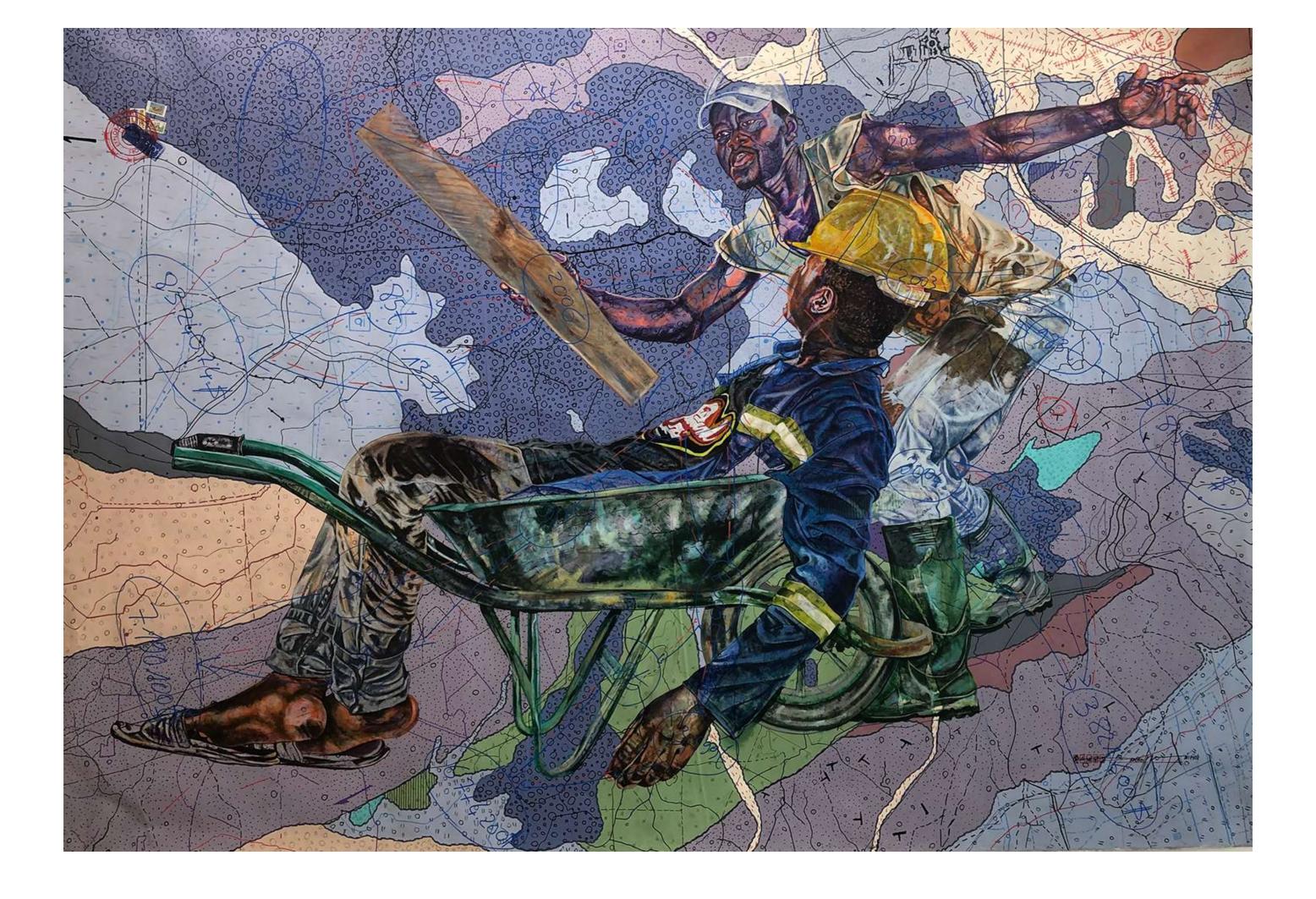


FR.BLUELINE.ORG.CM.COM, 2022 Acrylic, posca and silkscreen printing on canvas 200x247 cm / 79x97 in



ABOVE PO.BOX PLAN D'AIDE HUMANITAIRE@YAHOO.COM, 2022 Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas 200x240 cm / 78x84 in

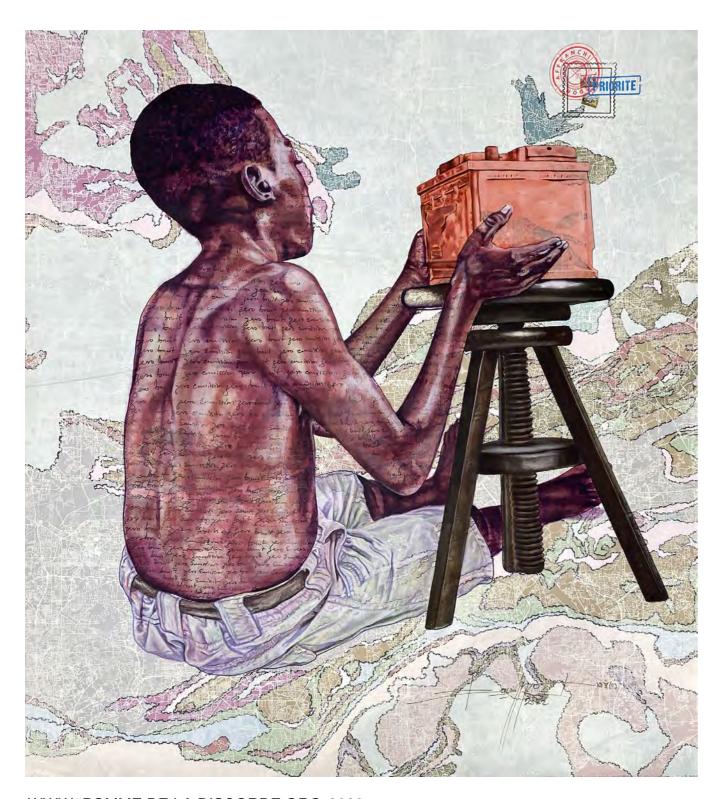
FOLLOWING PAGE WWW.HEADTIME@.COM, 2021
Acrylic, stamp, collage and and silkscreen printing on canvas 200x300 cm / 79x118 in



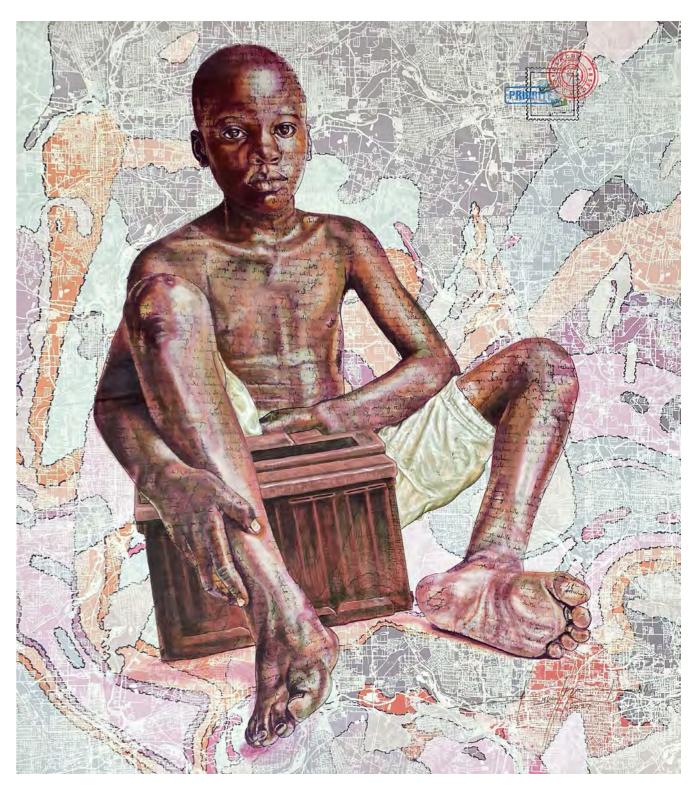


WWW.TRANSPORTEUR À TITRER.CM.ORG, 2021 Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas 200x338 cm / 78x133 in

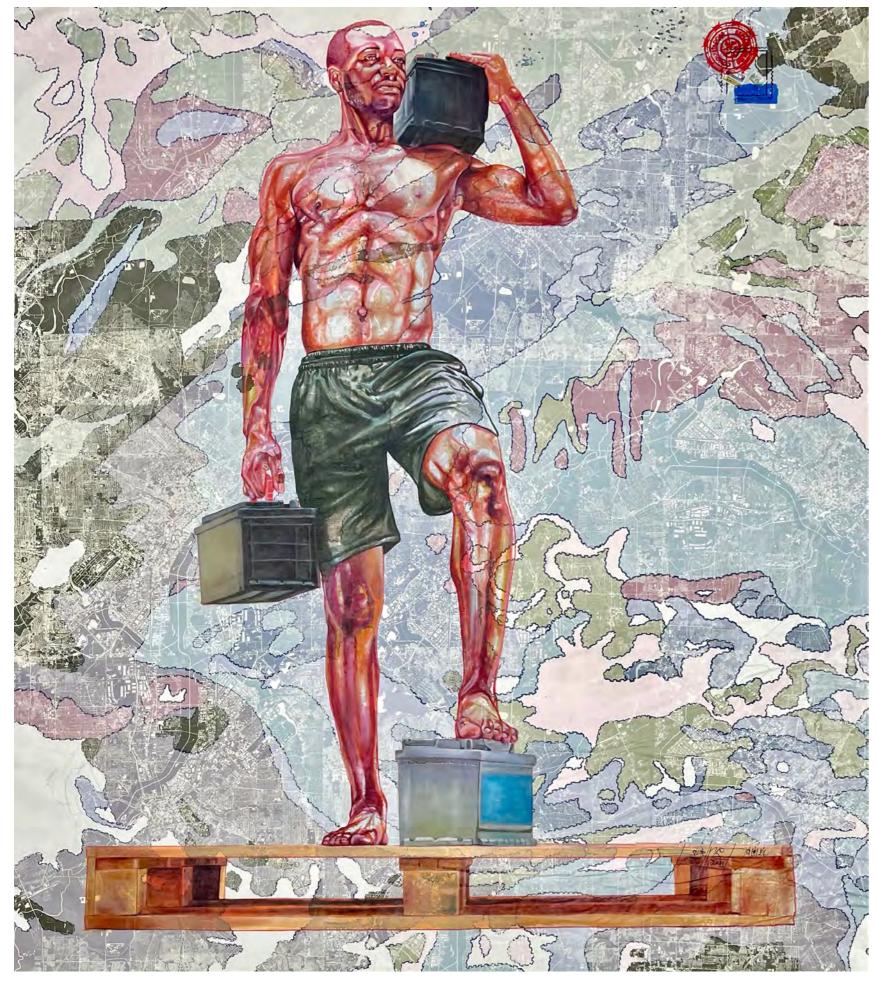
Nkot compensates for the lack of visibility and recognition of those who work in the shadows. By giving them the status of contemporary icons, he invites us to rethink our economic model to protect Men and the planet together. If a deep sensitivity to humanity has never ceased to tint his work, ecology 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.



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



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

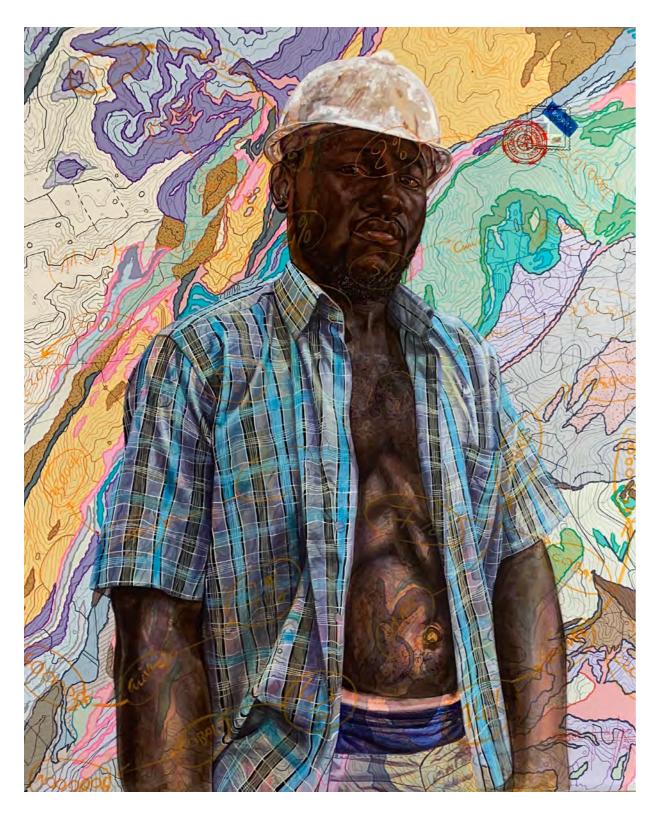


@HERCULE.COM, 2021 Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas 235x200 cm / 92x78 in

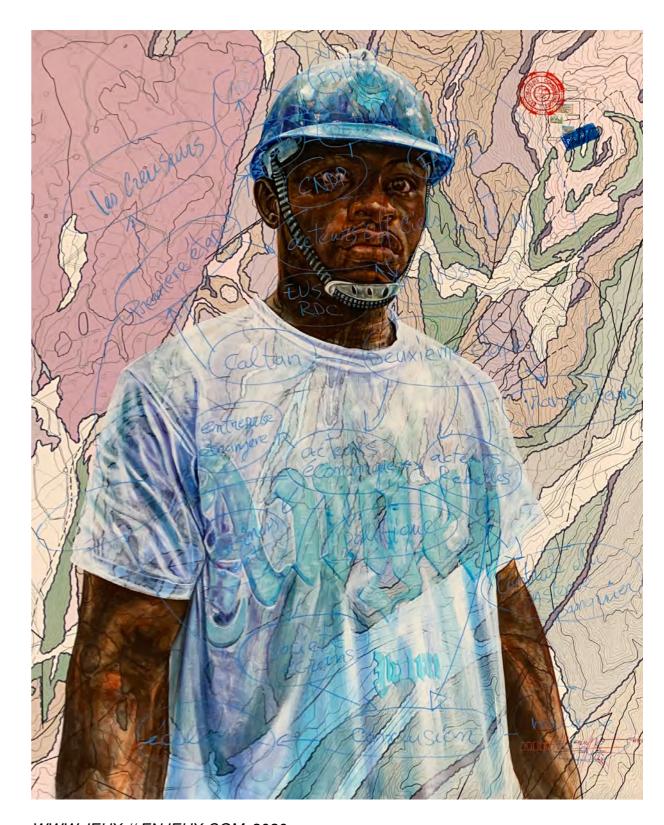
You who will take the time to photograph us, ask yourself this question: at what cost do we make phone calls, browse the internet, or photograph the people we hold dear?



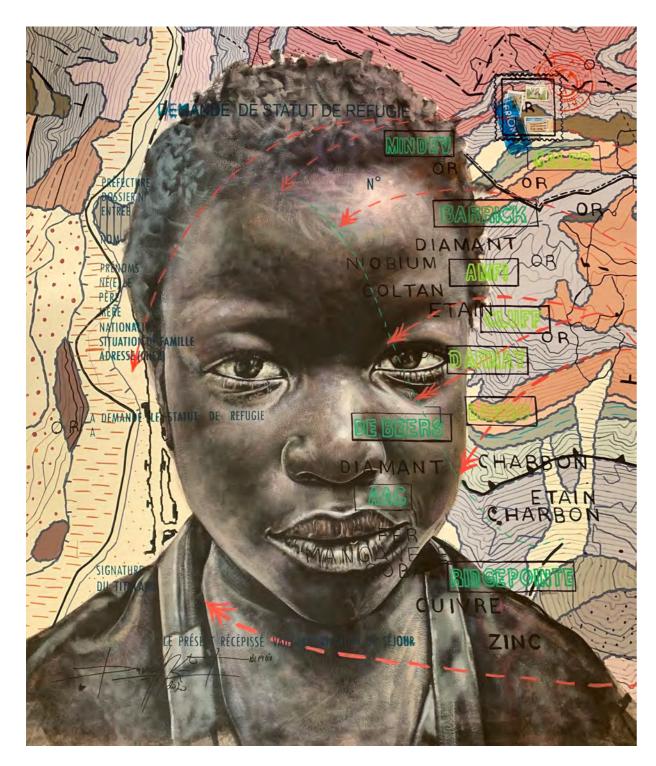
PO.BOX.THE HOPE OF THE SOUL, 2021 Acrylic, stamp, collage and and silkscreen printing on canvas 200 x 300 cm / 79x118 in



PO.BOX.TARIFICATION #COBALT #CUIVRE.ORG, 2020 Acrylic and posca on canvas 206x174 cm / 81x68 in



WWW.JEUX // ENJEUX.COM, 2020 Acrylic and posca on canvas 206x174 cm / 81x68 in

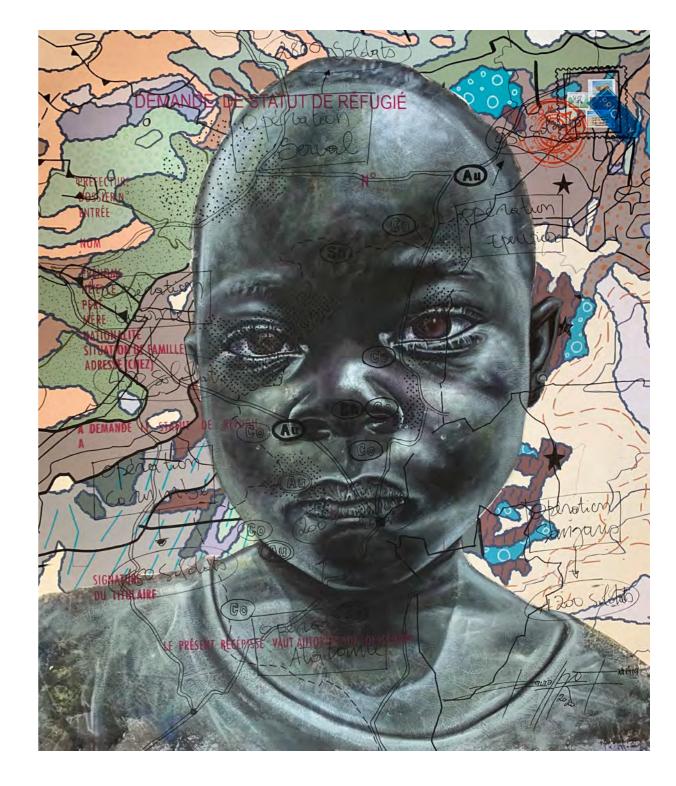


CI-DESSUS

BP. CHILD OF CALABAR, 2020

Acrylic, posca and silkscreen printing on canvas
120x110 cm / 47x43

FOLLOWING PAGE
#WUM'S CHILD#.ORG, 2020
Acrylic, posca and silkscreen printing on canvas
120x110 cm / 47x43



If his canvases remind of data analytics and investigation methods, Jean David Nkot is particularly interested in the work of American artist Mark Lombardi. Starting from 1994, the man who wanted 'to make the invisible visible', started to create what he called "narrative structures". These abstract diagrams aimed to explain financial trade movements. If the object and form of the analysis are different in the work of Nkot, the Cameroon artist also conceives his canvases like treasures of information. He feeds his art from his meetings and readings. He builds hence the archives of his time in parallel with his body of work.

The future of a people lies in its children. They are the ones whose emotions are genuine. To move the viewer, I portray children. It's a way of bringing them into history. To spark the viewer's emotion, there needs to be a short circuit in the brain to trigger critical thinking. Children provoke that questioning.

WWW.JOUEURS@DELUDO.COM, 2020 Acrylic and silkscreen printing on canvas 200x250 cm / 78x98 in





THE SHADOWS OF SPACE #13, 2019 Acrylic, ink and silkscreen printing on canvas 70x60 cm / 27x23 in

These Shadows of Space are the shadows of all the identities lost during their displacement. All those people who discarded their identity papers to avoid being deported. It is also a loss of identity on linguistic, social, cultural, and economic levels.



INDÉSIRABLE 5, 2018
Acrylic, ink and posca on canvas
108x112 cm / 42x44 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.

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.



INDÉSIRABLE 7, 2019 Acrylic, ink and posca on canvas 108x112 cm / 42x44 in

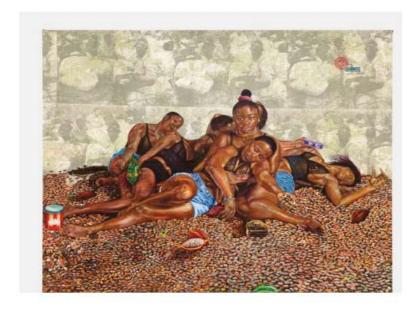
# PRESS REVIEW



31 mai 2025 Philippe Dagen France 1/1

## Sélection galerie : Jean David Nkot chez Afikaris

A voir cette semaine : des peintures et des sculptures de l'artiste camerounais où la volonté de réalisme se vérifie jusque dans le choix de ses matériaux.



Pour tout saisir de ce que Jean David Nkot inscrit et crypte dans ses peintures et sculptures, il faut un regard attentif. A l'arrière-plan de ce qui semble d'abord être de beaux portraits de groupe de jeunes femmes rieuses apparaissent les fantômes à peine visibles de photos qui montrent les travaux dans les plantations de cacao et de café, l'une des ressources principales du Cameroun, pays natal de l'artiste. Devant ces ouvrières s'étalent les fèves et grains qu'elles doivent trier avant que l'industrie ne les traite. A ces grandes toiles sont associées des figures nues en céramique d'un bleu cru. On s'aperçoit vite que les corps sont blessés et que ce bleu est celui du cobalt : une allusion aux activités minières du pays. Dans la dernière salle, Nkot déploie une installation où se retrouvent ces bustes bleus sur leurs socles et, dans des bocaux de verre, des imitations d'échantillons de minerais : argent, cuivre, lithium, platine, etc. Ceux-ci sont extraits par les mineurs, souvent clandestins, au mépris de leur vie. Le sol est recouvert de terre sablonneuse et des pochettes vides le parsèment : celles dans lesquelles ces mineurs boivent l'alcool frelaté qu'ils absorbent pour travailler des journées entières sans manger. Dans le couloir qui précède cette pièce, des portraits sont accrochés. Ils sont savamment peints, mais sur des toiles de jute effilochées et déchirées. Ainsi la volonté de réalisme de Nkot se vérifie-t-elle jusque dans le choix de ses matériaux.

#### Philippe Dagen

« Théâtre des corps. Drame de la matière ». Galerie Afikaris, 7, rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth, Paris 3e



#### L'IMAGE DU JOUR

QDA 12.06.25 N°3068

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### Jean David Nkot,

BP.the-story-of-a-treasure( fr.com, 2025, acrylique, sérigraphie et photographies d'archives sérigraphiées sur toile, 205 x 280 cm. © Courtesy de l'artiste et galeri Afikaris./Adagp, Paris 2025.

# La complainte du cacao

Dans les temps troublés que nous vivons, la dimension politique et sociale de l'art prend une résonance particulière. On l'a vu hier avec la cohabitation incongrue de la fresque de Barbara Kruger et des gendarmes mobiles devant le MOCA de Los Angeles (voir QDA du 11 juin)... Assistera-t-on parallèlement à la résurgence d'une peinture à visée documentaire (qui pouvait autrefois exister à côté de la photo et de la vidéo, désormais en situation de monopole sur ce secteur), qu'ont pu incarner par le passé les peintres de la marine ou les artistes engagés sur le front ? Que l'on pense aux images de guerre et de bombardements de Grosz ou de Vallotton... C'est un peu le territoire qu'explore le peintre camerounais Jean David Nkot (né en 1989 à Douala), qui bénéficie d'une quatrième rétrospective personnelle à la galerie

Afikaris. Il y poursuit un cycle engagé autour du coton et du café, abordant maintenant le cacao et les mines. On y voit, d'une façon très figurative ou plus allégorique, la coupe des cabosses, le tri des fèves, mais aussi le travail des enfants, l'absence de réglementation et de protection. La dernière salle, une installation qui a nécessité l'emploi de six tonnes de terre dans la chic rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth, parle d'une autre malédiction, celle des minerais, comme le cobalt, le manganèse ou le platine, indispensables à nos automobiles ou à nos téléphones portables. Leur exploitation suscite la convoitise des grandes puissances et des multinationales... toujours au détriment des populations locales. RAFAEL PIC

→ Jean David Nkot. « Théâtre des corps, drame de la matière » à la galerie Afikaris (7, rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth, 75003 Paris), jusqu'au 21 juin. afikaris.com



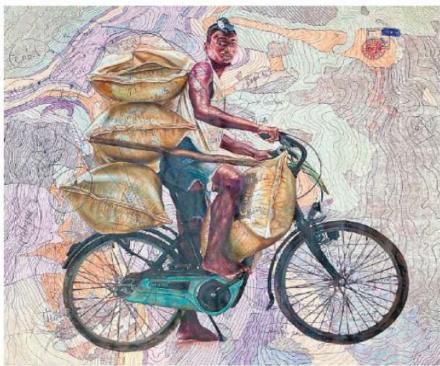
Juillet 2023 Anton jageret Daniel Zamora France 1/1

# La Silicon Valley contre le développement

Il fut un temps où les pays du Sud revendiquaient un « nouvel ordre économique international » et comptaient

sur une industrialisation planifiée pour lutter ontre la pauvreté. Aujourd'hui, les dons directs en espèces des plus riches en faveur des plus démunis font figure de panacée. Cette approche ne se substitue pas





URL: https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2023/07/JAGER/65936