

GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

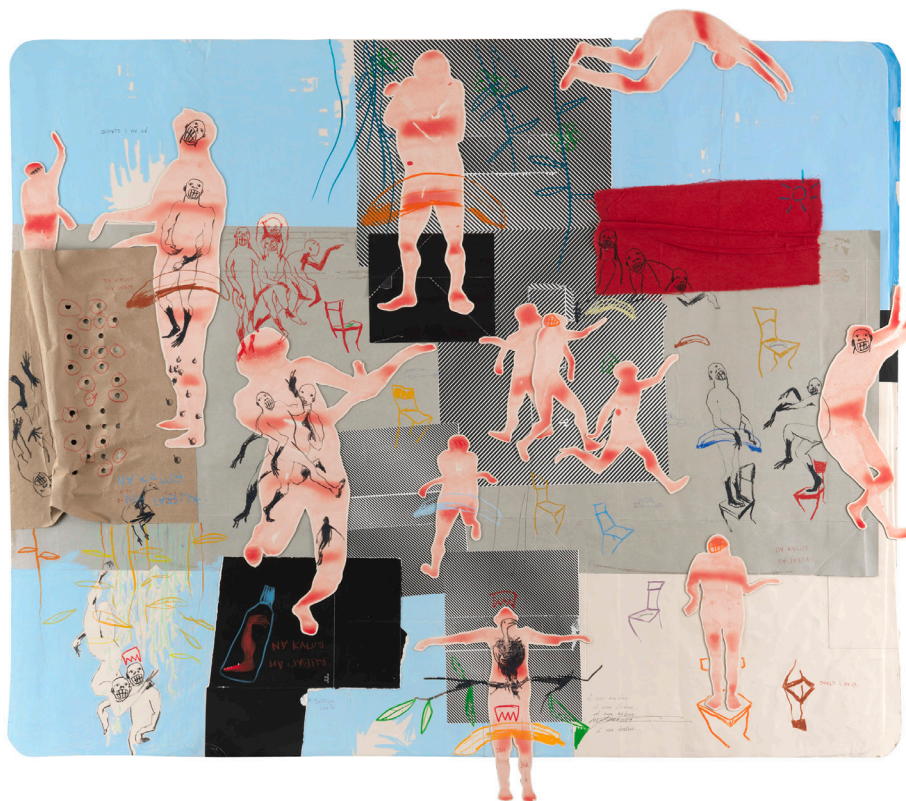
PARIS - BRUXELLES

Nú Barreto

Silhouettes Parfaites

November 18 - January 13, 2024

3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri - Paris 4^e



Nakatur, 2022
Pencil, pen; collage on paper
Courtesy of the artist and the Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to present *Silhouettes Parfaites (Perfect Silhouettes)*, Nú Barreto's fourth solo exhibition, across the Paris and Brussels galleries.

Works on recycled paper offer spaces of circulation where beings and things, swept up into a disconcerting mobility, find themselves and shift around, sometimes going beyond the structural limits imposed by the frame. At the heart of the exhibition is a three-meter-long canvas mounted on wood. Titled *Transmissions (2022)*, it is a continuation of his series *Etats Désunis d'Afrique (2009)*, in which the configuration of the American flag is replaced by the colors of most African states. Pens are amassed along the entire length of the canvas, as if to signify the accumulations of ideas, knowledge and desires.

This new body of work is an extension of the artist's research—Nú Barreto's use of drawing as a means of expression—and reveals works that have never been seen before. For this new exhibition, the plasticity of each work is enriched by variations in material and volumes, conveying politically charged messages on the state of the contemporary art world.

Since childhood, drawing has always been the artist's preferred medium: it is the "place of all expression," allowing to drastically reduce discourse via an "iconography that facilitates reading and transmission," he declares. Initially two-dimensional, Nú Barreto's practice has gradually shifted towards a plastic approach, where collages and the interplay of materials and volumes are central. These forms, which can be mistaken for abstractions, in reality reproduce silhouettes: "silhouettes like shadows," says the artist, "shadows like traces, traces like gestural imprints or frozen acts in which their agitation seems to dictate, lightly or dangerously, a narration of concrete facts," he continues.

Alone or entwined, these shadows of moving figures are at times physically very close to us. Their arrangement on the flat surface, either right side up, or upside down, creates unbalanced environments. The contours of each shape float in the pictorial field, sometimes transcending it: the silhouettes escape from the frame with their lively mobility or come towards us in their three-dimensionality, significantly detaching themselves from the support of the work. Visitors thus experience materiality in this face-to-face encounter with the works, contemplating the variations in scale, size and volume of the cut-out silhouettes.

Nú Barreto's iconography, rich and symbolic, subsists in this new corpus. The motifs echo each other from one work to another: bottles containing people and objects, three-legged chairs and ladders with uneven rungs follow each other like a series of words turned into images. To complete his personal semantics, the artist uses a chromatic palette where the color red acts as a binder. Red continues to be chosen for its symbolic power. Through image and color, Nú Barreto's new language attempts to express the instability and violence of the world in the 21st century.

By focusing on the human condition and the excesses of power in our contemporary society, Nú Barreto's works recall the drawings of South African artist William Kentridge. In these settings where circulation is the order of the day, visitors enter and circulate through the image. They scan the layers of material, volumes and symbols that transmit a message. For it is truly transmission that lies at the heart of this exhibition: all the symbolic and pictorial resources overflow in their vivid expressivity, escaping the frame both in their mobility and in their volume. These accumulations represent tormented landscapes, mirrors of the troubled state of the world.

Born in 1966 in São Domingos (Guinea-Bissau), Nú Barreto has been living and working in Paris since 1989.

Graduated from the École Nationale des Métiers de l'Image des Gobelins (Paris, France), Nú Barreto has forged a language of his own and developed a multidisciplinary and political practice. His original work was quickly spotted. In 1998, he represented his country at the Lisbon World Fair (Portugal). His work has since then received international exposure and Nú Barreto has established himself as one of the most prominent artists of African contemporary art.

As evidenced by the many solo and group exhibitions dedicated to his work, among which: *Flags* at the Fondation Boghossian (Belgium) in 2022 ; the touring show *EUROPA, Oxalá* at the Mucem (France), at the Fondation Gulbenkian (Portugal) and at the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Central (Belgium) from 2020 to 2022; *Reclaiming Magic* at the Royal Academy (UK) in 2021; *AFRO, Rencontres avec l'art de l'Afrique contemporaine* at the Centre culturel de l'Escale in Levallois-Perret (France) in 2019 ; *0.10 RELOADED Avant-Garde* at the Sabine Knust gallery in 2018, in Munich (Germany) where he exhibited alongside William Kentridge, El Anatsui and Isaac Julien ; the great exhibition entitled *Lumières d'Afrique*, which, between 2015 and 2018, travelled to the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, (France), the Donwahi Foundation in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), the IFAN Museum in Dakar (Senegal), the Palace of Nations in Geneva (Switzerland), the African Union of Addis-Abeba (Ethiopia) and at the EUMETSAT in Darmstadt (Germany) ; *Hommage à la Biennale d'Art contemporain africain de Dakar* in Martigny (Switzerland), and *Convergences* held at the headquarter of the West African Economic and Monetary Union in Ouagadougou (Burkina-Faso) in 2016. In 2015, the artist enjoyed his first solo show in China entitled *Ressonância* at the Taipa House Museum of Macao (China), and took part in *Rastros* at the Capixaba do Negro Museum (MUCANE) in Vitória (Brazil). Before, in 2013, he was exhibited at the Boribana Museum of Dakar (Senegal) ; at the Arpád Szenes and Viera da Silva Foundation in Lisbon, PLMJ, (Portugal) in 2012 on the occasion of *Fundação PLMJ, 100 obras - 10 años* ; at the Latin American Foundation of São Paulo (Brazil) in 2011 ; at the Biennale of São Paulo (Brazil) in 2010 ; at the Cité des sciences et de l'industrie de la Villette for the exhibition *Quand l'Afrique s'éveillera*, in Paris (France) in 2007. In 2006, he took part in the famous Biennial of Contemporary African Art of Dakar (Senegal), as well as in *Afrique Europe – rêves croisés*, an exhibition organized by the EU Commission at Les Ateliers des Tanneurs in Brussels (Belgium).

Nú Barreto's works are featured in major public collections such as the Musée Capixaba do Negro Museum (MUCANE) in Vitória, Brazil ; the Pro-Justitiae Foundation in Porto (Portugal), and the Arpád Szenes and Viera da Silva Foundation (PLMJ) in Lisbon (Portugal) ; the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) ; as well as the Taipa House Museum of Macao (China), Fondation Gandur pour l'Art in Geneva (Switzerland), the Fondation H in Antananarivo and Paris (Madagascar, France), The National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. (USA), the Africana Foundation in Geneva (Switzerland), the Société Générale Foundation in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), and the Central Bank of West African States Collection (BCEAO) in Bissau (Guinea-Bissau).

Nú Barreto has been represented by the Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels, since 2018.

Paris Saint-Honoré

Luc Delahaye

Reportage

November 6 - December 23, 2023

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri

Nú Barreto

Silhouettes Parfaites

November 18 - January 13, 2024

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri II

Guillaume Bresson

November 18 - January 13, 2024

Brussels

Jorge Queiroz

Shape the echo and other works

October 26 - December 23, 2023

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