

GALLERIA POGGIALI

Alexandre Diop

La Symphonie du Ghetto: Volume One
Natural Born Killer

8 June - 19 September 2022

Opening

Wednesday 8 June 2022 (18.30-21.00)

Galleria Poggiali Milan

Foro Buonaparte 52, 20121 Milan

With this new series of works on paper, **Alexandre Diop** (1995, Paris), presents a heterogeneous symphony telling the story of people — both mythical and real — in search of redemption. This narration is deeply tied to the life story of Alexandre Diop born to a French mother and Senegalese father and raised in Paris. ***La Symphonie du Ghetto: Volume One. Natural Born Killer*** is Diop's first show in Italy.

Alexandre Diop's artistic practice veers between painting and sculpture, concentrating on the physical presence of materials – such as wood, metal, fabric, latex, tar, canvas, natural fibres, straw, beads, pastels, leather, nails, and screws – that are assembled and amalgamated in his collages. Fragments of materials already produced and discarded are stratified on the canvas along with paint, creating an environment in which to explore the transformative power of everyday objects as to deconstruct the narrative structure of traditional representation. Diop works on autobiographical shreds that return constantly in his creations in the form of phrases and, frequently, self-portraits, investigating ontological concerns and his own emotional connections to self through art.

La Symphonie du Ghetto: Volume One. Natural Born Killer serves as an introduction to Diop's personal story and interpretation of the ghetto, a project that the artist has been working on for some time. The eleven works on paper represent a stream of consciousness in which he retraces the questions that disturb him most and, at the same time, stimulate his research. His works are responses to the social context he inhabits, frequently due to being an artist of African descent based in Europe, and his experience growing up with an immigration background in Paris, who moved first to Berlin and then to Vienna, where he lives and works.

Central to the exhibition is Diop's exploration of historical vs contemporary ideas of femininity and womanhood, contextualized by the often matriarchal and matrifocal society models prevalent across Africa and the Diaspora. The work that opens the series shows a pregnant woman as a symbolic icon of life and maternity in which the artist – partially at least – transfigures himself, reflecting on the meaning of having a son or a daughter in today's society, which demands constant compromises. The work considers

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how humanity essentially aspires for freedom and shuns repression. Simultaneously, it presents a reflection on what it means to be born with or without privileges.

The works feature a succession of historic figures such as the australopithecine *Lucy* discovered in Ethiopia in 1974 and dated 3.2 million years ago, interspersed by portraits of figures the artist chose to represent his interpretation of the ghetto - a tribute to a life filled with challenges and marginalization.

The series ends with a group portrait of *Le Mouton Noir*, an artist collective founded by Alexandre Diop spread over various European cities aiming to support original projects in public spaces.

Alexandre Diop (1995 Paris, France) is a Franco-Senegalese artist who constructs his works using different materials that are easily found in his everyday surroundings: metal, wood, fabric, latex, paper, animal fibres, burnt fragments, gouache, glue, oil, pencils, pastels, hide, cord, paint, nails, plaster, old car parts, rust, books, photographs etc. Diop is currently living in Vienna where he is studying at the Akademie der bildenden Künste under the tutelage of Daniel Richter. His most recent shows include *There Must Be Some Kind Of Way Outta Here*, Galerie Crone, Berlin, Germany; *There Must Be Some Kind Of Way Outta Here*, Galerie Crone, Vienna, Austria; *Amendments* group show with Dominic Chambers and Wangari Mathenge, Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, CA; *Idols by Alexandre Diop*, Salon94, New York, NY; *Surface is Only a Material Vehicle for Spirit*, curated by Kennedy Yanko, Kavi Gupta, Chicago, IL.

His works are included in the following institutional collections: Espacio Tacuari, Buenos Aires; Rubell Museum, Miami; and The Bunker Artspace, West Palm Beach.

In November 2022 Alexandre Diop will be included in the exhibition *The New African Portraiture* curated by Ekow Eshun at Kunsthalle Krems, Austria, to be followed by his first US institutional exhibition at the Rubell Museum, Miami, Florida as part of his residency he took up earlier this year.

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Information

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Tuesday – Saturday: 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.