

**Press release**

# Catch the Invisible

**16 May - 20 July 2024**

*Ana Beatriz Almeida, Jelili Atiku, Elogo Bosoka, Serigne Mbaye Camara, Ibiye Camp, Tessi Kodjovi, Marica Kure, Alberto Pitta, A. Sika and Yadichinma Ukoha-Kalu*

*Co-curated by Dr Jareh Das and Aissa Dione*



Marcia Kure, *Systems and Networks*, 2023, 275 x 214 cm, Charcoal and acrylic on canvas, image courtesy of the artist

**Opening Part 1: Galerie Atiss Dakar**  
18th May from 11am | Vernissage from 3pm

**Opening Part 2: Ateliers Aissa Dione Tissus**  
20th May from 11am

Galerie Atiss Dakar announces the two-part group exhibition on #theOFFisON. Set across two sites - Galerie Atiss in Dakar-Medina and Atelier Aïssa Dione Tissus in Sodida, Dakar, the exhibition is grounded in a theme connecting the materiality, spirituality, and symbolism of Brazil and West Africa. The title indicates the many forms of communication through gestures and meanings outside canonised or indoctrinated language and the systems of power and control from which they emerged; instead, it favours knowledge passed down across generations that can be ancestral or looking within one's context, landscape and surroundings for what is beyond the visible.

The exhibition is a significant moment for showcasing two new major commissions by Afro-Brazilian artists Pitta and Almeida in Senegal, given that The First World Festival of Black Arts (Premier Festival Mondial des Arts Noirs) or World Festival of Negro Arts (French: Festival Mondial des arts nègres) held in Dakar in 1966, initiated by former President Leopold Senghor, under the auspices of UNESCO brought to the country than 40 Brazilian artists, singers, musicians and dancers.

New and existing artworks by an intergeneration of artists compare the physiologies, origins, and histories passed down from generation to generation while working with an array of themes dealing with collective memory, ancestry, spirituality, reuse, and reinterpretation. Materials become central for connecting varied practices and approaches that ultimately reveal parts of the histories of our humanity that remain invisible. Forgotten or disappearing ancestral and indigenous knowledge is laid bare in textiles, film, drawings, and an installation, combined with the ability to envision new futures and new imaginaries for art making.

**Alberto Pitta** lives and works in Salvador, Brazil, where he grew up observing the activity of his mother, the Iyalorixá Mãe Santinha de Oyá. This led to an ongoing interest in working with fabrics and their symbolism. On the gallery's ground floor, Pitta presents a new large-scale site-specific installation connecting Senegalese and Brazilian maritime histories in the form of a boat sculpture that combines his pioneering work in fabric prints, clothing, sculpture, and ornaments of the Orishas deities from the Western African religion, Candomblé. For more than 45 years, Pitta has continued his research and creation of prints, costumes, props, and allegories that characterise the visuality of the Afro blocks that dominate the carnival of Salvador.

**Jelili Atiku**, on the other hand, has expressed his political concerns for human rights and justice through various mediums such as drawing, installation sculpture, photography, video, and live art performances. He aims to broaden the viewers' horizons and help them comprehend the world around them so they can enhance their understanding and experiences and bring about change in their lives and surroundings. Atiku's presentation will focus on his rarely exhibited yet extensive drawing practice rooted in Yoruba symbolism.

**A.Sika**, like Atiku, also, at times, works with Yorùbá symbolism and mythologies. She is a priestess of disorder, a free-spirited artist, liberated in her artistic approach and how she perceives her relationship with her creations drawn from her creative muses. With bewildering lightness, she transcends established codes regarding standardised techniques. She has empowered herself to push beyond boundaries, delving into the depths of her being, thus expanding her scope of action.

**Ana Beatriz Almeida** focuses on African traditions and their connections to the African diaspora throughout history. She has developed a series of rites to honour those who did not survive the transatlantic trade of enslaved people but remain alive in the spirit. Focusing on memory, the meaning of life and death, and the infinity between both. Her installation Homey, a 10-year ritualist performance documented in film, photography, and ephemera, has been conceived especially for the first-floor gallery.

**Tessi Kodjovi** experiments mainly with wood and iron and is influenced by collectively shared questions such as: Who are we? How do we coexist within the geographical and temporal frames? How do we restore faith within our systems? How do we create new languages? These questions are not new; they find physical expressions in the artists' way of providing answers.

**Yadichinma Ukoha-Kalu's** visual art practice centres on explorations of line, form, and boundary, which

she expresses through various media, including painting, drawing, sculpture, and film. She often returns to recreating landscapes on paper and, more recently, using fabrics to combine abstract elements and textures. In her series, Birthscapes (2021-ongoing), Ukoha-Kalu explores the often stereotypical keywords associated with femininity/feminine words such as nurturing, gentle, affectionate, warm, empathetic, tender, smooth and curvy. These words are conceptually rendered as forms using plexiglass of different sizes, colours and shapes, hung in a layered composition suspended in space to give a new perspective on what femininity means. Alongside these sculptures, the artist will present her most recent linocut prints exploring Igbo mythologies developed during Harmattan Workshop sessions at the Onobrak Arts Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State, Nigeria.

On the third-floor gallery, **Serigne Mbaye Camara** captures the welcome chants by young hawkers to buyers in a new soundscape work that will also be shown alongside abstract paintings and sculptures. Instead of calling to buy goods, the voices call out the names of respected Senegalese artists who have contributed immensely to the art scene in the country and beyond.

In sharing a gallery space with Camara, **Marcia Kure** examines the act of drawing from technical, conceptual, and material perspectives across bodies of work. Informed by individual and collective experiences of postcolonial and diasporic identities. The source and origin of a material is central to Kure's practice, which often incorporates a study of line, natural, plant-based pigments and collage techniques. Through abstraction, Kure paintings in the exhibition ask how visible and invisible structures can be dissolved into lines while reflecting upon past, present, and emerging power systems.

In the former furniture factory of Aissa Dione, **Elolo Bosoka** and **Ibiye Camp's** installations probe material histories, reuse and reinterpretation.

In his installations, short films, drawings, 'see-through' soft sculptures and painterly objects, **Bosoka** appropriates items amassed from corners of the mundane urban environment to engage with notions of art as place, economic exchange, materiality, and history. His new large-scale sculpture interacts with the former industrial workshop architecture, creating a living artwork that engages viewers, space, and material. Alongside this sculpture is a selection of painterly objects, an ongoing photographic series by the artist documenting the unexpected beauty of geometry and form in everyday encounters of space and place.

**Ibiye Camp's** recent installation, Remaining Threads (2021-ongoing), focuses on the impact of automation on our bodies. Camp uses Injiri fabric in this installation, which originates from Madras fabric, which was widely traded during the transatlantic slave trade. In Buguma, Nigeria, where part of Ibiye's family is from, Kalabari craftswomen used to make Injiri fabric by cutting and removing threads to create new patterns. This fabric was then worn as wrappers in Kalabari ceremonies. However, the process of making Injiri fabric has changed in recent years. The traditional female creative position has been replaced by machines that make the fabric in factories in China. This shift has significantly impacted the social roles and spaces in Buguma. In the Remaining Threads, the sound of Kalabari drums conveys stories about goddesses, gods, and spiritual beings. At the same time, it also captures the traces and ghostly presences that resulted from the transformation in the manufacturing process.

Catch the Invisible brings together artists from Brazil, the US, Europe, and West Africa concerned with material and immaterial explorations that offer new approaches to visual storytelling.

### Notes to Editors

**Ana Beatriz Almeida** (b.1987, Niterói, RJ, Brazil; Lives and works between London, UK, Salvador, BA and Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil) is a visual artist and art historian. Her work focuses on African manifestations and the African diaspora. Born in Niterói, Brazil, in 1987, she holds a Master's in Art History and Aesthetics from the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo (USP). She is also the curator and co-founder of the 01.01 Art Platform. She was nominated for the Pipa Prize 2021, is a curatorial consultant at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Niterói (MAC-Niterói) and was a guest curator at Glasgow International 2020/2021. Almeida did a curatorial residency in Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria, during which she could reconnect with the part of her family that returned to Benin during a period of slavery. As an artist, she developed rites in honour of those who failed to survive the Atlantic journey of the slave trade. Her

technique N’Gomku was developed during the five years of research by UNESCO on the traditions of the Afro-Brazilian communities of Baba Egum and Irmandade da Boa Morte. She presented performances at Centro Cultural São Paulo, Itaú Cultural, SESC Ipiranga and Casa de Cultura da Brasilândia, in São Paulo, and at the Bienal do Recôncavo, Bahia. She taught a summer course on her performance technique at Goldsmiths University in London, England, and participated in the Can Serrat Residency in Barcelona, Spain. Almeida’s work is part of the permanent collection of the Instituto Inhotim in Brumadinho, Brazil.

**Jelili Atiku** (b. 1968, Ejigbo, Nigeria) is a multimedia artist with political concerns for human rights and justice. Through drawing, installation, sculpture, photography, video and performance (live art), he strives to help viewers understand the world and expand their understanding and experiences so that they can activate and renew their lives and environments. For over a decade, Jelili has put his art at service to our times’ prevailing concerns, especially those that threaten our collective existence and the sustenance of our universe. The contents of these concerns, ranging from psychosocial and emotional effects of traumatic events such as violence, war, poverty, corruption, climate change and others that are associated with our warring world, have dominated his artistic forms.

Atiku was trained at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria and the University of Lagos, Nigeria – Where he was awarded Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts) and Master of Arts (Visual Arts), respectively. He is the Artistic Director of AFIRIperFOMA – a collective of African performance artists, and Chief Coordinator of Advocate for Human Rights Through Art (AHRA). Jelili has travelled widely and participated in numerous performances, exhibitions, and talks in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the US. He is the 2015 Prince Claus Laureates and was wrongly accused, arrested, detained in prison and tried on the instance of his performance in public space in 2016 and also in 2019 for protecting the indigenous Yoruba religion, Ìṣẹ̀ṣẹ. He was an artist in residence/ Professor at the Department of Africana Studies/Brown Arts Initiative at Brown University, Providence, USA, in 2018. He is the President of Ejigbo Indigenes Forum (EIF) and Chairman of the Community Development Committee, Ejigbo LCDA, Lagos, Nigeria.

**Elolo Bosoka** is a Ghanaian artist who works and lives between Tefle, Accra, and Kumasi. In his installations, short films, objects, drawings, and ‘see-through’ soft sculptures, Bosoka appropriates items from corners of the mundane urban environment to engage with notions of art as place, economic exchange, materiality, and history. He received his BFA and MFA from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana, in 2015 and 2019, respectively. In 2022, he was awarded the Baden Württemberg scholarship to study at the State Academy of Fine Art, Karlsruhe, Germany. Bosoka is a member of blaxtarlines Kumasi— the project space and contemporary art incubator of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, KNUST, where he is pursuing his PhD.

Solo exhibitions include ‘Objects in Situations ii’ (2023) at Clemens Thimme Galerie, Germany ‘Objects in Situations; Excerpts from a New Life’ at Clemens Thimme Galerie, Germany (2022), and ‘Lines, planes and Ridges in Between’ in Ghana (2018). Bosoka has participated in numerous group exhibitions such as ‘Poly, a fluid show’ (2023-2024) at the Kindl Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany, curated by Solvej Ovesen; ‘Meet Cute’ in Germany (2022); ‘Surplus’ in Copenhagen (2022); ‘AAA: Salon de refusé’ in Chicago, USA and Darmstadt, Germany (2022); and others. He is a Prince Claus building beyond Circle Three and a resident artist in Clermont-Ferrand, France.

**Serigne Mbaye Camara** (b.1948 Saint-Louis, Senegal) lives and works in Dakar. Since 1996, he has combined his profession as a creator and teacher at the National School of Arts in Dakar and in universities, in particular, that of Thiès, Ziguinchor, and Saint-Louis; he was, in turn, responsible for the plastic arts, sewing, and fashion cutting departments and then educational advisor at the National School of Arts in Dakar, where he began his training before leaving for France.

**Ibiye Camp** holds an MA in Architecture from the Royal College of Art, London, 2019 and a BA (Hons) in Fine Art from the University of the Arts London, Central Saint Martins, 2013. Camp’s work forms an investigation into postcolonial subjects, technology, and the built environment. She utilises architectural tools to create sound and video, accompanied by augmented reality and 3D objects. This is done to highlight the biases and conflicts of technology. Ibiye’s past work in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Ethiopia investigated the dynamics of data technological glitches to emphasise the conflicts of digital infrastructure in landscapes and the use of architectural tools in a conflicting manner.

This causes a technological malfunction that questions the disconnect of technology from the reality of the landscape.

**Tessi Kodjovi** (b.1974) is a visual artist who lives and works in Lomé, Togo. Tessi experiments mainly with wood and iron and is influenced by collectively shared questions such as: Who are we? How do we coexist within the geographical and temporal frames? How do we restore faith within our systems? How do we create new languages? These questions are not new; they find physical expressions in Tessi's way of providing answers. Tessi Kodjovi took his first steps towards art through his father, a visual artist whose works he has grown to find too studious. Tessi explored catalogues and visited exhibitions at the French Institute of Lomé and is aware of local and international practices but rejects the scholar approach to education. He dropped out of university as obtaining a degree felt like a complicit abandonment of the world and its inequalities. While refusing academia, the artist started activating a body of knowledge based on dialogue and experimenting with raw materials. During a residence in Benin led by Ludovic Fadaïro, Tessi gets sensitive to the importance of conversation with the medium. He mends pieces of various fabrics as a way to juxtapose anxieties and joys. Back in Togo, his encounter with Tete Camille Azankpo and his body of work was a trigger: a third dimension must be brought out of the material. It is the start of sculpture making with papier mâché for Tessi. He has also participated in the OFF program of the 13th Dakar Biennale, where meetings with El Hadji Sy sparkle thinking on contextualising ideas best. Ultimately, Tessi gave up paper to create a dialogue between wood and iron. Wood and its burning process allow him to question time. With iron, he can weld issues. Through pressure and heat, iron and timber become elongated statues, modular boxes, vividly expressive busts and everyday shapes, bringing answers to the third dimension Kodjovi conceptualises. Tessi's journey to his artistic language is a journey to one's inner world through experiential knowledge. It is a journey to what could perhaps be considered essential to the human.

**Marcia Kure** (b. 1970, Kano, Nigeria) lives and works in the United States and Nigeria. She trained at the University of Nigeria and is also an alumna of Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. In addition to one-person exhibitions in Nigeria, Germany, the Netherlands, England and the USA, her work was shown at La Triennial, Paris (2013), International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Seville (2006), and Sharjah International Biennale (2005). She presented her work at the 11th Dak'art Biennale of Dakar, Senegal, in 2014 and was part of the travelling group show *Body Talk*, Wiels Contemporary Art Center, Brussels, Frac Lorraine, France and Lunds Konsthall, Sweden. A group show, *Not a Single Story*, Wanås Konst, Sweden and Nirox Sculpture Park, Johannesburg, 2018-19 A Visiting Professor at the Royal Art Institute, Stockholm, Sweden (2019-20), research fellow of the Smithsonian Institution (2008), Visual Artist in Residence at the Victoria and Albert Museum (2014) and winner of Uche Okeke Prize for Drawing (1994), Kure's work is in the collection of the British Museum, Centre Georges Pompidou, the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, The High Museum, Atlanta, Newark Museum, The Hood Museum, Princeton University Museum, Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Block Museum, Northwestern University, IWALEWA-Haus, Frac Lorraine and The Menil Collection, among others.

**Alberto Pitta** (b.1961, in Salvador, the city where he currently lives). It was by observing the activity of his mother, Iyalorixá Mãe Santinha de Oyâ, that he saw his interest in cloth awaken. For more than 40 years he has dedicated himself to researching and creating prints, costumes, props and allegories that characterize the visuality of the Afro blocks of Salvador's carnival. His prints have already colored the 'Filhos of Ghandi', 'Ilê Aiyê' and 'Olodum'. 26 years ago, Pitta created *Cortejo Afro*, a block in which he introduced the famous white on white, one of the most important hallmarks of his style that was continued in his future canvases. In his studio in the Pirajá neighborhood, he begins to paint – on canvas, compositions combined with the silkscreen technique, using signs, shapes, lines, figures and abstractions that evoke African and Afro-Brazilian graphics revealing a symbolic universe – masks, combs, adinkras, animals, calabashes, cowrie shells, medicinal leaves, ritual objects – and layered overlays of engravings and paintings in his artistic research. His CV also includes participation in several exhibitions in countries such as Germany, the United States and France, as well as collections in important museums in Brazil.

**A.Sika** (b.1976, Takpame, Togo) is a free-spirited artist, liberated in her artistic approach and how she perceives her relationship with her creations, drawn from her creative muses. With bewildering lightness, she transcends established codes regarding standardised techniques.

She has empowered herself to push beyond boundaries, delving into the depths of her being, thus expanding her scope of action. Indeed, she has made experimentation her guiding principle, a quest made all the more thrilling as it opens up to multiple aesthetic universes that the artist explores at will, depending on her mood and inspiration. Sika's uniqueness lies in her ability to effortlessly harmonise materials and colours that, at first glance, seem incompatible. This creates an enchanting magic between Sika's work and the observer, inevitably captivating them. centres It's a logical evolution from the artist's initial disorder to establishing an order, yet still allowing glimpses of the fantastic disorder. She holds the secret of transferring and intertwining images in a rare, almost indescribable style. It's a disorder, but an organised disorder. Thus, she reveals to us that light exists only through shadow, and shadow only through light. Each creation is a new adventure artistically.

**Yadichinma Ukoha-Kalu** is an experimental artist and illustrator based in Lagos. Her artistic practice centres around the exploration of line, form, space, and boundaries, expressed through diverse media, including painting, drawing, sculpture, film, and technology. Yadichinma consistently crafts multi-dimensional environments that blend abstract elements, textures, and materials to create engaging interactions. Her fascination with materials propels her to deepen her understanding of the objects in her surroundings. She believes that each object possesses its unique world and system. This perspective is particularly pronounced in artefacts, where archival systems are generated through craft practices rooted in outdated cultures, particularly within the African context. Yadichinma aims to bridge the gap between traditional methodologies and contemporary practices. By intertwining these elements, she seeks to explore the rich tapestry of cultural heritage and foster a dialogue that extends beyond temporal boundaries.

#### **About Galerie Atiss Dakar**

Founded in 1996 by **Aïssa Dione**, Galerie Atiss Dakar opened with the first exhibition of the renowned Senegalese artist Soly Cissé. In the following years, the Gallery gained a reputation for spotting and incubating raw artistic talent from West Africa, often presenting such artists for the first time to an international audience. This includes names such as Serigne Mbaye Camara Camara Gueye and artists from West Africa such as Jems Robert Koko Bi, Sokey Edorh and others who have gone on to achieve international acclaim. As part of its commitment to revitalising the professional gallery sector in West Africa, the gallery maintains a long-term collaboration with the MAM Galerie of Cameroon. In 2006, the gallery embarked on an adventure with Galerie CHAB of Mali, travelling through West Africa to Mount exhibitions under Galeries Plastiques Itinérantes, presenting the work of now-established names. In the following years, the gallery presented the talents of Siaka Soppo Traore, Sadikou Oukpedjo and, more recently, Patrick Joel Tatcheda Yonkeu, Oumar Ball, Ngimbi Bakambana, Hyacinthe Ouattara, and Aliou Diack. Its exhibitions contribute to promoting artists from Africa. Indeed, the gallery has become a well-known OFF space during the Biennale of Art in Dakar, Senegal. The gallery has made a presentation during every Dak'Art Biennial since its inception.

#### **About Dr Jareh Das**

**Dr Jareh Das** is an independent curator, writer and researcher who lives and works between West Africa and the UK. Das's academic and curatorial practice is informed by an interest in global modern and contemporary art, focusing on performance art. In 2022, Das curated *Body Vessel Clay: Black Women, Ceramics and Contemporary Art* held at Two Temple Place, London and York Art Gallery. The exhibition spanned seventy years of ceramics and explored how Black women artists have disrupted, questioned, and reimagined clay. Das has held curatorial and editorial positions with Deptford X, Middlesbrough Institute of Art, Middlesbrough; Etemad Gallery, Dubai; Arts Catalyst, London; MVRDV, Rotterdam; and Camden Art Centre, London and has contributed to several print and online publications.