

ABDOULAYE KONATÉ'S NEW SITE-SPECIFIC, MONUMENTAL WORK COMES TO ZEITZ MOCAA

Cape Town, 11 January 2020: This February, Zeitz MOCAA will host the unveiling of a site-specific, monumental work by internationally renowned Malian artist, Abdoulaye Konaté, titled *Idéogrammes, signes, symboles et logos (Hommage à Youssouf Tata Cissé et Germaine Dieterlen)*.

This richly detailed textile work made up of striking strips of burgundy, coral, crimson and indigo fabric, soaring 4 stories high, will adorn the museum's interior wall in the Zeitz MOCAA BMW Atrium.

The work honours two thinkers distinguished for their contribution to culture and history: Malian historian and ethnologist Youssouf Tata Cissé (1935-2013), who specialised in canonising oral history from various parts of West Africa, and Germaine Dieterlen (1903-1999), a French anthropologist who pioneered research on Dogon astronomy and the Bamana cultures of Mali. With this artwork, Konaté references ancient writing and knowledge systems, transposing it into the present.

Koyo Kouoh, Executive Director and Chief Curator at Zeitz MOCAA, states: "It is an honour to have one of our continent's foremost artists represented in our museum and to introduce our audiences to the vitality of practices which are now part of global art history. The myriad of individually hemmed appliqued fabric fragments in *Idéogrammes, signes, symboles et logos (Hommage à Youssouf Tata Cissé et Germaine Dieterlen)*, not only add rich colour and texture to Zeitz MOCAA's concrete walls, but also contribute to an important dialogue around materiality in contemporary art from Africa."

Tandazani Dhlakama, Assistant Curator at Zeitz MOCAA adds: "Konaté's work has engaged with many socio-political and environmental issues. These range from global epidemics such as HIV/AIDS to freedom of expression, Islamic fundamentalism and political satire, to migration, music, language and spirituality."

Konaté is the recipient of numerous awards, Doctor Honoris Causa de la Universidad de las Artes (ISA) (2019), Knight of the National Order of the Lion of Senegal (2018), Officer of the National Order of Mali, (2009), Prix Passeport – Créateurs sans Frontières, France (2008), Knight of the National Order of Mali and Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters of the French Republic, (both 2002).

His work has featured in numerous international exhibitions, including group shows such as *Mobile Worlds or The Museum of our Transcultural Present*, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, DE (2018). Recent solo exhibitions include a retrospective at Arken Museum for Moderne Kunst, DK (2016) and *Symphonie en Couleur* at Blain|Southern London, UK (2016).

The installation at Zeitz MOCAA will be unveiled on 12 February 2020 and will be on view for one year. This commission was made possible with the support of Blain|Southern, London.

Exhibition name: *Idéogrammes, signes, symboles et logos (Hommage à Youssouf Tata Cissé et Germaine Dieterlen)*
Exhibiting artist: Abdoulaye Konaté
Venue: BMW Atrium, Zeitz MOCAA, Silo District, V&A Waterfront
Run dates: 12 February 2020 – 11 January 2021
Exhibition curator: Tandazani Dhlakama

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About Abdoulaye Konaté:

Work by Abdoulaye Konaté (b. 1953 Diré, Mali) primarily takes the form of textile-based installations that explore socio-political and environmental issues, as well as foregrounding his aesthetic concerns and formal language. Konaté grapples with the way in which societies and individuals, both in Mali and beyond, have been affected by factors such as war, power struggles, religion, globalisation, ecological shifts and the AIDS epidemic.

Employing material from Mali, namely woven and dyed cloths, the artist creates large-scale abstract and figurative compositions. Konaté references West-African practices of using textiles as a means of commemoration and communication, whilst balancing global political and social reflections with a reference to his own local and cultural history.

Konaté first studied painting at the Institut National des Arts in Bamako and then at the Instituto Superior des Arte, Havana, Cuba, where he lived for seven years before returning to Mali. In 2008, he was nominated for the Artes Mundi 3 prize, Cardiff. He has received several awards, including the significant Léopold Sédar Senghor Prize at the Dak'Art Biennale in Dakar (1996), the Officier de l'Ordre National du Mali (2009) as well

as the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de France (2002). Konaté's work has featured in numerous international exhibitions. Major group shows include *Pulling at Threads*, Norval Foundation, SA (2018); *Mobile Worlds or The Museum of our Transcultural Present*, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, DE (2018); *The Summer Show*, Royal Academy of Arts (RA), London, UK (2017); *L'Afrique en Capitale*, Musée Mohammed VI d'Art moderne et contemporain, Rabat, MA (2017); *Eva International* biennale in Limerick, IE (2016); *ART_TEXTILES*, The Whitworth, The University of Manchester, UK (2015); *Streamlines: Metaphorical and Geopolitical Interpretations of the Oceans* at Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, DE (2015); *The Divine Comedy, Heaven, Hell, Purgatory revisited by Contemporary African Artists* at the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, DE (2014), SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia, US (2014-2015), and National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, US (2015). Recent solo exhibitions include a retrospective at Arken Museum for Moderne Kunst, DK (2016) and *Symphonie en Couleur* at Blain|Southern London, UK (2016).

Abdoulaye Konaté was selected to participate in the 13th Havana Biennial in 2019 and previously participated in Viva Arte Viva, the central exhibition in the 2017 edition of La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Christine Macel, chief curator of the Centre Pompidou in Paris. The artist lives and works in Bamako, Mali and he is the Founding General Director of the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers Multimédia Balla Fasseké Kouyaté in Bamako.

About Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (ZeitZ MOCAA):

ZeitZ Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (ZeitZ MOCAA) is a public, not-for-profit institution that exhibits, collects, preserves and researches contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora; conceives and hosts international exhibitions; develops supporting educational, discursive and enrichment programmes; encourages intercultural understanding; and strives for access for all.

The museum's galleries are dedicated to featured exhibitions with a dedicated space for the permanent collection. The institution also includes the Centre for Art Education, the Centre for the Moving Image, and a dedicated project space for emerging artists.