

**DJIBRIL  
COULIBALY**

# Symbols of Life

*Beyond perception*

An Artistic Exploration of the Human Soul

**Nov. 7 → Dec. 7, 2024**

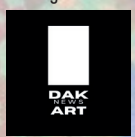
Hôtel Le Djoloff // Dakar, Sénégal



**TIDIANE  
NDONGO**

Graphic design : ©Sandra Derichs

Organizer



International partner



# Symbols of Life

## *Beyond perception*

An Artistic Exploration of the Human Soul

Symbols are more than mere visual elements; they are the language through which humanity expresses and understands its deepest truths. What concerns these artists' approach is less the imitative reproduction of objects than the vitality that animates them. They invite an alternative relationship with our world. Their images are not equations of objects, but "symbols and suggestions, echoing the late President Léopold Sédar Senghor's vision on African art.

### Universal Themes

Their artwork, rich in symbolism, encourages us to look beyond the surface and reflect on universal themes like identity, resilience, transformation, heritage, and transmission. Each piece tells a story, using powerful symbols to evoke reflections on the human condition and shared experiences. The artists employ various media and techniques, offering a unique visual and sensory experience that resonates well beyond the first glance.

"Symbols of Life: Beyond Perception" is an invitation to contemplate and engage with works that, by their very nature, prompt us to reflect on and appreciate life and its multiple facets more deeply.



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## The Transformational Power of Art

"I realized... that painting... has the power to reveal to ourselves our secret humanity," writes David Diop, the Booker Prize winning Senegalese-French novelist, at the end of his moving novel, *Beyond the Door of No Return*. These words resonate deeply with this inspiring exhibition, *SYMBOLS OF LIFE: Beyond Perception – An Artistic Exploration of the Human Soul*. CARAVAN Arts is honored to be in partnership with this creative initiative and is dedicated to building bridges through the arts. We believe art can transform lives and communities and our experience around the world has shown us that the arts can serve as one of the most effective mediums to enhance understanding, bring about respect, and deepen relationships between diverse peoples, cultures and spiritual traditions. Our name reflects our mission to facilitate reframing perceptions of the "other" by journeying together through the arts.

This exceptional exhibition features two remarkable artists whose work enhances our experience and understanding of each other and the transcendent. Tidiane Ndongo and Djibril Coulibaly brilliantly embody our vision of seeing the arts play a strategic role in transforming our world; they touch the spiritual dimension of our human existence. Art is a universal language that has the ability to dissolve the differences that divide us. As long as division has torn apart the human family, art has offered a mode of reconciliation and wholeness. As evident in this exhibition, artistic initiatives by their very nature, are "encounter points," bringing people together from different backgrounds who might otherwise remain apart, deepening understanding across cultures and spiritual traditions.

Hafez, the 14th century Persian mystic-poet, wisely wrote, "Art is the conversation... an opening for the heart." This exhibition is an invitation into conversation, with the "other," and within ourselves. It explores some of the most profound aspects of our shared humanity. In so doing, it furthers our global quest for a more harmonious future, both with each other and with the earth. The transcendent dimension of this exhibition echoes the words of Senegal's first president, Leopold Sedar Senghor, "Art is animated by invisible forces that rule the universe." These artists, through their distinct spirituality, lead us into life's deeper dimension. Their work has the power to impact us at a subconscious level, guiding us into new ways of being. Their art invites us to re-imagine ourselves, our situations, and our internal narratives, reminding us of what makes us most human.

By Paul G. Chandler, President, CARAVAN Arts



# The artists

## Djibril Coulibaly



Djibril Coulibaly, born in 1996 in Dakar, is an emerging artist and a member of the Mouride Sufi brotherhood. His artistic practice is deeply rooted in his faith and spirituality. Throughout his artistic journey, he has sought a personal imprint that would set his work apart. This quest led him to deep meditation and creative isolation, relentlessly exploring different facets of his artistic expression. Day by day, he immersed himself in reflection and creation, searching for a unique signature that would resonate with his inner essence and his connection to the world.

In early 2024, after reflecting on Surah Al-Imran, which speaks of God's signs in creation and the alternation of day and night, he experienced a revelation. Gazing at his fingers, he discovered a swirl of signs in his fingerprints, a natural and universal pattern that could embody his artistic vision. This moment of epiphany marked the beginning of a new phase in his art, where fingerprints became the central motif of his expression.

Thus, Djibril's works are distinguished by their dynamism and captivating movement. Rich in colors and textures, they create intriguing compositions where fingerprints intertwine to form complex patterns. Through his art, Djibril invites us to deep introspection, where each fingerprint becomes a symbol of identity, human uniqueness, and universal connection. «My works are not meant to be looked at, but to be meditated upon» he says.



The Couple, 2024  
Acrylic on canvas  
108 x 80 cm



The Conference of  
the Hereafter,  
2024, Acrylic on canvas,  
200 x 130 cm



Photographies : © Simo-Prod



## Tidiane Ndongo



Tidiane Ndongo, born in 1970 in Bamako, Mali, is an artist who has mastered the traditional bogolan technique. In 1994, he learned this art form under Youssouf Sidibé Nelly in Bamako-Coura, a lively neighborhood in Mali's capital. Bogolan, a technique using clay, plants, and roots, became more than just a craft for Tidiane—it was a gateway to Mali's rich heritage.

His work is deeply influenced by the research of the late Youssouf Tata Cissé, a renowned scholar of Malian myths and legends. Inspired by Cissé, Tidiane developed his own style, Dogodogoni, meaning «labyrinth» in Bambara. His geometric patterns represent more than visual elements; they conceal histories, traditions, and the complexity of civilization.

For Tidiane, Dogodogoni is like a chameleon, symbolizing change, reflection, and adaptation.

A lover of sacred texts, Tidiane often incorporates writings into his canvases, blending word and image. His guiding principle is: «To know myself, to be myself, for myself.» Far from selfishness, Tidiane sees this self-awareness as a path to personal growth and openness to others.

Tidiane is convinced that «humans are a mix of flaws and qualities, which they display according to circumstances.» His work continuously develops this conviction, aiming to make it universal and timeless. This conviction informs his work, which seeks to convey universal and timeless truths.

By revisiting the signs and motifs of bogolan, Ndongo unveils a labyrinth of meanings. Each path leads to a deeper understanding of contemporary issues while preserving the richness of this ancient cultural heritage.



Miri (Reflection),  
2024  
Clay and plant  
on cotton  
215 x 126 cm



Nyêshi  
(Eyebrows),  
2023  
Clay and plant  
on cotton  
120 x 130 cm

## Organization & Curation



[www.dakartnews.com](http://www.dakartnews.com)

The exhibition *Symbols of Life: Beyond Perception* is curated by Rémy Mallet, Dakartnews' founder. Based in West Africa, DakartNews, is an online platform dedicated to African visual arts.

Through interviews with artists, experts, collectors, and art critics, as well as reports and analyses, DakartNews highlights the contemporary African art scene.

This approach aims to deepen the understanding of contemporary African art and foster enriching dialogue within the international art community. DakartNews publishes in English to reach an international audience and build bridges between different artistic perspectives.

## International Art Partner



[www.oncaravan.org](http://www.oncaravan.org)

CARAVAN, an international arts NGO/non-profit, is recognized as a global leader in using the arts to further our global quest for a more harmonious future, both with each other and with the earth. CARAVAN's mission is based on the belief that the arts can be one of the most effective mediums to heal our world and to creatively foster peace, harmony, wholeness and health in all its forms.

CARAVAN's experience demonstrates that the arts can be one of the most strategic approaches to enhance understanding, bring about respect, enable sharing, and deepen relationships between diverse peoples, cultures and spiritual traditions. CARAVAN's artistic initiatives have resulted in unprecedented partnerships with renowned and emerging artists from all over the world, using art to transform our world.

## Scenography

NuNu Design & DakArtNews.



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