

Odonchimeg Davaadorj & Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien

Existences Multiples

12 April - 18 May, 2024

AKINCI is proud to present the duo exhibition *Existences Multiples* by Odonchimeg Davaadorj and Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien. The two Paris-based artists will present new work including drawings, ceramics, textiles and installation.

The works on display by Odonchimeg Davaadorj (1990, Mongolia) and Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien (1990, France/Ivory Coast/Guadeloupe) demonstrate the artists' ability to explore different techniques and media to convey their message. Both artists created their own language to tell stories about their origins and cultural heritage, resulting in a 'landscape' that can be read and interpreted by the observer. The title of the exhibition, *Existences Multiples*, refers to the multiple layers that emerge in their practice and identity.

"If we opened people, we'd find landscapes", a quote by filmmaker and artist Agnès Varda, serves as a great inspiration for Odonchimeg Davaadorj. In her most recent works, the artist continues a research into the connections between all living things and their surroundings. Depictions of figures that expand into landscapes, portraits, miniature sceneries, and symbioses between humans and animals hold contrasting qualities, such as healing and pain, growth and stagnation. The drawings and ceramic work demonstrate both the strong and fragile connections that are visible to those who observe closely, but mostly go unnoticed.

Davaadorj's work reflects the existence of all kinds of life: small organisms such as birds and insects, but also the life that exists within us; the lives that we have lived and that continue to exist in our memories and the stories of our ancestors.

Some of the drawings in this new series are inspired by personal memories. Davaadorj revives memories from her childhood in Mongolia and partly transforms them into fiction. Her parents had a small farm where they kept animals and grew vegetables and fruit during the short Mongolian summers. By creating stories that combine memory and fiction, she invites others to recognize themselves in her work.



Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien's work demonstrates how cultures are influenced by various forms of existence through the interaction of objects, communities, and bodies. Her works can be interpreted as maps with intricate narratives and symbolism. As a 'storyteller with materials', Messouma Manlanbien creates installations using textile as a foundation and composing encounters between industrial materials, such as aluminium, copper, and brass, and natural materials, such as raffia, rope, and shells. In this way the artist weaves a connection between different art forms, creating ecosystems where materials relate to each other and coexist in a symbiosis.

Messouma Manlanbien connects the visible with worlds that receive little attention in Western society. This interest stems from her childhood, which was influenced by different cultures. Born in Paris, she lived with her parents in Ivory Coast until she was 13. Her father belonged to the Agni people, who are part of the Akan culture. She owes her creativity to her mother and grandmother from Guadeloupe. During her childhood she was surrounded by artisans, especially weavers, who encouraged her to develop her skills in painting, sewing, and pottery.

The extensive research into matrilineal Akan societies forms a source of inspiration for Messouma Manlanbien's work. She incorporates specific iconographic elements from the Akan into her textile works, such as the two-headed reptile gods that symbolize the unity of binary elements like femininity and masculinity, becoming one when working together.

The artist's handmade works raise questions about our relationship with industrialisation in contemporary society, which seems to be detached from its values. Messouma Manlanbien, like Davaadorj, believes that human beings are part of nature as a greater whole and that nature is essential for our survival.

Odonchimeg Devaadorj (1990, Mongolia) lives and works in Paris. She studied at *École nationale supérieur d'art, Paris-Cergy* between 2014 and 2016 and graduated from *Bohemia Institute, Czechoslovakia* in 2009. Solo exhibitions in 2023 were at *Museum Folkwang, Essen* and at *Backs\ash gallery, Paris*. She recently partook in the group exhibitions at *MAMAC, Nice* (2023); *Maison Caillebotte, Yerres* (2023); *l'Été des Serpents, Arles* (2022); *Domaine départemental de Chamarande* (2022); *Âme Nue, Hamburg* (2021); *L'Espace de Christian Brest, Paris* (2021); *Centre d'art Transpalette, Bourges* (2021); *CAC, Meymac* (2019).

Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien (1990, France/Ivory Coast/Guadeloupe) was born in Paris, where she now also lives and works. She studied at *École nationale supérieur d'art, Paris-Cergy* between 2011 and 2016 after graduating as a graphic designer in 2010. She has had solo exhibitions at *Palais de Tokyo, Paris* (2023); *the French Institute, Berlin* (2022); *L'Orangerie, Paris* (2021). Currently her work is on show in the group exhibition 'In Brilliant Light' at *Wereldmuseum Leiden* (2024) and she is one of the artists at the *Pavilion of Ivory coast at the Venice Biennale 2024*. She has recently exhibited collectively at *MAMAC, Nice* (2023); *Musée Cères Franco, Montolieu* (2022); *Royal Academy of Art, London* (2021); *Céline Fakhoury, Abidjan* (2021); *Somerset House, London* (2020); *Sargent's Daughters Gallery, NYC* (2020); *MO.CA, Brescia* (2019); *38th EVA International, Limerick* (2018). *Messouma Manlanbien is shortlisted for the Future Generation Art Prize.*

Image: Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien, ORGANICS LANDSCAPES - LA NUIT #2, 2023, cotton kita, raffia, silk, ceramic, shells, plants, 250 x 120 cm