



CHRISTOPHER MOLLER

GALLERY

JEAN BAPTISTE DJÉKA



## LES AMAZONES

Vicki Sleet

In this collection of extraordinary and deeply detailed work from Jean- Baptiste Djéka is laden with symbolism from the artist's world, probes into his Akan cultural heritage and projections from a vivid imagination. An artist who lives and works in Côte d'Ivoire, Djéka's detailed painterly sojourns have made a significant impact on the global stage thanks to the universalities he presents and which, likewise, command our attention. At first glance, one might imagine that the distinctly African imagery that dominate his canvasses, his bold colouration and mechanics like scarification and collage are his major calling cards (and of course they are), but it is also his sharp view on the way of the world right now, be it in Africa or beyond, that excites us and reminds us that intentional art has no borders.

The title of this series Les Amazones refers to the artist's perpetual fascination with and desire for the acknowledgement of might and power of womanhood – that women are the literal birth point for mankind and should be, as they certainly are in his culture, revered and deeply respected as fonts of wisdom, ability and creation. Like many West Africans, Jean- Baptiste Djéka is Akan, a member of a matriarchal society where woman have always been seen as archetypes of life force, and he relishes the opportunity to explore this notion and indeed consider where we would be without the divine feminine.

That said, it is crucial to understand that Djéka describes himself not as a feminist but rather as a humanist. He sees his works as apolitical statements of where the world is right now – and certainly a commentary of some of the damage caused by patriarchal hierarchies. The metaphysical realm plays an enormous role in Akan culture and the straddling of the physical and spiritual worlds are a strong visual thread in much of Djéka's work. Likewise, much of his work is redolent with symbols, often used as repetitive visual mechanics through his emphatic colouring and brushwork – seen in the likes of umbilical cords that seem to link the present to generations that have come before and the appearance of celestial elements, be it the sun or stars.

In a world where so much is in disarray, we appreciate Djéka's outspoken commentary on what he sees as an antidote to much that is wrong – he reminds us that a return to self, to one's roots, to our spirituality and to the depth and wisdom of generations before us, may be what will keep us grounded and may ultimately save us. His paintings are brave, bold pleas to reflect on how we got here and what we need to do to forge a meaningful path ahead in peace, prosperity and being at one with the world.



G A L L E R Y





GODDESS  
Mixed media on canvas  
200 x 200cm (80 x 80 inches)

EUR 12,400 Excl 15% S.A vat

In the Akan culture, women are upheld as quintessential beings and in this audacious rendering, we see four bold female figures take centre stage as goddesses on earth. Note the word Goddess – etched backwards to reflect Djéka's perspective on the importance of looking inwards into oneself, while the twisted pink umbilical cord amplifies Djéka's insistence on the value of upholding generational value chains.





POLITO MASK  
Mixed media on canvas  
100 x 100cm (40 x 40 inches)

EUR 5,700 Excl 15% S.A vat

The tension between traditional mores and 21st century inevitability is clear in this poignant piece – traditional African heritage shows its face through Djéka's use of carved masks while the influx of Westernism and pop culture into traditional African life is clear through his introduction of emojis and tailored suits.



BEYEGBIN  
Mixed media on canvas  
80 x 65cm (32 x 26 inches)

EUR 5,400 Excl 15% S.A vat

The use of totems in Africa and certainly in Akan culture is commonplace and Djéka's rendition of totem-meeting- Westernised-toy is a forthright marriage of both worlds. Djéka often incorporates collages and cartoons into his works, an intended commentary on the loss of the innocence of youth.



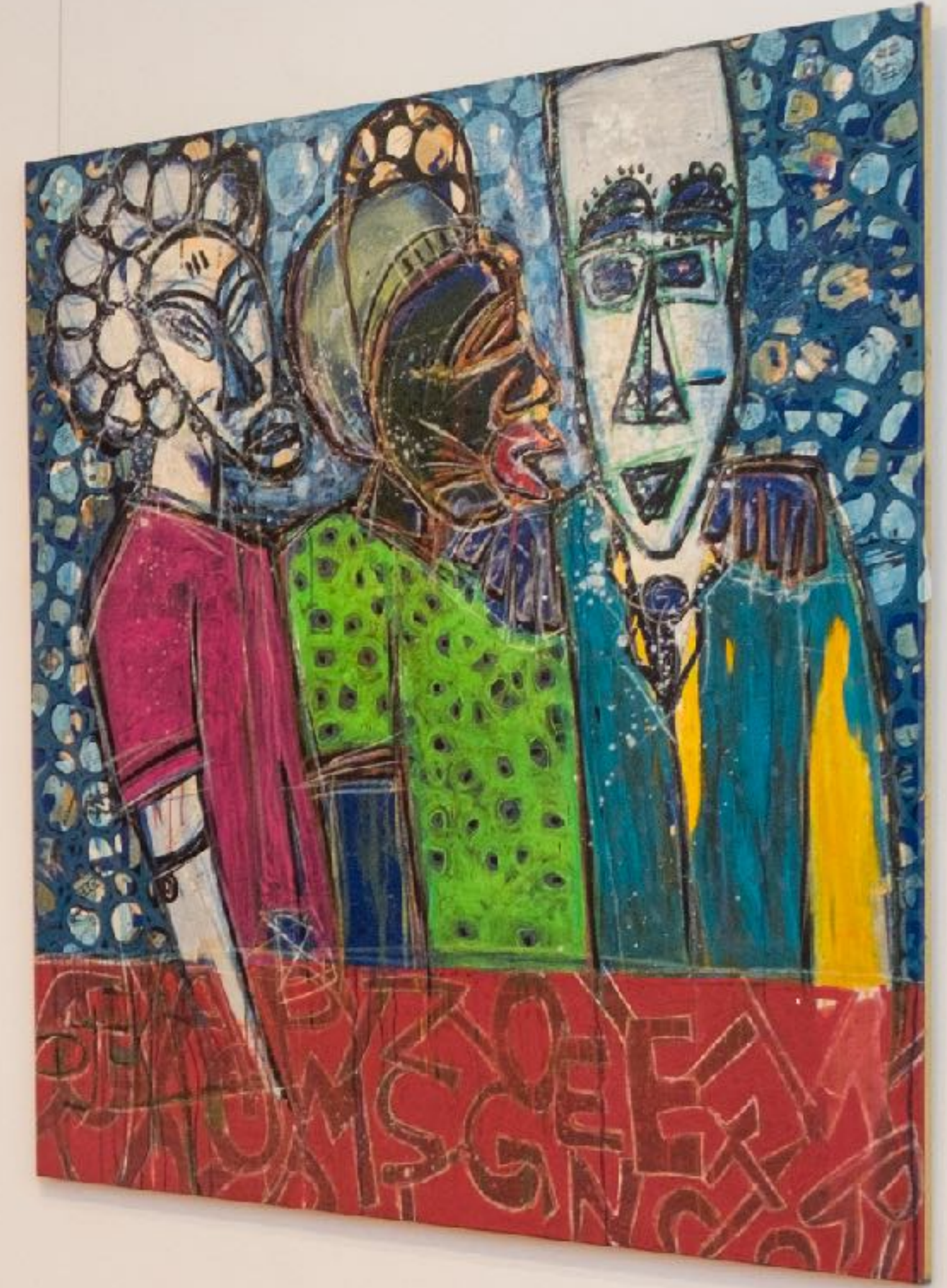
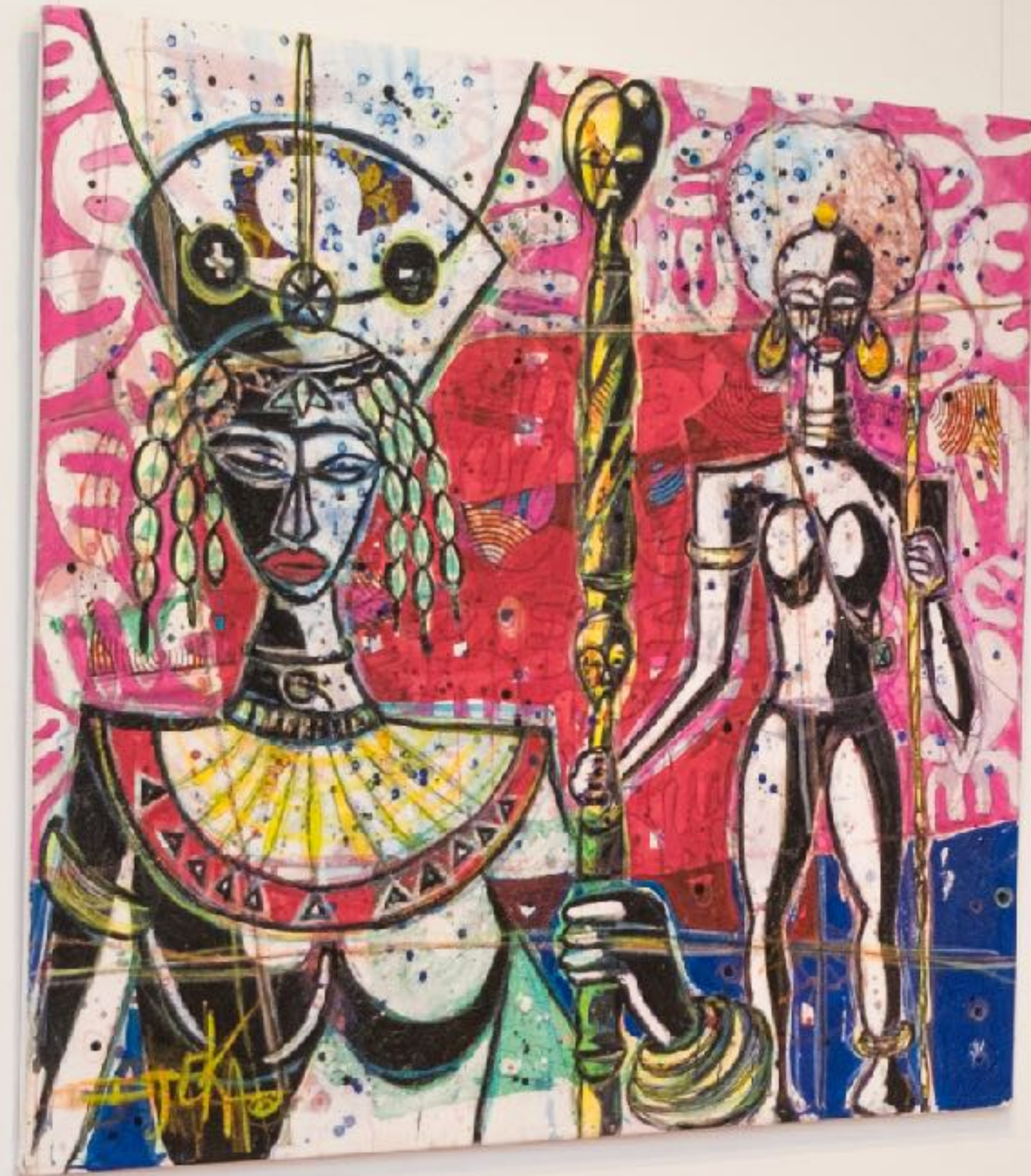




UNTITLED I  
Mixed media on canvas  
147 x 147cm (58.8 x 58.8 inches)

EUR 8,200 Excl 15% S.A vat

This complex piece is a reflection on the complexities of Djéka's own life – a man descended from royals in Côte d'Ivoire yet with his feet firmly planted in the modern world. Again, his preoccupation with the might of women in his culture and own life is paramount – his female protagonist is pictured seated on a throne while the idea that woman and the bearer of the womb are central to creation permeates.





UNTITLED III  
Mixed media on canvas  
147 x 147cm (58.5 x 58.5 inches)

EUR 8,200 Excl 15% S.A vat

This richly coloured and detailed work depicts a woman as a symbol of nobility and strength and is redolent with strong African imagery. The repeated E ideogram is notable – in the Akan culture, it symbolises a woman's fertility and the continuation of life.



ALECOLE  
Mixed media on canvas  
150 x 140cm (60 x 56 inches)

EUR 8,200 Excl 15% S.A vat

The inspiration for this playful and upbeat piece is the schoolyard (the title is a play on the French word 'l'école' meaning school). Once again, we see some of Djéka's favourite Akan mechanics and ideograms – circles to depict life, red to depict blood and therefore life force and the bond between mother and child.

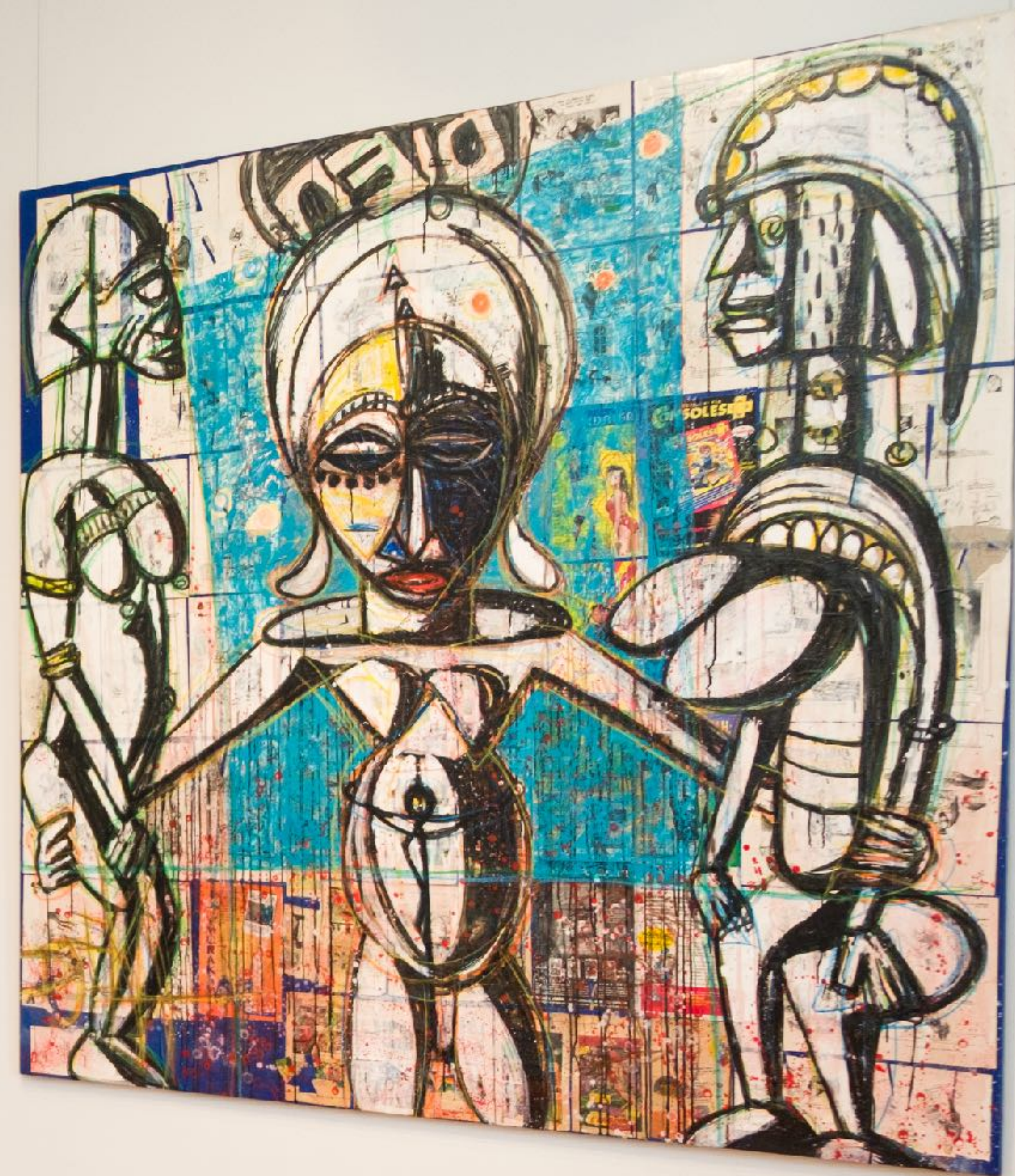




ABO HINSON  
Medium : Mixed media on canvas  
200 x 100 cm (80 x 40 inches)

EUR 6,300 Excl 15% S.A vat

A woman as a warrior and protector is the hero of this piece. The glowing egg in her hand represents both birth and a gleaming Fabergé egg. Here the artist questions the value of culture – what price we place on it and what price we pay for sharing it. Note the lot number '005' attached to the statuette's leg, indicating Djéka's delving into the commodification of his culture.





ASIE  
Mixed media on canvas  
200 x 200cm (80 x 80inches)

EUR 12,400 Excl 15% S.A vat

The age-old fight between good and evil and the link between man and God is depicted in Djéka 's use of the Akan wording 'Dieu' written backwards. We see three women depicted in this piece, a representation of the relevance of women and essentially, a trinity and bearers of life.





Côte d'Ivoire painter and sculptor Jean-Baptiste Djéka Kouadio's work is immensely complex thanks to a combination of techniques and visual cues, from brushwork to scarification, bemasked figures, and a selection of materials including acrylic resin, oil, natural pigment and collage. Deeply influenced by West African Akan culture, he relies on the African esoteric inheritance, ancestors, symbols, and masks to express himself.' — VICKI SLEET

ISRE  
Medium : Mixed media on canvas  
200 x 100 cm (80 x 40 inches)

EUR 7,245 Excl 15% S.A vat

The commodification and appropriation of cultural emblems and art is an important theme in much of Djéka's work and his use of the '001' tag is a clear indicator of this. Like 'Abo Hinsan' this work shows the woman as a warrior and protector.





*"All those objects that people had created with a sacred and magical purpose, to serve as intermediaries between them and the unknown and hostile forces that surrounded them, thereby trying to overcome their fears, giving them colour and shape. And then I understood what painting really meant. It is not an aesthetic process, it is a form of magic that stands between us and the hostile universe, a means of taking power, imposing a form on our terrors as well as our wishes. The day I understood that, I found my way."*

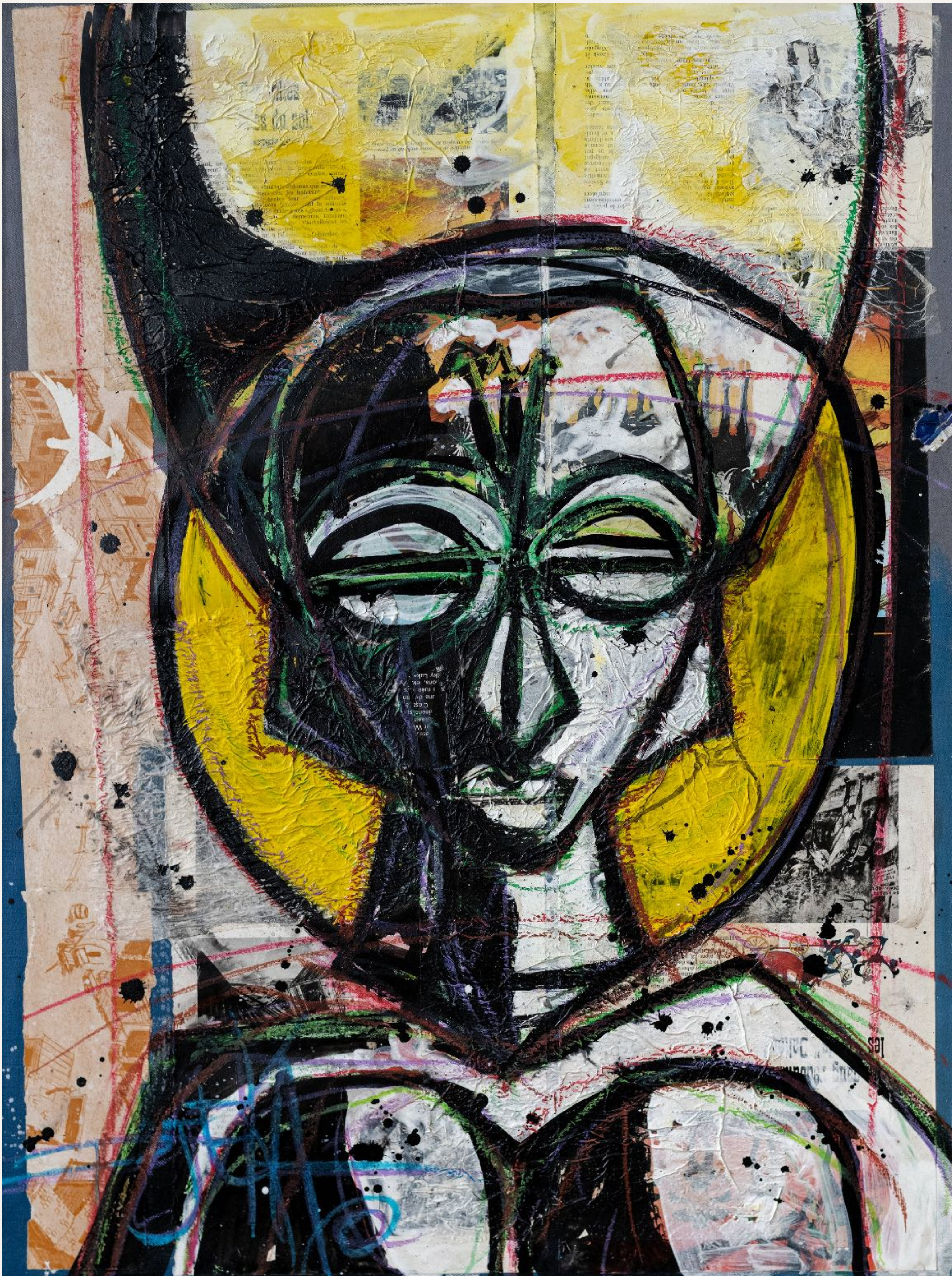
- PABLO PICASSO (AFRICAN INFLUENCE)

TABLETTES DE PIERRE  
Mixed media on canvas  
100 x 100cm (40 x 40 inches)

EUR 5,700 Excl 15% S.A vat

In Akan culture, the handing down of culture and tradition from generation to generation is paramount in its preservation. This scene shows a young boy being handed a stone filled with Akan ideograms – a figurative handing over of the responsibility of holding onto one's heritage.





IAISA  
Mixed media on canvas  
76 x 60 cm (30.4 x 24 inches)

EUR 4,000 Excl 15% S.A vat

This hard-hitting work examines toxic masculinity in Djéka's midst and the world at large, leaning into the irony that even the most machismo of men are born of a place of sanctuary and femininity.

## JEAN-BAPTISTE DJÉKA

For dextrous Côte d'Ivoire painter and sculptor Jean-Baptiste Djéka Kouadio, the influence of West African Akan culture on his work is an intense and tangible expression of how the matrilineal tradition has shaped his life and indeed his view of the world. The Akan culture arose in the 13th century and has played an enormous role in craft and artistic development in West Africa and both its aesthetic and inherited belief system play a significant role in many West African's and certainly in this artist's life.

Using a combination of techniques and visual cues, from brushwork to scarification, bemasked figures, and a selection of materials including acrylic resin, oil, natural pigment and collage - Djéka is able to convey the complexity of his subject matter and the weight and narrative of generations past, a subject close to his heart. At the same time, he offers a permanent reflection and a challenge to the viewer regards the meaning and wonder of traditional symbolism in a modern world. Central to Djéka's artistic premise is what he sees as an inevitable meeting point and mutation of cultures with the result that a visceral sense of shared humanity emanates from each and every potent artwork.

## EXHIBITION HISTORY

### 2023

LES AMAZONES, Christopher Moller Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.

### 2022

AUTUMN IS FRESH, Christopher Moller Gallery, Cape Town, (June) – Group exhibition.

INVESTEC CAPE TOWN ART FAIR, Christopher Moller Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa..

### 2021

DJENART, Abidjan/Ivory Coast.

CENTRE KAOLACK, Dakar/Senegal ROTONDE DES ARTS, Abidjan/Ivory Coast. VILLA SOPIA, Abidjan/Ivory Coast.

ABIDJAN ART FAIR, Abidjan/Ivory Coast.

MUSÉE DES CULTURES CONTEMPORAINES A. T., Abidjan/Ivory Coast

### 2020

GALLERY AMANI, PRÊTE MOI TON RÊVE, Abidjan/Ivory Coast

### 2019

ODA GALLERY, ART MADRID' 19, Madrid/Spain

### 2018

GALLERY AMANI, Les différents noms de Dieu, Abidjan/Ivory Coast, Solo exhibition



GALLERY

# CHRISTOPHER MOLLER

## GALLERY

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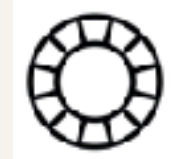
[www.christophermollerart.co.za](http://www.christophermollerart.co.za)

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### TO PURCHASE

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### ACQUISITION PROCESS

- Once you have chosen your favourite piece, please contact our team at [info@christophermollerart.co.za](mailto:info@christophermollerart.co.za) to confirm your request and advise on your shipping address.
- Please note, your requested piece and invoice will be valid for 7 calendar days. Once payment has been processed and received, ownership of the piece will be transferred.
- Art pieces will be released to the waiting list after 7 days.
- Shipment date will be confirmed per purchase. Kindly note, artwork will only leave the Gallery post exhibition.
- Kindly note all ZAR prices are excluding 15% SA VAT.
- Kindly note, shipping cost excludes any destination taxes & import charges

### CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS ACCEPTED.

Our bank (Nedbank) has given us the option to do the credit card transaction via e-payment solution for credit cards. This is a secure product that enables the Gallery to send you a link with the amount pre-populated. It requires you to complete your credit card details. This protects you, in that you don't have to give out your credit card details to a third party, while you complete it online. Unfortunately, this system does not accept American Express or Diners Club credit cards.

Please inform your bank of the transaction in advance and provide them with our Merchant code: 2738375 should your bank reject the request from a foreign country.

This is how it works; You will receive an email with the link from the Christopher Moller Gallery. This will include a PDF copy of the invoice. Please click on the link and complete the transaction by completing your credit card details. Kindly note each link has an expiry date and is valid for 2 days. Once the transaction has been authorised, you will receive a notification that the payment has been successful.

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### VIEWINGS BY APPOINTMENT

Please contact us to view in person.

Tuesday - Friday · 10h00 - 16h00

Monday & Saturday · Viewings by Appointment Sunday · Closed

# CHRISTOPHER MOLLER

## GALLERY

### VISIT US

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