



Soly Cissé

(b.1969, Dakar, Senegal)

Soly Cissé has established himself as a leading contemporary artist.

From his earliest works to the present, he has pursued a critical exploration of the world addressing pressing contemporary issues at the heart of social debates. Drawing inspiration from seemingly distant cultures, his work reinterprets universal myths—now more resonant than ever in a globalized world.

Through paintings, sculptures, and installations, Cissé confronts the fragility of ecosystems in peril while exposing the structures of power and social domination that underpin them

As he lives and works between France and Senegal, Cissé exhibits both on the African continent and internationally, he has started to stand out on the international art scene with the Havana (2000) and Sao Paulo (1998) biennials.

Recent exhibitions include

Art in Embassies, U.S Embassy, Dakar (2024) ; *Soly Cissé, Une Légende en Quête*, Dak'Art Biennale, National Gallery, Senegal, (2022) ; *Soly Cissé, Échappées Belles*, Maison des Arts, Evreux, France, (2022); *La Collection Pigozzi à Cannes*, France, (2022); *Là Où Est La Mer...* Africa 2020, CAC Passerelle, Brest, France, (2021); *Manature*, La Conciergerie, La Motte-Servolex, France, (2019); *Soly Cissé, Les Mutants*, Fondation Dapper, Paris, France (2017). The artist's works will be presented at Volta Basel, June 19 – 21.2025

His work is included in important collections, such as the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; TV | DW—Deutsche Welle, Germany; Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Cologne, Germany; MACMA Museum, Marrakesh, Maroc; Donwahi Foundation, Abidjan, Ivory Coast; MAM Foundation, Douala, Cameroun; Espace Senghor, Verson, France; Eiffage Collection, Dakar, Sénégal; Fondation Blachère, France.

SOLY CISSE

Playscapes: Shaping Worlds and Selves INVESTEC CAPE TOWN ART FAIR

Curatorial Statement Céline Seror **21-23 February**

Investec Cap Town Art Fair features artist Soly Cissé, whose work is part of the playful theme of the SOLO 2025 section: Playscapes: Shaping Worlds and Selves, Curatorial Statement: Céline Seror.

Soly Cissé, with the biting irony of his iconic "Le Monde Perdu" series - a vast fresco of the Comédie Humaine, or through his collages whose irony was highlighted by Roxana Azimi in *Le Monde* (2023), offers a vision of PLAY, deploying a wide range of sources and means that embodies an artistic libertinism that seems to demonstrate that painting itself is a game.

“ECOSYSTEMS 2025”

This work explores the coexistence between Nature and Culture, as well as the dualities that shape the world, through figures bearing emblematic attributes drawn from various mythologies, beliefs and religions.

The graphic series *Lost Worlds* is subtly woven into the depths of the canvas, yet ultimately emerges as a central element reinforcing the continuity and coherence of the artist's work.

Amid a luxuriant Nature environment, the presence of two imams wearing Casamance hats, along with a striking scene of offering or sacrificial ritual set against the backdrop of *Lost Worlds*, embodies this dialogue between Nature and Culture, suggesting their interconnection inviting us to consider a reconciliation of the world's dualities.

COLLAGES

CUTTING, FRAMING, MONTAGE

I had the idea for collage while browsing magazines offered on long-haul flights. Initially, I made drawings on these magazines. Initially, I made drawings on these magazines, leaving them for the following travelers to enjoy.

The experimental projects involving collage was a pivotal moment, shaping the artist's style and subsequent work.

The entire aesthetic of his collages stems from cinematographic framing, a direct influence of his early fascination with comics. Using magazine clippings, he reintegrates disparate elements, creating creating the shock montage where fragments of the original page remain partially visible - hinting at events, exhibitions, and at a fleeting modernity of cultural life.

This challenge and artistic gesture transform the status of the printed image into an original artwork

Each collage, the same size as a magazine page, (210 × 297 mm), acts as a “small container with vast content” where playful figures appear to play role

In addition to the reappropriation inherent in the collage technique the precise choice of medium-pages from Western art magazine - adds further depth, invoking questions about cultural representation and the power structures within it.

“WE TOO HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE A PART OF THIS HISTORY”.

Roxana Azimi adds in Le Monde in 2023:

The global history of civilization is a huge stock of shapes into which one can freely draw, and it is this feeling of freedom that prevails. [...] It is that of the irony in Cisse's collages.

LE MONDE PERDU

DRAWING AS A MEDIUM... CHARCOAL AND PAPER, PRIMITIVE TOOLS

Cissé's graphic work draws inspiration from ancient mythologies and allegories of universal struggles.

In October 2001, in Dakar, Bruno Corà discovered Cissé's work, immediately positioning it within a transcultural perspective. The art historian connects diverse cultures and time periods, recontextualizing the artist's experiences and practice. Bruno Corà goes as far as to identify, as a precursor in the Western tradition, the dramatic humanity captured by Goya in his engraving series *Los Caprichos*.

Both artists address similar moral concerns, notably their condemnation of fanaticism and obscurantism in our societies as well as in the most ancient civilizations.

This shared focus on universal human struggles forms a *Human Comedy* that Soly Cissé could not avoid, given his deep engagement with social issues.

“THE GROUP OF DRAWINGS LE MONDE PERDU EXHIBITS ALL THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A FORTUNATE PICTORIAL INVENTION. IT ENGAGES WITH A COMPLEX ETHICAL-MYTHOLOGICAL- RELIGIOUS-ANTHROPOLOGICAL SYSTEM DELVING INTO THE ARTIST'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, STRUGGLES, AND QUEST FOR FREEDOM”. *

*Bruno Corà Catalogue of the exhibition:“Soly Cissé, le Monde Perdu”, Centro per l'arte contemporanea, Luigi Pecci, 2005, Prato, IT. Préface, Guelfo Guelfi, *Blanc et noir*