

## **Ilídio Candja Candja**

Mozambican, b. 1976

*"Ilídio Candja Candja's painting isn't about creating a critical position. Instead, it is an artistic, aesthetic and cultural practice analogous to those who are guided by intuition, starting from the premise that art invents ways of inhabiting the world. The artist invites us to inhabit his world, sharing with us things that he is sensitive to, including a remix of thoughts and ideas of the past, present and future."*

## **BIOGRAPHY**

In his paintings, Mozambican-born artist Ilídio Candja Candja draws the audience into a personal exploration of his playful and dynamic energy. Executed in a style resonant with Abstract Expressionism and Action Painting, his works are characterized by spontaneous and confident brush strokes. Inspired by his heritage, the riot of colors, personal symbols and African textile prints all serve to infuse his canvases with both a psychological and visual vibrancy.

These painted collages by Candja Candja are a compelling combination of cultural reflection and personal symbology. From abstracted backgrounds arise restless figures that belong to the artist's own constructed mythology. Impulsive and aggressive gestures that reference Action Painting come together to create blurred ghosts, demonic entities, arachnids, and skeletons. An enigmatic tension arises in the work with the layering of more subtle geometrical and mathematical objects, photographs, and decorative elements taken from traditional African art and textiles. Candja Candja's art is a contemplation on the African culture combined with a pursuit of exploring his own restless spirit

Many artists take years to carefully create their identity as painters; but Ilídio Candja Candja merely followed his inspiration as painter, indifferent to associations and references to other contemporary artists, never forgetting his African origin. Painting after painting, the artist asserts his extraordinary creative freedom and produces a work of internal otherness to the art world without demagoguery or naïveté, influenced by what might have been his artistic training in the colourful tradition of his country.

Candja Candja was born in 1976 in Maputo, Mozambique. He studied at the National School of Visual Arts of Maputo. Following a number of exhibitions in his home country, Ilídio Candja Candja relocated to Porto, Portugal to develop his artistic practice. Two years after moving from Maputo, the painting of Ilídio Candja Candja has attracted the attention of many international art collectors and experts. Ilídio draws the audience into a personal exploration of his playful and dynamic energy. Executed in a style resonant with Abstract Expressionism and Action Painting, his works are characterized by spontaneous and confident brush strokes.

Inspired by his heritage, the riot of colours, personal symbols and African textile prints all serve to infuse his canvases with both a psychological and visual vibrancy. His large colourful canvases have a playful quality to them and many

of the symbols found in his compositions draw upon his African origins. On the subject of the narrative components in his work, Candja Candja says “The concept is to write with my paintings in order not to forget who I am, where I come from and where I intend to go.”

The first point to emphasize in the painting of Ilídio Candja Candja is the way he is able to produce an universal painting; the universalism of his vision lies in how he uses images of handmade objects and ancient artefacts from his African imaginary, and the manner how he converts them into essential, unique elements in his painting, making use of collage in a modern context in a way that it becomes impossible to separate the collage-paintings of the artist’s path.

Ilídio Candja Candja’s painting isn’t about creating a critical position, but instead it’s an artistic, aesthetic and cultural practice analogous to those who are guided by a free behaviour, starting from the premise that art invents ways of inhabiting the world. The artist proposes us to inhabit his world, sending us an effective message of things that he’s sensitive to, including those that concern him from a remix of thoughts and ideas of the past, present and future.

The African experience of Ilídio Candja Candja became several experiments determinative to the structure of his paintings: flickering between image and idea, identity and experience. Colourful and exotic, the paintings of Candja Candja convert themselves into infinite imaginary manners, an intelligent coexistence between images of African culture and painting-collage’s abstract backgrounds on which the images are introduced and the African memory is activated. Ilídio works and lives in Porto, Portugal.

**EDUCATION**

Visual Art School of Maputo, MZ.

**SOLO EXHIBITION**

- 2022** The magnificence, light and fusion, Galeria São Mamede, Lisbon, PT.
- 2021** "Octopus & Myopia", Galerias Municipais, Lisbon, Portugal
- 2019** Memory & Fantasy Part #2 Galeria São Mamede, Lisbon, PT.  
Legacy, Galerie Le Sud, Zurich, CH
- 2018** Nothing is Lost, Everything Becomes... Cosmos Part #2, Galerie Frederic Storme, Lille,FR.  
Freedom, Out of Africa Contemporary Gallery, Barcelona, ES.  
Memory And Fantasy, Galeria São Mamede, Lisbon, PT.
- 2017** "No Borders: Another Page", Bill Lowe Gallery, USA
- 2016** "Xiluvha", Galerie Frederic Storme, Lille, FR.  
"African spirits, rhythm and symbolism, Gallery Rastro, Figueira da Foz, PT.
- 2015** The game is to survive part#2, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfotein, SA.  
Mozambique: The Dialogue Continues, GAFRA Gallery of African Art, UK.  
Mahala blood/sacrifice for nothing, Plataforma Revólver, Lisbon, PT.
- 2014** Archive, Galerie Lumieres de Afrique, Brussels, BE.
- 2013** Invictus, Unix Gallery, New York City, USA.
- 2012** Processes, constantly evolving...paints and paintings, Bozart Gallery, Lisbon, PT.  
The game is to survive, Galerie Gree-t-room, Hamburg, DE. (catalog.) Ya, snene of life, Galerie Rammlmair, Hannover, DE.
- 2011** Black people reincarnation, Aparte Gallery, Oporto, PT. (catalog.)
- 2010** Metamorphoses, Ikon gallery, Braga, PT.  
African Remix, 9art gallery, Lisbon, PT.
- 2009** New paintings, Vitória gallery, Bragança, PT.
- 2008** Trips na imaginary World, Ikon Gallery, Braga, PT.
- 2007** Fragments of the past, Silva Guerreiro art gallery, Almancil, PT. (catalog.)  
Indian dreams, House Museum Bissaya Barreto, Coimbra, PT. (catalog.)  
Maze, Art Space João Pedro Rodrigues, Oporto, PT.
- 2006** Tariff between zoology and lyricism, Belo Belo gallery, Braga, PT.

**2005** Vertical thinking, Camões Maputo Institute, MZ. A lookat my land wood flavor and zinc, Municipal Auditorium of vila de Conde, PT.

**2004** Colorfull challenges-dreams, Belo Belo Gallery, Braga, PT.

**2003** Samples 15 days, Fortress of Maputo, MZ.

**2002** A gesture a smaile, Meldarte, Maputo, MZ.

#### **GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

**2021** Hamptons Fine Art Fair, Bill Lowe Gallery, Southampton, NY

**2020** Winter exhibition, Galeria São Mamede, Lisbon, PT.

Summer exhibition, Galeria São Mamede, Lisbon, PT.

African Art, Museum Miramar, Sitges-Barcelona, ES. (curation by Sorella Acosta).

Arco Lisboa, Galeria Movart, Lisbon, PT.

**2019** Summer group show, Out of Africa Gallery, Barcelona, ES.

Blomm:Calor, caress and seduction, Bill Lowe Gallery, Atlanta, USA.

JustLX Art fair, Galeria São Mamede, Lisbon, PT.

Street Art exhibition, Modern Art Museum, Cartagema, Murcia, ES.

JustmadX Art Fair with Galeria São Mamede , Madrid, ES.

Winter group show, Out of Africa Gallery, Sitges-Barcelona, ES.

**2018** Nature redeems us, Galeria Garcia de Diego, La Palma, ES.

**2017** Action time, Cordeiros Gallery, Oporto, PT

From A to C, This being B, Gallery & Warehouse Space, Manchester, UK.

**2013** Crossing the divide, Erdmann Contemporary, Cape Town, ZA. 3<sup>o</sup>th birthday  
Aparte Gallery, Oporto, PT.

**2012** In particular, 9art Gallery, Lisbon, PT.

**2011** Pessoa(s), Ikon Gallery, Braga, PT.

**2010** 9art, Catholic University of Oporto,PT. Free enter, 9art Gallery, Lisbon,PT.

New with Julio Resende, Spontaneous color Gallery, Oporto,PT.(Catalog.)

Mitos & ritos, Ikon Gallery, Braga, PT.

35 anos da Independência de Moçambique, Galeria do Casino Estoril, PT.

**2009** Myth & rites, Ikon Gallery, Braga, PT. Roots, 9art Gallery, Lisbon, PT.

Colectiva, Saomamede Gallery, Lisbon, PT. Ethic Urban, Ikon Gallery, Braga, PT.

Project T6+1, Mariana Jones Gallery, Oporto,PT.

**2008** 3 artis 3 continent the same language , Municipal Gallery, Barcelos, PT. Myths  
&rites, Ikon Gallery, Braga, PT.

7<sup>o</sup> birthday, Mouraria Gallery, Funchal, PT. Moçambique-Figueira da Foz, Casino  
Figueira da Foz , PT. (catalog.)

Light art, Convent of San Francisco, Coimbra, PT. 2007 6<sup>o</sup> birthday, Mouraria  
Gallery, Funchal, PT.

**JOHNSON  
LOWE** GALLERY

- 2006 Bidimensionality, BCI-Fomento Library, Maputo, MZ.(catalog.)  
Small format, Mouraria Gallery, Funchal, PT.
- 2005 Bienal TDM, National Art Museum , Maputo, PT.(catalog)