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CULTURA PERSA E IMPARATA A MEMORIA

(Culture Lost and Learned by Heart)

ADJI DIEYE

26.02 – 30.04

Opening: 25 February 2022, 7 pm

Curated by Emanuele Guidi

For her first solo exhibition in an Italian institution, artist Adjie Dieye presents three new artworks that expand her project, *Culture Lost and Learned by Heart*, begun in 2020.

Starting from her research into the National Iconographic Archives of Senegal, founded in 1913 by the former French colonial regime, Adjie Dieye undertakes a personal investigation into the role these institutions continue to play in the post-independent country.

While such research is necessarily conveyed by the materials that the archives still contain and their state of preservation, Adjie Dieye approaches them with an awareness of the taxonomic processes and forms of removal to which they may have been subjected. At the same time, the 'complicity' that Adjie Dieye agrees to establish with them is not aimed at unveiling or rewriting 'alternative' histories—a paradigm that the artist rejects—but at asking herself 'how a post-independent country uses the same imperial technology once used to exercise hegemony over its people in representing its cultural heritage today'.

In the three works *A Long Term*, *Friendship*, and *Untitled Black*, Adjie Dieye continues her editorial exercise in which photographs selected from the national archives are placed in relation to the documentation of the country's current infrastructural development, also supported by the Chinese economy, which the artist continues to catalogue. The 'linearity' of history is broken down through the association of past and present gestures, ceremonies and architectural spaces, making visible how a certain rhetoric constitutes the archive and the formation of a national identity.

The sculpture *Untitled Black* is probably the work that best interprets Adjie Dieye's urgency to interpose herself into these narratives in order to seek her own point of view. The images are reprinted on a 30-metre silk ribbon, woven into a structure that on the inside evokes a newspaper printing press and on the outside the skyline of Dakar. The materials and movements of this sculpture further mingle infrastructures and their co-responsibilities: the role of the media in the production of identity, modernist architecture in the changing urban space, the economic and political promise of the new Silk Road, Belt and Road Initiative, all intertwine again with the national archives to bring out the tangle of forces at work in the formation of the country's post-independent space.

Adjie Dieye's gesture of hand-printing the images is a way of openly practicing the desire—and the right—to use these iconographic materials in order to get to know them, to appropriate them and to bend them in the search for her own narrative, which, although made public, she deliberately keeps intimate and opaque.

Adjie Dieye is an Italian artist born in 1991, living and working between Zurich, Milan, and Dakar. Dieye holds a BA in New Technologies of Arts from the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera, Milan, and an MFA from the Zurich University of

the Arts, ZHdK, Zurich. Since 2018 Adji Dieye has exhibited her work in various international venues including LagosPhoto Festival, Rencontres de Bamako – Biennale Africaine de la Photographie, Kunsthalle Wien, Dak'Art Biennale de l'Art Africain Contemporain, 2020, and Clark House Initiative, Mumbai. She is the recipient of the C/O Berlin Talent Award 2021 in the category of art. In 2022 she will participate in the Dak'Art Biennale and Rencontres de Bamako.

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