

**INTERVIEW WITH THE COMMISSIONERS**

António Pinto Ribeiro

Katia Kameli

Aimé Mpane

# EUROPA, OXALÁ

EN



Malala Andrialavidrazana, *Figures 1883* | 2019 | ©Malala-Andrialavidrazana

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Mucem (M.)

What does « **Europa Oxalá** » mean? Why this title ?

António Pinto  
Ribeiro (A.P.R.),  
Katia Kameli  
(K.K.), Aimé  
Mpane (A.M.)

We gave this name to the exhibition in order to convey the idea of a plural Europe, but united. "Europe" comes from Western mythology. "Oxalá" is a Portuguese word whose origin comes from the Arabic expression *Insh' Allah* ("If God wills") and has several meanings, all related to the desire for a future or a positive event. By the association of these two words, we affirm our will to gather supposedly distant geographies and cultures in a common Europe.

M.

This project is situated in the field of memory and postcolonial studies. How can contemporary art help to explore these notions?

A.P.R., K.K.,  
A.M.

Contemporary art is crucial here, because in the materiality of the works of art and their narratives we find questions and doubts similar to those addressed in these studies.

This is the case, for example, of the questions related to the decolonization of or the resistance to the models of domination still practiced in certain countries. Art can fight against contemporary racism, but it can also help us reread colonial in order to create alternative narratives.

M.

What unites these artists? Is there a sharing of themes or visual languages?

A.P.R., K.K.,  
A.M.

These artists are children or grandchildren of the generations that lived through the decolonization process. They raise new questions from new territories. They question the stories told (or not told) in Europe, the objects inherited from the past, but also the hegemony of European modernity and the different narratives around colonial ghosts. These artists revisit official and family archives and tell these stories through books, films, and works of art. In this way, they redraw European culture, whether inherited

from the Greco-Roman tradition or Mitteleuropa. These artists become the main actors of a transnational vision of the arts and play a key role in the European cosmopolitanism of the 21st century. Their artistic paths often have as a starting point the refusal of all artistic nationalisms, drawing from the memories of their parents and grandparents as precious raw material for their work. Some of them do not have ancestry linked to the former colonies, but they began very early to work on these subjects that we call, for the simplicity of language, "post-colonial". The underlying their artistic production is the result of their reflections about the memories inherited from the colonial period and independence. These artists participate in international and contemporary artistic production in a very strong and unavoidable way.

They express themselves in very different ways. The singularity of their territorial origins, the artistic disciplines that inspire them, the theories through which they explain their practices, but also their differences, are present in the vast of techniques, languages, and forms that can be seen in this exhibition.



Mucem

