

JOHNSON LOWE GALLERY

Johnson Lowe Gallery presents Ilídio Candja Candja: *O Silêncio Negro em Forma de Chocolate [Black Silence in the Form of Chocolate]*

On view August 4 – September 9, 2023

“Can we intervene in the future, in the near future? We certainly can. Not in the sense of determining it, shaping it, prophesying it, or grounding it in utopia or dystopia. But we know that each of us, or all of us together in the daily decisions, acts, episodes, constructed fictions and updates of the reality we produce, is incidentally interfering in the future.” – António Pinto Ribeiro, 2009

Atlanta, Georgia — Johnson Lowe Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of work by Mozambican artist Ilídio Candja Candja: *O Silêncio Negro em Forma de Chocolate [Black Silence in the Form of Chocolate]*. This exhibition features a series of the artist’s latest large-scale paintings that, while chromatically vibrant and compositionally poetic, critically investigate the structural mechanisms used in the perpetuation, suppression, and silencing of the Indigenous populations on the continent of Africa in the colonial era. Elements of pre-colonial African sculpture and devices utilized in the subordination of these communities are [dis]placed across heavily collaged, seismically shifting abstract backgrounds, laying the bedrock for Candja Candja’s constellation of revisionist realms.

Candja Candja strategically inserts various instruments of torture and control into his compositions, underscoring the lasting effects of a colonial system historically built upon the manipulation and commodification of existing communities. Chocolate appears, in subtle references, as a pacifying element, palliating the saccharine whiteness of an economy entirely reliant on exploitation through the farming of ‘white gold’ — ivory, sugar, or cotton — and revealing hidden facets relating to the history of slavery in Mozambique.

The multi-tiered dimensions of the artist’s frenetically charged paintings materialize a deliberate visual schema mirroring the structure found in some vernacular African architecture, underscoring the sophisticated blend of mathematical principles and local building techniques inherent in these traditional styles. Such elements of visual representation provide a foundation for the audience to contemplate imaginative territories of empyrean order.

Rising above turbulent, expressive seas awash with vibrant hues of yellow, red, green, and black, among others — evocative of the Mozambican Flag of Independence — African masks, sacred power objects, maps, and figures associated with wayfinding, ceremony, and celebration pair with various apparatuses historically employed to assert physical and psychological dominion, suggesting a complex interplay between tradition and a desire for progress. These symbols, inalienable from vast histories across the African continent, coalesce into unpredictable, rippling scales that delicately balance one another. Within these cosmic systems lie the blueprints for utopian futures envisioned through the eyes of this Mozambican futurist.

This will be the artist’s first exhibition at Johnson Lowe Gallery following notable solo exhibitions, *Octopus & Myopia*, Galerias Municipais (2021), and *Magnificência Luz e Fusão*, Galeria São Mamede (2022), both held in Lisbon, Portugal. The exhibition is accompanied by an essay by Titos Pelembe titled *O Silêncio Negro em Forma de Chocolate [Black Silence in the Form of Chocolate]*.

Ilídio Candja Candja’s *Black Silence in the Form of Chocolate* will be on view from August 4, 2023, through September 9, 2023.

764 Miami Circle NE, Suite 210, Atlanta, GA 30324

O. (404) 352 8114 info@johnsonlowe.com johnsonlowe.com

JOHNSON LOWE GALLERY

About Johnson Lowe Gallery

Johnson Lowe Gallery is devoted to championing emerging, mid-career, and established artists from diverse cultural backgrounds. The gallery's program is built upon a reverence for the alchemical nature of artistic expression, with the intention to honor the profound nature of visual language and the role it can play in affecting paradigm shifts at both personal and societal levels.

Johnson Lowe Gallery is committed to presenting work across all media, including but not limited to painting, sculpture, installation, and photography. Alongside a commitment to support and foster the Atlanta arts community, our curatorial and programming initiatives aim to facilitate cross-cultural and global dialogues.

The gallery was founded in the summer of 1989 in Atlanta, Georgia, by Bill Lowe. Longtime artists in the gallery program include Thornton Dial, Michael David, Todd Murphy, Jimmy O'Neal, and Kathleen Morris. The gallery's exhibition history includes internationally renowned artists such as Ida Applebroog, Markus Lupertz, Dale Chihuly, Hiro Yamagata, and Leiko Ikemura.

Notes to Editors

Title: **Ilídio Candja Candja: *O Silêncio Negro em Forma de Chocolate***

Dates: August 4, 2023 – September 9, 2023

Address:

764 Miami Cir NE #210, Atlanta, GA 30324

Hours:

Tuesday – Friday | 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Saturday | 11:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Sunday, Monday, and Evenings by appointment

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

For all media inquiries, please contact [Pelham Communications](#):

Emma Gilhooly | emma@pelhamcommunications.com | +1 929 613 9790

Alison Andrea Lopez | alison@pelhamcommunications.com | +1 917 378 0172

764 Miami Circle NE, Suite 210, Atlanta, GA 30324

O. (404) 352 8114 info@johnsonlowe.com johnsonlowe.com