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OMAR VICTOR DIOP

Omar Victor Diop is a self-taught artist and at forty-one he is one of the leading photographers of his generation. His work is part of the African tradition of studio photography, which includes the pictures of Seydou Keïta, Mama Casset and Malick Sidibé. At the same time, although being in full command of the technique, he has also chosen gradually to distance himself from it. This book, co-published with Galerie MAGNIN-A in Paris, for the first time brings together the photographer's last three emblematic series: *Diaspora* (2014), *Liberty* (2017) and *Allegoria* (2021).

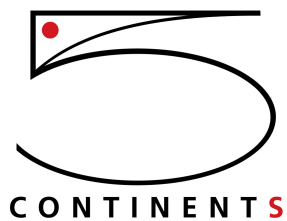
In *Diaspora*, Diop concentrates on the self-portrait. The Senegalese photographer embodies eighteen figures from the African diaspora who lived extraordinary lives but have been ignored in the conventional history of the Western world. Enlivening the photos with objects associated with football, he softens the impact of his characters by propelling them into the present, where they add an interesting take on the current debate about immigration to Europe and the integration of foreigners.

In *Liberty*, Diop continues to raise the profile of the continent of Africa and to place the spotlight on its ongoing exodus by providing an overview of the history of his people's struggles. Playing on visual tropes and combining self-portraits with portraits of others, the artist re-examines the main events in this complex affair. While the incidents all certainly involve different periods and places and are not of equal importance, they are all connected with the same desire for a liberty that has too often been denied.

In *Allegoria*, Omar Victor Diop turns his attention to a completely fresh topic. In these photographs he explores the issue of the environment and its importance in Africa. The allegory in question is nature itself, which instead of existing in the world, risks becoming just a memory and a series of pictures in science textbooks. Awash in its painful responsibility, mankind gathers around itself nature's residues, reduced to mere representations.

Renée Mussai is London-based curator and scholar with a special interest in African and diasporic lens-based visual arts practices. She is Senior Curator and Head of Curatorial & Collection at Autograph, London, as well as Research Associate at the Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre, University of Johannesburg; Associate Lecturer at University of the Arts London, and regular guest curator and former Fellow at the Hutchins Centre for African & African American Research at Harvard University.

Imani Perry is the Hughes-Rogers Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University. She is the author of 6 books, including the award winning: *Looking for Lorraine: The Radiant and Radical Life of Lorraine Hansberry* and *May We Forever Stand: A History of the Black National Anthem*. Perry is also an essayist and a cultural critic. Her work has appeared in various publications such as: the Atlantic, The New York Times, Harpers, The Financial Times, and O Magazine. Her next book: *South to America: A Journey Below the Mason-Dixon to Understand the Soul of a Nation* will be released in January of 2022.



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