

E X H I B I T I O N C A T A L O G U E

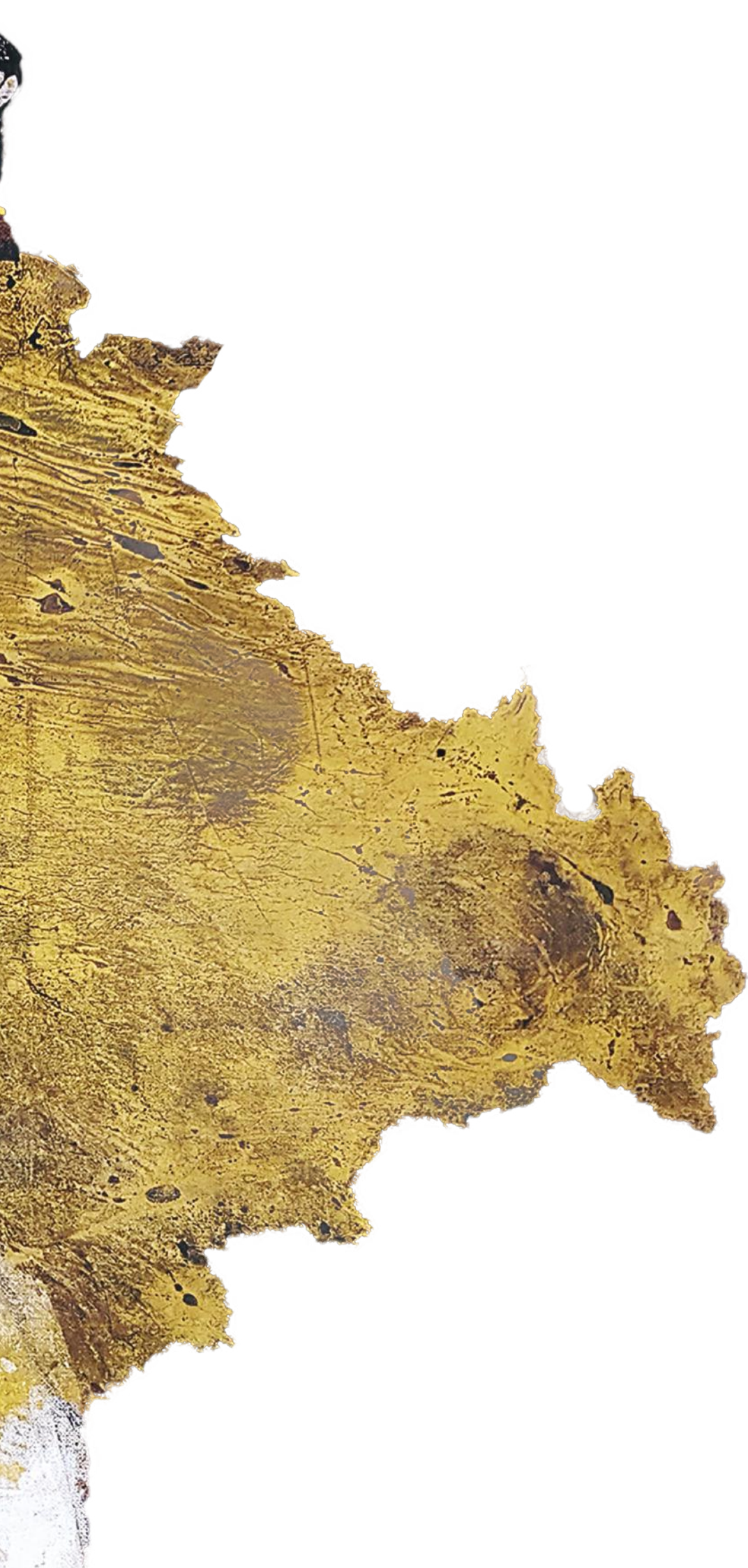
RENÉ TAVARES

IN MEMORY WE TRUST



27.05 // 17.06.21





|| THIS IS NOT
|| A WHITE CUBE



THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE contemporary art gallery expands its international presence with the opening of a new space in Lisbon, in Chiado. To mark the occasion, between 27 May and 17 July, the gallery will simultaneously present in its two branches, in Lisbon and in Luanda, a solo exhibition by the Santomense artist René Tavares.

IN MEMORY WE TRUST promotes a reflection around the notions of memory, history, tradition, heritage and miscegenation. The show includes more than 30 works produced between 2012 and 2021, many of which have never been shown before. It displays two distinct sections - divided between Lisbon and Luanda - with a large variety of media ranging from painting to drawing, including photography and installation.

At the Angolan centre, the artist explores the themes of migration and heritage that have been, over the years, a consistent motor of innovation and creativity in his artistic production. At the Portuguese centre he gives greater expression to themes such as memory and cultural heritage. The persistence of the concept of layer and the concept of miscegenation defines the main structure of the exhibition, in a vision transposed from the work of René Tavares himself, which repeatedly introduces inevitable conceptual combinations, crossed cultural and heritage references and composed solutions.

The multiple layers of materiality and plastically come together in each of René Tavares' works - by painting, photography or drawing - by find reciprocity in their conceptual structure. The process of agglomeration of layers derives from the transposition to the work of a view that can be defined as archaeological or stratified on the ancestral Santomense culture of the Tchiloli - a traditional Santomense spectacle of European origin -, which the artist recovers, represents and plastically reinterprets in the core of Luanda.

The recovery of Tchiloli's immateriality, seen through the magnifying glass of the contemporary artistic production that René Tavares embodies, is declared in this exercise that documents the intersection between personal narratives - of the actors who perform it - and the broader historical narratives - and the characters that enact in the streets of São Tomé and Príncipe. "Two Lives Tchiloli" is the oldest photographic series in the exhibition, and one of those that more clearly

embodies this idea of the meeting between past and present, between the individual and the collective, between personal narratives and historical narratives, in a double, but one composition, visually translating the meeting between three peoples - the Portuguese, the French and the Santomense - and the heritage that came from this.

A similar logic persists in the photographic-based works of the series "In Memory We trust", differing only in the assumption of distinct techniques. Here, a more preponderant character is given to painting. The documentary photographs at their base take us back to a historical past and a cultural tradition that must be recovered, but at the same time push us onto the contemporary stage, where ideologies and concepts linked to the notion of territory and identity are simultaneously debated and where the relevance of the physical and ideological borders erected between civilizations is challenged.

The collective memory of the peoples and the inheritance resulting from their voluntary and involuntary crossings, which René Tavares addresses to the first exhibition centre, in Luanda, translates into a body of work that leads us physically and intellectually to another. In Lisbon, which is more up-to-date and committed to the factual and future vision of a continent which, in the era of globalization, continues to recover its traditions, reaffirm its roots and consolidates a revision of the History that is today being carried out academically and politically on the international stage.

"In Memory We Trust" challenges us, placing us between the critical revision of a dystopian conception of the identity of the African continent and the need to affirm a renewed vision of the various Africas that Africa encloses within its borders and in the diaspora.

The work of René Tavares makes recurrent use of a rich archival material to present us with countless intellectual challenges. His practice proposes the redefinition of the fields of artistic expression, bringing to painting techniques, gestures and materials that refer back to drawing and transferring to drawing the gestural and theatricality that is the appanage of painting. This hybridization of the plastic languages is also transferred to photography, claiming for art a trace of the absolute.





ABOUT THE ARTIST

RENÉ TAVARES (b. 1983, São Tomé and Príncipe)

René Tavares translates into painting and drawing, through lines, and stains, a personal synthesis of his own identity, always in process ("unfinished"), positioning himself in constant movement between past and present references. He is interested in deepening the permeability of the borders between stories, languages, and techniques and sharing this exploratory path. He is an artist who reflects in his works his own experience of displacement or contemporary relocation between the various post-colonial contact zones.

In many of his works, what the artist calls "l'imagerie comun" is present, the simple representation of a vulgar object or form that is inserted in a pictorial space of pure abstraction and that allows the treatment of lines with drawing technique and with painting technique, where several references appear nuanced, expressed in an ambiguous way, as if in a transposition of the very functioning of memory.

Recently, his works have taken on a political-cultural component, through which the artist draws attention to everyday reality, transferring references from memory, identity, and heritage to the contemporary context. Impartially, René Tavares intervenes in socio-political development, not through a desire to assume political discourse, but because politics is necessarily part of the regime of everyday reality.

Graduated from the School of Fine Arts in Dakar, Senegal, he won a scholarship in 2008/09 to study at the École de Beaux Arts in Rennes (France) where he developed an intense research program. At the same time, he took part in the photography course of the ARC / Rennes project and in 2011 he attended the Master of Science in Art and Heritage Sciences at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon.

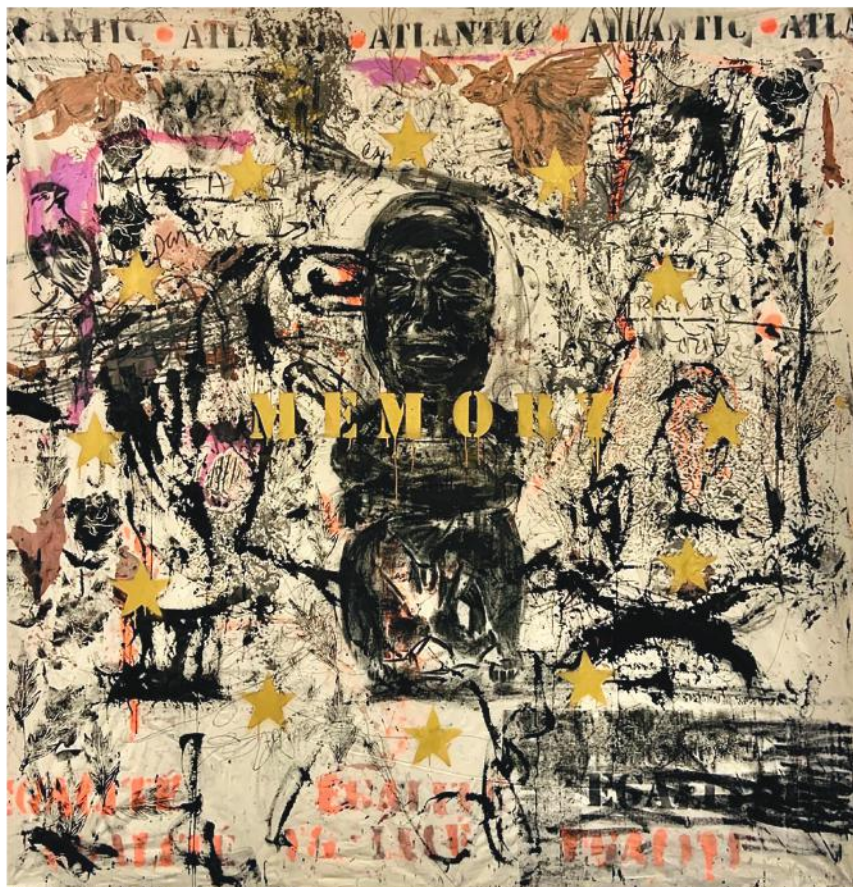
His work has been exhibited internationally, in several countries, including São Tomé, Portugal, France, Belgium, Germany, Angola, South Africa, United States of America, and China. In 2008 he participated in the collective exhibition "Africa Now", in Washington, organized by the World Bank, and in 2015 he took part in the international exhibition "Lumières d'Afrique", at the Palais Chaillot, in Paris - France.

Most recently he was nominated for the "AFRICA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL NEW ARTISTIC TALENT | FNB, Joburg Art Fair 2018. He currently lives and works between São Tomé and Lisbon and his work is represented by THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE contemporary art gallery.









Atlantic nation.
Series: New nation, 2020

Mixed media on canvas
200 x 190 cm
(RT100)



***Looking for a
new life, 2021***

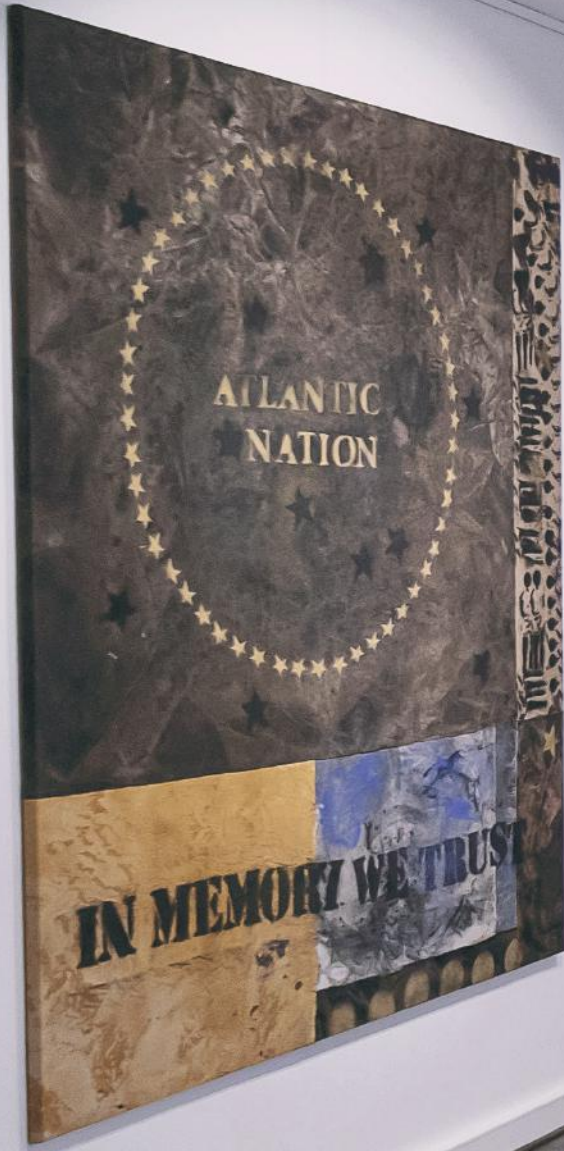
Mixed media on canvas
200 x 180 cm
(RT132)





Sketch I, II, III, IV.
Series: Atlantic Nation, 2021

Mixed media on canvas
78 x 58 cm
(RT136, RT139,
RT142, RT138)







*In memory we
trust I & II, 2020*

Mixed media on paper
70 x 50 cm
(RT90, RT97)

NEW NATION



MEMORY

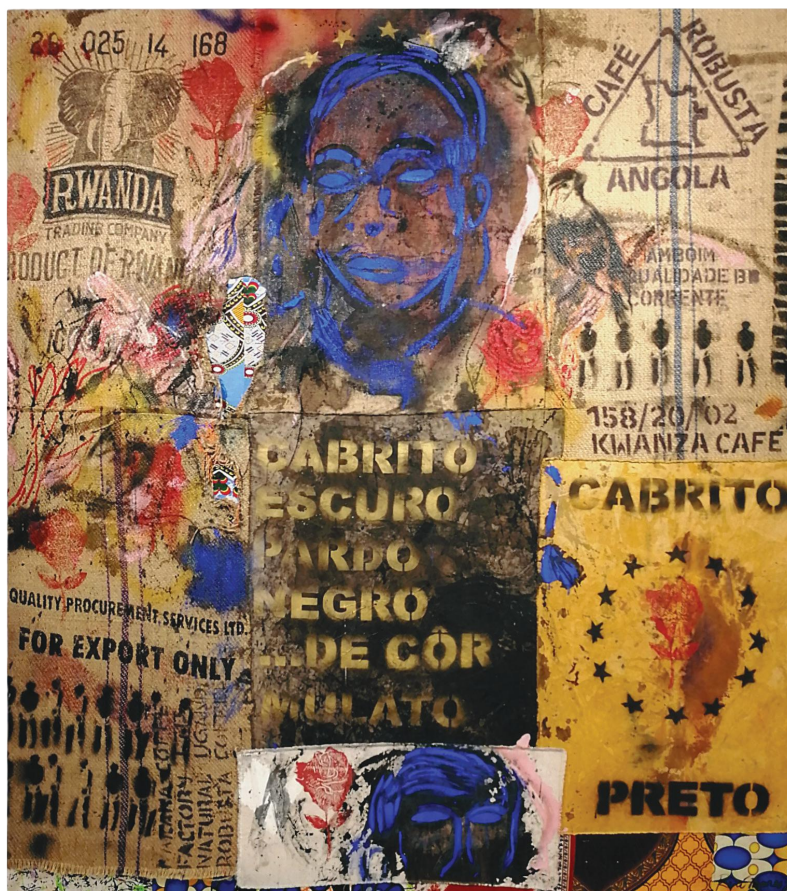
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Blue and Rose, 2020

Mixed media on canvas
200 x 177 cm
(RT102)



*Product for export only.
Series: New nation, 2020*

Mixed media on textiles
200 x 177 cm
(RT101)

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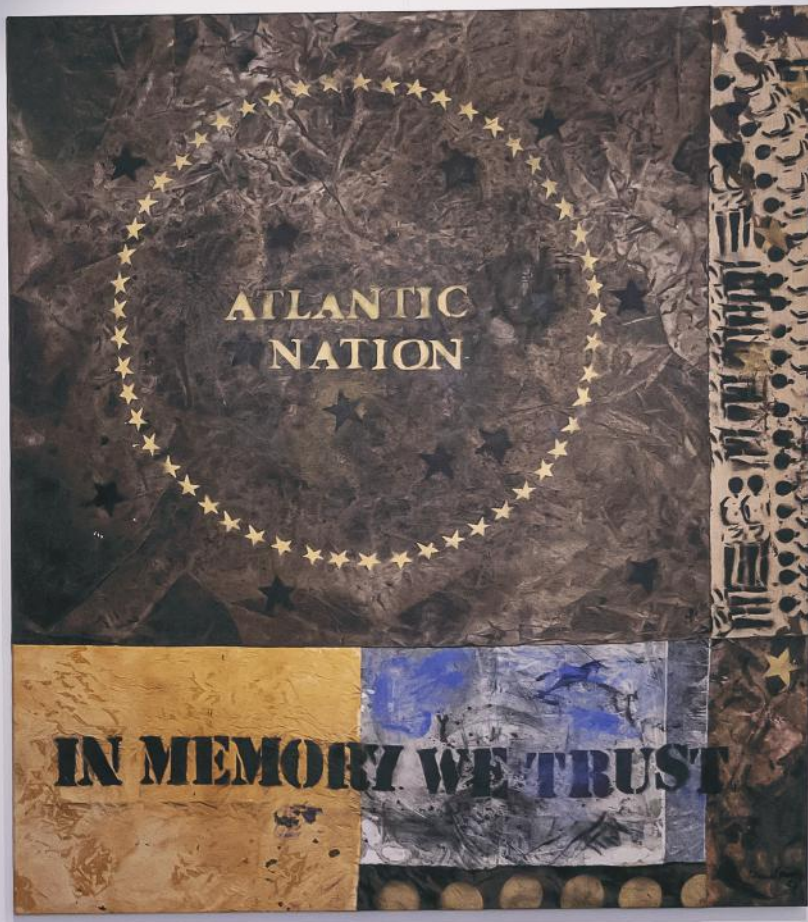
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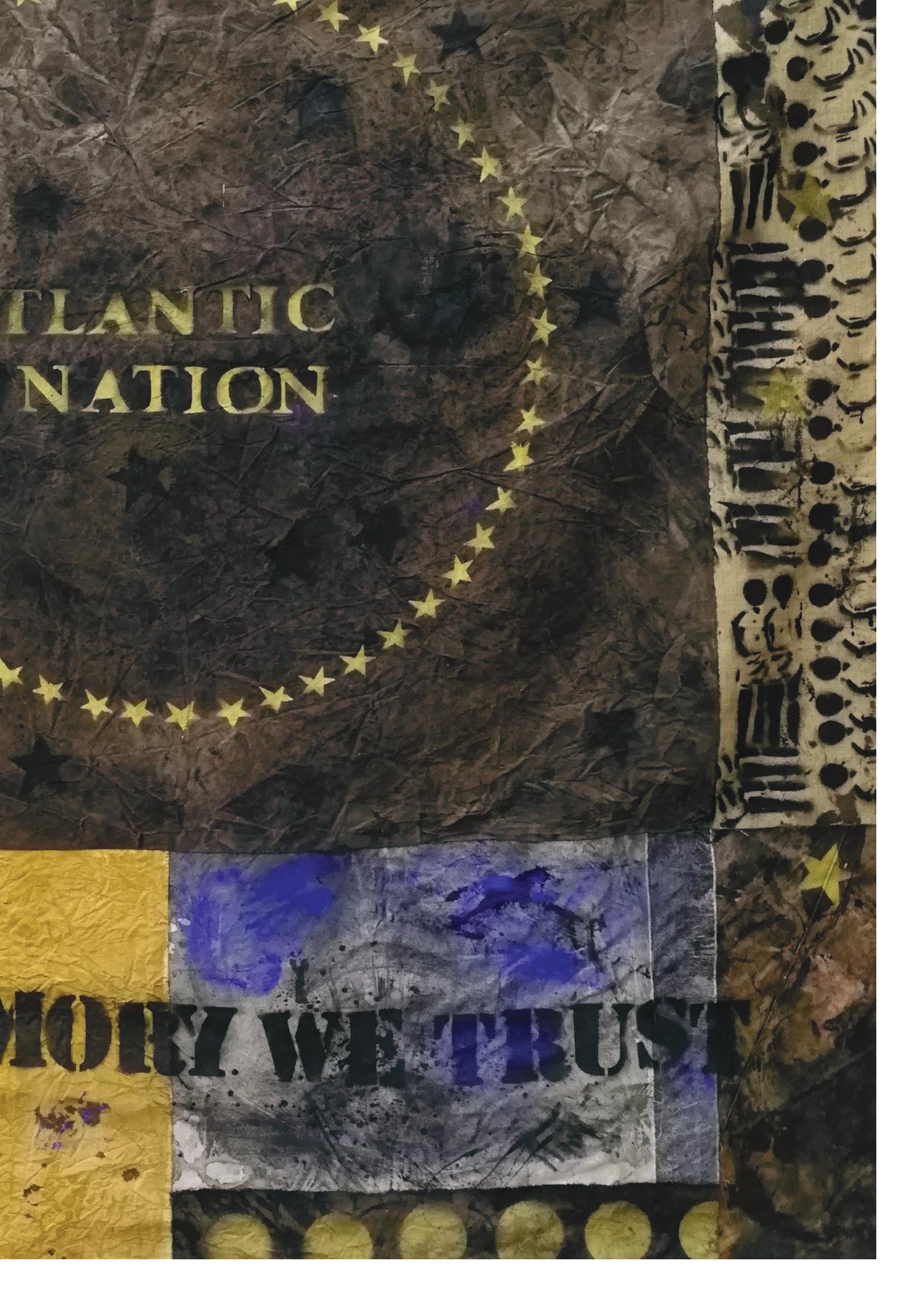
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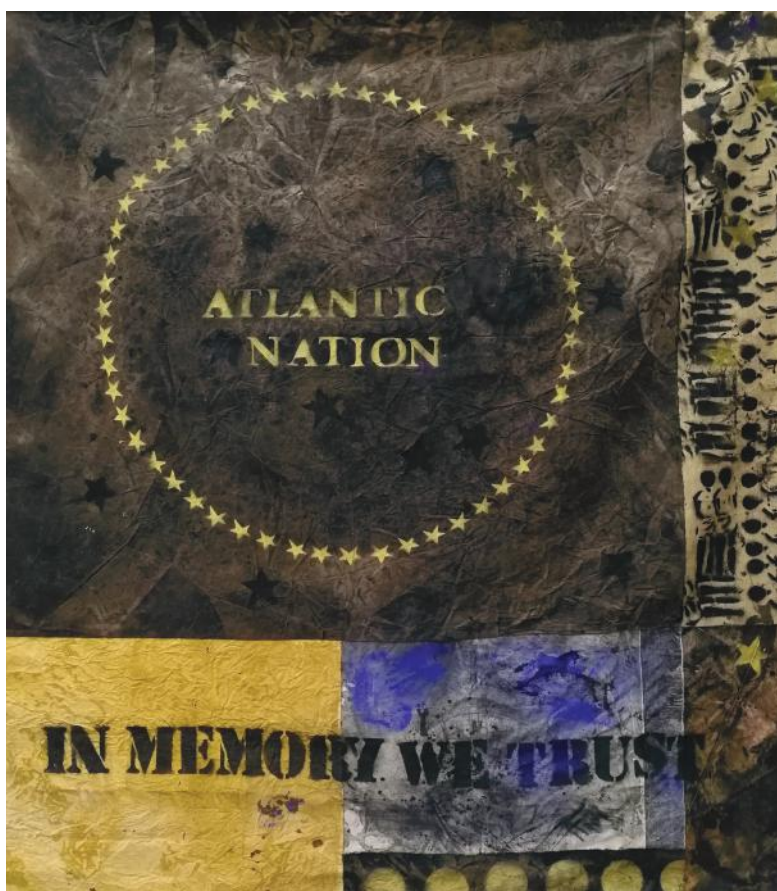




ATLANTIC
NATION

MEMORY WE TRUST





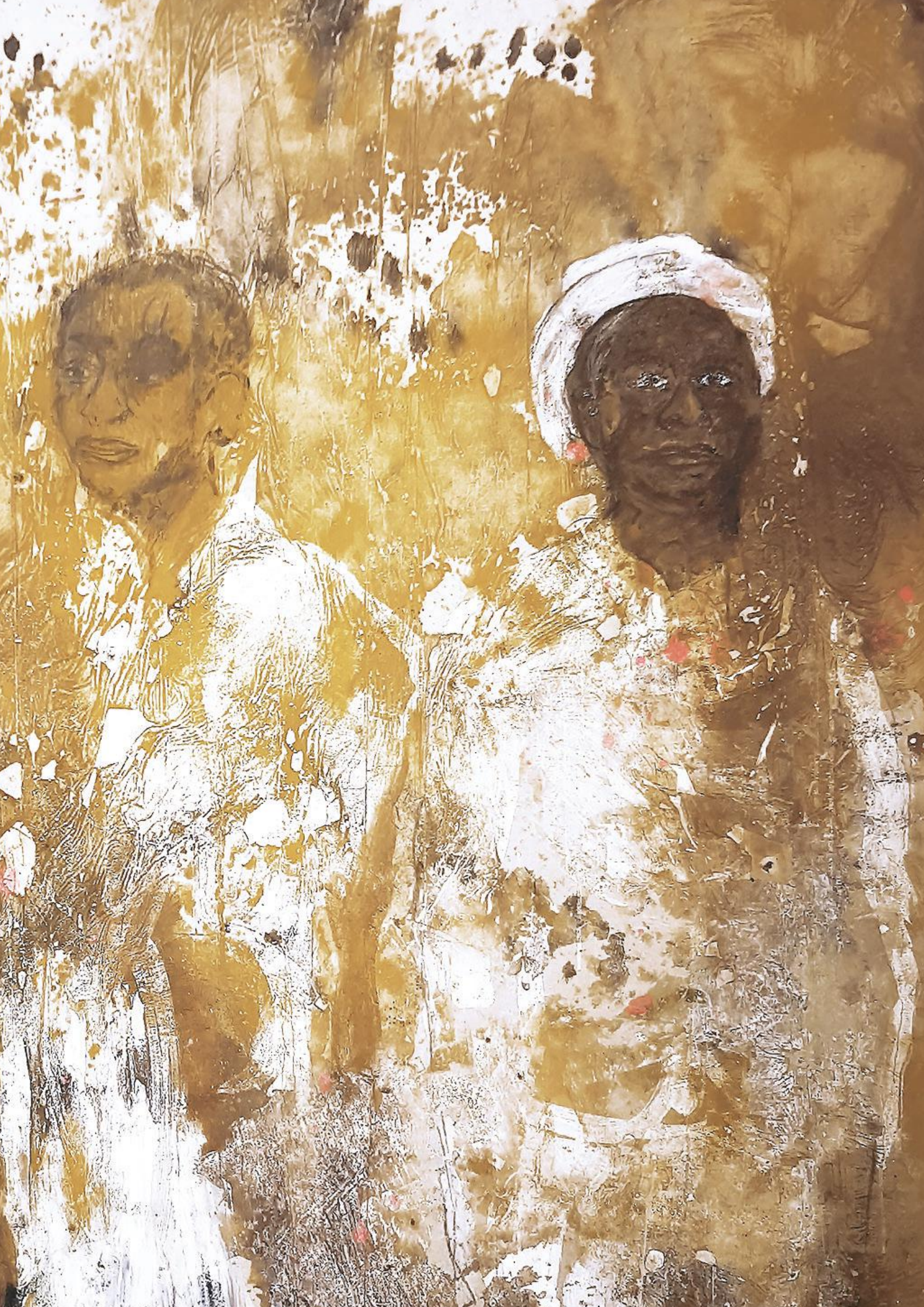
In memory we trust, 2020

Mixed media on canvas
200 x 177 cm
(RT126)



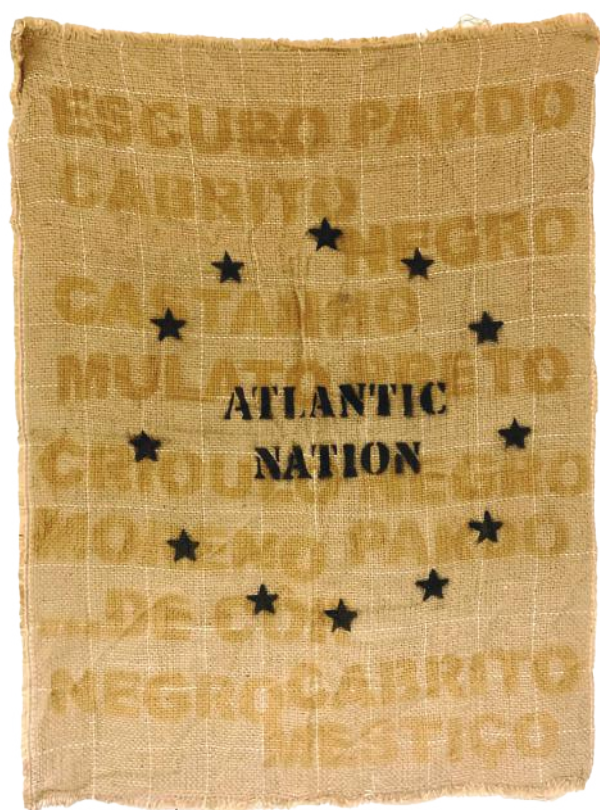
***Untitled. Series: retratos
para inglês ver, 2021***

Mixed media on canvas
165 x 153 cm
(RT133)





**ATLANTIC
NATION**



Atlantic Nation, 2021

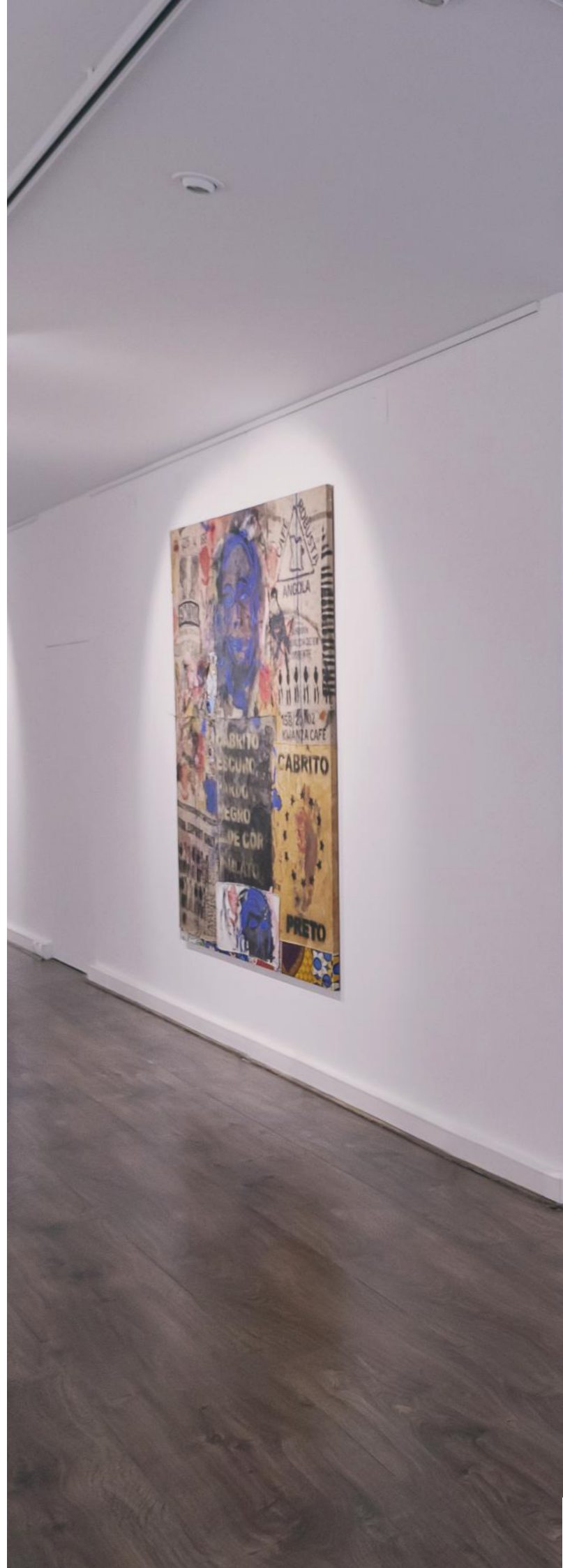
Mixed media on burlap
125 x 95 cm
(RT129)

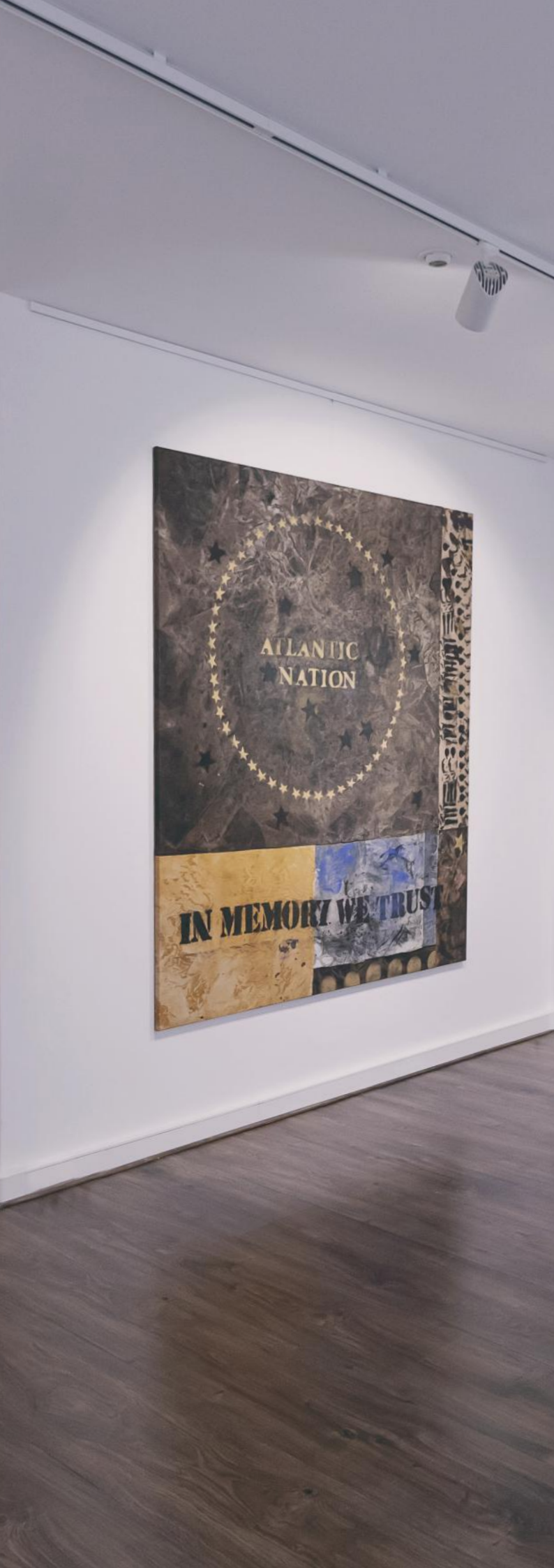
THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE is an international contemporary art gallery with exhibition spaces in Luanda (Angola) and Lisbon (Portugal). Representing and collaborating with international established and emergent artists, the gallery's program focuses on relevant and powerful narratives and discussions associated with the African continent and its diaspora. Despite the profound connection with Africa, it is the first Contemporary African gallery in Portugal that focuses not exclusively on Lusophone circles but also the emerging aesthetics of cultural and artistic productions from the Global South. The gallery maintains a regular and significant presence in important international art fairs.

THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE extends its intervention beyond the physicality of the gallery space with exhibition projects that enhance the extension of the art world to a multiplicity of places, inviting curators and artists in occasional collaborations that provide enriching visions and dialogues.

Founded in Luanda in 2016 by Sónia Ribeiro, current CEO, and becoming a leading art gallery in Angola, the project expanded in 2019 to one of Lisbon's most emblematic neighborhoods, Chiado. Given Portugal's historical connection with Africa, Lisbon was considered a natural location for this first expansion of the gallery and an important gateway to Europe.

Both exhibition spaces have an independent program, offering collectors and enthusiasts a focused and strong view of contemporary artistic production from the African and South American continents and their diaspora.





As of 2016, the Gallery has represented, exhibited, and collaborated with both emerging and established artists. Since then, the gallery has remained true to one of its primary goals of providing artists with the opportunity to share their unique perspectives through their work, thus creating and promoting discussions around relevant historical and contemporary narratives in the context of globalization.

As such, within an extensive yearly program that includes regular exhibitions in Lisbon and Luanda, the collaboration in diverse cultural projects, and a consistent presence on numerous international art fairs, attention is drawn to issues such as identity, memory, heritage, cultural heritage, and social change. In addition, artists from the gallery frequently feature on major platforms like museums, biennales, and important exhibitions around the globe.

Its three directors, Sónia Ribeiro - CEO and founder, Graça Rodrigues - Curator, and Ngoi Salucombo - Executive Director of the Angolan delegation - have a singular entrepreneurial and artistic vision based on a solid curatorial and collaborative - based art project approach. In 2019, the gallery founded "O CUBO", a non-profit platform that seeks to boost experimentation and research, through the development of a program of artistic residencies, editorial projects, archive mapping, and the establishment of a network of local and international partnerships.

The gallery has already presented numerous exhibitions in Angola, South Africa, France, Italy, the UK, and Portugal but continues to expand and develop its connections worldwide.

CONTACTS

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