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

"My work reflects on the African diaspora and on the forms of miscegenation that have taken place; it also reflects my creative process as an artist in keeping with the rhythm of a mestization that overlaps times, places, and supports, diluting the watertight borders between domains." (René Tavares)

René Tavares' work is based on a process of research spanning through archives, photographs, and literature, while bringing to the forefront themes related to historical and socio-political issues that affected different African countries. With a preference for painting and drawing, Tavares' artistic practice also includes photography, video, and installation. The artist's work evolves and expands in the form of projects and series that develop over time according to his own experiences of transition between different artistic languages, between the African and European continents, between insular and continental Africa, also between the local and the global, the individual and the collective. By questioning assimilated, neglected, and forgotten heritages and challenging the rigidity of categories and prejudices, the artist's works are produced in an impulsive and engaged mode to raise awareness and trigger processes of resilience and social empowerment.

Using a palette of rich, deep, and earthy colors and working the canvas in layers and all over, Tavares' figurative universe, with its dreamlike atmosphere, is filled with memories and human presence, faces and gazes that look at us throughout space and time. The works also emphasize iconographic and symbolic elements such as cotton flower fields and plantations, specific animals, objects, and housing, and the depiction of group portraits. These collective pictures of men and women, either standing peacefully or shown in their interactions and daily activities, aim to reflect on the historical processes of hybridization and miscegenation happening between several ethnic groups, communities, and cultures, including components assimilated during the colonial and post-colonial eras. Either through his paintings or multi-media installations, which often included striking words referring to racism and discrimination, Tavares fuses references taken from ancestral practices and belief systems, collective memories, and heritage with contemporaneity and globalization. Thus, the whole work highlights the processes of appropriation, integration, and merging of heterogeneous religious, social, and cultural components that compose many African cultures.

Tavares holds a Bachelor's in Fine Arts and Visual Arts from the Dakar School of Fine Arts (Senegal), a postgraduate degree in Visual Arts, Painting and Photography from the Rennes School of Fine Arts (France), and a Master's in Art and Heritage Sciences from the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon (Portugal). **Highlights of his career include** the selection as a finalist for the EDP Foundation New Artists Award (2022), the Public Vote Prize for the Norval Sovereign African Art Prize (2022), the nomination for Africa's most influential new artistic talent (FNB Joburg Art Fair, 2018), and the Artist Revelation Prize at São Tomé and Príncipe's biennale of Art and Culture (2002). **René Tavares' work is included in several relevant collections, such as** the Collection of His Majesty the King Mohammed VI of Morocco, the PLMJ Foundation (Portugal), Kloser Contemporary Art, AAD - African Artist for Development, Omali Lodge - HBD Group, Sindika Dakolo Collection, World Bank Collection of the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, EDP Foundation Collection, Lisbon City Council Collection, Fondation H, and Schulting Art Collection.

RENÉ TAVARES | CV

SOLO SHOWS

[**2026**] *"As paisagens mudam de lugar: obras da coleção da Fundação PLMJ"*, Eugénio de Almeida Foundation (Évora, Portugal)

[**2025**] *"Luso-Portugueses"*, Kunsthalle Lissabon (Portugal)

[**2024**] *"The Atlantic is Black"*, THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE & ARTCO Gallery (Berlin, Germany)

[**2023**] *"Portraits for English to See"*, The Africa Centre (London, UK)

[**2022**] *"Global Narratives Of Southern Peoples"*, Galerie Alex Serra (Cologne, Germany)

[**2021**] *"In Memory We Trust"*, THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE Gallery (Lisbon, Portugal)

[**2020**] *"Migrações e Coisas, Retalhos de uma História Só"*, Banco Económico Gallery (Luanda, Angola)

[**2005**] *"São Tomé Mostra 2005"*, Fernando Pessoa Gallery (Lisbon, Portugal)

GROUP SHOWS

[**2025**] *"Atlantic Laboratory - Contemporary Art from São Tomé and Príncipe"*, curated by João Carlos Silva and Ricardo Barbosa Vicente, UCCLA, (Lisbon, Portugal)

"Afro Renaissance: Between Legacy and Transformations", Oficina de Artes Manuel Cargaleiro, Afrikanizm, (Seixal, Portugal)

"Beyond Boundaries. A Collective Odyssey", Curated by Graça Rodrigues, Ricardo Barbosa Vicente, and Sónia Ribeiro, Water Museum and Cape Verde Cultural Centre (Lisbon, Portugal).

"Entre Mãos, Matérias e Memórias", Curated by Shanna Cancio, Art Centre, (Comporta, Portugal).

"From the surrounds, we build the present", curated by Cindy Sissokho, Lisbon Municipal Galleries, East Tower of the Cordoaria Nacional, (Lisbon, Portugal).

"Post Museum: 'A' for Absence: Works from the Portuguese State Contemporary Art Collection", Curated by Sandra Vieira Jürgens, National Museum of Ethnology, (Lisbon, Portugal).

[**2024**]

"Porto de Nós - Confluências Transnacionais", curated by Ricardo Barbosa Vicente and João Carlos Silva. (Porto de Mós, Portugal).

"Embodied Narratives", THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE Gallery, (Lisbon, Portugal).

"Ablakassa: Wisdom Freedom Opulence and Responsibility", curated by Roger Niyigena Karera, La Résidence, (Abidjan, Ivory Coast).

"ACQUISITIONS. Lisbon City Council Contemporary Art Center", curated by Sara Antónia Matos and Pedro Faro, Lisbon Municipal Galleries, East Tower of the Cordoaria Nacional, (Lisbon, Portugal).

[**2023**]

"Intercultural Encounters And Dialogues", THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE Gallery, (Lisbon, Portugal)

"Errâncias", LAC - Creative Activities Laboratory (Algarve, Portugal)

"Paragone: What's With Mediums Today?", Water Museum - Barbadinhos Steam Pumping Station and Patriarcal Reservoir, Cape Verde Cultural Centre (Lisbon, Portugal)

"(IM)MATERIALITY", Águeda's Arts Centre (Portugal)

[**2022**]

"Prémio Novos Artistas", EDP Foundation, Museum of Art and Technology (Lisbon, Portugal)

Exhibition for The Norval Sovereign African Art Prize, Norval Foundation (Cape Town, South Africa)

[**2020**] *"Discourses of Decoloniality"*, Not A Museum (Lisbon, Portugal)

[**2019**] Exhibition Arkane Africa (Casablanca, Morocco)

[**2018**] *"Afro Our Urban"* (Toronto, Canada, and New York, USA)

[**2016**] *"El Pueblo Resistente"* (Caracas, Venezuela)

[**2015**] *"Lumières d'Afrique"*, Le Théâtre National de Chaillot (Paris, France)

[**2008**] *"Africa Now"*, World Bank (Washington, USA)

ART FAIRS, BIENNIALS & FESTIVALS

[**2025**] X São Tomé and Príncipe Art & Culture Biennial, (São Tomé and Príncipe)

[**2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2020**] ARCO Lisbon, (Portugal)

[**2024, 2023, 2022**] 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair (London, UK)

[**2022**] "Les Rencontres de Bamako", 13th Edition (Mali)

[**2021**] 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair (Paris, France)

[**2020**] Investec Cape Town Art Fair, (South Africa)

[**2014**] Mionga House, 14th Venice Biennale of Architecture (Italy)

[**2008, 2006, 2004**] V, IV, and III São Tomé and Príncipe Art & Culture Biennial

[**2006**] I Luanda Triennale (Angola)

RESIDENCIES & AWARDS

[**2023**] ROOTS, Artist Residency Programme, Portugal

[**2022**] "Public Vote Award" of The Norval Sovereign African Art Prize; Nomination for the "EDP Foundation New Artists Award."

[**2018**] Nomination for Africa's Most Influential New Artistic Talent, FNB Joburg Art Fair

[**2017**] NINGXIA, Academy of Art and Calligraphy, (Ningxia, China)

[**2015**] ROOTS, Artist Residency Programme, (Portugal)

[**2012**] Transitante Largo Residency (Lisbon, Portugal)

[**2009**] HORES, Artist in residence (Brussels, Belgium)

[**2002**] Revelation Artist Award at the São Tomé and Príncipe's Biennial of Art and Culture

COLLECTIONS

Portuguese State Contemporary Art Collection

The Schulting Art Collection

Fondation H

FAS Collection (Portugal)

Lisbon City Council Collection (Portugal)

Collection of His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco

PLMJ Foundation (Portugal)

Kloser Contemporary Art, AAD - African Artist for Development

Omali Lodge - HBD Group

Sindika Dokolo Art Collection (Angola)

World Bank Collection of the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe

EDP Foundation Art Collection (Portugal)