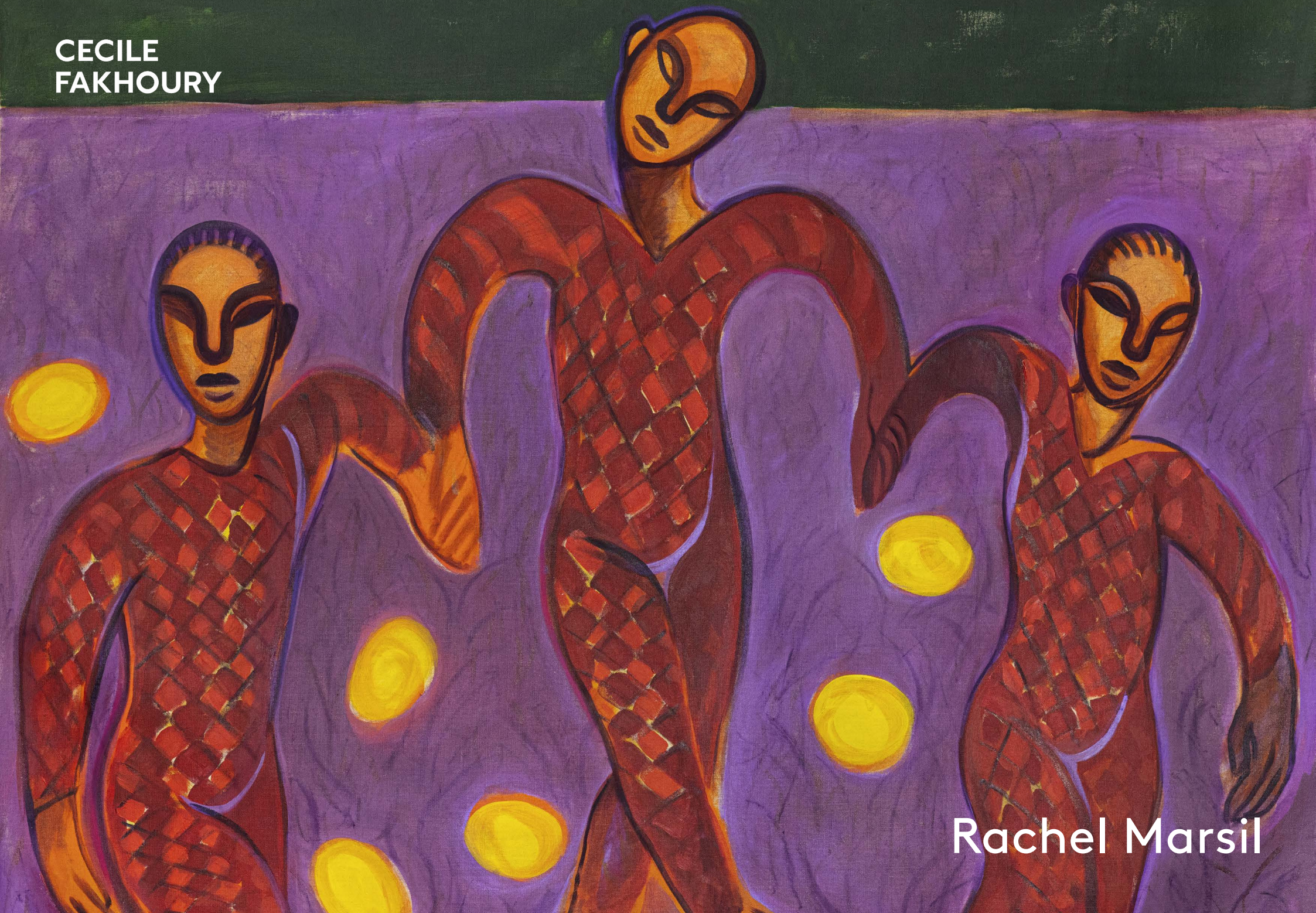


CECILE
FAKHOURY



Rachel Marsil



Soeurs aux drapés, 2024
Huile et acrylique sur lin
oil and acrylic on canvas
207 x 145 cm
81 1/2 x 57 1/8 in

Born in Lille in 1995, Rachel Marsil lives and works in Paris.

A textile designer by training and a graduate of Arts Décoratifs de Paris (2021), it was the rediscovery of old family photos that prompted Rachel Marsil to question the construction of a personal narrative: by questioning her relationship with her origins, her gaps and shortcomings, she constructs an imaginary world imbued with scenes of ordinary life. In 2021, she assisted the Franco-Senegalese textile designer Aïssa Dione on her first trip to Senegal, followed by a return to Dakar a year later for her first solo exhibition, *J'aimerais me voir dans tes yeux*, presented at the Galerie Cécile Fakhoury (2022).

From painting to textiles, the artist's work is part of a process of self-appropriation. She questions the way we look at ourselves and our relationship with others, through the notion of exoticism and belonging. Her representations invite the subject to become part of a dynamic of looking and being looked at tipping the viewer into an intimate setting where presence and absence mingle. By exploring the links between painting, motif and figuration, Marsil questions the place of colour in our perceptions. In her works, the artist develops the art of motif, composition and the mastery of chords with vibrant nuances.

The sometimes posed attitudes of the painted figures and the quasi-photographic framing that accompanies the still lifes are all references to the history of art, traditional textiles and objects dear to the artist. These are images that plunge us into the intimate, playing on familiar aesthetics. The blurred painted lines and synthesised forms become a means of questioning the way we look at things, our biography experiences and our projections.

Tending towards a form of abstraction, the simplification of the elements evokes the loss of landmarks, memories that are no longer there, knowledge that we have no control over. Rachel Marsil's works offer a space for self-portraiture, featuring archetypal figures openly influenced by the artist's modernist references and tending towards the self-portrait.

Solo Show

- 2025** *Le poisson vient avec la pluie*, Fundacion Casa Wabi, Mexico
Rachel Marsil, Sokhamon, Dakar, Senegal
- 2024** *Le goût de la mangue*, Galerie Cécile Fakhoury, Côte d'Ivoire
- 2022** *J'aimerais me voir dans tes yeux*, Galerie Cécile Fakhoury, Dakar

Group Show

- 2025** *Le pays de Cocagne*, Galerie Cécile Fakhoury, Paris, France
Cour intérieure, Galerie Cécile Fakhoury, Dakar, Sénégal
- 2024** *Africains Everywhere*, Blavy Collection, France
Manifold Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria
Equilibrium, Galerie Cécile Fakhoury, Dakar, Sénégal
Dada holiday edit, Dada, London, Uk
- 2023** Investec Cape Town Art Fair, Cape Town
1-54 Marrakech, Morocco
Manifold Deluxe, Frieze No. 9 Cork Street, London, UK
Femme Noire, Seattle, Usa
Ouagadougou International Biennial of Sculpture, Burkina Faso
Transmission(s), Union de la Jeunesse Internationale, Paris
- 2022** Art X Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria
Défier l'amnésie, le Sample, Bagnolet, France
About Now #2, Galerie Cécile Fakhoury, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Memoria, Mucat, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
100%, La Villette, Paris, France

Education

- 2017** Master's degree in textile and material design, Diploma and dissertation with congratulations from the jury, Ecole des arts décoratifs, Paris
- 2015** BTS design de mode textile et environnement option textile et matériaux de surface, La Martinière Diderot, Lyon
- 2014** Mise à Niveau en arts appliqués, Paul Poiret, Paris
- 2013** L1 LEA anglais chinois, université de Cergy Pontoise
- 2010** Bac économique et social option économie et histoire de l'art, mention, George Sand, Domont

Résidences

- 2024** Grand Bassam, Ivory coast
- 2023** International Biennial of Sculpture of Ouagadougou (BISO), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Awards

- 2023** 5th prize of the Christophe Person gallery at the Biennale internationale de sculpture de Ouagadougou (BISO)
- 2019** Excellence award, International Pattern Design Competition of Hangzhou, Hangzhou, China

Fundacion Casa Wabi (CMDX, Mexico)

July 12 – September 27, 2025

The fish comes with the rain

Rachel Marsil's original proposal for an exhibition at Casa Wabi was entitled *J'entends l'orage* (I Hear the Storm). Prompted by visions of the rainy season in Dakar, Senegal, Marsil intended to evoke the experience of weathering a storm: seeking shelter with friends and family, waiting for the "beautiful days to come back." Rain is an experience most of us share, wherever we live. But the kind of thunderstorms that arrive in the afternoon like clockwork, turn the sky from blue to black in seconds, dump an unimaginable amount of water in minutes, and then vanish as if by magic, leaving only stultifying humidity and the smell of wet earth and cement under a blazing sun, are more specific to the tropics. The opportunity to link Mexico City with parts of the world that are not usually part of the local imaginary through the apprehension of a trans-national environmental culture was irresistibly Wabi.

As Marsil thought about the tropics as a global community that could be activated through a common deep empirical experience she became more interested in specific experiences of rain. How torrential rain fosters intimacy and community by forcing us to hunker down together. How the rhythm of life in this band around the equator is reformatted by daily downpours. As she thought about it, she became enamored by notions of cocooning and renewal that knit together our experience of the environment and daily life. Remembering something she heard from a waitress while doing a residency in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and drawing as always on family photos, Marsil began a new series of paintings, and *J'entends l'orage* (I Hear the Storm) became *Le poisson vient avec la pluie* (Fish Come with the Rain), a more elliptical and symbolic take on her roots. During the rainy season, she was told, fish are said to rain down from the sky. But there—unlike the English "raining cats and dogs," Spanish "lloviendo a cántaros (raining buckets)," or French "pleut des cordes (raining ropes)"—it is not a figure of speech. Well it is, but it's a metaphorical description of a biological reality.

Throughout parts of West Africa with strong dry and rainy seasons, the lungfish (*protopterus annectens*), a big eel-like fish, appears with the first heavy rains of summer on otherwise dry ground, as if having fallen from the sky. In fact it is an extraordinary hibernator that survives the dry season underground. When the rivers and streams, ponds and lakes dry up in the late fall, lungfish burrow deep into a muddy bed, fold themselves in half, excrete a mucus that hardens into a complete shell-like cocoon, and wait for the rains to return. When enough water falls, they perform the magic act of emerging, full-grown, from the earth. And when enough water accumulates to again form lakes and streams, they return to swimming, eating, and spawning: the regular life of a fresh-water fish.

Dakin Hart (Curator for Casa Wabi, New York)









Galerie Cécile Fakhoury (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire)

May 30 – September 9, 2024

The Taste of Mango

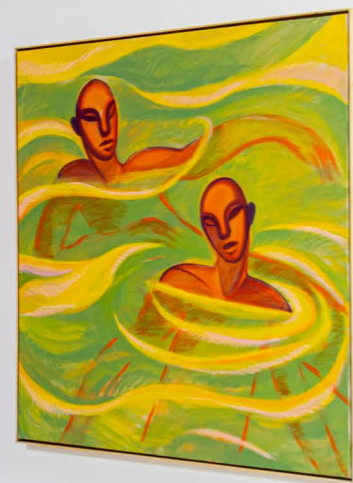
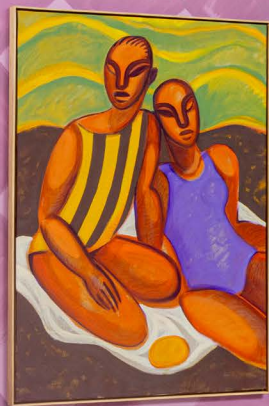
In one of her best-known and most fascinating essays, *All About Love* (1), the American writer bell hooks explains that love is a verb of action. In her search for a definition of love, she takes up that of the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, who defines it as «the will to extend oneself in order to nourish one's own spiritual growth or that of others». So love is not just a feeling, it's a choice and a voluntary act. It materialises in the creation of a caring, respectful and honest environment. More than just aesthetic harmony, the characters painted by Rachel Marsil seem to commune with depth, whether they are couples, friends or sisters dressed as twins. And the fruit of love here takes the form of a mango, which we're not sure is the forbidden fruit, so reluctant are the women who seize it to taste its flavour, preferring to keep it as a precious object.

For her first solo show in Abidjan, Rachel Marsil plunges the gallery into a world of lush vegetation, where fruit grows in abundance and the sea seems very close. The artist is also experimenting with paintings of bathers, in the style of Paul Gauguin or Emile Bernard. The peaceful faces, at first sight identical, cast a questioning glance at the viewer who lingers there, sending us back to our own emotions. But if these faces seem to reflect great serenity, they are in fact marked in places by solitude, doubt or melancholy. We would be hard pressed to date them, as there are so few clues to their period. Some of the paintings adopt an aesthetic reminiscent of the West African studio photographs of the 1960s, from which the artist draws inspiration in both poses and outfits. But Rachel Marsil also moved away from portraiture and scenes of intimacy, with works that tended towards an initial form of abstraction, in particular the depiction of mangoes on geometric backgrounds made up of arabesques and curves. These works may evoke the motifs of batik fabrics, a craft found in Grand-Bassam, and recall the artist's initial training in textile design.

In artistic residence in Grand-Bassam since March, Rachel Marsil crosses the long mango-lined alleys every day, probably following in the footsteps of the women who came from Abidjan to demand the release of the political leaders detained by the colonial authorities in 1949. So it's no coincidence that the women she paints stand tall, defiant and proud. She is also continuing her sculpture work, which began in autumn 2023 at the Ouagadougou Sculpture Biennial, in the workshop of a bronze-maker in the town of Grand-Bassam. She will be presenting a new series of sculptures in bronze and wood, representing fruit trees in delicate balance. These fruit trees appear as allegories of the long and sometimes delicate growth of love as described by bell hooks.

Aby Gaye (Curator for Fondation Cartier, Paris)







3rd Ouagadougou Biennial (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso)

October 4 – November 9, 2023

The Fire of Origins

Exhibition curator Louise Thurin explains the theme of this edition, which focuses on issues of Africanness, Afro-descendants, the Black Atlantic, and the Global South: «A classic epic recounting the transmutation of an African territory and people by European colonization, *The Fire of Origins* is the second novel by Congolese author Emmanuel Dongala. Its main character is Mandala Mankunku, «blacksmith, son of a blacksmith» and «master sculptor: in wood, bronze, stone» – a hero who ardently resists colonial power through his art. (...)

Sculpture is the original and regenerative fire of art in Africa. The choice of this book as the title and theme of this 2023 edition of the Ouagadougou International Sculpture Biennale (BISO) is a tribute to the Burkinabe metallurgical tradition, to the fire of the furnace and the forge. May the *Fire of Origins* continue to burn through art, through us.» (...) This matrix-like animist fire fanned by the work evokes the passionate relationship that each person can have with their intimate geographies – and it echoes, in a related way, the eruptive and all-consuming nature of origins in an Afro-descendant context.

Louise Thurin (Curator, 3rd Ouagadougou Biennial)

Rachel Marsil's work, entitled «*Through My Eyes I Touched the Sun*» composed of raffia embroidery and pieces combining bronze and wood, won an award. Between totems and displays, fruit is stacked and balanced, blending and interacting in front of embroidered mats hanging in the background, one of which suggests sunlight filtering through the surrounding vegetation.

«This installation speaks to the relationship with family, others, and origins. It evokes my first return to the continent, the discovery of the vendors who pile up fruit like sculptures to attract customers,» emphasizes this young woman, who grew up in the Paris region and is of Senegalese origin. A 2021 graduate of the École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs in Paris, she discovered old family photos that allowed her to construct an imaginary world that questions the notion of connection, with its gaps and shortcomings.

Olivier Herviaux (Journaliste for Le Monde, October 21, 2023)





Par mes yeux je touchais le soleil, 2023
Installation de Raphia, plastique, bronze, bois
Dimensions variables

Investec Cape Town Art Fair (Cape Town, South Africa)

February 15-19th, 2023

Galerie Cécile Fakhoury is pleased to participate in the 10th edition of the Investec Cape Town Art Fair in Cape Town, South Africa.

For the fair's 10th anniversary, Galerie Cécile Fakhoury will present a special project by artists Rachel Marsil and Elladj Lincy Deloumeaux. Both working with portraiture and its symbolic significance in history, the two artists share their sensibilities around subjects such as the transmission of memory, the intimate affirmation of identities, and the questioning of social constructs.

The booth is the result of a four-handed collaboration. It functions as a space suspended in time, literally trapped between heaven and earth, and designed to encourage reverie and contemplation. Rachel Marsil and Elladj Lincy Deloumeaux continue their dialogue with art history; borrowing sometimes from classical Renaissance painting (Elladj Lincy Deloumeaux), sometimes from the early days of European primitivism (Rachel Marsil), always adding their contemporary reinterpretation.

The atmosphere emanating from the coexistence of these works is unique: it highlights a captivating and melancholic beauty that continually insinuates itself into the viewer's mind.





Un déjeuner sur l'herbe, 2023
Huile, acrylique et pastel sur toile
Oil, acrylic and pastel on canvas
175 x 140 cm



Les amoureux , 2023
Huile, acrylique et pastel sur toile
Oil, acrylic and pastel on canvas
175 x 140 cm

Galerie Cécile Fakhoury (Dakar, Sénégal)

September 17th - November 25th, 2022

I would like to see myself in your eyes

Galerie Cécile Fakhoury is pleased to present Rachel Marsil's solo exhibition, *J'aimerais me voir dans tes yeux* [I would like to see myself in your eyes] in Dakar, Senegal.

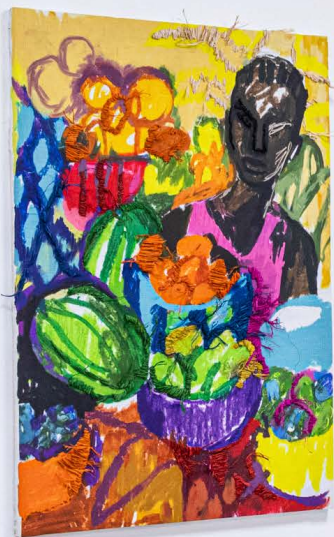
For her first solo exhibition, Rachel Marsil plunges us into an intimate and colourful universe on the border between memories and dreams. Originally, Rachel Marsil dives into her family photographs; each scene is an opportunity to revisit a memory, sometimes even to reinvent it. For the artist, painting is a narrative of a larger personal story where history with a capital H, intimate history and fantasized vision mix. The silhouettes with their soft, rounded angles undulate on the canvas and seem to be devoid of the roughness of reality. The blur of their physiognomy makes them appear to us as if behind a veil of the mind. The colours, however intense and warm, create a thread from one work to the next, making each canvas like a moment in an imaginary story.

Some elements nevertheless keep us from the risk of absolute onirism; in particular the objects that the artist adds to her paintings. Rachel Marsil represents them in the same way as the characters, making them protagonists of the visual narrative in their own right. The objects carry a sensitive and memorial weight. They crystallise as many moments as emotions experienced by the artist and at the same time send us back to our intimate sphere contemplating our own Proust's madeleine and our own forgetfulness. Thus, the two ceramic vases created in collaboration with the artist Esther Hien are literally receptacles of memory.

The exploration of embroidery and fabric work is an opportunity for Rachel Marsil to subtly address the question of memory through the transmission of knowledge and the preservation of know-how.

It is also an opportunity to appeal to the plural poetics of the link that binds together people, objects and places in an indestructible way. [I would like to see myself in your eyes] invites us to listen, to share and to contemplate. Through characters, objects, settings and nature, Rachel Marsil paints the contours of an intersubjective reflection that unfolds from the personal to the collective.

Delphine Lopez (Curator for Galerie Cécile Fakhoury, Dakar)









Un besoin de se retrouver, 2022
Acrylique et huile sur toile
Acrylic and oil on canvas
155 x 147 cm
61 x 57 7/8 in