CONTEMPORARY ART / PORTFOLIO

SANOU04

Souvenir d’un retour

Selected works | English edition



THE ARTIST & THE SERIES

Alama Soumahoro

SANOU04

I am an Ivorian visual artist living and working in France. My work draws on childhood, family, memory and the experience of distance. Côte d’Ivoire gave me my earliest points of reference; the artist in me grew in France.

My artist name pays tribute to my grandmother Nassanou, a maternal presence, healer and source of inherited knowledge. Painting gives form to absence and brings the child I once was into dialogue with the adult I have become.

I create three-dimensional works at the intersection of painting and sculpture on canvas. My mixed-media practice combines painting, stitching, cardboard and fabric collage, jute cloth and assemblages of found objects, including backpacks in some works. Cords, wood and metal wire extend these materials and carry traces of time, bodies and places. Red evokes blood, family ties and vital force.

In my semi-abstract works, figures merge with their surroundings. Memory emerges through fragments, sensations and layers; stitching brings together what has been separated. I deliberately cultivate a sense of mystery: figures, shadows and objects suggest stories without revealing them fully, leaving viewers room for interpretation.

Born from a return to Côte d’Ivoire after fourteen years away, Souvenir d’un retour brings together childhood memories, a life built in France, family ties and the people whose presence endures.

CONTACT

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SOUVENIR D’UN RETOUR

Moments volés

147 × 130 cm · 2026 · Mixed media on canvas



Skipping school becomes a way of learning through experience. By leaving the prescribed path, the child creates a space of curiosity and freedom. The work explores the tender contradiction between childhood freedom and the values we pass on.

L’Héritage

203 × 135 cm · Mixed media on canvas



The child carried by his father receives more than support: guidance, confidence and the possibility of moving forward. What we pass on is embodied in gestures and in the responsibilities we accept for those who come after us.

SOUVENIR D’UN RETOUR

Dans la magie de mon ombre

160 × 200 cm · 2026 · Mixed media on canvas



Through my grandmother’s work as a healer, I explore an African heritage rooted in plants, observation and oral transmission. Beyond their therapeutic uses, these forms of knowledge constitute a cultural memory.

NASSANOU

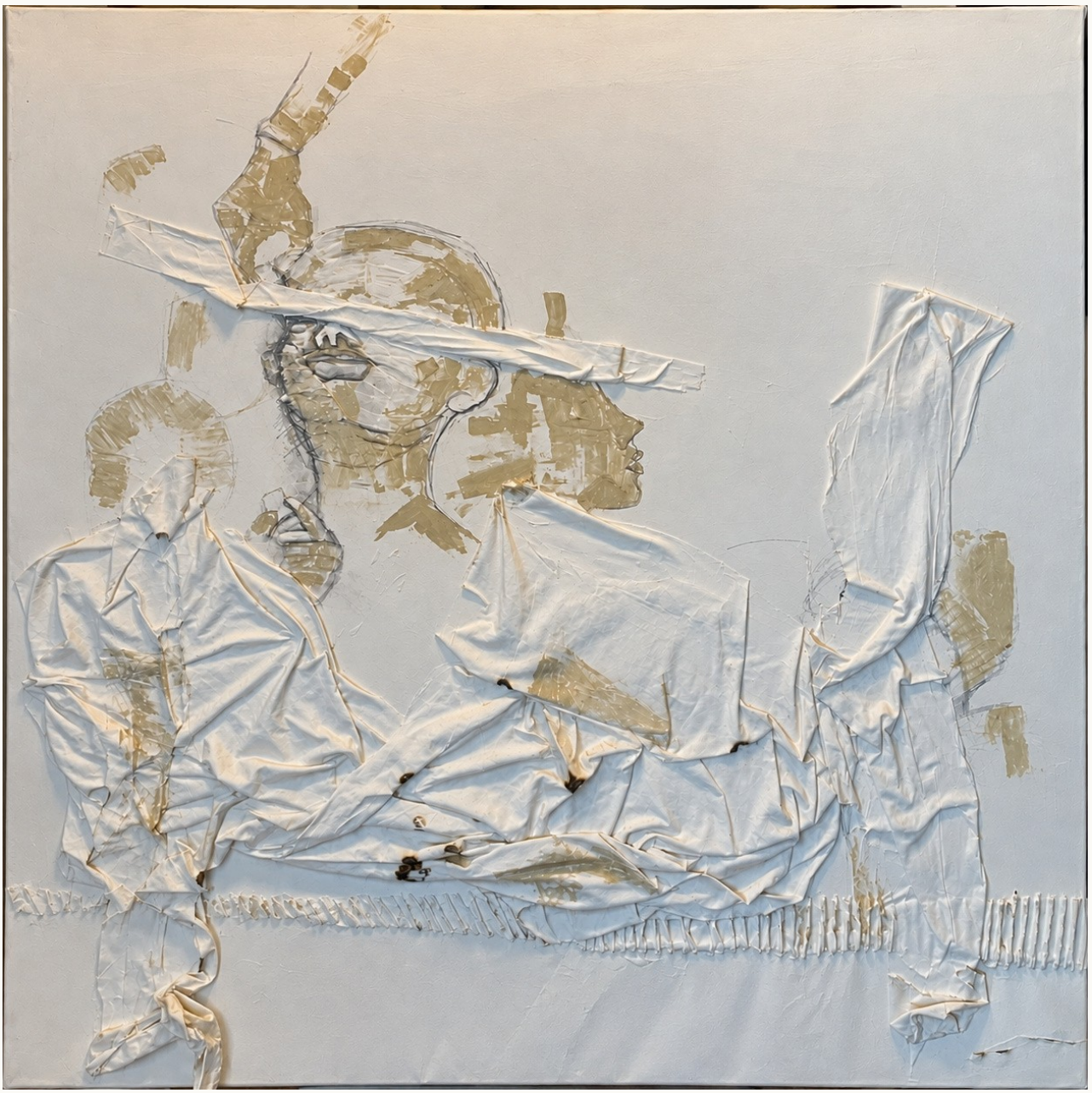
150 × 150 cm · 2025 · Mixed media on canvas



Nassanou is a portrait of my grandmother, a foundational presence in our family. Her life continues through our gestures, our choices and the ways we love.

La Lettre d’Adieu

120 × 120 cm · 2025 · Mixed media on canvas



During that stay, we lost a loved one. In our culture, white is more than a colour. It is a passage, a gentle shroud, a final embrace around the person who is leaving.

SOUVENIR D’UN RETOUR

Bleu, blanc, orange

160 × 160 cm · 2026 · Mixed media on canvas



I was born in Côte d’Ivoire; France helped shape my artistic vision. White, the colour shared by both flags, becomes a meeting place for these two cultures.

Jamais seul

162 × 164 cm · 2026 · Mixed media on canvas



Within this small space, siblings, friendship, closeness and solidarity coexisted. It was more than an apartment: it was a living refuge and an extended family.

La Cabane enchantée

162 × 115 cm · 2026 · Mixed media on canvas



The fragile walls of the cabin protect an immense inner world. Within this makeshift architecture, memory transforms humble materials into signs of belonging.

SOUVENIR D’UN RETOUR

L’Étranger chez soi

130 × 130 cm · Mixed media on canvas



Returning brings two realities face to face: the country preserved in memory and the one that exists today. Places change, but so does the person who returns. A sense of unfamiliarity can emerge at the very heart of belonging.

SOUVENIR D’UN RETOUR

I dansé

146 × 114 cm · 2025 · Mixed media on canvas



This painting tells of a long-dreamed-of return. After fourteen years away, I return to where it all began: the house, the voices, the red roads and forgotten gestures.

L’Espoir du laboureur

97 × 130 cm · 2025 · Mixed media on canvas



The farmer works in the present for a future beyond his control. His gesture expresses a clear-eyed trust: he knows uncertainty, yet chooses to keep working.