From Direct Carving to Récupération: The Art of Moustapha Dimé in Post-Independence Senegal 1974-1997

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Moustapha Dimé (1952-1998) is one of Senegal’s most influential sculptors of the late 20th century and helped define sculpture as a viable avant-garde alternative to the painting traditions of Négritude as they had been conceived of, and sustained by, President Léopold Sédar Senghor during the 1960s and 70s. Working both within parameters established by Senghor for modern Senegalese expression in the arts and against them in conjunction with anti-Négritude movements such as the Laboratoire Agit-Art, Dimé developed strategies for contemporary visual expression in his sculptures that openly confronted the political, social and artistic tensions of the post-colonial republic of Senegal.

During the early years of his career, Dimé produced direct carvings in the form of wood panels with figurative or decorative bas-reliefs. In the 1980s he started creating three-dimensional forms from solid blocks of wood – sculptures he called “filiforms” because of their sinuous and sensually tactile characteristics. By the early 1990s, however, Dimé virtually abandoned direct carving in favor of “found objects.” The resulting works helped define a new art movement in Senegal now known as récupération.

This dissertation is the first critical analysis of the artist and his contributions to post-colonial art and scholarship in Senegal. While monographs and catalogue raisonnés are common in the study of European and American art, they are few and far between in the field of African art. This hinders art historical analysis not only of individual artists but also entire artistic periods
in which they worked. This dissertation, through its focus on a single artist, fully engages with
the postcolonial artistic movements in Senegal as they manifested on both local and international
stages. This dissertation analyzes Dimé’s works as being both illuminatory of his time, as well as
crucial to the development of avant-garde art in Senegal. My theoretical arguments are grounded
on the compilation of a catalogue raisonné of the artist’s works – included at the end of this
dissertation – without which I could not have reached my conclusions about the evolution of
Dimé’s work over his career and the local and international importance of various moments in
his oeuvre.
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A special note of thanks goes to the Director and staff at the Fondation Blachère in Apt, France, for granting me access to the nearly complete corpus of Dimé’s *hybride* and *récupération* works displayed in their exhibition “Exposition-Hommage à Moustapha Dimé” on view at the Foundation from June 17 – October 12, 2008.

Seth Kaufmann and his team of designers at Whirl-i-Gig built the Open Access database software for the Catalogue Raisonné of Moustapha Dimé I present here, and I cannot thank them enough for their time, technical support, and the sizable chunk of space on their server that this database now occupies.

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to do. To my committee of Columbia, Barnard and Ramapo Professors, Zoë Strother, Kellie Jones, Elizabeth Hutchinson and John Peffer, thank you for steering me, sometimes gently, sometimes forcefully away from the many less productive paths I was tempted to follow along the way. Without your support and guidance, this dissertation would never have come to fruition.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the inimitable Moustapha Dimé and to the legacy he leaves in his wake.

Ndânk-ndânk ay jápp golo ci ŋaay.
(Slowly slowly, is how to catch the monkey in the bushes)
Introduction

I was searching for something that belonged to me.¹

- Moustapha Dimé

Moustapha Dimé (1952-1998), one of Senegal’s best-known sculptors, appears in almost every art historical text written about the development of contemporary art in Senegal’s post-colonial period, a testament to his far-reaching influence on the Senegalese avant-garde. After exhibiting his work only twice, he was awarded a scholarship in 1977 to attend the newly established state-sponsored school of fine arts, the École des Beaux Arts. In 1980 President Léopold Sédar Senghor bought one of his sculptures and later facilitated a state grant enabling Dimé to visit Mali and acquire first-hand knowledge of the textile and carving techniques in that country. During the early years of his career, Dimé produced direct carvings in the form of wood panels with figurative or decorative bas-reliefs. In the 1980s he started creating three-dimensional forms from solid blocks of wood – sculptures he called “filiforms” because of their sinuous and sensually tactile characteristics. These filiforms were widely exhibited in Senegal and frequently purchased by the State, government officials, as well as local elites. By the early 1990s, however, Dimé had virtually abandoned direct carving in favor of “found objects:” driftwood, discarded domestic items, sheet metal and tree branches, which he frequently assembled with little modification. The resulting works became part of a new art movement in Senegal now known as récupération.

*Récupération* is a term that emerged in the early 1990s to define a series of contemporary art, artisanal and craft practices in Francophone Africa that laid claim to abandoned spaces and/or abandoned (found object) materials. *Récupération* does not translate well into English, but in a fine art context can loosely be explained as the retooling of materials salvaged from the natural and man-made environments to produce new objects and installations with cultural, political and aesthetic implications.

In the early 1990s, *récupération* was being used to describe folk art practices across Africa. By the end of that decade, however, the term had shifted to describe the avant-garde practices of recycling being explored by trained artists. By the early 2000s, *récupération* had developed from a term defining a technique into a term connoting the specific style that defined an entire avant-garde movement in Senegal that began in the late 1970s and has persisted through the present day. While Moustapha Dimé was allied with this avant-garde beginning in the early 1980s, and is now seen as a progenitor and master of the style, his oeuvre cannot be circumscribed by the term. A significant component of this dissertation, therefore, examines the development of *récupération* in Senegal and Dimé’s strategic use of its techniques and metaphors to develop an entirely unique vision of the relationship between the material, the maker of that material, and the artist himself.

Dime’s *récupération* inspired works from the 1980s onward attracted both local and international attention because of the originality of their forms and the depth of their meanings. No wonder he has had solo exhibitions in many parts of the world from Rabat (Morocco) to Tokyo (Japan), in addition to being featured in several group shows (see Appendix C). He was also one of the four artists selected to represent Africa for the first time at the 1993 Venice Biennale in Italy. Major public and private establishments in different parts of the world,
including the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art (Washington, DC) and Museum of Modern Art (New York) have collected his sculptures.

At the height of his career, Dimé was diagnosed with liver cancer, and passed away in 1998 at the age of 46. His phenomenal rise to fame and sudden death complicate the scholarship on his works. While there is abundant literature on contemporary art in post-independence Senegal, there are only brief references to Dimé and most of them focus primarily on his late works. They rarely mention his early (pre-1990) works and only a few images from that period have been published.

This dissertation, the first and most comprehensive yet on the artist, examines the existing discourse on the artist’s biography and his works with a view to contributing to the study of contemporary African art in general and that of Senegal, in particular. Though primarily concerned with form and meaning in Moustapha Dimé’s sculpture, this dissertation also examines the influence of Senghor’s rhetoric of Négritude on the artist. In addition, it interprets the factors that led some Senegalese artists to revolt against Négritude and its emphasis (in painting and tapestry) on an imaginary Africanness – a revolt that led artists to opt for the assemblages now known as récupération. In the process, Dimé’s récupération objects will be related to this revolt as well as to his personal philosophy on art, which draws heavily on his membership in the Mouride tradition of Islam.

To enable me to do justice to the field data and shed as much light as possible on the ramifications of Dimé’s oeuvre, I have adopted a multidisciplinary approach, combining formal, iconographic and textual art historical analyses with relevant materials from anthropology, religion, and gender studies. Such an approach has enabled me to relate contemporary Senegalese art in general, and Dimé’s works in particular, to contemporary visual
culture in postcolonial Africa and the trans-national dynamics impacting their forms. In examining these dynamics, a number of issues have arisen regarding the roles of local and foreign influence and patronage. As Elizabeth Harney aptly observes:

Under Senghorian patronage, the role of the artist was to be “African” and “modern” and that of his critic was to acknowledge and applaud this visual Africanité. The patronage for these arts, both local and international, supported the Negritude agenda. State patronage in the post-Senghorian era has showed a different face, and a growing number of private galleries, foreign cultural centers, and international opportunities have provided artists with alternative sources of support. As artistic goals and markets changed during the post-independence era, [artists’] efforts to bypass the Negritude claims of the École de Dakar led to new senses of cosmopolitanism and globalism.²

Certainly the exchanges between local patronage and rising global awareness of Senegalese art are crucial to the analysis of Dimé’s works, especially those he created with the international market in mind. Also critical are the methodologies used by scholars attempting to relate Dimé’s experience and the objects he produced. Much of the scholarship on Dimé derives from European and American authors who tend to trace the origin of his récupération style to Western influence. Dimé, therefore, had to confront the reality that his assembled works would be interpreted from within European and American discourses of art and aesthetics.

Admittedly, Western influence is apparent in examples of récupération in contemporary Senegalese art, and is a critical component in many of Dimé’s sculptures. Yet, and as will be seen below, much of the inspiration for the phenomenon can easily be traced to the sanitation crisis in Dakar in the late 1980s – a situation that led artists to convert wastes into works of art with social and political implications. Though Dimé’s récupération is inspired in part by that sanitation crisis, there are indications that it also reflects his awareness of indigenous African “found object” art, to which he was exposed as a consequence of his travels to other parts of

West Africa. The confluence of indigenous African aesthetics and Western art theory in Dimé’s sculptures – a result of what Harney would no doubt label his “cosmopolitan” and “global” awareness – has no doubt confused some scholars who attempted to separate the “African” from the “Western” in his works. The situation is further complicated by the fact that a good majority of Dimé’s objects, both carved and assembled, are of the human figure and the latter is often stylized. The fact that he frequently used found objects (with little modification) to signify the human body deepens its significance in his works. As Nicholas Mirzoeff points out, “The body must be distinguished from the flesh and blood it seeks to imitate. In representation, the body appears not as itself, but as a sign. It cannot but represent both itself and a range of metaphoric meanings, which the artist cannot fully control, but only seeks to limit by the use of context, framing and style.”

In short, the distinction between the body as sign and the body as human being is yet to be clarified in the literature on Dimé’s work. This thesis attempts to do so by relating the artist’s recuperation sculpture to precedents in the contemporary and historic arts of Africa. And, since the latter had influenced Western Modernism at the beginning of the twentieth century, the need for caution when comparing Dime’s works with Western “assemblages” cannot be over-emphasized.

Literature Review

In a field of study as diverse as that which we now call “contemporary African art” it is remarkable that so much attention has been paid to Senegal, especially on how art and politics have influenced one another in the country since it gained political independence from France in

3 Nicholas Mirzoeff, Bodyscape: Art, Modernity and the Ideal Figure (London and New York: Routledge, 1997). 3.
1960. Previous publications by Tracy Snipe and Elizabeth Harney as well as two doctoral
dissertations by Joanna Grabski and Kinsey Katchka deal extensively with the topic. The fact
that Dimé features in three of these (he is absent in Snipe) signals the importance of his works to
researchers. Additional references to the artist abound in a variety of African, European and
American sources.

The first Senegalese scholar to pay a significant amount of attention to Dimé is Abdou
Sylla, professor and art critic at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar. In his 1992
dissertation written for the Université de Paris I, Sylla dedicates an entire chapter to Dimé. In it
he includes a biographical account that provides the most complete record of the artist’s life up
to 1992. Though my biography owes much to Sylla, it expands on Dimé’s chronology from 1992
up until his death.

Sylla briefly chronicles some early works by the artist but does not illustrate them. As a
result some of the examples he describes, like Végétal (1985) (cat. 18), are yet to be identified.
Sylla’s dissertation has not been published, but the professor continues to draw attention to
Dimé’s works in exhibition reviews and journal articles.

In his coverage of Dimé’s 20-year retrospective exhibition at Dakar’s Gallerie 39 in
1993, Senegalese journalist, Vieux Savane, was so captivated by the works on display that he

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century Senegal" (Ph.D., Indiana University, 2002). Joanna L. Grabski, "The Historical Invention and Contemporary
Practice of Modern Senegalese art : Three Generations of Artists in Dakar" (Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana
University, 2001). It should be pointed out at this juncture that Snipe’s and Harney’s books are based on their
doctoral dissertations.

5 Abdou Sylla, "Practique et théorie de la création dans les arts plastiques sénégalais contemporains" (Doctoral

6 See Appendix A. The (cat.) numbers are those given to all works by Dimé that appear in the Catalogue Raisonné
(Appendix A) at the end of this dissertation.

Sylla, "Les arts plastiques senegalais contemporains," Ethiopiques: Revue Négro-Africaine de litterature et de
philosophie 80, no. 1er semestre (2008), http://www.refer.sn/ethiopiques/article.php3?id_article=1599.
described them as a “totemic universe” because they were “recreated works, composed of [discarded] wood pregnant with its own history, modeled by wind, sand and time.” What Savane called “recreated wood” at the time would later come to be known as récupération.

In 1995, Dimé, along with Souleymane Keita and Viyé Diba (both painters), was selected to represent Senegal at the first Johannesburg Biennale in South Africa. In his one-page essay on the state of contemporary Senegalese art, the prominent Senegalese scholar Ousmane Sow Huchard identified Dimé as a reputable sculptor and one of Senegal’s “most talented young artists.” Before then, painting had dominated the Senegalese artistic scene from independence until the late 1980s when sculpture gradually emerged as a viable counter narrative. The inclusion of Dimé’s works for the Johannesburg Biennale is significant, attesting to their emerging local and international impact. Okwui Enwezor, the artistic director of the second Johannesburg Biennale in 1997 also included some of Dimé’s sculptures to represent Senegal again at that event. However, the catalogue for Enwezor’s Biennale illustrates only one of Dimé’s works, Les Hommes de Kayar, (cat. 52) accompanied by a short biography provided by the artist.

During the late 1990s, Dimé and his sculptures were the subject of many articles published in Senegalese newspapers and journals such as Le Soleil or Walfadjri. Articles also abounded in Senegalese and French sources after his death. One noteworthy local piece was written in 2004 by Seriñ Ndiaye, a poet, artist and art critic who was himself a member of Dakar’s avant-garde in the 1980s and 1990s. In a powerful reflection in Tempo Negro, Ndiaye

notes how the monumental and non-conformist “installations” of Dime set them apart from the works of his contemporaries and would eventually “change our way of seeing.” It is worth mentioning that much of what has been written about Dimé is celebratory or rather fawning in nature, if not hyperbolic. This phenomenon derives partly from a desire to compensate for the previous scholarship that tended to regard contemporary African art as either inferior to work produced by their ancestors in pre-colonial times or simply derivative of Western aesthetics. Clearly this generates a problem in academic scholarship. In Dimé’s case, because of his early death, published sources (especially those after 1998) use reverent terms to describe him and often his work. The hesitancy to apply critical evaluation to Dimé’s objects and sculptural materials within their historical context is something this dissertation attempts to overcome.

Publications by European scholars on Dimé are not only few, the majority of them post-date the artist’s death. They consist mainly of brief articles or interviews in Revue Noire. The rest are short entries in lavishly illustrated catalogues of group shows featuring some of the artist’s works and recycled entries/essays from earlier publications. Despite Senegal’s close

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12 Along with the sources I mention, another interesting figure in the literature on Dimé is Daniel Sotiaux, a Belgian diplomat and art hobbyist. An admirer of Dimé’s work, Sotiaux authored many articles on the artist, all of which read like poetic odes to a worshiped figure. Given that Sotiaux was not examining Dimé’s work from an academic perspective, little of his writings adds to the discourse I present here. Therefore I do not cite his articles as part of my literature review on the artist. See Daniel Sotiaux, "Moustapha Dimé: De la longue quête d'une ombre " [Moustapha Dimé: from the Long Search for a Shadow.] Cimaise 43, no. 240-241 (avril-mai-juin 1996). Also Daniel Sotiaux, "A la rencontre de...Moustapha Dimé. Des vérités aurorales," Convergences. Revue trimestrielle d'art et de culture 1(août 1996). And Daniel Sotiaux, "Moustapha Dimé," in Viyé Diba - Moustapha Dimé, ed. Daniel Sotiaux (Brussels: Centre d'Art Contemporain, 1997).


14 The most comprehensive publication on Dimé to date is a French retrospective exhibition catalogue, Moustapha Dimé, published in 1999 by the Association pour la Promotion des Arts, but it recycles a previously published interview between Dimé and Daniel Sotiaux. Sotiaux, "Rencontre de...Moustapha Dimé." The French catalogue also includes a translation of Dimé’s 1993 interview with Thomas McEvilley, previously published in English.
cultural relationship with France, European criticism and theory on contemporary Senegalese art lags behind that of American scholars who have produced the most in-depth critical writings on post-independence Senegalese art, including récupération and the work of Dimé.

Joining Elizabeth Harney and Johanna Grabski are Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen Roberts. While they draw slightly different conclusions about art production in Senegal from 1960 onward, these publications all recognize Dimé’s contributions. Harney’s research in the late 1990s focused on the relationship between art and politics during the tenure of President Léopold Sédar Senghor between 1960 and 1980. She also interviewed Dime on different aspects of his works. Grabski did her fieldwork in Senegal about the same time as Harney, but concentrated more on the history and legacy of the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts (established by the state during Senghor’s presidency), and on the artists who later challenged the artistic program and the ideology of the institution. Drawing primarily upon interviews with artists of this younger generation, Grabski’s publications delve into the Senegalese artists’ search for artistic autonomy in an era where national hegemony was valued over individual expression.


Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen Roberts take a different approach to post-independence era art in Senegal, choosing to focus less on the political aspects of art making and more on popular and tourist arts as well as the impact of Islam on the contemporary artistic production of the country. In their book, *A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal*, the Roberts’ include an extensive interview with Dimé about his faith in God and how his practice of Mouridism influenced his daily life and work as an artist. I will return to this point at length in Chapter 4.

The most popular American text on the artist, however, is Thomas McEvilley’s *Fusion: West African Artists at the Venice Biennale*. The volume emerged from McEvilley’s interviews with four artists: Moustapha Dimé, Tamesir Dia, Ouattara Watts and Gerard Santoni. They were selected by Susan Vogel and McEvilley to comprise the second African Pavilion held at the Venice Biennale in 1993. Vogel brought the exhibition to the United States thus introducing the four artists from Francophone West Africa to American scholarship for the first time.

While the *Fusion* catalogue begins with McEvilley’s personal analysis of various trends in contemporary African art, the more intriguing, and hence valuable, texts in the book are the four interviews conducted with the artists while all five were in Venice for the Biennale. Dime’s interview with McEvilley quite literally narrates a chronology of the artist’s life from the 1970s

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18 Ibid., 208-9.

19 The catalogue also includes works by Mor Faye, a Senegalese painter who passed away in 1984.

20 Vogel had previously included Ouattara, the only artist of the four living and working in New York, in the Center For African Art’s seismic exhibition, *Africa Explores: 20th Century African Art* in 1991. *Fusion*, however, presented by Vogel at the Center for African Art two years later was the first exhibition to explore Ouattara’s work, along with that of Dimé, Dia and Santoni, in any depth, hence my argument that this exhibition stimulated the initial American interest in Dimé.
through the early 1990s. The contribution of McEvilley’s interview for African art scholarship lies in Dimé’s own extensive narration of his life. All subsequent American authors, myself included, cite heavily from this interview in their own biographical accounts of the artist. McEvilley’s interviews, however, have come under considerable scrutiny from art historians and artists alike who cite the ethnographic and Euro-centric nature of McEvilley’s questions and narrations. Indeed, the biographies of each artist are the focus of McEvilley’s interest, neither their works of art per se, nor the significance of those works to 20th century art history, whether African or global. For example, Dimé’s interview with McEvilley covers a wide range of subjects, from the biographical to theoretical and ideological, but only rarely art historical. While the published interview contains some illustrations of the artist’s works at the Biennale, Dimé only briefly mentions his filiform style and his earliest bas-relief carvings, but neither artist nor art historian dwell on any object for any length of time. Only two of Dimé’s works, Femme Calebasse and Hope, are mentioned by name in the interview, but neither is illustrated in the catalogue, nor was either work included in the exhibitions in Venice and New York.

21 McEvilley, “Interview with Moustapha Dimé.” The interview with McEvilley was originally conducted in French and translated into English by Susan Vogel. (It was subsequently re-translated into French by Yves Abrioux for the Moustapha Dimé catalogue).


23 The most scathing criticism comes from Olu Oguibe, who launched a furious tirade against what he perceived to be McEvilley’s paternalism and condescension of Ouattara Watts during their interview. Oguibe writes “McEvilley drives his conversation with Ouattara towards the realization of his preferred narrative, with questions not intended to reveal the artist as subject, but rather to display him as object, an object of exoticist fascination.” Olu Oguibe, "Art, Identity, Boundaries: The Rome Lecture," Nka. Journal of Contemporary African Art 1995, no. 3 (1995): 27.

I therefore tread carefully around this interview as I examine its various components in this dissertation. I am suspicious of some of the information that Dimé himself presents, and have been able to confirm some errors of chronology it contains based on Sylla’s biography of Dimé as well as interviews of my own with the artist’s colleagues and family members. However, this interview remains the lengthiest and most substantive account by the artist himself of his personal and artistic demarche. Despite its flaws, the McEvilley interview is the doorway through which most subsequent scholarship has approached, and will continue to approach, the life and work of Moustapha Dimé.

Given my attention to the biography of Moustapha Dimé throughout this dissertation, it seems prudent to clarify that mine is an art historical inquiry, more precisely a monograph of a single artist, and the artist’s biography is used as a foundation to explain key moments in the artist’s career as well as establish a chronology for his work. I selected to write this dissertation as a monograph with an accompanying catalogue raisonné for several critical and methodological reasons. While monographs on individual artists may be common in the study of European and American art, they are few the field of African art. This is an unfortunate legacy of colonialism, which prioritized culture groups and styles over named individuals. To this day, art historical inquiry into the works of individual artists of African heritage forms a miniscule component of the field.

The first example of a monographic study I can find is the 1978 publication by Louise Crane, *The Antelope Rises: Elimo Njau, East African Artist*. Predominantly an Ethnomusicologist, Crane was an advocate of education about Africa, and her text on Njau, a
young Kenyan artist, stems from personal interest, not scholarly critique or analysis.\textsuperscript{25} It would take another decade for an art historian, Ulli Beier, to publish a short volume exploring the biographies and work of three contemporary Nigerian artists, Twins Seven-Seven, Ademola Onibonokuta, and Muraina Oyelami.\textsuperscript{26} The early nineties saw a small handful of studies on individual contemporary artists, among them John Muafangejo and Gerard Sekoto (South Africa), a short monograph by Yacouba Konaté on Ivoirian artist Christian Lattier, and the more monumental study by Roslyn A. Walker on Olówè of Isè.\textsuperscript{27} These last two items are the first to also produce catalogue raisonnés, but both are highly incomplete. Konaté’s documents only the 19 works that are held by the Musée National de Côte d’Ivoire in Abdijan. Walker was able to find and verify 45 works by Olówè of Isè, but cautions that the historical record on the artist was and remains very much incomplete.\textsuperscript{28}

More recent monographic studies include Sylvester Ogbechie’s work on Ben Enwonwu (Nigeria), historian Diana Wylie’s examination of Thami Mnyele (South Africa) and Simon Ottenberg’s very recent biography on Miranda Olayinka Burney-Nicol (Nigeria), one of even fewer monographs to focus on a female artist.\textsuperscript{29} While these are groundbreaking works, none of

\textsuperscript{25} See Louise Crane, \textit{The Antelope Rises: Elimo Njau, East African Artist} (Thompson, CT: InterCulture Associates, 1978).

\textsuperscript{26} Ulli Beier, \textit{Three Yoruba artists : Twins Seven-Seven, Ademola Onibonokuta, Muraina Oyelami} (Bayreuth, W. Germany: Bayreuth University, 1988). Beier subsequently published a monograph on Twins Seven Seven alone. See Ulli Beier, \textit{A dreaming life : an autobiography of Twins Seven-Seven} (Bayreuth; London: Bayreuth University; Global, 2000).


\textsuperscript{28} Walker, \textit{Olówè of Isè: A Yoruba Sculptor to Kings}, 13, 16-17, 35.

these authors includes a catalogue raisonné of the artists’ works. This is due to either inability to access complete archives – as Ogbechie concedes was a tremendous frustration for him over the course of his work on Enwonwu – or the fact that the aims of their research were elsewhere.\footnote{Ogbechie, \textit{Ben Enwonwu : The Making of an African Modernist}, xviii-xix.}

My contribution to this tiny and very newly emergent field of monographic study in African Art History adds Moustapha Dimé into the corpus of literature on individual artists. Furthermore, my attempts to thoroughly document his work and present a comprehensive and nearly exhaustive record of his many sculptures, drawings, multi media works and paintings means that for the first time a single artist’s work is fully catalogued and analyzed within a single volume.

\textit{Récupération} Theory and Dimé’s Oeuvre

One of the goals of this dissertation is to account for the paradoxes apparent in Dimé’s works that tend to confuse rather than clarify their interpretation. To do so, I address the reasons why the artist stopped his practice of direct carving in favor of \textit{récupération}, as well as the impact of that decision not only upon Senegalese art at the time, but also on international reception of his works. The international community did not take notice of Dimé until he began working with \textit{récupération} techniques. Furthermore, all of the available literature on Dimé and his work dates from 1992 forward – well after he was already working with found objects and considered to be a mid-career artist. No publications on the artist predate his found object period, meaning that scholarly interest bypassed his early work. Significantly, even local Senegalese authors did not view the artist’s work as noteworthy until he began to gain international recognition for his “found object” sculptures. As a result, very little is recorded about his early work or how it relates to his later \textit{récupération} style. Furthermore, no systematic inquiry has yet

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been published that explains how the artistic movements in Senegal of the 1980s and 90s came to be known as *récupération*, or what that term actually encompasses, given the variety of found object practices that emerged in Senegal beginning in the 1970s. Therefore an examination of the evolution of *récupération* as a technique and style, as well as an art historical codifier of aesthetics is warranted here.

The first author to publish internationally on the Senegalese avant-garde of the late 1970s was Ima Ebong. In a 1991 essay written for Susan Vogel’s exhibition catalogue *Africa Explores: 20th Century African Art*, Ebong describes the works by contemporary Senegalese artists Issa Samb and El Hadji Sy as being composed of “found” or “readymade” objects, that were used to make “constructions” that served as stage sets or backdrops for theatrical productions.\(^{31}\) Samb and Sy were the primary co-founders of *Laboratoire Agit-Art*, a loose collective of artists who were disenchanted with President Senghor’s state sponsored art project of *Négritude*, and the preferential treatment it offered to contemporary Senegalese painters and tapestry makers.\(^{32}\) Samb and Sy, both graduates of the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Dakar, were trained as painters but objected to government control over artistic expression. In founding the *Laboratoire*, the artists actively chose to work in materials that were not considered fine art materials (canvas, oil, marble, tapestry) to protest the European training offered at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts and its mission to produce state sponsored art. Samb began collecting trash from the streets of Dakar to make objects as a means by which to protest the government’s lack of public services to the citizens of the city. Sy began painting with his feet in opposition to academically sanctioned painting techniques that employed brushes and palette knives.

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\(^{32}\) *Négritude* is discussed in depth in the next chapter.
In 1977 the Laboratoire Agit-Art made its home in the Village des Arts, a converted army barracks that served as residential and studio space for artists with the tacit approval of President Senghor. Dimé himself joined the Village in 1980, maintaining a studio there until 1983. Sy described the courtyard of the Village as a space that “manifests itself in spite of the absence of costly and unusual media, on all types of support structures - such as walls, doors, shutters, discs, sheets of metal, bits of wood, wire, rice sacks, cloth, etc.”\(^3\)\(^3\) The Laboratoire was unfortunately forced to change locations in 1983 when the Senegalese government repurposed the Village des Arts and evicted the artists.

Reestablishing the Laboratoire Agit-Art in central Dakar at 17, rue Jules Ferry, Issa Samb ensured that the performances and found object anti-art techniques of his artistic cohort would continue – and merely one block away from the government offices at that. Photographs from the early 1990s by Ebong, Samb and Sy of the open courtyard at rue Jules Ferry depict installations made from plastic bottles, plastic buckets, wire, glass bottles, sheet metal, metal cans (tomato paste), bone, rope, a sewing machine, a yield sign written in Arabic, a mortar, drum, several tourist masks, strip metal and, in Ebong’s famous example, a shabby Senegalese Flag wrapped around a wooden mannequin.\(^3\)\(^4\) All of these materials were freely acquired on the streets of Dakar, and were repurposed into art for political and social aims.

Sylla’s 1992 account of the artistic movements of the late 1970s and 1980s is important in that he positions artists such as those in the Laboratoire who were practicing what he called “assemblage” and “installation” in opposition to the recycling operations by those he calls “baay


\(^3\)\(^4\) See the photographs accompanying Ebong’s essay in Africa Explores Ebong, "Negritude: Between Mask and Flag, Senegalese Cultural Ideology and the "École de Dakar". Also see the photographs by Sy, Samb and Deliss in Sy, "Objects of Performance: A Story from Senegal by El Hadji Sy."
"jagal," a Wolof term for a person who collects trash to re-use it. Sylla’s distinction is necessary in order to situate the found object works of Moustapha Dimé against the local craft practices of making shoes out of car tires, or toys out of soda cans and electrical wire.

Sylla’s careful separation of artistic “assemblage” from baay jagal recycling went largely unnoticed however due to the subsequent publication of two international exhibition catalogues that examined the phenomenon of found object “art” in the African context. These were

*Ingénieuse Afrique: artisans de la récupération et du recyclage*, held in 1994 at the Musée de la Civilization, Québec, which subsequently traveled to Cotonou (Benin), Abdijan (Côte d’Ivoire), Bamako (Mali) and ended in Dakar (Senegal) where it was put on permanent display at the Ecopole cultural center. *Recycled Re-Seen: Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap* was an American organized exhibition held in 1996 at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

In both, functional and craft items were largely conflated with artistic practices, and in both the terms recycling (*recyclage*) and récupération (being introduced for the first time) were used interchangeably. The arrival of the term récupération as a type of collection technique necessitated an explanation of how and why it was being used as such, deviating from its more general context of retrieval or recovery of items, ideas or physical health. The *Ingénieuse Afrique* catalogue, therefore, provided a glossary of terms and Récupération was defined as the “activity

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35 Sylla, "Practique et théorie." under section “Moustapha Dimé III ‘Les Installations’
36 Ibid., n.p., under section “Moustapha Dimé III ‘Les Installations’.
37 *Ingénieuse Afrique*, is highly relevant to Dimé’s own work as it was on view in Dakar at the Ecopole exhibition space from March 2-31, 1996. This was two months before the 2nd edition of Dak’Art, where Dimé exhibited his *La Grande Danse*. Both exhibitions were expected to draw large local and international audiences and it seems quite likely that the artist saw the Canadian exhibition of recycled art. Dimé’s archives contain a four-page publicity flyer where the *Ingénieuse Afrique* exhibition was advertised along with the Dak’Art ’96 biennale and Dimé’s *La Femme à la Culotte* (cat. 57), the sculpture that had won Dimé the Presidential Prize at the first Dak’Art edition in 1992. Most of the objects exhibited in *Ingénieuse Afrique* are still on view. See ENDA Ecopole, "Ingénieuse Afrique: Artisans de la récupération et du recyclage," [http://www.enda.sn/ecopole/ecop5.html](http://www.enda.sn/ecopole/ecop5.html) (Accessed on 21 April, 2009).
of collecting obsolete or waste objects for fabrication, be it for reuse or recycling.”^38  The definition given for Recyclage is different only in that it “presupposes a collection [of objects] and implies a transformation of those previously used objects into usable products of a different nature.”^39

While the definitions state the difference as being between the act of collecting and the subsequent transformation of the objects collected, the two terms are used jointly by most authors in the catalogue to mean the same thing: recovery of used objects in economically distressed areas to be refashioned and resold by the poor to sustain or ameliorate their circumstances. For example, Amadou Abdoulaye Seck, Curator of the Musée de la Mer on Gorée Island in Dakar, explains that “Récupération and recyclage are defined in large Third World cities by the nature of the interrelations between products discarded by certain sectors of the population and the [individuals who are the] agents of récupération...: artisans; distributors or middlemen; and buyers of the transformed or recycled objects.”^40  Throughout Ingénieuse Afrique, readers are reminded that récupération is an activity found in the artisanal practices of impoverished African urban environments. Recycled Re-Seen further developed this emerging theory of récupération as exclusively the domain of poor spaces located within the “Third World.”

Unlike in Europe, where the readymade was heralded as one of the harbingers of the postmodern age with its references to industrialism, prefabrication and artistic intention rather

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^38 Emphasis is original to the authors of the glossary, but the translations of the definitions are my own. Andrée Gendreau, ed. Ingénieuse Afrique: Artisans de la Récupération et du Recyclage [exhibition catalogue], Collection Voir et Savoir (Québec: Fides/Musée de la Civilisation, 1994), 90.

^39 Ibid., 91.

than production, the found object is imperfectly codified in these two catalogues on the practice in African art. Suzanne Seriff, the organizer of *Recycled Re-Seen,* suggests the dominant reason Africans recycle found objects into their art is because their impoverished condition prevents the acquisition of new materials. She further proposes that the “found object” phenomenon enables local artisans to produce cheap and whimsical crafts for the tourist market. Allen Roberts, in his essay for the catalogue presents a more Marxist view, proposing that the recycling of industrial materials is done in order to critique commercial overproduction and overconsumption in capitalist societies. Unfortunately these views restrict the comprehension of *récupération* to a craft movement associated with poverty and hence only applicable to underdeveloped nations.

In his essay, "The Ironies of System D," Roberts brackets his conversations with market artisans in Dakar between theoretical analyses of *récupération* that he builds up from the writings of Claude Levi-Strauss and Marcel Griaule, among other Euro-American ethnographic sources. He draws the analogy between Dakar artisans making recycled objects for sale in the informal sector (black market) and Claude Lévi-Strauss’ *bricoleurs,* who use not “raw materials

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45 The notion of poverty or lack of materials providing the major impetus for recycled object art is the thesis of the art exhibition and catalogue *Recycled Re-Seen: Art from the Global Scrap Heap.* See Seriff, "Introduction. Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap: The Place of Irony in the Politics of Poverty."

46 “Systemic D” is slang for *Système débrouillage,* or the System of “making do” with what is at hand. Senegalese market craftsmen use this term to describe their recycling practices that emerge from not having enough resources to purchase new materials.
but wrought products” in their *bricolage* constructions.\(^{47}\) Roberts does not dispel the notion that recycled art is exclusively the product of artisans (rather than artists) nor does he seek to reëvaluate the medium as a high art phenomenon. This is because his research focuses not on those artists making unique items for display in museums and art galleries, but rather on those producing in volume for local outdoor markets. As a result, Roberts prefers the terms “carpenter,” “recycler,” “cobbler,” “trunk maker,” and “blacksmith” to that of “artist.”\(^{48}\) The title of the exhibition, in fact, precludes such a reading, for it informs the reader that the material under consideration is “folk art.” The objects on display were chosen to reinforce this ideology and consisted of briefcases and trunks made from off-printed sheet metal from the canning industry; toy vehicles made from flip flops, soda cans, wire and electrical tape; jewelry made from safety pins and plastic beads; and furniture, sculptures and baskets made from folded paper and plastic bags.

Readers of *Recycled Re-Seen* are further dissuaded from reading the objects as “Art” because this material is largely functional (briefcases, toys, baskets) and it comes from the “global scrap heap.” According to Seriff, this art is “inherently understandable, ‘whimsical,’ perhaps ironic, yet ultimately devoid of any further cultural, critical or ideological meaning.”\(^{49}\) While the intentional negativity of the title is undoubtedly selected for its postmodern, or even anti-modern irony, Seriff and the various contributors to the catalogue reinforce the notion of this subject matter as strictly folk art produced by artisans scrounging through First World trash to make their Third World crafts.

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\(^{48}\) Roberts, "The Ironies of System D."

\(^{49}\) Seriff, "Introduction. Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap: The Place of Irony in the Politics of Poverty," 18.
Understood in these terms, recycled art in Africa is the modern-day folk art produced by unskilled craftsmen living in “underdeveloped” regions, made for consumption by tourists who live elsewhere. Most importantly, the récupération discussed in Recycled Re-Seen and the earlier Ingénieuse Afrique is decisively not an American or European art form. It is foreclosed against such a possibility given the two primary conditions identified for its existence: poverty and the embrace of trash as a folk art aesthetic.

One essay in the Ingénieuse Afrique catalogue does introduce the idea of fine art récupération as a contemporaneous activity (or a different practice altogether) to that of the market artisan recycling soda cans into toy cars. Yacouba Konaté and Yaya Savané of the Musée National in Abdijan negotiated their artist subjects into a relationship with European modernism by stressing the abject, oppositional nature of “récupération” as a corollary to the found object or “readymade” of European art. They comment that:

The gesture of the récupération artist contains an undeniable nihilistic import, but it is also a defiance of aesthetics. Abandoning entirely academic painting and sculpture, the artist presents objects pulled from their contexts and presented as works of art. One can ask in what measure that which we conveniently call a récupération aesthetic (which is informed by the values and vocabulary of art brut) does not fit in the “tradition” of modern art, where the gesture of Duchamp exhibiting a urinal constitutes a great moment.

Konaté and Savané question why the found objects of récupération are seen as fundamentally different from Duchamp’s urinal, but are wary of openly attributing this to a neo-colonial or racist pedagogy at work in the West. Despite Konaté and Savané’s decision to focus on récupération as a strategy invoked by practicing artists, their voices are muted in comparison

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50 Yacouba Konaté and Yaya Savané. "Les artistes de la récupération à l'œuvre." In Ingénieuse Afrique: Artisans de la récupération et du recyclage, edited by Musée de la Civilization (Québec: Fides/Musée de la Civilization, 1994) 74: “Le geste de l’artiste de la récupération comporte indéniablement une portée nihiliste. Mais c’est aussi un défi esthétique. Tout en abandonnant l’académisme de la peinture et de la sculpture, l’artiste propose des objets sortis de leur contexte et présentés comme œuvres d’art. On peut se demander dans quelle mesure ce que nous convenons d’appeler esthétique de la récupération, et dont les valeurs se rapportent à la nomenclature de l’art brut, ne s’inscrit pas dans cette “tradition” de l’art moderne dont le geste de Duchamp, exposant un urinoir, constitue un grand moment.”
with the rest of the *Ingénieuse Afrique* catalogue. Only their idea of *récupération* as a rebuttal to Western aesthetic values appears in essays by other contributors to the *Ingénieuse Afrique* catalogue. With poverty established as a prerequisite, *récupération* is thus defined as the non-Western abject version of the readymade, the agency of which can only be exercised by artists in relation to the pre-established found object high art traditions of the West. While the writers of each catalogue euphemistically “grant” agency back to the producers of recycled art by claiming that recycling is an act of protest against Euro-American cultural commodification, they are only confirming that this type of art production can only exist outside of a Western framework and only in response to it. In nearly identical terms to Allen Roberts, Liette Petit claims in her essay for *Ingénieuse Afrique* that the eliminated object returns to life under the hands of the recycling artist, and that this “rebirth” is a victory. “Victory…over the objects serially produced in the factory, over high technology, over the latest fashionable ‘gadget’ [that] symbolizes the overconsumptive societies where people create “needs” out of their [wants.]”

In separating the “readymade” from “trash,” African practices are called into conversation with the discourse of Dadaism and post WWI art in Europe without a clear understanding of how that movement is implicated (or not) by Senegalese, Beninois or Ivoirian artists in their own work. Such a view hinders conversation about how European readymades and found objects – part of the modernist discoveries at the turn of the century – were inspiration for commentary and critique by Senegalese artists half a century later. It further denies non-European historical precedents for the style, forgetting that found objects have long been a part of African aesthetic practice before, during and after the colonial experience.

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While the agency of the artists in both catalogues is promoted as a reaction to European and American commodity production, neither catalogue openly addresses the fact that the recycled art they display is itself produced specifically for European and American audiences and consumers. It is neither produced for, nor often bought by, local consumers. It is tourist art *par excellence* and therefore the artists’ agency is less likely to be found in their production of a socio-economic critique of the West and more likely to be understood in terms of market economics. The artists of the recycled art objects in these two exhibitions have figured out what tourists like and what they will buy, and therefore their artistic inspiration most likely comes less from a desire to critique, and more from a desire to extract financial gain from, these foreign groups.

This is why Konaté and Savané note that the recycling of trash into art in Africa does not fall into the same art historical understanding as the European readymades. It is why the works are labeled “folk art” by the American catalogue, and not “Art” in the Winklemannian sense of the word. In the same way that colonial Europeans could not understand the abstraction of African wood sculpture as contemporaneous to their own modern art, and hence labeled it “primitive,” late 20th century anthropologists and art historians have not been able to view recycled art in Africa as a radical avant-garde gesture the way European readymades and found objects are interpreted within modernism. The discourse of “recycling = poverty” emerges rather strongly in the art historical literature around *récupération*, and this is not dispelled until the term is investigated in the early 21st century by Harney, Grabski and myself.

By the early 2000s, however, *récupération* was being used in Senegal not to define salvage items made from leftover materials, but rather to describe avant-garde art practice, one initiated by the Laboratoire Agit-Art and monopolized by younger generations of academically-
trained artists. Moving the term from folk art use into avant-garde use proves problematic in that the earlier definitions of the term, the “baay jagal” process that Sylla compared against fine art installation, remain in the art historical discourse. Authors today are compelled to explain that their use of récupération is not related to the discourse of the Ingénieuse Afrique and Recycled Re-Seen exhibitions, but rather a descriptor for a cosmopolitan art movement. We see this transition occur very clearly in the work of Elizabeth Harney. In her 1996 dissertation, she wrote about Dimé’s found object sculptures of the 1990s. She states: “Dimé’s use of found materials, known in French as récupération, is important to note because it is now being seen as part of a larger phenomenon. There are many reasons why the use of found objects and assemblage are currently so popular. The most obvious, of course, is the lack of materials available to artists in Senegal.”

She continues: “The dire condition of the École nationale des beaux arts has made it necessary to encourage students to utilise materials they find on the surrounding streets – geared, in part, as a lesson in the properties of materials and also, as one in economy.”

While her dissertation does mildly challenge the assumption that poverty is the only reason that practicing artists begin experimenting with récupération techniques, her 2004 book on the subject more aggressively rejects the relationship between récupération and poverty as defining the projects by the Senegalese avant-garde. There, she points out that “postmodernist fascinations with pastiche combine in the Western marketplace with paternalistic concerns for the poverty of African practitioners.” She argues this has forged “new exotics of indigence, presenting these pieces as miraculous accomplishments in an otherwise dismal African world.”

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53 Ibid., 131-2.
54 Harney, In Senghor’s Shadow, 125.
55 Ibid.
Unfortunately, Harney stops short of arguing an alternate theoretical framework for *récupération*, and while she finds fault with how it has been interpreted by Western scholars such as herself, it is not the topic of her book to provide a corrective gesture to this model.

Grabski is also quick to discredit the established notion of *récupération* being associated with impoverished or indigent conditions. In a recent article, she argued that *récupération* is a cosmopolitan practice, deftly commenting on the changing modernity of the international city of Dakar. She notes: “*récupération* renders visible the relationship between the artistic practice and the city, for the materials of *récupération* are the city’s materials.”\(^5^6\) She further refutes lack of means or lack of artistic training as the motivation for the style, pointing out that *récupération* in Senegal emerged among Beaux-Arts graduates. *Récupération* therefore, arose “less from the impulse of necessity than from the interlacing of visual production at the École des Beaux-Arts with the broader urban landscape.”\(^5^7\) Thus, she defines *récupération* as a movement concerned with the interactions of globality with locality: locally specific materials that comment on cosmopolitan and international realities.

While poverty may be implicated in art made from found objects, it is not always a pre-condition for artistic production, either in Senegal or elsewhere. Dimé’s work is a case in point. Though struggling to make ends meet in the sixties and seventies, he still managed to purchase expensive pieces of ebony and other tropical hardwoods for creating bas-reliefs and filiforms, among others.\(^5^8\) That he turned to *récupération* after becoming more financially stable in the late eighties clearly shows that poverty alone cannot explain its significance in his artistic development. A market perspective would expect the artist to continually invest in more


\(^{57}\) Ibid., 8.

\(^{58}\) Sylla, "Practique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé II: ‘Practique et Technique Sculpturales’.”
expensive materials once he could afford them, and yet at this juncture the artist stops purchasing materials all together, choosing to acquire them organically from his environment.

I find Dimé’s use of *récupération* in his own work to be a protest gesture, although not quite for the reasons Roberts or Petit might hypothesize. Dimé’s objects engage with the art historical rhetoric of *récupération* precisely in their refusal to be conscripted within the discourse I outline above. As Harney and Grabski point out, in ascribing poverty as a necessary condition for *bricolage* more generally, or *récupération* in Senegal, to exist, the Eurocentrism of such an argument cannot go unnoticed. When followed to its teleological conclusion, the argument is a restatement of the ethnographic myth of the barefoot carver pounding out awkward and meaningless trinkets, albeit couched in postmodern prose.

As a result, the emphasis on *récupération* in many of the recent Euro-American publications on Senegalese art of the post-Senghorian has been from the perspective of the movement’s participation with certain aspects of modern and postmodern European art, in order to separate it from the initial discourse aligned with recycling or “scrap heap” art. Both Sylla and Ndiaye related Dimé’s practice to the Western paradigm of installation art, while Thomas McEvilley stated that "In terms of Western art ideas, Dimé's sense of involvement in community through the materials of his work could loosely be compared with Robert Smithson's idea of urban decay as the seedbed of art, or with Joseph Beuy's idea of social sculpture."  

In addition, I find the comparison of Senegalese high art *récupération* with European styles to be a result of late 20th century avant-garde practices in Europe – France in particular – where *récupération* was adopted by contemporary artists for its ability to function as both social

and political commentary while allowing for unbridled creativity in object creation. In European cities over the course of the 1990s through the present day, artists have been experimenting with making installations in abandoned factory buildings, repurposing them as studios, theaters and installation sites. Denoted as récupération practices during the 90s, the movement has now retermed itself friche. Jean-Loup Amselle, noting the parallels between recent trends in found object work both on the African and European continents, reexamines the strategies of African artists of the 1990s next to the European movements of the same time and argues this has propelled the success of both movements on each continent.

For example, painter, friend, and housemate of Dimé, Abdoulaye N’Doye commented to Harney in 1994 that, “You come and you say, ah, the récupération, it’s in style. You say that right now all that is in fashion in Europe is récupération. And immediately people will follow your advice.” If French trends were known amongst Dakar practitioners in the 1990s, the reverse was also true. In 2006, Sylvain Sankalé, writing for an exhibition of Contemporary Senegalese art at the Musée Dapper in Paris, commented that, “The sculptural work presented here is practically systematically based on récupération. The public often feels saturated by this “recup” that has been at the forefront of trendy contemporary art practice for so long.” He then points out that the Senegalese artists offer a refreshing take on stale European practices of collage, assemblage and found object sculpture. Both N’Doye’s and Sankalé’s comments substantiate Amselle’s claim that European and African artists and audiences both remained

62 Friche is an older French term for fallow that has come to mean abandoned, wild and uncivilized in avant-garde art. Ibid., 12-13.
63 Harney, "Legacy of Negritude," 220.
heavily invested in the evolving techniques of récupération on their own and on each other’s continents.

Dimé’s objects approach and participate in the international market with the same intent that Roberts and Petit (uncritically, I argue) attribute to their mallet-makers and that Amselle attributes to the shared European and Senegalese experimentation with abandoned objects and spaces beginning in the 1990s. Dimé does use his art to criticize Euro-American consumption—but not just the consumption of the “latest gadget.” Rather his objects address the wholesale consumption of the African continent and its peoples by Euro-American capitalistic and cultural interests. By creating objects that appealed to a Western “abject” aesthetic and that he sold to international buyers, Dimé ensured that his works of art would be seen from inside the Euro-American metropolis, and from inside its art-viewing machinery. By the time of his death, he had held two solo exhibitions in Europe, one at the Dany Keller Galerie in Munich, and one at the Centre d’Art Contemporain in Brussels. He had also participated in group shows in Toulouse, Paris, Brussels, Venice, New York, Marseilles, Liverpool, Bruges, and Berlin just to name the European countries. His objects therefore infiltrated the market at its heart, making his critique of the exotic African primitive carver all the more damning to art historical discourse.

On the other hand, Dimé’s objects function equally from within the domestic, Senegalese context, as his plein air installations of his objects, and his récupération materials attest. While his inclusion of found objects certainly revels in the local histories of the reinvented materials, I argue that frequently Dimé’s use of found objects is ironic, meant to expose the inherent prejudices of the international art market. In considering Dimé’s work, one must remember that

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65 Dimé’s works were also exhibited in Rabat (Morocco), Tokyo and Johannesburg during his lifetime. He additionally participated in artists’ workshops (some of which were affiliated with exhibitions, some that were not) in Paris, Turnhout (Belgium), Schwarzenberg (Austria), and Geneva.
despite critical attempts to prove the contrary, Dimé was not interested in pursuing a “Western” aesthetic in his art. He actively strove to disengage himself from Western categorization and his objects overtly challenge the fractious line arbitrarily drawn between African and European conceptions of sculpture and modern art. Over the course of his search for an anti-Western, non-Négritude driven aesthetic, he looked to the local, Senegalese movement of récupération.

He also objected, however, to his work being categorized as récupération, largely for the contextual reasons I outline above. As the term was established between 1992 and 1994 to mean scrap object tourist art, it was completely inappropriate to define the work of an artist who used found woods, metals and domestic objects to redefine figuration and humanity with a contemporary artistic vocabulary. An interview conducted by Ayoko Mensah in the April-May 1998 edition of Balafon, contains one of the early references to the artist’s works as récupération. Dimé pointed out to Mensah that the term was inadequate, as it did not truly encapsulate his creative process, which for him was “more of a quest than recuperation [per se]” Nonetheless, he never did offer an alternative term to describe his works from the 1990s.

Scholars have hinted at the possible international connotations Dimé’s récupération objects evoke even as they attempt to understand the local “African” or Senegalese meanings embedded in them. Harney, for example, argues that “his practice of récupération, through a reuse of household or everyday objects…enabled him to produce and maintain a sense of tradition and identity with his community.” Grabiski further problematizes Dimé’s practice, pointing out that while he was sculpting for two decades before he began using récupération

66 "Il a valorisé la sculpture Africaine, ce qu'il a trouvé spirituelle et profonde, sur la sculpture occidentale." [He valued African sculpture, which he found to be spiritual and profound, above European sculpture.] Gabriel Kemzo Malou, Interview with the Author, 15 June 2004.
68 Harney, In Senghor's Shadow, 168.
techniques, it was only his adoption of “salvaged materials” that “brought him the recognition [of] international art world brokers.” 69 In fact the underlying paradox in Dimé’s production, from his earliest bas-reliefs to his last récupération objects is the inherent – and, I argue, intentional – tension between local and international motifs.

Field and Archival Data

Much of the data analyzed in this dissertation were collected between 2004 and 2008 during fieldwork that took me to Senegal, France, and various American cities. In Senegal I worked with Gabriel Kemzo Malou, the late Moustapha Dimé’s former apprentice and now manager of Dimé’s studio on Gorée Island. In 2004 and 2006, I created a digital archive of Dimé’s works of art, documents, drawings, correspondence, and photographs held at the Gorée Studio and his family members in Dakar, St. Louis and Louga. I paid additional visits to Senegal in 2007 and 2008. As a result, all the photographs presented here are mine unless otherwise stated, and the collection of images represents the most thorough digital record of the artist’s works of art, documentary archives, correspondence and miscellanea ever produced.

A tremendous amount of the Senegalese material presented here is the result of interviews and conversations conducted in Wolof, and to a lesser extent, in French. In all cases, translations into English are my own unless stated otherwise.

Research on Dimé’s works in France took me to the Fondation Blachère (Apt) in September of 2008. The Fondation had negotiated with Malou, Dieumbé Dimé (Dimé’s widow), and Béatrice Soulé in Paris to organize a retrospective exhibition for the artist. The objects had

been in storage in a Parisian warehouse since 2000.\(^{70}\) In exchange, the Fondation agreed to restore the objects as needed and house them for a period of five years.\(^{71}\) The Fondation exhibition, *Moustapha Dimé “je ne rêve que de lumière,* allowed me to view and photograph works of art that had been inaccessible for over a decade.\(^{72}\) The Fondation also graciously provided me with permission to use their photography of Dimé’s objects.

Along with the artworks currently housed at the Fondation Blachère, there are many works by Dimé at the artist’s studio on Gorée Island. Additional works are in public and private collections in Dakar and the artist’s hometown of Louga. Objects sold to international buyers are in public and private collections in Japan, Belgium, Germany, France, and the United States. Additional undocumented materials and art objects come to light regularly, creating the need for constant updates to the catalogue raisonné I present with the dissertation.

**Chapter Summaries**

The first chapter introduces the reader to a brief summary of the cultural and artistic history in Senegal leading up to and including the twenty year period in which Léopold Sédar Senghor instilled his artistic plans of cultural and nation building in post-colonial Senegal under his program of *Négritude.* I address *Africanité,* Senghor’s artistic and philosophical precursor to

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\(^{70}\) The *Moustapha Dimé* retrospective organized by the Association pour la Promotion des Arts, Hôtel de Ville de Paris was exhibited at the Salle Saint Jean in the Hôtel de Ville from June 16 – September 19, 1999. It then traveled to the Château des Carmes, La Flèche, France January 15 – February 27, 2000, after which it was crated until it traveled to the Fondation Blachère in Apt, France.

\(^{71}\) The Fondation has entered into a long-term loan with Dieumbé Dimé Fall, Dimé’s widow and overseer of his estate for their daughter, Ndèye Yacine Dimé. The Fondation has agreed to house the fifty-four works from the exhibition for a period of five years, perform restoration where necessary and feasible, and arrange for possible traveling exhibitions during this time. The goal of this loan is to provide enough time for the relevant parties to secure a location in Senegal where the works may eventually return and be placed on permanent display. See Fondation Jean Paul Blachère and Mme Dieumbé Dimé Fall, “Contrat de conservation de l'oeuvre de Moustapha Dimé,” ed. Fondation Blachère (Apt, France2008).

\(^{72}\) The exhibition was on view at the Fondation Blachère in Apt France from June 17 – October 12, 2008.
the state-sponsored platform of *Négritude*, and Senghor’s handling of African art within this context. As others have analyzed the entirety of *Négritude*,73 I signal only what I believe to be the aspects of Senghor’s ideas that surface in aesthetic philosophy and in Dimé’s sculptural production. I discuss how *Négritude* was put into practice in Senegal via art institutions, many of which became significant places for Dimé’s career. Lastly, I analyze the anti-*Négritude* movements that emerged during the 1970s and 1980s, which became consolidated under the avant-garde style of récupération. As Dimé was a part of both *Négritude* and anti-*Négritude* institutions and artist groups, his engagement with them illuminates aspects of his early career that have so far been unexplored by scholars.

Chapter 2 introduces key elements of the artist’s biography. Due to the inherent gaps in recorded knowledge about Dimé’s early years in comparison with what is documented on and by him from the early nineties forward, an unfortunate misunderstanding emerges. The narrative has Dimé floundering in his youth, and then emerging with récupération fully-formed onto the world stage at the Venice Biennale in 1993, already eloquent in the ways of art making and philosophical about culture, religion and history.74 The implausibility of this is what led me to retrace his life and work from the beginning. Here I present his education, the background of his religion and his Mouride practice of Islam as well as the debates and rumors surrounding the

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74 Allen and Mary Nooter Roberts’ provide a concise example of this narrative: “The late Moustapha Dimé was a widely recognized sculptor who created works from recycled materials – especially jetsam found on the rocky shores of Gorée Island...Among the triumphs of his all-too-brief career, his work was selected for the Venice Biennale of 1993 and shown later that same year at the Museum for African Art in New York City. In a long interview with Thomas McEvilley, Moustapha Dimé proved himself a fiercely independent Mouride, but one contrite after surviving a period of emotional distress and alcoholism, and as he said, regaining “equilibrium” through his sculpture.” Roberts and Roberts et al., *A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal*, 208.
reasons for his illness and death. Aspects of the artist’s biography that relate to his artistic
demarche are included with the relevant decades of his career in chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 3 documents Dimé’s early artistic production from the mid-seventies through the
late eighties. I begin with the first sculptures that Dimé photographed and documented himself
from 1974, which are low-relief panels carved while the artist was living in Ghana. I trace
Dimé’s transition from reliefs and sculptures in the round to sinuous carvings know as
“filiforms” and a short-lived series of works described by the artist as *hybrides*. Dimé’s
seemingly odd deviation into textile production while on a research fellowship in Mali in 1980
reveals itself to be a harbinger of the composition and methodology of his later three-
dimensional objects. Most significantly, Dimé’s works from this decade signal a profound and
lasting commitment to local styles, historical African sculptural models and dubiousness over the
merits of Occidental art.

Dimé’s *récupération* sculptures are the subject of Chapter 4. Here, I analyze artworks
comprising Dimé’s oeuvre from the late 1980s until his death in 1998. I draw on Dimé’s early
years to substantiate my claims regarding the inimitable complexity of Dimé’s unique brand of
*récupération*. I address Dimé’s direct engagement with pan-Africanism and *Négritude* as
witnessed in transcriptions of text by Cheikh Anta Diop and others in his journal. I reconcile the
artist’s religion with his dedication to figural work, a seeming paradox that has yet to find
resolution in the published literature on the artist. I include in this chapter an investigation of the
artist’s figurative sculptural works, one of the most potent manifestations of his *récupération*
style.

Chapter 5 contains my conclusions on the methodological and theoretical implications of
Dimé’s works both locally and internationally. I further include a discussion of Dimé’s
contemporaries and the rising stars in Senegalese contemporary art who dialogue with Dimé’s works frequently in their own projects.

At the end of the dissertation, I include three important Appendices. “Appendix A: Catalogue” is the Catalogue Raisonné of the artist’s work and all works illustrated in this dissertation are identified by their catalogue number (cat.) as well as their figure number (fig.). “Appendix B: Documents” is a compilation of all primary source documents mentioned in this dissertation. These are identified in the text by (doc.) parentheses and their number as given in the Appendix. Among the documents are correspondences between Dimé and various government officials, letters, pages of object view books the artist created to document his work, versions of the artist’s CV, brochures, receipts and other relevant paperwork. These documents all exist in the artist’s archives and in those of his family members, and all were digitally archived by myself.

“Appendix C: Curriculum Vitae” is a cumulative Curriculum Vitae of the artist with all known exhibition information to the present day. Such a document is not available in French or English. I compiled Dimé’s CV from his copies of his curriculum vitae that he started keeping in the 1980s. I supplement these with versions (in English, French and German) that were published in exhibition catalogues or included as gallery handouts, as well as CVs from exhibitions that postdate the artist’s death.

Lastly, readers will note that the bibliography is broken into thematic sections. I include all of the references that are cited in the footnotes along with a complete bibliography to date of items published or available in public collections on Moustapha Dimé. Locations of archival items are given. As some items could conceivably belong in multiple categories, I have placed
them where I believe each exhibits the most relevance. I beg the readers’ forgiveness if my categorizations do not coincide with their personal preferences.
Chapter 1  Art in Pre- and Post-Independence Senegal

To understand how Dimé’s oeuvre reflects the cultural, ideological and economic forces that influenced the development of contemporary art in Senegal from the 1970s through the present times, one must be aware of the country’s cultural history. Senegal sits on the western bulge of the continent, bound by the Sahara Desert to the North, the Atlantic Ocean to the West, savannah grassland to the east as tropical forests to the south. The earliest recorded political state in the area was that of the Takrur (aka Fuuta Tooro) (c. 1000 CE), a primarily Fulbe (Fulani, Tukulor) society, although its diverse population is believed to include the Seereer and Wolof peoples by this time as well. Between the early fourteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries, much of present-day Senegal formed part of the Mali Empire. The central and southern sections were later dominated by the military Songhai state until the end of the sixteenth century.\(^5\) In the north, the Jolof Kingdom emerged to rival the Takrur in the fifteenth century. By the mid-sixteenth century, however, the Jolof state had splintered into smaller groups, including the Wolof and Seereer Kingdoms;\(^6\) from which hailed the ancestors of Moustapha Dimé. These kingdoms were divided into class and caste, the remnants of which are still evident in contemporary Senegal. Certain family names are associated with the ancient aristocracy and kings, while some kin groups continue to practice traditional caste professions such as ironworking, medicine, music (the art of the griots or gëwël) and, most important to this narrative, the work of the lawbe, or carver. Warriors (ceddo), slaves, and nomadic classes of individuals also shifted in and between these states altering their populations, cultural and ethnic makeup, and political clout on a regular basis.


\(^6\) Ibid., 159.
Not much is known to date about the plastic arts of the Seereer and Wolof kingdoms. Yet the fact that they were part of the ancient Mali Empire might suggest that some Seereer and Wolof artists in the past produced works similar to the terra cotta figures and other art forms excavated from many sites in present-day Mali that date to the seventh through fifteenth centuries.77

While vestiges of ancient masquerades can be observed in some areas of Senegal today, they are not as deeply rooted or elaborate as those found among neighboring groups such as the Dogon and Bamana of modern Mali. Nonetheless, oral histories, narrated, sung and danced by the gëwël and put to music by drummers suggest that the visual and performing arts were inseparable from life in the past. Carved wooden headpieces to accompany masquerade costumes do not appear to have been part of performance ceremonies among the Wolof and Seereer kingdoms, nor do they appear in today’s performances.78 The lack of masquerade tradition might be due to the introduction of Islam to the area in the 11th century, though the extent of its influence at this time would seem to be limited.79 There are indications, however, that Islam


78 The Simb, or Faux Lion (False Lion) masquerade may very well be one of the vestiges of the past. It performs on special occasions in Senegalese communities. On July 7, 1999, I witnessed a Simb performance sponsored by a local neighborhood in Louga, Senegal. The ensemble consisted of three female gëwël, three “little lion” masqueraders, two cross-dressed clowns, one “Great Lion” masquerader, a mounted Equestrian ceddo performer and a troop of drummers. While all of the performers wore elaborate costumes and had some degree of face painting relevant to their roles, none wore any kind of mask or face covering. A less experienced group of performers conducted a three-day Simb on Gorée Island from 24-26 May, 2012. This latter group focused on doing popular dances while dressed as lions, leaving out much of the historical narrative traditionally included in the masquerade.

contributed greatly to the artistic heritage of the region, frequently merging or partnering with existing cultural, artistic and religious practice. According to Rene Bravmann:

In long-and well-established Muslim communities [in West Africa], masking and figurative traditions persist either because they have proved more effective [or] local procedures may also be retained because they offer traditionally tested solutions to particular problems; although Muslim clerics may be capable of offering answers to the same problems, they are fully aware that indigenous methods continue to exercise a strong appeal because they are trusted modes of behavior. 80

Nonetheless, the Islamic jihad that spread across West Africa in the early 19th century did affect indigenous art production in some parts of Senegal. The French colonization of the area in the mid-nineteenth century consequently introduced a European art curriculum in public and private schools that neutralized some of the Islamic iconoclasm. Paradoxically, French colonial art education also popularized local production of glass painting (*sous verre* or *sooweer*) with Islamic subjects, previously imported from North African and the Middle East. 81 At the same time, French art education produced a new generation of contemporary artists in Senegal who were trained to follow European standards of naturalism, thus abandoning the non-objective and abstract traditions of West African ancestral arts.

The Wolof and Seereer kingdoms declined rapidly in the nineteenth century as pressure from both European and Arab influences competed for resources, territorial control and religious conversion in the area. 82 When the French became the dominant power in Senegal after the Berlin Conference of 1884-5, they established four coastal cities, known as the “Four

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80 Rene Bravmann, *Islam and Tribal Art in West Africa* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974). 31. Bravmann’s statement has continued to hold true for Senegal, as Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen Roberts most recently confirm in their seminal publication, *A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal* (2003). Their research in the late 1990s on Islam’s dynamic partnership with the contemporary artistic traditions of glass painting (*sous verre* or *sooweer*), architecture, sculpture and painting is proof of Islam’s continuing contribution to artistic creation.

81 Roberts and Roberts et al., *A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal*.

Communes” of Dakar, Gorée, St Louis, and Rufisque. These cities became the only areas in Senegal where native-born inhabitants could apply for, and ostensibly receive, French citizenship. Very few native-born individuals, however, actually achieved the status of évoluté, the term for an African citizen granted French citizenship. As an évoluté himself, Leopold Senghor would tread the fractious line between being French and Senegalese very carefully first as a revolutionary student in Paris and later as Senegal’s first president after independence.

Outside of the Four Communes, the French sought to eradicate local political structures: first by encouraging infighting among the Wolof and Seereer kings until they capitulated and second, by tolerating North African Islamic encroachment on the more arid regions of the territory. The local inhabitants were trapped between the French and the Arab Muslims, both of whom had earlier raided them for slaves as a means to debilitate local populations.

Towards the end of the 19th century, Cheikh Amadou Bamba Mbacké, a Wolof and Muslim religious leader from Mbacké, founded the Mouride brotherhood, an indigenous form of Islam based on Sufi principles. He later used the brotherhood to challenge both the French territorial colonization of Senegal and the Arab trade encroachment from North Africa. While Islam was present in Senegal from the time of the Middle Ages in Europe, modern-day Mouridism emerged under Bamba as a direct response to colonial conditions of the 19th and early 20th centuries. As Cheikh Thiam points out, “This [colonial] context gave birth to Mouridism, which appeared as a new force against French imperialism as it [Mouridism] aimed to restore and re-organize the society under the values of an Islam mixed with Wolof tradition and

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83 The French had actually maintained a colonial outpost in St. Louis at the mouth of the Senegal river as of 1659. St. Louis was the first French capital of the region. Dakar was a major trade port, but not a capital city until it served to administer the Mali Federation in 1959-60 and subsequently Senegal in 1961.

84 Léopold Sédar Senghor was one such individual. He spent much of his youth in Paris, went on to marry a Frenchwoman, and retired to France after stepping down from the presidency in Senegal in 1980.
values."\textsuperscript{85} The establishment of the Mouride practice is credited as being one of the first truly modern aspects of what would become the independent Senegalese nation state less than one hundred years later.\textsuperscript{86}

The Mouride movement from its inception used visual arts as a means of communicating with its members, many of whom were non-literate, and of celebrating important figures in the tradition. Given the didactic nature of these arts, figuration played an important role in teaching Mourides about their tradition. The figuration forms a unique aspect of Mouride art practice, one that runs counter to the larger Islamic prohibition of figural imagery in the arts.\textsuperscript{87}

Of course, Mouridism alone was not sufficient to return political and territorial autonomy to the Senegalese region.\textsuperscript{88} As in other parts of Africa, social and physical resistance to colonial rule contributed significantly to its demise in Senegal. The Pan-African Movement also played a major role in the process. Its origin can be traced to the beginning of the twentieth century when African and Caribbean students in Europe and Blacks in the Americas questioned the moral, philosophical and political values of the European colonial enterprise. Edward Blyden (1832-1912) from the Danish West Indies and Henry Sylvester-Williams (1869-1911) from Trinidad are credited with founding the Movement. W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963), from the United States, helped launched the Movement internationally by coordinating a series of meetings in the United States and Europe that enabled Blacks from different parts of the world to exchange ideas. The


\textsuperscript{87} See Roberts and Roberts et al., \textit{A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal}.

\textsuperscript{88} It should also be noted that Mouridism is not the only form of Sufism practiced in Senegal. There are three main orders, Mouridism being the most recent, the Tijaniyya being the more conservative, and the Qadiriyya, which is the oldest form of Sufism practiced in the region, but also having the fewest followers. Leonardo A. Villalón, \textit{Islamic society and state power in Senegal: Disciples and citizens in Fatick}, African Studies Series No. 80 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press in conjunction with the African Studies Centre, 1996 [1995]). 65.
goals were to unite Blacks worldwide through a shared sense of collective pride in skin color, history and African heritage and then to use that group unity to combat racial prejudice, social injustice and economic exploitation.  

In Paris, France, the Pan-African Movement, coupled with the writings of black American authors associated with the Harlem Renaissance (such as Richard Wright, Langston Hughes and Claude McKay), exerted considerable influence on the expatriated Caribbean and African student communities. Such was the Movement’s impact that it inspired the birth (in the 1930s) of a corollary movement known as *Négritude*. Its leaders were Aimé Césaire from Martinique, Léon Damas from French Guiana and Léopold Sédar Senghor from Senegal. Césaire is said to have coined the term *Négritude* to reinforce the need for people of African descent to articulate the essence of their blackness and the various ways it could be used not only to challenge the “civilizing mission” of Europe in Africa, but also awaken race-consciousness and cultivate a black identity in the arts.

The need to define the essence of blackness in the humanities led Senghor to formulate a theory of *Négritude* that contemporary African artists could use as a compass when negotiating a black-specific aesthetics in an era dominated by European “-isms” in the arts. Underlying the theory was Senghor’s awareness of the paradox in early 20th century European Modernism,

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which structured its own artistic modernity on the so-called “primitivism” of contemporary African and Oceanic artistic expressions. Simply put, Senghor’s vision of Négritude, as Elizabeth Harney rightly observes, called for a rootedness in historical pan-African visual and literary traditions (Africanité) that would then be mined selectively and synthesized with 20th century European elements (Latinité) to create a “new Senegalese modernism.”

The utopianism of these imagined collective societies was an admittedly fantastical aspect of Senghor’s ideology, but he used it to soften a more political reality: the steady breakdown of French colonial control over West Africa, and the unwillingness of Africans to buy into European cultural superiority after World War II. Furthermore, Africanité’s appeal lay in its synergy with Pan-Africanism and its qualities of opposition to the faltering promises of Latinité.

Shortly after World War II in 1945, many European colonies in Africa began to agitate for political independence. In 1958 France merged its colonies of Mali and Senegal together as the Mali Federation. Each territory, however, maintained a representative in Paris who reported to the French government. Senghor was the representative for Senegal until the dissolution of the Mali Federation in 1960 when both countries became independent from France. While French control over the Mali Federation had been weak, and Senghor was essentially functioning as the Head of State of Senegal during 1958-9 in Paris and from 1959-60 in Senegal, the first official year of his presidency was 1960. His election enabled him to establish a state-sponsored art school and other programs to manifest this new modernism in the literary, visual and performing arts.

92 Harney, In Senghor’s Shadow, 2, 40.
Senghor’s Negritude in Word and Image

As Souleymane Bachir Diagne observes, “Art [for Senghor] is the proof of African philosophy and, conversely, we reach the full intelligence of the African arts only through the understanding of the metaphysics from which they proceed.”93 Senghor’s concept of Africanité was predicated largely on what he saw as the ontological significance of art in ancient African cultures. Apart from drawing attention to the contexts and functions of African art and how it was used to embody and project world-views different from those of Europe, he attributed the stylized and non-descriptive forms of a good majority of African sculptures to their, frequently social, and metaphysical functions. As Senghor puts it “The image is not a simile but a symbol, an ideogram” for a hierarchy of life-forces thought to empower visible reality.94 In his view, the need to create visual metaphors, rather than likenesses, enabled African artists to be more inventive in their works, enabling them to produce forms embodying collective aspirations and inspired by cosmologies, folklore as well as precedents handed down from the past.

Throughout his life, Senghor remained convinced that African artistic production both past and present, was not inferior to that produced in Europe, but rather under-recognized for its value as the expressive agent of African philosophies. To this end, Senghor summarized the qualities in African art that distinguished it from the art of the European continent and made it the communicator par excellence of African philosophical values. These traits were 1) the inseparability of art production from work and manual labor; 2) the interdependence of the arts, such that music, painting, sculpture, dance and poetry were not separate engagements from each other; 3) the functionality of the artistic product, which was linked to 4) the communal nature of

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how the arts were used; 5) the symbolic and abstract nature of art based on rhythm and a connection to the invisible (or surreal); 6) the emotional and non-descriptive nature of the art (meaning freedom from imitation of nature) and lastly 7) the locally-motivated and engaged nature of art production.  

Unfortunately, some pre-twentieth century European art critics mistook the non-descriptive forms of African art for a failure to imitate nature accurately, calling it “primitive.” But toward the end of the eighteenth century, a number of avant-garde European artists had begun questioning “the primacy given to reason in the Academy” in the latter’s attempt to equate verisimilitude with the Enlightenment. The Romanticists, for example, valued emotion as the wellspring of aesthetic experience and so relied on the power of the imagination in their works. As Adam Geczy puts it, “Romanticism was deeply indebted to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who attempted to account for the limitations of perception. Kant did not quite approve of the manner by which Romantics took subjective expression to be a strength and not a limitation.” Indeed, the emphasis on the intuitive or subjective expression would cause many European artists to gradually move away from descriptive to non-descriptive imagery. In the end, artists like Henri Matisse, André Derain, Maurice Vlaminck, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque sought inspiration from the so-called “primitive” art of Africa and other parts of the non-European


98 Adam Geczy, Art: Histories, Theories and Exceptions (Oxford: Berg, 2008). 52. In his famous book, Critique of Judgment (Kritik der Urteilskraft, 1790), Immanuel Kant argued that knowledge is restricted to what humans are able to see or rationalize and that certain aspects of the sublime are beyond human comprehension.
world. This volte-face culminated in the birth of abstraction in Modern art at the beginning of
the twentieth century, causing some Western critics to identify it as “Primitivism.”

Pablo Picasso’s Les Demoiselles d’Avignon (1905-1907) is generally considered one of
the most important masterpieces of the early twentieth century. He reportedly altered the faces
of three of the female figures to look mask-like after his 1906 visit to the Musée d’Ethnographie
du Trocadéro in Paris, which had a collection of African and Oceanic art.

Needless to say, the originators of the Négritude movement were delighted to see modern
European artists seek inspiration from the ancient arts of Africa, forms previously despised and
associated with the “irrational.”

Thus Senghor would declare in a 1939 publication that, “Emotion is Negro, as reason is
Hellenic.” With this statement, Senghor spoke not to the primacy of cultural attributes as is
often assumed, but to the origins of philosophical discourses. Souleymane Bachir Diagne notes
that Senghor’s use of the word ‘Hellenic’ is what establishes this as a comment on the origins of
cultural sensibilities. Diagne argues that Senghor uses the analogy of “reason is to Greek
sculpture” what “emotion is to African sculpture” in order to draw a distinction between the two

99 For a review of the data, see Robert John Goldwater, Primitivism in Modern Art (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press,
York: Thames and Hudson, 1994).

100 William Rubin contends that the similarity is “fortuitous.” Yet he concedes that the “affinities” between the faces
of these two females and some African masks may very well reflect the depth of Picasso’s “grasp of the informing
principles of African sculpture as a whole.” see William Stanley Rubin, "Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity
of the Tribal and the Modern, 2 vols. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984). 265. See also Z. S. Strother,
145-9. According to James Clifford, the use of the word “affinity” suggests “a deeper or more natural relationship
than mere resemblance…” See James Clifford, The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth Century Ethnography,

101 “L’émotion est nègre comme la raison hellène.” Léopold Sédar Senghor, "Ce que l'homme noir apporte," in
chronological processes that created each continent’s philosophical and artistic modalities. To avoid being misunderstood by those not too familiar with the nuances of his analogy, Senghor explained in a later article that “the ancestral negro is not stripped of reason, as many would claim I have stated: But his reason is not discursive, it is synthetic…reason, amongst whites, is an analytical operation, black reason is an engagement with the intuitive.” This clarification recalls Immanuel Kant’s distinction between synthetic (a priori) and analytic (a posteriori) propositions. In his famous treatise, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), Kant identifies the synthetic with rationalizations based on conceptual knowledge or indirect intuitive experience (especially of the sublime), and the analytic, with conclusions derived from direct experience or empirical observation. According to him, since humanity’s knowledge is restricted to what it can see or rationalize, certain aspects of the sublime are beyond human comprehension.

Nevertheless, humans have the free will to make personal decisions. By the same token, in his subsequent volume, *Critique of Judgement* (1790), Kant analyzed judgment of taste to be personal and subjective, being determined more or less by an *emotional* response to a given object, even though an individual tends to attribute that response to *reason*.

Senghor’s opinion was that the continental experiences of Europeans and Africans had historically been separate, divided by the twin barriers of ocean and desert. This created distinct philosophical traditions: the analytical discourse of the Enlightenment in Europe, and the synthetic artistic practices of sub-Saharan Africa. Since the colonial period, however, these two

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102 Diagne, "Rhythms," 94.

103 Wherever I have provided my own translations for Senghor’s words, I include the original French for the readers' benefit: “...le Nègre, traditionnellement, n’est pas dénué de raison, comme on a voulu me le faire dire. Mais sa raison n’est pas discursive; elle est synthétique...La raison blanche est analytique par utilisation, la raison nègre, intuitive par participation. Léopold Sédar Senghor, "L’Esthétique Négro-Africaine [1956]," in *Liberté I: Négritude et humanisme*, ed. Léopold Sédar Senghor (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1964), 44.

histories had abutted each other, forcing each to negotiate the other through a vocabulary of
difference. Such difference, for Senghor, did not imply inadequacy of one discourse to another:
“We are of different temperament and certainly of spirit. But these differences, are they not
found in the relationships between things rather than in their natures? Underneath differences
are there not intrinsic similarities? Moreover, reason is universal among men. I do not believe
in the “prelogical mind.” The mind cannot be pre-logical no more than a-logical.”¹⁰⁵

Senghor, therefore, stressed that reason is equal among men: it manifested as detached
discourse in Europe, and as the emotive visual and performing arts in Africa. He did so in order
to prove the primacy of African reason and hence the legitimacy of African arts as separate from
the inferior position granted them by European art historical discourse. Additionally, he refutes
the notion of African cultures as “prelogical,” a term introduced in 1910 by philosopher Lucien
Lévy-Bruhl, who employed a space-time dis-continuum to imply that African cultures were not
as societally advanced as European cultures. What Senghor defies is the borrowing of an
anthropological trope, that of time, to establish a notion of the past, where quality object making
on the African continent is held to have happened in the past, and present artistic movements in
Africa are seen to fall short when compared with those of European postmodernism.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ “Nous avons un tempérament, une âme différente, certes. Mais les différences ne sont-elles pas dans le rapport
des éléments plus que dans leur nature? Sous les différences n’y a-t-il pas des similitudes plus essentielles? Mais
surtout, la raison n’est-elle pas identique chez tous les hommes? Je ne crois pas à la “mentalité prélogique.” L’esprit
ne peut être prélogique, encore moins alogique.” Emphasis in italics is Senghor’s own. Léopold Sédar Senghor,
"Vues sur l’Afrique noire, ou assimiler, non être assimilés [1945],” in Liberté I: Négritude et Humanisme, ed.

¹⁰⁶ I have adapted the critique of Lévy-Bruhl’s “prelogical mind” from Johannes Fabian’s seminal text Time and the
Other. In this study he argued that anthropology had profited from a discourse of “othering” by placing the subjects
studied in “anthropological time” a time that was assumed to be different from that of the anthropologist. If the
anthropologist existed in a modern, intellectual society, than the people studied could not also occupy this same time
and place, and as a result were relegated to a discourse of the past, where they were understood by their
“primitiveness” relative to that of the Euro-American researchers own societies: “…the object of anthropology could
not have gained scientific status until and unless it underwent a double visual fixation, as perceptual image and as
illustration of a kind of knowledge. Both types of objectification depend on distance, spatial and temporal. In the
fundamental, phenomenalist sense this means that the Other, as object of knowledge, must be separate, distinct, and
Diagne also points out that Senghor believed that while the African artist *invented* objects, the objects were actually *authored* by the community who *accomplished* the artistic project.\(^{107}\) This meant that the artist’s struggles were not his alone, but communal, and this is how Senghor posited a larger collective of knowledge (philosophy) that was African in nature and performative in its expression.\(^{108}\) By tapping into a collective consciousness, the African artist was recording not mimetic visions of reality as per his own eyes, but a larger world of dynamic realities.

Furthermore, Senghor’s use of philosophical texts not only buttressed his arguments about African philosophical knowledge but also served to underpin his chief criticisms of European materialism. In praising the African for his closeness to nature, Senghor used a Marxist strategy to point out the active, direct and participatory nature of African cultural production and consumption, while concluding that European values have strayed towards disassociation with culture and an overvaluation of the passive “contemplative gaze” of the spectator.\(^{109}\)

The spectator in fact, has been identified by many critics as one of the most fundamental aspects of art creation in a larger African context. Senghor’s praise of the communal nature of traditional art production in black Africa is buttressed by Senegalese art historian Iba Ndiaye Diadji who used the medium of dance to provide an example: “The observer who regularly preferably distant from the knower. Exotic otherness may be not so much the result as the prerequisite of anthropological inquiry. We do not “Find” the savagery of the savage, or the primitivity of the primitive, we posit them, and we have seen in some detail how anthropology has managed to maintain distance, mostly by manipulating temporal coexistence through the denial of coevalness.” Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). 121.\(^{107}\)


\(^{108}\) Ibid.

attends dance performances will witness, on many occasions, the dancer’s correction or criticism (in the form of looks, gestures, and refusal to continue dancing) of the lead drummer when his rhythms are off. Often the attending public will side with the dancer-critic from murmurs to angry shouts at the orchestra, frequently forcing the drummers to adjust the harmonies.”

With the roles of performers and spectators set as equals within the process of artistic creation (dance, in Ndiaye Diadji’s example), we understand the flexibility and dynamic nature of the arts as part of a larger cultural philosophy that values experiential practice over recorded passive discourse or observation of nature.

In order to dispute Enlightenment-based views on African art, Senghor, arguably on the cutting edge of African art discourse for his time, extracted usable principles from them. Senghor had discovered quite early the writings of the German ethnologist Leo Frobenius. According to Senghor, Frobenius deepened his knowledge about the interrelationship of emotion, reason and art. While studying in France in the 1930s, he had read The History of African Civilization:

…Up to that point, our masters, who had been trained in the school of rationalism...had taught us to despise emotion and to be guided by only discursive reason…

As [Frobenius] told us in the History: “More than any other living organism, man is capable of ‘receiving reality’ … receiving reality means the faculty of being moved by the essence of phenomena – not by the facts but by the reality which gives rise to them, or, in other words, by the essence of the fact.”…[T]hat is their significance, which we perceive symbolically in the tangible qualities of the things and beings which underlie those facts…

\[110\] Iba Ndiaye Diadji (Qui a besoin de la critique d’art en Afrique – et ailleurs, Paris: Harmattan, 2006, 60) as qtd. in Diop, Critique de la notion d’art africain: approaches historiques, ethno-esthétiques et philosophiques, 158. « L’observateur qui fréquente assidûment des spectacles de danse sera témoin, plus d’un fois des reproches, des critiques (par le regard, par le geste et par le refus de continuer la danse) du danseur ou de la danseuse face au tambour-major lorsque la rhythmique est faussée. Et souvent le public présente donne raison au danseur-critique par des murmures, voire des cris de désapprobation en direction de l’orchestre des percussions, obligé dans bien des cas de réajuster l’harmonie. »

[Fronbenius] writes, ”what we call civilization is often the expression of the spirit, the language of the spirit, at least when it concerns men whose thought is still and primarily intuitive.”

And it is from feeling, that is to say from emotion, that art takes its inspiration. This idea may now be universally accepted, but it was not so at the beginning of the [twentieth] century.\footnote{Leopold Sedar Senghor, “The Lessons of Leo Frobenius: Preface.” In \textit{Leo Frobenius on African History, Art, and Culture: An Anthology}, edited by Eike Haberland. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007, viii-ix,}

In short, Senghor not only associated stylization in traditional African art with the transcendental, but also viewed its influence on modern European art as a vindication of the creative imagination of his ancestors. Though proud of the elevation and visibility of African art in many Western museums, he was, however, concerned that its ontological or spiritual functions had been sacrificed on the altar of “pure aesthetic enjoyment” or “art-for-art’s-sake”:

…In general, fragmentary borrowings—empty of all vigor…empty of all spirit…How could it have been otherwise in a world subjected to matter and to reason, and where one denounces reason only to pronounce the primacy of matter? For this is certainly the cause of the decadence of nineteenth-century art;…Realism and impressionism are but two sides of one same error. It is the adoration of the real that leads to photographic art. At most, the mind is content to analyze and combine the elements of the real, for a subtle game, a variation on the real...

For the value of Negro art is to be neither game nor pure aesthetic enjoyment; it is to signify. From among the arts, I select the art that is most typical—sculpture. Even the decoration of the simplest pieces of popular furnishings, far from diverting them from their purposes and being useless ornament, stresses these purposes…Art that is above all spiritual…the essential function of sculptors is to represent the dead ancestors and spirits, in statutes that are at once symbol and dwelling...

This is done by means of a human representation, and singularly through the representation of the human figure, the most faithful reflection of the soul. It is a striking fact that that anthropomorphic statues, and among these, masks, predominate. Constant concern for the man-intermediary.

But since this art strives for the essential expression of the object, it is opposite of subjective realism. The artist submits the details to a spiritual, therefore technical, hierarchy. Where may have wished to see only a lack of manual skill or an inability to observe the real, there is in fact will, at least consciousness of ordering (ordination)—or better, consciousness of ranking...
Along with the communal nature of the arts, therefore, Senghor posits an important corollary, being that the face of African art presents not an imitation of nature, but rather a series of signs that project the awareness of realities beyond the visible. These depictions of a greater truth accommodated the collective objective of production. They were visually manifest in ways that Senghor termed “surreal” or sometimes sous-real, meaning the unconscious undercurrents that were made physical in the plastic arts.

By declaring that the African artist sublimates his abilities to the authorship of the group, and raises his resulting objects to a plane beyond that of mere visual comprehension, Senghor points out to the European critic that African art is liberated from a reductive engagement with vision alone. As the French surrealist painters in the 1930s would later discover, the African artist had long achieved the integration of the conceptual world into tangible objects.

Frobenius’ statements about how the “barbarous negro” of Africa was a European invention, and that Africa and Europe could not be ranked hierarchically against each other due to the unique and individual merits of each, certainly inspired Senghor’s 1939 discourse on “Ce que l’homme noir apporte” (What the Black Man Brings) to global cultural history. He further admired the Frenchmen, Paul Guillaume and Thomas Munro for their seminal text.

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113 Senghor, "Ce que l'homme noir apporte," 308-9.
114 Diop, Critique de la notion d’art africain: approaches historiques, ethno-esthétiques et philosophiques, 177, 89. The surreal and subreal concepts are articulated by Senghor in two chronologically distant texts “L’Esthétique nègre-africain” of 1956 and Liberté 5, Le dialogue des cultures, 1993, testifying to the longevity of these ideas in his philosophical thought.
116 Vaillant, Black, French and African: A Life of Léopold Sédar Senghor, 125.
Primitive Negro Sculpture (1929), which he cited frequently in “Ce que l’homme noir apporte”. Given the interrelationship of the visual and performing arts in Africa as well as the attention that Paul Guillaume and Thomas Munro had drawn to the rhythmic organization of forms in African sculpture, Senghor would affirm that:

The ordering force of the Negro art is rhythm [cited from Guillaume and Munro]… It is the most delicate and least material thing. It is the vital element per excellence. It is the primary condition for, and sign of, art, as respiration is of life—respiration that rushes or slows, becomes regular or spasmodic, depending on the being’s tension, the degree and quality of the emotion. Such is primordial rhythm, in its purity, and such is it in the masterpieces of Negro art, particularly in sculpture.

By drawing from the work of Europeans such as Frobenius, and Guillaume and Munro, Senghor pointed out to his European readers the value that their own cultures and writers placed on the arts and cultures of his continent. Specifically Senghor could claim that Europeans themselves valued the rhythmic and emotive qualities of African material culture as it brought something to their own modern expressions that had been previously lacking:

…What is rhythm? It is the architecture of the soul, the internal dynamism that gives it form, a series of waves that it emits towards Others, the pure expression of vital force. Rhythm is the vibratory shock, the force that, via the senses, seizes us by our very roots. It expresses itself in the most basic, most sensual fashion: lines, colors, architectural volumes; painting and sculpture; accents in poetry and music; movements in dance…

117 The original version was published in English, but Senghor cites the French translation, which appeared in 1929. Paul Guillaume and Thomas Munro, La sculpture nègre primitive, Peintres et sculpteurs (Paris: G. Crès, 1929).
118 Senghor, “Ce que l’homme noir apporte,” 309.
119 Guillaume and Munro, La sculpture nègre primitive, 32-7, 52. On the influence of this book on Senghor’s notion of rhythm, see Diagne, "Rhythms," 95. And Diagne, African Art as Philosophy, 77-81.
120 Senghor, "Ce que l’homme noir apporte," 309. « Cette force ordinarice qui fait le style nègre est le rythme. [cited from Guillaume and Munro] C’est la chose la plus sensible et la moins matérielle. C’est l’élément vital par excellence. Il est la condition première et le signe de l’art comme la respiration de la vie ; la respiration qui se précipite ou ralentit, devient régulière ou spasmodique, suivant la tension de l’être, le degré et la qualité de l’émotion. Tel est le rythme primitivement dans sa pureté, tel il est dans les chef-d’œuvres de l’art nègre, particulièrement de la sculpture. »
121 Senghor, "L’Esthetique négro-Africaine," 55. « Qu’est-ce que le rythme ? C’est l’architecture de l’être, le dynamisme interne qui lui donne forme, le système des ondes qu’il émet à l’adresse des Autres [sic], l’expression pure de la force vitale. Le rythme, c’est le choc vibratoire, la force qui, à travers les sens, nous saisit à la racine de
Senghor argued that rhythm was a defining characteristic of all the historic arts of black Africa, and therefore a philosophical marker of African reason as well. Rhythm, therefore, was a literal by-product of the African aesthetic (hence philosophical) behaviors he defined in “L’Esthetique Nègro-Africaine.” Diagne further argues that “...the African art of yesterday, as Leo Apostel affirms, does provide convincing evidence for an African philosophy, considered as pluralistic energetism in particular, for Senghor’s thought.”

Stressing the interconnectedness of rhythm throughout the arts in Africa, Senghor frequently wrote of masks (sculpture) and the role they played in dance (which, by default also connected the objects to music, to audience, and literally to rhythm) One relevant example is his “Prayer to Masks” from 1945:

Masks! Oh Masks!
Black mask, red mask, you black and white masks,
Rectangular masks through whom the spirit breathes,
I greet you in silence!
And you too, my lionheaded ancestor.
You guard this place, that is closed to any feminine laughter, to any mortal smile.
You purify the air of eternity, here where I breathe the air of my fathers.
Masks of markless faces, free from dimples and wrinkles.
You have composed this image, this my face that bends over the altar of white paper.
In the name of your image, listen to me!
Now while the Africa of despotism is dying – it is the agony of a pitiable princess, Just like Europe to whom she is connected through the navel.
Now turn your immobile eyes towards your children who have been called
And who sacrifice their lives like the poor man his last garment
So that hereafter we may cry ‘here’ at the rebirth of the world being the leaven that the white flour needs.

l’être. Il s’exprime par les moyens les plus matériels, les plus sensuels : lignes, surfaces, couleurs, volumes en architecture, sculpture et peinture ; accents en poésie et musique ; mouvements dans la danse. »

122 This statement is supported by Senghor’s conclusions to his essay. Senghor, "L'Esthetique Nègro-Africaine [1956],” 216. (An English translation of this section is available from Souleymane Bachir Diagne.) See also the late iterations of this in Senghor’s thought in Léopold Sédar Senghor, Ce que je crois : Négritude, Francité et Civilisation de l'Universel (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1988). 9.

123 Diagne, "Rhythms," 100-01.
For who else would teach rhythm to the world that has
died of machines and cannons?
For who else should ejaculate the cry of joy, that arouses the dead and the wise in a new
dawn?
Say, who else could return the memory of life to men with a torn hope?
They call us cotton heads, and coffee men, and oily men.
They call us men of death.
But we are the men of the dance whose feet only gain
power when they beat the hard soil.\textsuperscript{124}

The line, “Rectangular masks through whom the spirit breathes” speaks volumes about
ancient African belief that reality has two aspects—the invisible and visible, both empowered by
a vital force that generates the rhythm of life. Conversely, it is the rhythm or the vital force
generated by the soul that empowers the body in its metaphysical function as a mask that makes
the spirit manifest in the physical world—the mask “whose feet only gain power when they beat
the hard soil.” So it is that Senghor would attribute the inventiveness of African art to their
creators’ reliance on an imagination nourished by intuitive reason—a phenomenon previously
misunderstood by Western art critics, but now widely recognized by Western avant-garde artists
as the hallmark of modernity. As Senghor remembered:

During the 1930s, when I was a young teacher at the Lycée Descartes in
Tours, I would often spend my weekends and short holidays in Paris. There I
socialized more with artists in the Paris School or, if you prefer, the Cubist
Movement… As most of these artists were Mediterranean – Italian, Portuguese,
Romanian and especially Spanish – one of other of them would occasionally
suggest, ‘Why don’t we go to see Picasso?’ He lived nearby, two or three streets
away

I still remember Pablo Picasso’s friendliness, seeing me to the door as I
was leaving and saying, looking at me straight in the eye, ‘We must remain
savages.’ And I replied, ‘We must remain negroes.’ And he burst out laughing,
because we were on the same wavelength. The artists in Paris were well aware
that Cubism or the Paris School had drawn its inspiration primarily from black

[1945]). (NB: English translations of this poem vary.) Another (shorter) version appears in Léopold Sédar Senghor,
dedicated another of his poems “Black Mask” to Pablo Picasso.
African art. It was no coincidence that this school sprang up in Paris at the same time as Surrealism, or what Tristan Tzara, again, who best described it in his book on Picasso: ‘In this artist’s works,’ he specified, ‘the surface elements, the solid masses, are arranged in such a way as to dispel the illusion that the flat surface of the canvas has real depth.’ In other words, he had done away with the effects of perspective. And if the result of this, as in the case of negro and surrealist poems, was to move the spectator or listener deeply, it was because it had appealed to their emotions and, going deeper still, had touched their mystic soul.

It is worth mentioning here that the influence of African art on European modernism also sparked a cultural and artistic awakening in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s. Known as the Harlem Renaissance, that awakening caused a number of black intellectuals, writers, artists, musicians and dancers to reconnect with an African past, synthesizing it with Western elements to define and assert their blackness as well as generate self and race pride. As some leaders of the Harlem Renaissance paid frequent visits to Paris and interacted with black students from French colonies in Africa and the Caribbean (including Senghor), they soon became role models for members of the Négritude movement. And since some artists of the Harlem Renaissance sought inspiration from African abstraction in an attempt to reflect the fact of their being “black” and “American” at the same time, Senghor would call on contemporary African artists to chart a similar course. Doing so, according to him, would enable them to (a) reflect the dynamics of change due to the impact of Islamic and Christian evangelization as well as European colonization and (b) forge a new Black consciousness/identity out of the resulting

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hybridity. In fact, Senghor himself epitomized that hybridity. First, his father (Basile Diogoye Senghor), a Seereer, was a Christian, while his mother (Gnilane Ndieme Senghor), a Fula, was a Muslim. Second, he was an évolué (African and French at the same time) during the colonial period. And having served as a member of the Assemblée Nationale Francaise in Paris, he was obliged to reconcile African with French perspectives even after Senegal became politically independent from France in 1960.

Thus, Senghor’s nostalgia for the African past in the visual arts would end up in a compromise, if not a paradox. For instance, he once described (as noted earlier) the self-referential European paintings and sculptures inspired by African art as “fragmentary borrowings—empty of all vigor…empty of all spirit….”¹²⁹ Yet he refrained from calling for a revival of ancient African religions—hook, line and sinker--which would have required the use of contemporary African art for embodying spirits on altars and in ritual performances. Of course, such a call would have been publicly denounced in a predominantly Muslim country like Senegal that had a Christian for their first president.¹³⁰ No wonder then that he would define Africanité as “the complementary symbiosis of the values of Arabism and the values of Négritude.”¹³¹ Consequently, the art programs he established during his presidency fostered African parallels of those European forms he once dismissed as “empty of all spirits.” However, unlike the latter, the African parallels were not intended to be self-referential expressions. Rather, they were expected to perform a number of social, psychological, cultural and political functions such as promoting pride in black humanity, pan-African solidarity as well as an

¹²⁹ Senghor, "Ce que l'homme noir apporte," 308.
¹³⁰ It should be pointed out that despite the fact that a good majority of Senegalese are Muslims, many have not totally severed their connection with the ancient belief in spirits.
awareness of the great contribution of African abstraction to the world of art, which would then serve as a catalyst for cultural development in contemporary Africa, in general, and Senegal, in particular. To facilitate the latter, he encouraged contemporary Senegalese artists to emulate the achievements of their ancestors by exploring the possibilities of lines, shapes, forms and colors, in addition to following “the black African aesthetics of ‘rhythmical, melodious and analogical images.’”

Visualizing Négritude at the École des Arts de Sénégal (EAS)

Shortly after becoming president in 1960, Senghor made funds available for reorganizing Senegal’s premier art school, the Maison des Arts, founded in 1958. He changed the institution’s name to École des Arts de Sénégal (EAS) in 1961 and charged it with the task of producing a new breed of contemporary artists for the country. The institution’s curriculum included courses in Music, Dance, Drama and Fine Arts as well as a foundational program in the humanities designed to introduce students to courses in African and Western art history. Senghor’s rejuvenation of the École des Arts de Sénégal produced an academy divided into two sections, both initially directed by Senegalese artists who had trained in France. Iba Ndiaye, was a realist/expressionist (fig. 1.1), and was selected by Senghor to head the Section des Arts Plastique, which endeavored to familiarize students with “a command of both classical and

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132 Senghor, Ce que je crois, 119.
133 The school would be renamed yet again in 1977 as the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts du Sénégal.
modern elements of Western art. Papa Ibra Tall headed the department known as *Section de Recherches Plastique Nègres*. Because he was already familiar with Senghor’s vision of *Négritude* and reflected it in his own works (fig. 1.2), Papa Ibra Tall encouraged students to create from an “African” perspective with an emphasis on stylization and abstraction. As Harney points out, he was reluctant to “offer formal instruction for fear that it would block the creative output of his students.”

Because Senghor followed developments in the École very closely, he soon invited the Frenchman Pierre Lods (a mathematician and self-taught artist) to complement the teachings of Papa Ibra Tall. In 1951, Lods had founded the Poto Poto experimental art workshop in Brazzaville (RC) to allow students a space to investigate their creative impulses. As a result, they produced abstractions similar to those Senghor prescribed for *Négritude*. Also on the faculty of the École des Arts de Sénégal was Alpha Woualid Diallo, a local self-taught artist nationally famous for his realistic historical paintings (fig. 1.3). A final founder, André Seck, was hired by Senghor in 1963 to create a sculpture program. Like the painters, Seck had trained in Europe (Belgium) and was living there until Senghor brought him to the École.

In short, the pedagogical approaches of Ndiaye, Tall, Lods, Diallo and Seck enabled students to combine in their works Western and African elements to reflect what Senghor perceived as a synthesis of *Africanité* and *Latinité*. In 1977, the name of the school was changed

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136 Ima Ebong, “Negritude: Between Mask and Flag,” 204.
137 On Papa Ibra Tall’s exposure to the tenets of Negritude while studying in Paris, see Harney, *In Senghor's Shadow*, 59.
138 Ibid., 56.
139 Grabski, "Historical Invention and Contemporary Practice," 18.
141 Sylla, "Les arts plastiques senegalais contemporains", par. 11. par. 11.
again, to the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts du Sénégal. Because of its location in Dakar, the school is popularly known as the “École de Dakar,” though the term is also used by scholars to categorize works produced by its graduates and their instructors under the influence of Négritude. While these works vary in form, style and content, they share certain characteristics such as an emphasis on stylization and abstraction, bright and contrasting colors, sinuous forms evocative of musical or cosmic rhythm and easily identifiable African motifs (most especially masks and ancestral figures), all rendered in techniques that draw from Western training or materials. A work by Seydou Barry, an early student of Tall, depicts the mythological Return of the Boal Queen through flat forms, outlined in contrasting colors (fig. 1.4).

Partly to diversify the materials for art production in Senegal and partly to make creative expressions more functional both culturally and politically, Senghor initiated the establishment of a tapestry school (Manufacture Senegalaise des Arts Decoratifs (MSAD) in Thiès and appointed Papa Ibra Tall its first director in 1965. The new position enabled the latter to employ some of his former students such as Ibou Diouf, Bacary Dième, Modou Niang, and Moussa Samb, whose designs continued the painting traditions of the École des Arts de Sénégal, but were now translated into tapestry. The tapestries produced by this group shared many visual traits, being: the predominant use of two-dimensional subject forms created with heavy outlines or else block colors, dynamic patterning used to fill both subject and background spaces, and subjects themselves of archetypal nature (African animals, musicians, masks or masqueraders, mythical scenes, ancestor or demon figures, and sometimes depictions of well-known African sculptural prototypes). Given the ancient tradition of rugs and carpets in the Islamic world, it is not surprising that some of the Thies’ tapestries would also combine African and arabesque
motifs to evoke Senghor’s definition of *Africanité* as “the symbiosis of the values of Arabism and the values of *Négritude.*”\(^{142}\)

Tall encouraged students at the Tapestry to create a visual vocabulary for *Négritude* that was informed by “universalisms and particularisms, often narrating tales of local cultural heroes with a pan-African visual vocabulary, in European oils or dyed, imported wool.”\(^{143}\) Two works from the time illustrate the trend: Papa Ibra Tall’s own *Chevauchée Solaire* (fig. 1.5) and a work by his student, the tapestry *Day and Night* by Ibou Diouf (fig 1.6).

Since the primary patrons of the tapestries were Senegalese government officials, including Senghor himself, the dialogue between art and politics via *Négritude* became a closed loop where artists, inspired by political rhetoric, produced works almost exclusively for state consumption (and for the government to exchange with other heads of state as gifts).

After Papa Ibra Tall’s departure to Thiès, Pierre Lods became the new head of the *Section de Recherches Plastique Nègres*. Like his predecessor, he maintained a pedagogy consistent with *Négritude*. While directing the art workshop at Poto-Poto, he had championed a strategy of “laissez-faire”, where instructors (primarily Europeans) provided tools and support, but no cultural or technical influence over their African students. According to Grabski, Lods was of the view that “artists were born, rather than made” in the art school—a perspective “premised on the notion that being an artist involved a “state of spirit” rather than a mastery of materials, mechanics, or techniques.”\(^{144}\) For him, making art was more a question of feeling deeply and expressing an internal vision than depicting the visible world or elucidating an intellectual


\(^{143}\) Harney, *In Senghor's Shadow*, 59.

\(^{144}\) Grabski, "Historical Invention and Contemporary Practice," 22.
He therefore allowed students to develop their own styles based on intuition and local cultural ideas without teaching them to copy styles and precedent from European academic painting. To this end, Lods displayed examples of “traditional” African masks in the classroom at Poto-Poto (fig. 1.7) evidently to inspire students and remind them of the interconnectedness of spirituality, emotion and rhythm in African cultures. Abdou Sylla points out that Lods’ methodology of inner inspiration dovetailed nicely with Senghor’s own theories that the Black African’s “emotions, sensibilities and instincts” were the driving cultural markers of Africanité. As such, Lods’ teachings created a perfect artistic platform for the visual expression of Négritude philosophies.

Lods’ tightened his pedagogy even further in Dakar, where he taught students to avoid all external influences, including the works of other artists, whether African or European. Harney corroborates Sylla’s points in her own description of the École de Dakar style:

[Lods] favored a laissez-faire teaching approach, preferring not to impose European models on what he saw to be an African artist’s “innate sense of composition, of rhythm, and of color harmony…” (Mount 1973:85). The works produced under his tutelage often depicted elongated, schematized figures in sharply defined movement. Painted in strong contrasting colors or in subtle shades of brown and ochres, these forms were situated within idyllic landscapes or market and village scenes. Masks also frequently made their appearance in these flat, highly decorative compositions.

145 Ibid.
147 Sylla, ”Les arts plastiques senegalais contemporains”. par. 10., par. 10: “Cette pédagogie de Lods et ses croyances rencontraient, bien évidemment, les idées et théories de Senghor (cf. émotivité, sensibilité, instinctivité, etc., du Noir africain), qui envisageait, également dans ce domaine de la formation artistique, de faire de la Négritude le fondement des arts plastiques sénégalais modernes.”
148 Grabski notes that “to preserve the purity of their expression, students were not exposed to the work of other artists, even the walls of their classroom are remembered as completely devoid of images.” Grabski, ”Historical Invention and Contemporary Practice,” 24.
A painting by Bocar Pathé Diong. *Masks*, (n.d.) makes use of the motif, repeating it in rhythmic fashion with abstracted human hands across a large canvas in oil (fig. 1.8). The frequency of the mask in the paintings and textiles of the École de Dakar is not surprising given the popularity of Senghor’s poem “Prayers to the Masks.”

Although Iba Ndiaye, the head of the *Section des Arts Plastique*, contributed significantly to the foundation of what is now known as the École de Dakar, he struggled with the parameters imposed by Senghor’s *Négritude* ideology and the resulting pedagogical practice at the École. Having trained, lived and worked in France, he sought to encourage a more traditional French academy-style of teaching in Dakar. Thus his section required students to draw from life and plastic models, acquire the knowledge of perspectives and be familiar with Western and African art history, among others. Ndiaye was not convinced that an “innate sense” was sufficient to produce quality compositions, color blending or knowledge of materials and he insisted on attention to learning skills and mastery over them. This approach put him at odds with Tall and Lods. Disappointed with the favoritism shown to their department (*Section de Recherches Plastique Nègres*), Ndiaye left the school in 1967 and returned to France.

As Senghor was bent on using the arts to reinforce the Senegalese body politic and his vision of *Africanité* and the output of the students of Papa Ibra Tall and Pierre Lods contributed to the materialization of that vision, he continued to give them his full support. There are indications that during his presidency the Ministry of Culture received between twenty-five and thirty percent of the state’s budget for museums, art schools, presses, theatres, archives,

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151 He lived and worked there until his death in 2008. Ibid.
exhibitions and art workshops. In 1966, Senegal sponsored (in collaboration with UNESCO and the Society for African culture) the *Premier Festival Mondiale des Arts Nègres* (The First World Festival of Black Arts). Attended by writers, playwrights as well as visual and performing artists from 30 African nations and 37 from other parts of the world, the festival featured public lectures, symposia, concerts, fashion shows and art exhibitions, among others. For the Senegalese exhibition, Senghor personally selected canvases painted by students and faculty at the École des Arts de Sénégal. His choice later formed the core of a traveling international exhibition designed to promote Senegalese culture abroad. In 1974, the exhibition opened its European tour at the Grand Palais in Paris. It added destinations in the United States, Canada and several African nations before finally returning to Senegal in 1985 well after Senghor had stepped down from the office of President.

**From Pro-Négritude to Anti-Négritude**

According to Harney, “Senghor’s formulations of *Africanité*, which drew heavily upon European anthropological, evolutionist, and primitivist models to characterize racial and cultural authenticity, coupled with his insistence upon the “emotive” and “rhythmic” qualities of this reclaimed “Africanness,” led many to dismiss his philosophical writings as reductivist, misguided, and ultimately self-primitivizing.” Not surprisingly, some art critics used similar terms to dismiss much of the artistic productions of the École de Dakar. Others saw them as

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152 Harney, *In Senghor's Shadow*, 49.


catering to foreign interests and as well as Senegalese elites. The richness suggested by their
designs and expensive materials often contradicted the realities of the Senegalese landscape, for
a good majority of the population lived in inexcusable poverty with no access to the elite
institutions where Senghor had cultivated his intellect under colonial French rule. Despite
Senghor’s pacifism and careful appeasement of French government officials and commercial
enterprises, all of which arguably kept his country relatively secure and financially stable,
compared to its neighbors in the immediate post-independence years, *Négritude* was not the
formula most Senegalese wanted to follow in order to improve the quality of their quotidian
lives. Senghor’s lofty idealism spoke to philosophical abstractions, not lived realities.

By the mid-1970s counter-movements had begun to form outside the École de Dakar. In
1977, disenchanted with the status quo, some artists converted an abandoned army barracks not
far from the *Musée Dynamique* into the *Village des Arts*. There, they began to experiment with
sculpture, performance, installation and other modes of expression different from those
associated with the École de Dakar. Some artists lived inside the village with their families,
others, like Dimé for example, maintained working studios in the Village, but resided
elsewhere.  

Issa Samb (aka Joe Ouakam), El Hadji Sy, a 1977 graduate of the École Nationale
des Beaux-Arts in Dakar, along with Youssouf John are generally credited with leading the
artistic rebellion culminating in the creation of the *Village des Arts*. Issa Samb was older than
the rest, and like many artists in the anti-*Négritude* movements, began his career as an École de
Dakar painter. He eventually rejected *Négritude* and the style it engendered amongst his
colleagues in order to help found the *Laboratoire Agit-Art*, an organization of mostly younger,

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155 After 1979 Dimé shared an apartment with Abdoulaye Ndoye, his friend and fellow artist (painter) in the HLM

second generation artists who were based in the Village des Arts. The Laboratoire’s main objective was to use art as a means of challenging the status quo. This meant rejecting painting, tapestry and European-type modernism and academicism in favor of a more down to earth approach that would reflect the realities of life in contemporary Senegalese society. Some members started making use of found objects to create assemblages; others engaged in performance art.

El Hadji Sy, most noticeably, broke from his academic training at the École by using his feet to paint – signaling an open rejection of European academic techniques, and forcing a renegotiation of the meaning of ‘primitivism’ within the genre of painting (fig. 1.9). Samb is widely recognized as Senegal’s first contemporary performance artist, as he combined oration, object and environment into multi-media events that were openly critical of artistic patronage and state sponsorship. By the early 1980s the Laboratoire Agit-Art, had begun focusing on performance art events that included sets and sculptural installations fabricated by the artists from materials found (récupéré) in the city of Dakar (fig. 1.10).

In 1980, Senghor stepped down from office, passing leadership of the country to his handpicked successor, Abdou Diouf. Unfortunately Diouf inherited a budget crisis from his predecessor and in his attempts to reduce spending, most, but not all, of Senghor’s art initiatives were cancelled. Such was the budget crisis in the country that by the late 1980s the capital city of Dakar could not afford to maintain many basic social services. Water delivery and trash

158 Ibid.
159 Snipe, Arts and Politics in Senegal  61-3.
pickups were sporadic at best.\textsuperscript{160} Trash began to pile up around the city, which encouraged trash picking by people from across the economic spectrum, looking for items they could use, fix or sell. The HLM (Habitation à Loyer Modère), the city’s designated low-income housing project, where Dimé lived at the time, was one of the most devastated areas. The situation was worse in the suburbs, and the younger generations began to realize that the government was not going to help ameliorate the situation anytime soon.\textsuperscript{161}

In January of 1990, internationally renowned musician, and modern-day griot (gëwël), Youssou N’Dour released a song, “Set” (clean), that became the anthem of the day.\textsuperscript{162} It called on the general public to clean up the environment – physically, morally and spiritually – and it gave the name Set Setal to the spontaneous urban beautification movements begun by neighborhood youth groups during the school vacation months of July-October 1990.\textsuperscript{163} As part of their contribution to the clean-up exercise, artists from the Village des Arts responded by moving into the poorest neighborhoods inside and outside Dakar, creating wall murals. While some murals focused on different aspects of Senegalese history and culture, others were didactic, calling for better behavior from citizens and government alike.\textsuperscript{164} Certain murals critiqued former president Senghor’s support of the decidedly apolitical paintings and tapestries by École

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\textsuperscript{162} Youssou N'Dour, Set, (Dakar: Virgin Records, 1990), Album.

\textsuperscript{163} Set Setal does not translate well into English. Literally “clean, make it clean” does not encompass the full meaning, which emphasizes the making of something beautiful for the benefit of all. See, Sylla, "Les arts plastiques senegaiais contemporains". under “4: Ruptures et Récupération” par. 15.

\textsuperscript{164} Jacques Bugnicourt and Amadou Diallo’s short text includes color photographs of most of the murals that went up around the city prior to 1990. Bugnicourt and Diallo, Set Setal: des murs qui parlent. Nouvelle culture urbaine à Dakar. For more images, see Harney, In Senghor’s Shadow, Pl. 12 and 13.
\end{flushleft}
de Dakar artists, while at the same time condemning Diouf’s outright lack of support for the arts in general.\textsuperscript{165}

As Harney, citing Wallerstein (1966), points out, “Negritude and its political equivalent, African socialism, had never addressed more than an elite audience.”\textsuperscript{166} The decision by Issa Samb, El Hadji Sy and members of the \textit{Laboratoire Agit-Art} to use “trash” in their artistic compositions had two major implications. First, it drew attention to government control of arts through the tenets of \textit{Négritude} and its focus on the upper class and government elites. Secondly, the \textit{Laboratoire} laid the foundation for what would become known in Senegal in the 1990s as “\textit{recuperation},” a popular art movement that would be nationally and internationally recognized for its critical use of abandoned materials to make social, political and aesthetic statements. Members of the movement also painted murals on sites previously used as garbage dumps, thus making art accessible to the masses. Suddenly painting ceased to be a phenomenon restricted to art galleries and members of the upper class. At the same time, found object installations by members of the \textit{Laboratoire Agit-Art} and \textit{Set Setal} movements found their way from the streets, as it were, into the elite museum and gallery venues, thereby inverting the dominant paradigms of value and display as established under Senghor. The move towards sculptural production, and specifically to \textit{récupération}-based production using found objects coincided with the waning years of Senghor’s presidency, the resulting loss of patronage for the arts in general, but in particular for painting and the \textit{École de Dakar} style.


\textsuperscript{166} Harney, \textit{In Senghor’s Shadow}, 11.
In sum, Moustapha Dimé, the focus of this dissertation, rose to become one of Senegal’s leading contemporary artists during both the pro- and anti-Négritude periods. Hence, his works reflect the dynamics of both periods.
Chapter 2  Moustapha Dimé: The Making of an Artist

Education

Moustapha Dimé was born on April 23, 1952 in Louga, Senegal into an upper-middle-class Wolof family. His father, Karimou, was a man of local standing and wealth, having made a career as a trader and professional farmer. He expected his sons to assist in the management of the family businesses, and wanted Moustapha to be an accountant.\[167\] Karimou had three wives: Astou Diaw, M’bene Gaye and Fatou Dienj. Dimé’s mother, M’bene, had eleven children, of which Dimé was the fifth.\[168\] Wolof was the primary language spoken at home, but like all other school children in the country, when Dimé attended the École II de Santhiaba-Sud elementary school in Louga from 1960-64, his education was taught entirely in French. Due to disruptive behavior, he had to transfer halfway through the 1964 school year to the École Nguelaw, where he completed elementary school in 1966.\[169\]

At this early age, Dimé demonstrated his frustration with traditional, conscripted forms of education established as part of the French colonial tradition in Senegalese schools. What his elementary school and family saw as ‘disruptive,’ might very well be symptomatic of Dimé’s independent character, and, by extension, the anti-colonial attitude of a new generation of

\[167\] Cheikh Umu Dimé, Interview with the Author, 2 June 2006. Cheikh Umu is one of Dimé’s younger brothers and the two were very close. Cheikh Umu unfortunately passed away in March of 2008 without seeing the completion of this text, which he supported from the outset.

\[168\] Susan Kart et al., Interview with the Dimé Family in Louga, 15 June 2008.

\[169\] Sylla, “Pratique et théorie,” under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”. Sylla interviewed the artist several times between 1982 and 1992 and his conversations with Dimé are lengthy. As Sylla neither published his dissertation in its entirety (the original is housed in the collections of the IFAN Library, University of Dakar), nor translated it into English, I cite heavily from his account for the benefit of Anglophone readers. Dimé’s most well known biography in English appears in his interview with Thomas McEvilley at the moment of the 1993 Venice Biennale. In general, the McEvilley interview contains fewer specifics than Sylla’s interviews as well as some factual errors. Subsequent authors, however, have frequently depended on the McEvilley interview for their own biographies of Dimé. For example, Elizabeth Harney draws only from the McEvilley interview and her own 1994 conversation with Dimé as her biographical sources for the artist. See Harney, In Senghor’s Shadow, 163-73.
Senegalese youth. Senegalese school children in the 1960s were subject to a process of acculturation to the cultural, political and social values of the French motherland. Dimé recalled that history textbooks in his grade school taught about “Our ancestors the Gauls...”\(^{170}\) For his generation the sentence fragment became an ironic motto for all that was wrong with the French colonial project. The early sixties were heady times in Senegal, with the newly independent nation struggling to define itself against its former French colonial identity. As an adult, Dimé continued the practice of speaking Wolof at home, while French was reserved for non-Wolof speakers or formal occasions involving government officials. He was also able to speak and write rudimentary English and understood a fair amount of religious Arabic from his later Qur’anic studies.

By the time he finished primary school, however, Dimé was involved with the young, active and large social class of Lawbé carvers who formed a dominant component of the Louga population. He made many friends among them, carving toys from wood and bits of scrap metal.\(^{171}\) According to indigenous Senegalese societal structure, which predates colonialism and is still evident today, the Lawbé form one segment of a lower caste of artisans (musicians, blacksmiths, griots, etc.), higher only than that of the traditional slaves.\(^{172}\) As his family was not of caste society, the young Dimé incurred Karimou’s displeasure for consorting with the

\(^{170}\) Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 34.

\(^{171}\) Sylla, "Practique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”.

\(^{172}\) While I could cite this class structure system to any number of sources, it pleases me to select this information from Senghor himself. Léopold Sédar Senghor, Liberté I: Négritude et Humanisme (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1964). 47. In the interest of full disclosure, Senghor cites a source for this material, being: L. Aujas. “Les Sérères du Sénégal” in Bulletin d’Etudes historiques et scientifiques de l’AOF. (1931).
Lawbé.\textsuperscript{173} Perhaps correctly, his father assumed Dimé’s association with the unschooled Lawbé children were the reason for his son’s lack of focus in the classroom.\textsuperscript{174}

After failing his entrance exams to middle school, Dimé sought admission to the Centre de Formation Artisanale (CFA), a vocational school in Dakar, designed to promote technical and artistic education in the newly-independent state of Senegal under President Senghor. Perhaps hoping to place some distance between Dimé and the Louga Lawbé, his father consented. From 1966-1970, the teenage Dimé lived with family members in Dakar while attending the CFA.\textsuperscript{175} At the time, the CFA offered professional training in woodworking, jewelry, watch, shoe, and basket making, along with ceramics.\textsuperscript{176} Textile work, painting and sculpture along the lines of what one might find in a “fine art” school, however, were not taught. Dimé was attracted to woodworking, and studied under a French ex-patriot who trained his students primarily in the decoration of Occidental-style furniture with African-inspired design motifs.\textsuperscript{177} Hence, the program did not expose Dimé to drawing, sculpture, or art history. He learned about them later

\textsuperscript{173} Cheikh Umu Dimé, Interview with the Author, 2 June 2006.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{175} Accounts vary as to where and with whom Dimé lived from 1966-1979. His brothers, Amadou and N’Dongo state that Dimé lived with Amadou in the neighborhood known as HLM IV in Dakar. Abdou Sylla in his doctoral dissertation claims that Dimé lived first with his uncle Malik Dimé from 1966-68 and then moved to the SICAP neighborhood to live with his sister and her new husband from 1968-72. Sylla does not mention Amadou in his records. Rokhaya, the sister who lived in SICAP does state that Dimé lived for a while with her, and also with their brother, Amadou, but she does not remember the exact years. Most likely, Dimé lived at varying intervals between all three houses in Dakar during this 13-year period. In 1979, however, he moved in with Abdoulaye Ndoye, his friend and fellow artist (painter) and the two were based out of their live/work studio in the HLM IV until Dimé moved to Gorée Island in 1992. Sylla, "Practique et thérie," under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”. Amadou Dimé, Interview with the Author, 26 June 2008. Rokhaya Dimé, Interview with the Author, June 15 2008.
\textsuperscript{176} Sylla, "Practique et thérie," under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’".\textsuperscript{177} Ibid. Sylla does not name the instructor, and I cannot verify his name at the present from my records either.
during his travels outside of Senegal and in his subsequent residency at newly established École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Dakar.  

Dimé’s internship (1977-79) at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts was his only formal training in fine art, though a continuation at a higher level of his education at the Centre de Formation Artisanale. At the 1977 Festival de la Jeunesse in Dakar, the painter Claude Chaigneau, then Director of the École Nationale de Beaux-Arts in Dakar, saw some of Dimé’s carvings for the first time. On the merits of these sculptures, the Frenchman invited Dimé to attend the school for free as an auditor/intern, for at twenty-five, the sculptor was too old to matriculate as a traditional student.

The years at the École enabled Dimé to acquire some of the technical and theoretical skills with which to negotiate the international, Euro-American driven art market. He investigated European art history, methodology and market politics on his path towards participating in those systems himself as a working artist. He studied French literature at the École, along with classical Greek sculpture. Recounting his history for McEvilley, Dimé

178 While the school had existed in various forms since 1958, not until 1977 did it carry the name École Nationale des Beaux-Arts du Sénégal. Additionally, in 1977, the school not only changed its name, it moved from its former location at Camp Lat-Dior on the Corniche Ouest to Avenue Peytavin, hence my use of the term ‘newly established.’ Prior stages of the school were: 1958-1961 Maison des Arts; 1961-1971 École des Arts du Sénégal; 1971-77 Institut National des Arts du Sénégal; 1977 to present École Nationale des Beaux-Arts du Sénégal. To avoid confusion, I refer to the school as the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts (ENBA) as this is what it was called when Dimé left and what it is called today. See Sy, “The School of Fine Arts of Senegal,” 35, 36.


180 Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 35, 41.
states that during his residency at the École he became more deeply engaged with, and subsequently critical of, the history and methodologies of Western art.\textsuperscript{181}

The curriculum at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts had undergone changes since the formative years of the 1960s, but the personalities of its founding directors and the entrenchment of their teaching methods were still evident during Dimé’s tenure. While Iba Ndiaye and Papa Ibra Tall had departed, Lods and Seck were still in residence when Dimé was at the school. The French director, Chaigneau, maintained the tradition started by Senghor of hiring faculty that were either French or else Senegalese artists trained in France.\textsuperscript{182}

André Seck primarily directed Dimé’s instruction in sculpture. He guided Dimé through a series of independent studies during the 1977-78 school year and then left him to his own devices. While at the school, Dimé had the option of attending theoretical and studio classes, but no documentation remains that would tell us which classes he chose. As an apprentice, Dimé did not have to pass qualifying levels, nor take exams.\textsuperscript{183} Thus, Seck evidently handled Dimé’s sculptural education in accordance with Lods’ and Tall’s “laissez-faire” pedagogy; assigning projects without direct instruction. While offering critique, he did not mandate familiarity with sculptural models or art history. Seck’s free-spirited approach must have initially appealed to Dimé given his truculence in the highly structured state school system of his elementary years. Evidently, his first year at the École went well and he enrolled in a second as his student ID from the epoch attests (doc. 1).

\textsuperscript{181} Dimé qtd. in ibid., 40, 41.

\textsuperscript{182} Sylla reports that from 1979-1982, the number of instructors never numbered more than twenty, and the vast majority were French or assisted by French technicians in the classroom. Sylla, "Pratique et théorie," under section 3 – 4 – 3 “L’École Nationale des Beaux-Arts”.

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”.

In 1978, however, Seck hired one of his former pupils, Ali Traoré as an assistant.\textsuperscript{184} Traoré had received a grant from President Senghor, using it to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome in 1971 and had also completed an apprenticeship in Carrara, Italy in 1976. By the time he came to teach with Seck he had had several more internships in addition to receiving a number of art prizes.\textsuperscript{185} Traoré and Dimé clashed from the start – most likely the result of differing sets of artistic values, as well as the special status of Apprentice afforded to both men at the École.\textsuperscript{186} Seck, apparently could not, or would not, reconcile the younger artists, and Dimé left the École three-quarters of the way through the 1978-79 academic year.\textsuperscript{187} As Seck and Traoré were well versed in European sculpture and methods, having trained in Belgium and Italy respectively, Dimé may have felt pressured to follow their lead, and subsequently restricted in his own creative demarche.

Traoré and Dimé clashed again in the year after Dimé’s departure from the École during a group exhibition in 1980 when Traoré exhibited works that copied heavily from Dimé’s developing filiform style. Dimé cites this incident as one reason why he eventually abandoned the style in the mid-1980s in search of something that would be uniquely his own. This calls for some additional corrective amendments to the current literature on this event. In his 1993 interview with McEvilley, Dimé states:

> What pushed me also to leave that style was that there is a Senegalese sculptor with whom I exhibited in 1990 in the Senegalese exhibit in the French Cultural Center. He had a scholarship to Carrara, and he worked a lot there and came back to Senegal. He wanted to do something that had nothing to do with what he had done in Italy. He hung out with me…A little after that I realized he was now doing the same thing that I was doing. We had an exhibition of Senegalese artists

\textsuperscript{184} Alternately spelled Aly Traoré
\textsuperscript{185} Saliou Démaguy Diouf, Les arts plastiques contemporains du Sénégal (Dakar: Présence Africaine Éditions, 1999), 209.
\textsuperscript{186} Sylla, “Practique et théorie,” under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
against Apartheid, and the sculpture he presented there looked a lot like mine. And everybody said that.\textsuperscript{188}

It is clear from the context of Dimé’s remarks, however, that the date has been erroneously recorded and that the artist in question is Traoré, with whom Dimé was frequently at odds, and who had been in Carrara on a fellowship before meeting Dimé at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in 1978. The date should be 1980, not 1990, and is most likely an editing error.\textsuperscript{189}

\textbf{Religion}

Along with his studies at the École, Dimé made a second purposeful commitment to his profession as an artist, this time a spiritual one. In 1985 he went to the religious city of Touba for a spiritual retreat at the side of his religious mentor, the Marabout Serigne Cheikh Fall Khady Guèye (d. 1994). A deeply religious individual, Dimé struggled chronically with how to reconcile his choice of career as an artist with his family, his religion and his fluctuating economic success.\textsuperscript{190} His seclusion in Touba in 1985 was thus born of personal and professional needs. He reported frustration that others, not just Traoré, were now copying his filiform sculptures, and he was still living in entrenched poverty.\textsuperscript{191} Despite some early successes, he had

\textsuperscript{188} McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 45-8.

\textsuperscript{189} In turn, as Dimé politely does not name the artist in his discussion with McEvilley, this leads to Elizabeth Harney’s determination that the artist in question must be Tasfir Momar Guèye. Working from the date of 1990, she cannot be blamed for the suggestion in her footnotes that: “This artist-friend was Tasfir Momar Guèye whose entry to the 1992 Dakar Biennale is a perfect example of the filiform figures previously produced by Dimé. See Biennale Internationale des Arts: Dak’Art ’92, catalogue (Paris: Beaux-Arts Magazine, 1992): 57” Harney, "Legacy of Negritude," 127 (footnote 265).

\textsuperscript{190} Kart et al., Interview with the Dimé Family in Louga, 15 June 2008.

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid. Sylla, "Practique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé II: ‘Practique et Technique Sculpturales’”. See also Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 41, 44-45.
not managed to sell art regularly enough to improve his living conditions. \(^{192}\) Lastly, he might very well have been struggling with alcoholism. \(^{193}\) Drinking is prohibited by Islam, being regarded as a loss of faith in God, and a much more serious offence than “substance abuse.” The retreat therefore seems to have served to rectify a loss of faith and to find a means of reconciling his faith with his work. Only one sculpture, \textit{Végétal} (cat. 18), is identified at the present time as dating to 1985, indicating that while in Touba the artist may have refrained from carving. \(^{194}\)

Dimé emerged from his year in Touba having become a disciple of his marabout, or \textit{Baye Fall}, a status that would be reflected in all aspects of his personal, professional and artistic life. \(^{195}\)

As the \textit{Baye Fall} tradition is unique to Senegal, a brief explanation of it and how it is practiced by Mourides is warranted here. Mouridism, a branch of Sufi Islam, was founded by Cheikh Amadou Bamba in the nineteenth century and was based out of the holy city of Touba, located 194 kilometers west of Dakar. Mourides follow three basic principles outlined by Bamba in his teachings: peace, work, and dedication to religion through service to the spiritual guides known as the Marabouts. The latter are the primary agents of dissemination, education, and practice of the Mouride faith. Their main purpose is to assist their followers in attaining a

\(^{192}\) Sylla, "Pratique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé II: ‘Pratique et Technique Sculpturales’”.

\(^{193}\) Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 41. I cannot confirm the truth of this beyond Dimé’s own revelation of the fact to McEvilley. I will return to discuss this in more depth at the end of this chapter.

\(^{194}\) Sylla documents \textit{Végétal} as dating to 1985 but no image of the work has yet been located, making Sylla’s the only known account of the work. Of the object he states only that: “\textit{Végétal} donne l’impression, par la diversité des formes, que plusieurs sculptures sont accolées, alors que toutes les formes sont sorties d’un même bloc de bois taillées différemment (différences de dimensions, d’orientations, etc.) pour constituer un ensemble significant. La pureté des formes est nette, malgré les aspects “à facettes,” qui n’excluent pas les rondeurs.” (The diversity of forms in \textit{Végétal} gives the impression of it being several independent sculptures. In actuality, all the forms are carved from a single block of wood, carved differentially (differing dimensions, orientations, etc.) to constitute a meaningful ensemble. The pureness of the forms is clear, despite the “faceted” nature of even the rounded elements.) Sylla, "Pratique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé III: ‘Les Installations’”.

\(^{195}\) See, for example Roberts and Roberts et al., \textit{A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal}. The higher devotion to Islam that Dimé maintained from this moment forward has not gone unnoticed in the literature, yet the impact of Dimé’s religion on his works that post-date his 1985-86 year in Touba at the side of his Marabout has not been adequately investigated. I attempt to correct this by including a sustained discussion of religious motivations for Dimé’s work in Chapter IV, but even this, I feel serves merely to introduce a subject that deserves more thorough analysis.
closer relationship with God and a more spiritually satisfying life on earth. The members of the lineage of Grand Marabouts, those who trace their ancestry to Amadou Bamba, are celebrated as national leaders and culture heroes.

The Baye Fall tradition originated with Cheikh Ibrahima Fall (Ibra Fall), a warrior from Cayor who accepted Amadou Bamba as the one true Marabout. He submitted completely to the religious leader, and offered hard labor and service in exchange for religious guidance. Those who follow in Fall’s path and devote their lives either to Bamba or to a subsequent Marabout (who must be a disciple of Bamba) are known as Baye Fall. A Baye Fall, sometimes also pejoratively called a taalibe in Wolof, does not work for money; he works only for spiritual reward and for the Marabout. As a result he is dependent on the generosity of others for food, shelter, and sustenance – all things believed to be provided by God in the course of time.

According to Dimé’s brother and others, the artist was very close to Serigne Cheikh Fall Khady Guèye. In order for followers, such as Dimé, to receive the spiritual guidance of Guèye, they had to undergo Baye Fall training with him, for the Cheikh only mentored Baye Fall. Dimé was one of a select few to win the closest confidence of the Marabout, and the artist emerged from Touba serving as the porte-parole, or spokesperson, for the Cheikh. Dimé


\[198\] Taalibe in Wolof simply means “religious student” yet it has come to be used to describe poor young boys who are shipped off by their impoverished parents to work for unscrupulous urban “Marabouts.” Many of these Marabouts send the boys out to pose as Baye Fall and beg for money in the streets of Dakar. The money they collect is usually then kept for the Marabout himself while the boys are little more than enslaved dependents in his service. This has diminished the reputation of the Baye Fall experience by linking it with the dangerous and exploitative practices of some who claim to be in the service of Amadou Bamba.

\[199\] This was confirmed by the late Cheikh Umu Dimé, younger brother of Moustapha Dimé, and Gabriel Kemzo Malou, former apprentice to Moustapha Dimé and now overseer of Dimé’s studio and archives. Cheikh Umu Dimé, Interview with the Author, 2 June 2006. Malou, Interview with the Author, 15 June 2004.
continued to work for the spiritual leader in this capacity until the holy man’s death.  A photograph in the artist’s archives taken during Dimé’s time in Touba shows the artist in the company of four other Baye Fall all presumably in the service of Guèye (fig. 2.1). In the photograph, the group wear the traditional clothes of the Baye Fall; clothing either found or donated by others. On occasion, the Baye Fall make their clothing from patchwork scraps stitched together, following the requirement that the Baye Fall purchase absolutely nothing, including their clothing.

Dimé emerged from his religious internship having established a mutual friendship with Guèye, who became a person of great support to him. According to Dimé’s brothers, Guèye assisted him in finding a balance between his decision to be a sculptor and his calling to be a servant to God. Guèye further assuaged Dimé’s struggle to reconcile the apparent contradiction in Islam regarding the creation of images and figures, both important aspects of Dimé’s sculptures, and I will discuss this at length in chapter 4.

**Illness and Passing**

In 1997 Dimé began to exhibit symptoms of illness. Frequently experiencing stomach pains, he began spending more time seeking prayer and spiritual aid from the son of Cheikh Fall

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200 Cheikh Umu Dimé, Interview with the Author, 2 June 2006. and Malou, Interview with the Author, 15 June 2004.

201 The patchwork clothing is more familiarly associated with the Baye Fall who populate tourist areas of Dakar soliciting money in the streets for songs and prayers. The patchwork clothes have more recently proven popular with tourists and versions are frequently sold in boutiques. The Roberts’ even included some of these outfits in their recent exhibition of the Sufi arts in Senegal. Roberts and Roberts et al., *A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal*, 115-7.

202 Cheikh Umu Dimé, Interview with the Author, 2 June 2006. Amadou Dimé, Interview with the Author, 26 June 2008.
Khady Guèye, his former Marabout. He was eventually hospitalized in Dakar and diagnosed with Hepatitis B that had advanced into liver cancer. Unfortunately, this is a relatively common diagnosis amongst middle-aged Senegalese men. In Senegal, one of the most common causes of liver cancer, along with Hepatitis B, is exposure to aflatoxin poisoning. Aflatoxins are fungi that grow in peanuts, one of the main domestic cash crops in Senegal. People who are exposed to both aflatoxins, even in low doses and who are carriers of the Hepatitis B virus are at increased risk for liver cancer, and in these cases it is nearly always fatal. Members of Dimé’s family state his diagnosis was liver cancer from Hepatitis B and that it was “caused from eating peanuts.”

Dimé’s use of alcohol, which encouraged rumors that his death was alcohol or sexually-transmitted disease related, was first documented by Thomas McEvilley in 1993. The two had been discussing Dimé’s preference for an adze versus a chisel, causing McEvilley to ask what happened to three chisels that Dimé had previously taken from the Centre de Formation Artisanale. Dimé replied: “I still use them. They are with my tools today. So in 1977, when I


204 Worldwide, 80% of liver cancer cases are caused by the Hepatitis B virus, and it is frequently diagnosed among men aged 40-60. Dimé’s next youngest brother, Cheikh Umu Dimé was diagnosed with, and passed away from, the same disease in March of 2008. Hepatocellular carcinoma is one of the most prevalent cancers across much of the African continent, despite its rarity in the US and Europe.

205 Aflatoxins are highly mutable and extremely carcinogenic, and studies have shown that up to 80% of some regional peanut crops in Senegal are contaminated with unacceptable levels of the fungus (over 40ppb). Aflatoxins are destroyed by the high heat of the industrial processes that produce peanut oil, but they survive in artisanal peanut cultivation. Peanuts and peanut products are a staple of Senegalese diets as they are one of the country’s main cash crops. Studies conducted in Senegal indicate the aflatoxin poisoning is a real risk for the local population as roasting, mashing or cooking the peanuts in local food preparations does not kill the fungus. See: Y Diop, and B. Ndiaye, A. Diouf, A. Thiam, O. Barry, M. Ciss, D. Ba, "Contamination par les aflatoxines des huiles d'arachide artisanales préparées au Senegal," Annales pharmaceutiques francaises 58, no. Supp. 6 (2000). Joseph L. Melnick, "Hepatocellular Carcinoma Caused by Hepatitis B Virus," in Viral Infections of Humans: Epidemiology and Control, ed. Alfred S. Evans, and Richard A Kaslow (New York: Springer, 1997).

206 Amadou Dimé, Interview with the Author, 26 June 2008. The evidence at present does not indicate that alcoholism or HIV caused Dimé’s cancer, or that his Hepatitis was sexually transmitted, as has been rumored in international circles. Although alcohol use could certainly have aggravated Dimé’s condition, it does not appear to be the cause of it.
began to understand all this, I was under a lot of pressure, and I drank a lot. I was a real drinker – beer, wine – and I needed money all the time for it.”

McEvilley steered the conversation back to the chisel and adze, but Dimé immediately returned to this point, stating, “…I began to drink to a catastrophic degree. I knew what I was doing wasn’t good, but I couldn’t stop.”

Dimé’s narrative about alcohol addiction has distracted scholarly discourse on his work. I believe it has proved an ostensible reason for scholars to overlook the merits of his early sculptures, and one reason for their focus on his récupération objects – works made after the artist claimed to have returned to sobriety.

I find it highly suspicious, however, that this is the only known account where alcohol use is mentioned in conjunction with Dimé and it necessitates a brief tangent away from the primary aims of this dissertation. In all other published interviews known to me, neither Dimé nor his interviewers mention a period of alcoholism. Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen Roberts mention the alcoholism in their discussion of Dimé in *A Saint in the City*, but they are citing this information from McEvilley’s interview. They additionally infer at one point that when Dimé states, “I no longer feel about my work as I once did” that he is referring to a period of alcoholism. In the context of Dimé’s comments, however, this is not implied. Rather the artist is here contrasting his earlier sculptural work (which he deemed as less spiritual) with his later,

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207 Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 40.
208 Dimé qtd. in ibid., 41.
209 Of course, this is not the only reason I believe scholarly attention has focused on Dimé’s late works. His negotiation of international theories of the found object, assemblage and bricolage are other primary areas of interest to art historians.
more spiritually motivated objects.\textsuperscript{211} I can document that Dimé did smoke cigarettes in his youth,\textsuperscript{212} but none of his friends, colleagues, family members, his wife or his students will attest to having witnessed him drink or do any other drugs.\textsuperscript{213}

In Senegal, where drinking is prohibited not only by the Islamic religion but also by social codes of respectable behavior, no one will openly accuse a friend or family member for a religious/social taboo such as drinking. Thus, whenever I broached the topic of Dimé’s alleged alcohol use, the polite and proper answer given to me was an absolute rejection of any wrongdoing on Dimé’s part. This protects not only the honor of Dimé, as a deceased person of whom one does not speak ill, but also the honor of his remaining family members and the Dimé family name. Even accounting for this cultural politeness around drinking, I find it difficult to discount the high number of individuals who refute Dimé’s own statements about drinking.

Furthermore, in his earlier interviews with Abdou Sylla, Dimé recounted that his 1974 trip to Nigeria from Accra was instigated by a Nigerian he met in Ghana who promised him work. Dimé returned quickly to Accra as the Nigerian turned out to be a drug trafficker. Dimé told Sylla that of all the countries he visited during these years that he liked Nigeria the least. In Nigeria, Dimé observed “much violence in the life and social mores of the population.”\textsuperscript{214} Given the social taboos against drinking in Senegalese society, and given Dimé’s refusal to stay lodged in the home of a drug user, I find Dimé’s comments to McEvilley to be at odds with the actual

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Dimé qtd. in Roberts and Roberts et al., \textit{A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal}, 208-9.\item Souleymane Keita, Interview with the Author, 26 June 2008.\item The number of people I spoke with on this account is too large to cite here, but I received upwards of twelve individual accounts that Dimé did not abuse drugs or alcohol at any point over his life. Some of these include: Malou, Interview with the Author, 15 June 2004. Viyé Diba, Interview with the Author, 9 June 2004. Keita, Interview with the Author, 26 June 2008. Cheikh Umu Dimé, Interview with the Author, Dakar, 2 June 2006. Amadou Dimé, Interview with the Author, Dakar, 26 June 2008. Lô, Interview with the Author, 27 May 2008.\item Dimé qtd. in Sylla, "Practique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
lifestyle he is recorded (by himself as well as others) as having lived. Whether or not Dimé consumed alcohol in his life is at this point an unanswerable question. The question, more properly asked, is why he chose to divulge such information to Thomas McEvilley, a professional art historian whom he barely knew, who was producing an interview for a catalogue Dimé knew would be published internationally. It seems evident that Dimé intentionally inserted this detail into the conversation, as McEvilley himself does not initiate the exchange, and in fact tries to avoid discussing it. Perhaps Dimé had his reasons for wanting such a piece of information to circulate amongst the international consumers of the catalogue and his sculptures, but I have yet to discover any factual basis for his comments. While speculative, I might suggest that the calculated addition of the salacious story of a suffering-then-recovered alcoholic adds intrigue to a biography that is otherwise a respectable narrative of a man’s coming of age.

By late spring of 1998, Dimé’s deteriorating health prevented him from navigating the multiple levels of his Gorée studio and the hill that one must hike to reach it. As Dieumbé and Moustapha Dimé’s house in northern Dakar was under construction at the time, the couple went to St. Louis to be with her family and also within close reach of Louga and Dimé’s family. Dimé was hospitalized again a short while after arriving, and passed away in St. Louis on June 30, 1998.

Moustapha Dimé is buried in the holy cemetery in Touba, next to the Great Mosque, in the company of his Marabout and all the great Mouride leaders of Senegal.

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215 I debated about even including this tangential discussion of Dimé’s claims in this dissertation as I do find it irrelevant to his artistic demarche. Against the well-reasoned advice of my Dissertation Sponsor, Babtunde Lawal, I did decide to present it here largely to dispel oral rumors that have circulated among the international community of scholars. During my research it was mentioned to me several times in various conversations with academics either that Dimé had died from alcoholism or that his earlier career was severely hampered by it. Both of these rumors appear to be exaggerated, so I present this evidence here as a corrective gesture to those who, like me, may have heard otherwise from their colleagues and peers.
Chapter 3    Direct Carving (1970s-1980s)

1970s: Artistic Development

In the early 1970s Dimé appears to have been floundering. He had finished his training at the CFA in Dakar, but had not yet attended the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts, nor made his career-defining journey to Touba. In 1970, upon realizing that his son intended to be a professional wood carver Dimé’s father refused to provide him any financial support. Unable to find a steady job, Dimé had to moonlight as a part-time furniture carver. The early 1970s were therefore a period of profound poverty for Dimé, which must have unnerved him given that he grew up in a wealthy household. Unable to support his living expenses, he relied on the generosity of friends, and money covertly sent to Dakar by his mother through his sister, Rokhaya, without his father’s knowledge.

In 1973, Dimé left Senegal for the first time and went to The Gambia in search of work and the excursion proved a fruitful starting ground for the emerging artist. While there, he was hired by a woodworker who had him carve decorative bas-reliefs into utilitarian objects such as bowls, doors, and furniture. In 1974 he asked for and received permission from the Gambian Director of Patrimony to exhibit a group of carvings in The Gambia, although for reasons that are unclear, Dimé never followed through on the project.

Some scholars have identified either three or four distinct phases in Dimé’s oeuvre, of which his Gambian carvings comprise the first (or proto-first) phase. I have yet to locate any

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216 Sylla, "Practique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”.
218 Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 37.
of Dimé’s carvings from this period, nor are they documented in the artist’s estate. I can only explain this by pointing out that Dimé was working as an employee, and his finished works were utilitarian, unlikely to have been signed or considered works of art per se. Given that Dimé neither followed through with his planned art exhibition nor seems to have kept documentation for his sculptures (although he does record objects made after this time), I do not think Dimé considered himself an independent practicing artist at this point in his career.

In 1974, he returned briefly to Senegal, only to leave shortly after (with some of his friends from The Gambia) to travel around West Africa. They began in southern Mali, where they stayed a few days and then headed for Burkina Faso. After spending a week they left for the Côte d’Ivoire en route to Niger only to abandon the trip when the Gambians could not get entry visas into the latter country. Most then went back home. However, Dimé and one friend, a Gambian journalist, decided to go instead to Accra, Ghana. Dimé reports that during these travels he carved small objects and panels that he sold to market salesmen for money to pay for his lodging, food and transport.

Dimé stayed in Ghana until 1976, although he took a brief trip to Nigeria, and two additional longer sojourns to Lomé, Togo and Cotonou, Benin during this time. While in Ghana, Dimé began to record the sculptures he made and sold. Nine of these can be documented and all are bas-relief panels (figs. 3.1-3.7). They are modest in size, carved with softly molded forms, set against plain backgrounds within clearly delineated framing elements (See cat. 1-7). Trees, animals, female figures and domestic scenes of rural life are easily recognizable. Two panels remain at the artist’s Gorée studio. One shows a group of predominantly female figures

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220 Information on Dimé’s 1974-76 itinerary is taken from Sylla, "Practique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”.
221 Dimé qtd in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 37.
222 Sylla, "Practique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”.
seated in various positions (fig. 3.6) (cat. 6) and the second is a portrait bust of Sgt. Étienne Gnassingbé Eyadéma, president of Togo from 1967-2005 (fig. 3.7)(cat. 7).

While in Accra, Dimé met the Senegalese Ambassador to Ghana, James Bruce Benoit, a childhood friend of Senghor. In celebration of Senghor’s seventieth birthday, Benoit commissioned Dimé to make a portrait bust of the President. A letter from Benoit dated to the first of September, 1976 confirms the completion of the bust, and is the only current proof of the existence of the sculpture (doc. 2). The second bust of Eyadéma, which I analyze in depth in the next chapter, may give us some idea of the style of the Senghor piece as well.

Between the years of 1973-77 Dimé ultimately visited seven African nations: The Gambia, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Togo, Benin and Nigeria. He recorded these “Voyages d’Etudes,” or study travels, on his CVs beginning in 1989, indicating the importance he accorded them in his own sculptural education and production (doc. 3). While Dimé never specified in any interviews to what art or cultural groups he may have been directly exposed during his travels in the 1970s, it is safe to say that he would have at least seen woodcarvings for sale in local markets. Rural towns and villages would have also been on Dimé’s itinerary as his group traveled on public transportation routes between major cities. These towns, viewed in passing, may have served as the model for his low relief panel of a rural homestead (fig. 3.5)(cat. 5), but in any case would have reaffirmed his awareness of the local materials used both in daily life and in woodcarving. Of these, popular West African hardwoods such as mahogany, ebony and palm wood formed the backbone of his sculptures from the late 1970s through the late 1980s. Found materials like the calabash, mortar and pestle, and fishing boats became his favorite materials in the 1990s.

223 Photographs of the bust are also absent from the archives of the artist and the Dimé family. I continue to look for this object and for additional documentation about it.
Returning to Senegal in 1977, Dimé exhibited his art publicly for the first time contributing sculptures to two exhibitions: the Louga Region’s Grand 1st Anniversary Exhibition (Grand Exposition du 1ère Anniversaire de la Region de Louga) and the Youth Festival in Dakar (Festival de la Jeunesse). The exhibitions indicate a turning point; no longer working as an employee or itinerant carver, Dimé was most likely starting to envision himself as a professional artist. In fact, after these exhibitions he stopped making decorative panels and furniture entirely, focusing on carving objects exclusively for exhibition and sale in various studio and gallery settings.

Bas Reliefs and Early Sculpture in the Round

During the first decade of Dimé’s professional career, circa 1974-1986, he produced a diverse group of sculptures both in technique and subject matter. At this point Dimé was thoroughly engaged with craft production, a natural outgrowth of his previous work with furniture makers and his studies at the CFA. His Ghanaian period panels are didactic in nature, composed of simple images arranged in very readable compositions. The imagery is broadly inspired by Pan-Africanism; animals, houses, and village scenes along with two portraits of African political leaders attest to his developing interest in West African symbolism.

A rare early photograph documents an untitled bas-relief panel of a bucolic family compound, carved in palm wood around 1974 (fig. 3.5) (cat. 5). The panel depicts three stylized round huts with thatched roofs surrounding a round thatched pavilion with no walls. A

224 The individual sculptures he submitted, however, are not identified by any of the documents remaining in the artist’s estate.

225 Dimé carried the photograph during his travels in the 1970s, and in 1977 sent it from Mali to his older brother Amadou as a postcard containing an appeal for money (doc 13). When I showed a photograph of the “postcard” to Amadou, he remembered receiving it and related how difficult it had been to send money internationally in those days. Amadou Dime, Interview with the Author, Dakar, 26 June 2008.
rectangular building with square corners and a tiled roof stands out among the round houses. A cactus, palm tree and baobab tree form the left, center and right boundaries of the panel, while a river cuts across the foreground, broken at regular intervals by three dugout canoes, (pirogues). Round houses occur ubiquitously across western Africa before, during and after, the colonial period. As the houses are stylized, they resemble the historical Sudanic style adobe houses built by the Kassena of Ghana and Burkina Faso, the Dela of Cameroon, Fulbe, Malinke, Seereer and Joola of Senegal or Tiv of Nigeria among many other possible prototypes. Dimé carved the rectangular building to resemble the newer vernacular building techniques introduced in the 1960s and 70s that used adobe bricks or cement cinderblocks to make long rows of attached rooms with roofs of tile or corrugated steel.

The pirogues Dimé depicts in this untitled panel are the traditional fishing vessels of Senegal; yet they are not unique to the country. The type itself is found along the northern and western coast of Africa and dates to well before contact with the first Portuguese traders in the mid-fifteenth century. Dimé’s panel, therefore, reads as a listing of archetypes: the

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environment, lodgings and boats are based on African examples not specific to any culture, country or time period. The composition is non-hierarchical, and perspectival only in the loosest sense. The contrived nature of the subject matter and the repetitive staccato of similar shapes across the panel read as an intentional exploration of more remote archetypes. The simple forms create a nostalgic vision of an African Arcadia; the huts and boats are markers of an imagined rural utopia.

With no humans or animals to animate the scene, the composition’s narrative depends on rhythmic repetition of geometric shapes. Almost all the objects depicted occur in threes: three round houses, three boats, three rocks in the river and three native plants. Additional threesomes are found in the left-to-right upward diagonal created by the ladder leading from the water to the rectangular building, which informs the lines of the baobab at its right. A singsong effect results, as the eye bounces evenly around the composition of the panel. The tempo of regularized forms rigidly balances the resulting composition regardless of how a viewer reads the work (left to right, top to bottom, or the inverse of these).

A second bas-relief panel in palm wood from the same period, Samba Wagne (1970) (fig. 3.4)(cat. 4), also shows engagement with stylized African prototypes. In Samba Wagne Dimé forgoes a landscape setting and carves rows of crocodiles, birds, and armed equestrian figures against a flat background. A horizontal register of pyramidal triangles bifurcates the panel, interrupted by human and animal motifs that cross it at regular intervals. A frame of repeating overlapping circles borders the panel. The human and animal motifs are as prosaic as the circular houses. A distinction can be made, however, in his use of African elements: while the round huts and their setting refer to an archetypal environment, the formal qualities of the human and animal carvings in this panel recall artistic rather than environmental prototypes.
Possible sources for Dimé’s motifs include carved bas-relief panel doors by the Dogon of Mali and the Senufo of Côte d’Ivoire in which equestrian figures, amphibians, and birds often appear together in mythological contexts (figs. 3.8-3.10). Mass produced copies of these doors were, and remain, in wide circulation as part of the extensive tourist art market across West Africa.\(^{229}\) As Dimé worked for salesmen in both The Gambia and Accra making carved panels, he probably participated in the production of some of the items.\(^{230}\) Chances are that, during his travels, he was also exposed to Dogon and Senufo objects on sale in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana markets.\(^{231}\)

Another African prototype Dimé appears to be appropriating in *Samba Wagne* is the goldweights of the Lagoon peoples (Akan and Asante) of Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire, which Dimé would have seen while staying in Accra.\(^ {232}\) The free-standing human and animal figures depicted by the gold weights are characterized by rounded tubular forms with softened edges and decorative incised patterning, all stylistic referents to the wax in which they are molded and subsequently cast (fig. 3.11). The figures in *Samba Wagne* recall the slender, tubular characteristics of some of these gold weights. The animals and equestrian figures, while

\(^{229}\) Christopher Steiner attests to the primacy of the Dakar, Senegal and Abdijan, Côte d’Ivoire art markets in West Africa, both cities familiar to Dimé. Steiner describes the ubiquity of Senufo and Dogon (along with Dan and Baule) carvings of figures, masks and panels in the West African trade markets from Dakar to Lagos, but focuses primarily on Abdijan where he did his doctoral research. See Christopher B. Steiner, *African Art in Transit* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1994). 4, 34, 80, 91.

\(^{230}\) From his biography we know that Dimé carved furniture and decorative objects for sale in the Gambia in 1973 when he was hired by a woodworker. While traveling to Ghana (through Burkina Faso and the Côte d’Ivoire, he made and sold objects to cover his expenses. In Accra, he sold panels on his own and to merchants to pay for his rent and food. See Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 38.

\(^{231}\) According to Steiner these West African markets for carved wooden trade objects reached their zenith from the late 1960s to middle 1970s, coinciding with Dimé’s travels around the region and his participation in the markets as a carver. See Steiner, *African Art in Transit*, 7.

referencing the gold weights and Dogon and Senufo doors, also pick up on the anthropomorphic imagery seen in many West African traditions.233

Any of these models could have inspired Dimé’s *Samba Wagne*. Other panels from the same time period depict more animals as well as assorted human figures (figs 3.1-.3, 3.6, cats. 1-3, 6). The imagery and style of Dimé’s Ghanaian panels, therefore, can be explained from two perspectives. The first has to do with his assimilation, during his travels, of ancient West African art forms created for local use and their copies or modifications intended for the tourist market. The second might derive from Dimé’s growing awareness of the artistic doctrine of pan-Africanism (*Africanité*) being espoused at home in Senegal as part of *Négritude*.234

By the 1960s Senghor’s rhetoric, now implemented as state policy, called for a pan-African cultural expression in which a collective identity would take precedence over individual expression. Thusly articulated, *Africanité* was a common front that could be used to compete philosophically with Europe. Souleymagne Bachir Diagne, borrowing a term from Gayatri Spivak, calls this “strategic essentialism,” arguing that Senghor encouraged artists to use assimilative strategies that devalued individual experimentation in favor of collective investigations of broader “black” “Negro” and “African” -isms.235

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233 A cursory glance at Allen Robert’s catalogue *Animals in African Art: From the Familiar to the Marvelous* (1995) provides images of a lizard door lock from Burkina Faso and a Kassena brass anklet with crocodiles that resemble Dimé’s, while equestrian figures are shown decorating rings, combs, gold weights, staff finals and sculptures from the Dogon, Yoruba, and Chokwe cultures among others. Allen F. Roberts, *Animals in African Art: From the Familiar to the Marvelous* (New York/Munich: Museum for African Art/Prestel, 1995), catalogue accompanying the exhibition of the same title held at the Museum for African Art, New York City 148-9. For copyright reasons, these objects are not illustrated here.

234 Sylla reminds us that Senghor’s influence on the artists working during his tenure as president was omnipresent and inescapable. It would have been impossible for Dimé to be ignorant of the primary aims and ideals of *Négritude*. Sylla, “Art africain contemporain,” 56.

235 Diagne, "Rhythms," 95 and footnote 36. Note that Harney also uses this term in her discussion of *Négritude*, although she does not discuss its origins. Harney, *In Senghor’s Shadow*, 83.
Certainly, Dimé’s bas-relief panels are configured to fall within the rhetoric of “strategic essentialism” in their embrace of forms easily defined as “African” within the Senghorian concept of Africanité. While the various motifs in Dime’s early panels (especially Samba Wagne) may be said to reflect the West African rural environment as well as certain aspects of Senufo, Dogon, and Kassena carvings (among others), the fact remains that none of the images can be mistaken for “European.” Furthermore, Dimé is not carving the imagery in a manner that exerts a personal or individual technique that is unique to the artist himself. I am hard pressed to look at these bas-relief panels of women, animals and a village and identify anything particularly “Diméan” about them. There are no grandiose gestures, no unfamiliar elements or radical breaks with tradition that would confuse or discomfit a viewer. I find Dimé’s bas reliefs themselves to be “strategically essentialized” in their production and technique as well as in the imagery they present. On the other hand, they do seem to possess qualities that would make them saleable at West African art markets for reasonable prices.

Additionally, in Senghor’s writings, one finds numerous references to the (strategically essentialized) African man’s interchangeability with nature, his devotion to agricultural labor and to his village. Senghor was fond of drawing attention to metaphorical connections between man and nature. Also, he often described “negro” culture as having its roots deep in the earth to be fed from the rivers so as to grow into a fecund tree. According to Sylla, Senghor’s

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236 Among many possible examples, a few from “Ce que l’homme noir apporte” are: “Le Nègre aujourd’hui est plus riche de dons que d’œuvres. Mais l’arbre plonge ses racines loin dans la terre, la fleuve coule profond, charriant des paillettes précieuses.” (The Negro today is richer in gifts than in works. But the tree plunges its roots into the depths of the earth, the river runs deep, carrying its precious minerals) “Toute la nature est animée d’une présence humaine... Non seulement les animaux et les phénomènes de la nature – pluie, vent, tonnerre, montagne, fleuve – mais encore l’arbre et le caillou se font hommes.” (All of nature is animated by the human presence... Not only animals and natural phenomena – rain, wind, thunder, mountain, river – but also trees and rocks become men.) “Il est à remarquer que, dans la société nègre, le travail de la terre est la plus noble. L’âme nègre demeure obstinément paysanne.” (It must be remarked that in Negro society, working the land is the most noble work. The Negro spirit remains obstinately agricultural.) Senghor, "Ce que l'homme noir apporte," 295, 96, 302-3. A year later (but not published until 1964): “Prenez ce viatique, jeunes hommes et jeunes filles, mes camarades. Vous méditez ces
philosophies pervaded (and in fact dictated) the artistic climate under which many contemporary artists were working.\textsuperscript{237} It is not surprising therefore, that many of the generic African motifs in Dimé’s early panels should directly or indirectly evoke some of Senghor’s metaphors.

While the panels from the mid-seventies embrace African cultural and historical values in their imagery and production as promoted by Senghor’s Africanité philosophy, the title of Dimé’s \textit{Samba Wagne} panel nuances the project ever so slightly. Dimé’s francophone spelling of the Wolof title leaves some ambiguity as to its meaning. It most likely translates as \textit{samm bu waane}, approximately “Clever Shepherds” in English. Wolof language is rooted in metaphorical ellipsis, however, and while \textit{waane} means clever, it also connotes hypocritical, or equally, meddlesome. Dimé’s title therefore carries the double entendre of “meddling” or “hypocritical” shepherds, encouraging a more cynical reading of the human riders.

Additionally, \textit{samm b-}, is an archaic (also poetic) term for shepherd. Dimé does not employ the more common \textit{sammakat} (one who works with sheep). His choice of terminology situates this scene in a poetic or archaic context, similar to how the vacant rural setting functions in Dimé’s panel of the family compound. \textit{Samba Wagne} further rejects attempts to interpret the composition as referring to a specific place, time or event, as it draws our attention to the metaphorical power of language to communicate multiple meanings in a single expression. \textit{Samba Wagne} thus focuses its energies on conveying a proverbial meaning through metaphor and symbolism.

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\textsuperscript{237} Sylla, "Art africain contemporain," 56.
This similarity is shared with many so called traditional African arts across West Africa, among them the Ghanaian gold weights, which usually have two functions: to measure gold dust and to transmit proverbs via their imagery. In many cases the proverbs indicate the path to correct human behavior through an analogy with a particular animal. As such, the role of animals in Akan proverbs, and subsequently in gold weights, is frequently more significant than that played by humans. In other words, human beings learn to behave properly through verbal and visual representation and characterization of animals.

In effect, *Samba Wagne* employs a metaphorical strategy similar to the Akan gold weights, where the knowledge of the viewer/user determines the comprehension of the various layered meanings. Through language, Dimé ties this piece to a Senegalese audience, (ironically not the Ghanaian populace among whom he was living at the time) and at the same time employs stylized versions of West African sculptural imagery, thus producing a dual-functioning object.

*Samba Wagne*, therefore, seems to offer a challenge to the communal ideals of *Africanité*. While embracing visual signs of *Africanité* in its rendition of animals and people common to Senufo, Dogon, and Akan ancestral archetypes, *Samba Wagne* couches them within a specific Senegalese context. Dimé draws attention to the inability of the archetypal imagery celebrated by *Négritude* to be anything but symbolic and hence devoid of more nuanced or local meanings. *Samba Wagne* confronts the inherent problem therein: the resulting generic imagery renders the

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239 A Senegalese buyer, Mamadou Thiam, purchased the panel, although it is unclear if Thiam was in Ghana or Senegal at the time.
work of any one artist indistinguishable from every other. Only a clever shepherd will be able to
distinguish his sheep from those of others.

Later, in the 1990s, when Négritude had long fallen out of favor, Dimé vehemently
objected to being classified as an “African artist” since, by then, the pan-Africanism of Négritude
was seen as having encouraged stereotyping at its worst extreme, and lack of individuality at
best. As he angrily explained to Elizabeth Harney in 1994, “I am not a representative of an ethnic
group, I am my own representative – an individual. To work as an African – that is not correct,
it is dishonest. I will never accept the West’s attempts to imprison me in this racist concept. I
don’t try to work like an African. I try to work like Moustapha Dimé. I am a Senegalese artist
among many Senegalese artists.”

While Dimé’s comments to Harney from 1994 cannot be said to explain his process in
the middle 1970s, the artist’s sculptures indicate that he was already confronting the utopia
promised by Négritude in his early career. Samba Wagne is one example; another is evident in a
detail included in Eya Dema (1975), Dimé’s portrait bust of the Togolese General Gnassingbé
Éyadéma (fig. 3.7) (cat. 7). While Dimé engraved the date on the front of the relief, he signed
the back of the portrait in ink. The inscriptions read: “Eya Dema” “Moustapha Dimé,
Sénégalaism” and “Louga.” I surmise that Dimé’s inclusion of the title and his name indicates he
was beginning to consider himself a practicing artist rather than exclusively a craftsman.
Furthermore, by drawing equal attention to his hometown and nationality, Dimé identifies
himself as Senegalese, and specifically a resident of “Louga”, thus a foreigner in both Lomé and

240  Dimé qtd. in Harney, In Senghor’s Shadow, 172.
241  Alternately spelled Eyadema in English and Éyadéma or Eyadéma in French. Dimé spells the name as two words
(Eya Dema) both on the sculpture and in his written records of it. Despite the variations, I have opted not to
standardize the spellings out of respect to Dimé’s orthography. This sculpture is currently at the artist’s Gorée
studio.
Accra, the two cities between which he was travelling and working at the time. Dimé’s decision to include on this panel his country and hometown, therefore, may have more to do with the fact that he was traveling than with his politics; but it does signal his connectedness to Senegal and to his hometown roots. As locality will eventually come to inform his politics and his dealings with the art market on an international scale later in his career, the bust of Éyadéma seems an important early step in that direction.

Additionally, *Eya Dema* is a more complex relief than the two bas-reliefs previously discussed. It is a portrait of a named individual; therefore its subject, purpose and political intentions would suggest a more straightforward interpretation. Here, Dimé seems to be manipulating the technique of bas-relief carving in order to present a more nuanced rendition of a local political figure. Éyadéma came to political power on January 13, 1967 after leading a successful *coup d’État* with French support that resulted in the assassination of the first post-independence President, Sylvanus Olympio, in 1963. By 1975, however, when Dimé made this portrait bust, Éyadéma himself had become a dictator. From the front, the sculpture looks rather benign; a professional man in a suit with a knowing smile. When viewed from the side, however, the facial features become grotesquely distorted and pinched (fig. 3.12) (cat. 7 det.). Despite the bas-relief and profile techniques, which would dictate a presentation of one half of the face, split vertically down the midline of the nose, all of Éyadéma’s frontal facial features are depicted. Both eyes are present, with the front being smaller and positioned lower than the

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242 Dimé had made an extended visit to Lomé, from Accra, where he may have hoped to sell the bust to members of the Togolese government, based on the success of his contacts with Benoit and the commission for the portrait of the Senegalese president Léopold Senghor.

243 Many Togolese welcomed the coup at the time, as Olympio, despite hopes to the contrary, had become a dictator. After Éyadéma’s coup in 1963 a provisional government was founded, headed by Nicolas Grunitsky and Antoine Méatchi. It proved to be nonfunctional due to political infighting, and in the political power vacuum that ensued, the army, still headed by Éyadéma, took over again in 1967 and Éyadéma assumed the presidency. Comi M. Toulabor, *Le Togo sous Éyadéma* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1986). 13-15. Togo is presently ruled by Eyadéma’s son, Faure Gnassingbé, who claimed the presidency upon the death of his father in February of 2005.
bulging eye closest to the panel background. The mouth curves into a grimace where it meets the foundational support of the flat panel, and all the facial features slide towards the left side of the figure’s face. When viewing the object from its edge, Éyadéma looks as if he has palsy.

The distortion of the face is not due to Dimé’s lack of proficiency with a chisel and adze as his other panels from the period can attest. The presumed viewpoint of the object is from the front of the panel, where one looks upon the anatomically normalized profile of Éyadéma. Bas-relief sculpture by definition utilizes a frontally viewed, two-dimensional representation. Viewers of panel carvings therefore are lulled into a false sense of completeness by the frontality of the bas-relief technique. Only when a viewer actively challenges the frontality of Dimé’s relief and moves to the edge of the work to investigate the actual depth of the carving, is the full meaning of the panel revealed. In this way, the sculpture challenges the passive role of the viewer as observer, forcing the viewer into an active engagement with the panel. I suspect one reason Dimé carved the panel from this perspective was to exploit a parallel between a viewer’s understanding of the art object and their self-same understanding of the individual portrayed. The carving technique thus presents an ambivalent (or two-faced) portrait of Éyadéma, where only careful investigation on the part of the viewer will reveal the frontal view of the politician so artfully concealed in plain sight.

244 This of course, is a European understanding of sculptural form, which in its colonial incarnation is defined in the late 19th century by Adolf von Hildebrand. Hildebrand, and others of his time understood vision itself to be two-dimensional, and thus sculptural forms that acknowledged this enhanced the optical experience. He argued that sculpture (in general) should follow the same frontal, two-dimensional techniques of relief in order to compete with the (aesthetically superior) expressive qualities of painting. For analysis of Hildebrand’s rationale for the superiority of two-dimensionality in sculpture, see Alex Potts, The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). 125-29.

245 It would be interesting to compare Dimé’s sculptural treatment of the Togolese military leader with that of his handling of the poet/president Senghor. Should his bust of Senghor surface, I will address this issue in subsequent writings on the topic.
Lest I over determine Dimé’s unique approach to this portrait, it should be duly noted that other West African artists similarly felt no anatomical restrictions in relief carving and also included multiple perspectives, including depictions of entire faces in otherwise profile renditions of people and animals.\textsuperscript{246} The extant collection of Ghanaian panels therefore, attests to an early interest on Dimé’s part not only in West African vernacular cultures and sculptural decorations, but also in West Africa’s contemporary political realities. While he was not politically motivated himself, Dimé’s consistent cultivation of relationships with various politicians throughout his career proved invaluable to his artistic development.\textsuperscript{247}

Dimé’s exercises in panel carving ended abruptly in 1977 when the artist returned to Senegal and began his nearly two-year tenure at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts. While there, he encountered Western art academicism for the first time, as it was then engrained in the school’s curriculum. Despite the Lods-Tall “laissez-faire” pedagogy being used to promote Africanité at the school, Dimé describes his experience there as being heavily colored by European academic training.\textsuperscript{248} He was also directly exposed to the concurrent monopoly on artistic production held by École de Dakar artists (primarily painters) that were the result of the school’s Senghorian period. Having experienced some early success with the sale of his woodcarvings as art objects (rather than embellished furniture pieces) and subsequently training within the fine-arts environment at the École, in the late seventies Dimé began producing works intended for art collectors and public display.

\begin{footnotes}

\footnote{Anita J. Glaze and Alfred L. Scheiberg, \textit{Discoveries: African Art from the Smiley Collection} (Urbana-Champaign: Krannert Art Museum, 1989). 40.}

\footnote{For example, the commission by Benoit led to more from other staff at the Senegalese embassy in Ghana. Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 37-8.}

\footnote{Dimé qtd. in ibid., 40-41.}
\end{footnotes}
A piece he made in 1977 may be used to illustrate this argument. Entitled simply *l’Homme*, the piece departs from the earlier busts and panel work in that it is fully dimensional and carved in the round (fig. 3.13) (cat. 8). Some formal elements of Dimé’s low relief style are still in evidence. The visage of the figure is remarkably flattened in contrast to the volumetric forms of the torso and limbs, and as such it maintains a formal link to the artist’s Ghanaian period panels. While the fully dimensional sculpture is indeed a departure for Dimé from his earlier style, the facial element pressures us to view *l’Homme* as a continuation of the earlier work rather than a complete rupture. As with the Ghanaian panels, the face seems to recall elements from various African sculptural traditions, in this case masks. Senghor had popularized the “mask” as symbol, and the instructors at the École actively encouraged use of the motif. This is the most logical explanation for its appearance in this sculpture carved while Dimé was in residence at the school. The flatness of the face with its geometrically rounded eyes, triangular nose and ovoid mouth does not, however, recall a specific mask from any West African region. Additionally, while the figure is fully carved, it retains the primacy of a frontal viewpoint as all the detailing of the body takes place across the front of the torso. The body is rigidly carved along a central axis, with no lateral or twisting motion across the spine. The limbs are tightly folded, fetus-like, against the chest and abdomen such that the columnar form of the torso is mimicked by the vertically positioned limbs. From the back, the sculpture is a flat single mass of wood, while the front is compositionally dynamic despite its compressed nature.

The significance of this composition resides in the body’s contortion to fit within the original column of wood from which it was carved. The trait is one shared with Baule, Dogon, Yoruba and many other West African aesthetic traditions, and a testament to Dimé’s likely awareness of them. The most unusual aspect of the sculpture, however, is the fact that the lower
portion of the trunk is largely un-carved. This element serves not only as a pedestal for the object, but also a signifier of the raw material from which it springs. The uncarved wooden pedestal here seems to me to be an evolution of the connection Dimé was establishing between the raw wood and his carving practice. *L’Homme* creates a new partnership between the raw and finished by leaving one aspect of the work intentionally “unfinished.”

*L’Homme*, in fact is the first of very few sculptures in Dimé’s oeuvre where the artist sculpted a pedestal element into the work of art. The majority of Dimé’s subsequent filiform and found object sculptures from the 1980s and 1990s have no pedestal and are either self-supporting or else reliant on being hung or propped up for display. The socle-element seems to me to be a result from Dimé’s studies at the École and his exposure to modern European sculpture techniques at the time. In an interview, Dimé made this clear, stating, “At school, the West was the reference for academic art education.”

The European sculptural tradition grants a three-dimensional sculpture a base upon which to rest. This pedestal, or stage, which separates the object from the world occupied by its viewers, frequently provides viewers with clues as to how to interpret the sculpture itself. In European art, the socle is a required component of sculpture until the late 19th century, and a negotiated calculation thereafter.

Rosalind Krauss, in her 1978 interrogation, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” defined pre-20th century European sculpture as having an “internal logic” historically inseparable from


250 Pedestals often bear inscriptions, or create a vantage point from which to view the object, as such they often direct viewers on how to understand the object in front of them. I take the notion of the ‘stage’ from Alexandra Gerstein, “Introduction,” in *Display and Displacement*, ed. Alexandra Gerstein (London: Courtauld Institute of Art Research Forum/Paul Holberton Publishing, 2007), 11.

the “logic of the monument” where monuments are commemorative representations that mark
certain places and meanings about those spaces.\textsuperscript{252} She writes that because sculptures
traditionally “function in relation to the logic of representation and marking, [they] are normally
figurative and vertical, their pedestals an important part of the structure since they mediate
between actual site and representational sign.”\textsuperscript{253} For Krauss, this understanding of sculpture as
monument, and its need to function as a marker of event or person as related to the particular
space in which the sculpture is located, motivated Western sculptural production until the time of
Auguste Rodin in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Rodin’s repeated “failures” to make traditional
monuments spurred a new age in sculpture. His \textit{Gates of Hell} (1880-1917) were never finished,\textit{Balzac} (1891-98) horrified spectators, and when Rodin went so far as to suggest to Calais that
they not use a pedestal under his \textit{Burghers of Calais} (1884-89), the town was incensed.
According to Krauss, Rodin’s removal of the traditional pedestal element was what truly
radicalized modern sculpture. She argues that after Rodin, artists were finally able to free the
sculptural object from its subordination to places and meanings and to the category of
“monument.”\textsuperscript{254} Removing the pedestal renders sculpture both “nomadic” and “autonomous,”
specifically “the sculpture reaches downward to absorb the pedestal into itself and away from
actual place; and through the representation of its own materials or the process of its
construction, the sculpture depicts its own autonomy.”\textsuperscript{255}

While Rodin was trying and failing to encourage late 19\textsuperscript{th} century French citizens to let
go of the “sculpture as monument” mentality, African artists during the same time period, by

\textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 279.
\textsuperscript{253} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{254} Ibid., 280.
\textsuperscript{255} Krauss’ argument is based on works by Rodin that stand on low plinths of cast bronze that look like molded wax
and Brancusi’s crafted bases that dominate the forms resting atop them or else supplant the sculpted object all
together. Ibid.
comparison, were already enjoying a relatively loose relationship with the pedestal. Lobi artists (also highly skilled in found object assemblage) made their *bateba* sculptures to stand on their own feet (fig. 3.14).\(^{256}\) Additionally, some Bakongo *minkisi n’kondi* are carved to include a thick square plinth under the figure, while others incorporate two separate small platforms, one for each foot. Still other objects in the *minkisi* class stand directly on their feet, with no intervening platform to separate them from the surface on which they are placed (fig. 3.15). Baule spirit spouses (*blolo bla* and *blolo bian*) are another class where some objects are carved with attached bases while others are not.\(^ {257}\) A *Dogon Seated Couple* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art sits on a stool on a carved ovoid plinth, while a Dogon female *Bombu-Toro* figure at the Brooklyn Museum has no base and her feet stand independently on the ground.\(^ {258}\) Lastly, Dimé’s *l’Homme* is reminiscent of some of the terracotta figures originating from Jenne-Jeno, Mali in its frontality and seated, cross-legged, crossed-arm presentation.\(^ {259}\) The Jenne sculptures may very well have been an inspiration for *l’Homme*, and like the Bakongo, Baule and Dogon objects mentioned above, they do not always have a pedestal or base included in their composition.\(^ {260}\)

\(^{256}\) See fig. 5.1, a comparison that is even more relevant for Dimé’s work as it is discussed in chapter 5, which is where I placed the image.

\(^{257}\) See examples of both in Philip L. Ravenhill, *The Self and the Other: Personhood and Images among the Baule, Côte d'Ivoire*, Monograph Series, No. 28 (Los Angeles: Fowler Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, 1994).

\(^{258}\) These objects are not illustrated here for copyright purposes. They can both be viewed online. For the Dogon couple: http://www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/collection_database/arts_of_africa%2C_oceania%2C_and_the_americas/figure_seated_couple/objectview.aspx?OID=50002904&collID=5&dd1=5 And for the *Bombu Toro*: http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/4890/Female_Figure_(Bombu-Toro)/set/search?referring-q=1989.51.45

\(^{259}\) Babatunde Lawal, Personal Communication, December 2008.

As a precedent for Dimé, therefore, African sculptural traditions do not provide a consistent indication of whether or not the base is a necessary component for the sculpted figural object. Similar to strategies seen in Dimé’s earlier panel reliefs, the socle of *l’Homme* does not directly engage any particular African model, although it may be a response to Jenne, Dogon, Baule, Bakongo or other objects that Dimé encountered in his studies of African sculpture.

Taking into consideration that *l’Homme* was sculpted while Dimé was at the École, I argue that the pedestal, as a non-requirement in African art prototypes and unusual in Dimé’s own production is most-likely a response to his exposure to European sculpture and that it functions in response to the strategy Krauss claims for modern European sculpture. *L’Homme* sits on a wooden stool, carved in such a way that the body of the figure and the pedestal fuse into each other. The sculpture absorbs the base, removing the object from participating in a singular time or location and freeing it to refer only to itself and to its fabrication. The self-referentiality of the object, what Krauss terms “autonomy,” is further articulated in the universalizing title “Man.” Unlike Dimé’s previous works that depicted a specific person (*Eya Dema*), or specific language (*Samba Wagne*), *l’Homme* acknowledges no descriptors, markers or signs other than that of the subject itself and the wood from which it is fashioned. While it seems to draw upon visual pan-African forms of seated figures, or carved wooden masks, no one cultural or sculptural precedent is specifically identifiable. *L’Homme*, more than any identified work preceding it, embraces its own autonomy. It rejects the genres of portraiture, landscape and narrative, all aspects of Dimé’s earlier bas-reliefs, and not insignificantly, all aspects of what Krauss identifies as pre-modern European sculptural “monuments.”

pedestal. I have not illustrated the image here, but it can be viewed online at http://www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/collection_database/arts_of_africa%2C_oceania%2C_and_the_americas/seated_figure/objectview.aspx?OID=50007027&collID=5&dd1=5 Nok ceramics from ancient Nigeria may equally seem likely prototypes based on similar compositional strategies, and these sculptures too appear with and without attached pedestal elements.
In rejecting the logic of the monument, artists in the mid-20th century moved sculpture into what Krauss analyzes as the “expanded field;” exploiting the ability of the object to be non-referential, non-placed, even non-object. Here, however, Dimé diverges from his European and American contemporaries. His objective never became that of the minimalists’ “specific objects,” which Krauss and others have argued was the final culmination of sculptural autonomy, and yet minimalism still left the objects in a relationship with the spaces in which they sat. The goal for Dimé was autonomy itself: autonomy from European modernism, from African “traditionalism” and ultimately even from the gallery itself. “I was searching for something that belonged to me,” Dimé pointedly told McEvilley later in 1993.

On the one hand, I have applied a Western postmodernist analysis to the object; the implication being that Dimé’s brief tenure at the École Nationale des Beaux Arts had brought him into greater contact with European techniques, which do seem to be under examination in l’Homme. But Dimé was not interested in becoming a European-style carver. The sculpture therefore speaks to a transitional moment in Dimé’s work; a concerted melding of Africanité motifs – the mask, the carved wooden figure, the matching of the figure to the columnar trunk from which it was carved – with European modernism – questioning the monumentality, the pedestal and the universalism of subject. The sculpture therefore, seems to exist in full embrace of Senghor’s Négritude strategy adopting from both “African” and “European” aesthetic sensibilities.

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262 This is the subject of the next chapter.

263 Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 44.
While *l’Homme* embraces *Négritude* goals for artistic production, it is visually unique within the artist’s entire production. It seems to have been an experiment, and one that did not resonate well with the artist for he made no other objects like this. Dimé thereafter transformed his carved work into forms exhibiting much greater abstraction, technical acuity and formal sophistication. The creation of *l’Homme* at the end of the 1970s, a moment of documented frustration and self-doubt for the artist, speaks to the many unresolved issues present in Dimé’s personal and professional life at the time. Two significant events in the 1980s provided the impetus for resolution: his Senghor-funded “bourse de perfectionnement” in Mali, and his subsequent religious seclusion in Touba.

1980s – Establishing a Career

After leaving his apprenticeship at the École in 1979, Dimé began sharing a studio and living space with his friend and collaborator, painter Abdoulaye Ndoye. From 1979 to 1993 the two worked out of the HLM IV (Habitation à Loyer Modéré), a low-rent neighborhood along the Autoroute in Dakar. This neighborhood was one of the most important centers of the Set Setal movement in the early 1990s, which would further impact Dimé’s artistic direction. Already in 1979, however, Dimé was working on a new series of works for a group exhibition at the Centre Culturel Français (CCF). A group of young artists, including Dimé’s nemesis, Ali Traoré, set up in the courtyard of the Centre from November 1979 to January 1980.264 At the CCF, Dimé for

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264 Sylla, "Practique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”. The French Cultural Center in Dakar (known colloquially as the CCF) was renamed in 2008 to the l’Institut français Léopold Sédar Senghor. It is still known colloquially as the CCF.
the first time sculptures that he called ‘filiform’ because of his threadlike manipulations of the wooden medium.\(^{265}\)

Despite Traoré’s copies of Dimé’s filiforms also exhibited at the show, Dimé’s sculptures generated substantial recognition. Pierre Goudiaby, then president of the Order of Senegalese Architects purchased *Progrès* (1980) (fig. 3.16) (cat. 13), one of Dimé’s filiform works in ebony, and gave it to President Senghor.\(^{266}\)

Upon receiving *Progrès*, Senghor held an audience with the group of young artists who organized the CCF exhibition and led a discussion about traditional and contemporary African sculpture.\(^{267}\) After the meeting, Dimé requested a private audience with the President, which was granted. Dimé took his father with him. The visit proved beneficial to the artist in two ways. First, it facilitated a meaningful reconciliation with his father; second, it earned him a travel grant.\(^{268}\) Senghor proposed to Dimé a “bourse de perfectionnement en Europe,”\(^{269}\) which, ironically, would have given Dimé credentials comparable to those of his teacher André Seck and his rival, Ali Traoré. Rather than simply accept his benefactor’s largesse, Dimé asked that he be given a “bourse de perfectionnement” in Africa. Specifically he wanted to go back to Mali, to study Dogon carving and bogolan textile making. Despite the irreverence, and a report that Dimé insulted the Minister of Culture at the formal opening of the exhibition at the CCF,\(^{270}\)

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\(^{265}\) These filiform works, including the various inspirations for their forms, will be discussed at length in Chapter IV.

\(^{266}\) Sylla, "Practique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”. Apart from *Progrès*, the sculptures that Dimé exhibited at the CCF for this exhibition are not identified in the artist’s archives.

\(^{267}\) Ibid.

\(^{268}\) Ibid.

\(^{269}\) Ibid.

\(^{270}\) According to Sylla, at the opening of the group show in 1979 at the CCF, Dimé accused the Minister of Culture of ignoring of Senegalese contemporary sculpture. In his interview with McEvilley, Dimé states that he gave an interview on television for the CCF exhibition where he claimed that the Ministry of Culture was a sham because it did not support Senegalese artists. The exhibition was put on and supported by the French government, not the
Senghor acquiesced, and in 1980 facilitated a 300,000 CFA (1000 USD) stipend for the artist. Dimé subsequently spent April, May and June in Bandiagara and Bamako. The fellowship emboldened the artist. He moved into a period of increased production and his work underwent a further stylistic shift. The objects that postdate Dimé’s 1980 residency in Mali are noticeably less literal, more confident and more experimental; they foreshadow his even more radical works that came in the late 1980s.

Several of Dimé’s works bear direct witness to the research he conducted in Mali. He produced a series of Bogolan-style textiles in Bamako, two of which remain in his estate (figs. 3.17-.18) (cat. 186, 187). One of his drawings (cat. 232) appears to be of a Dogon Togu na post common to the Bandiagara region that Dimé visited on this trip (fig. 3.19). Interestingly enough, I cannot identify any sculptures that Dimé may have made while he was in Bandiagara. His brief exploration of textile, which I will discuss at length later in this chapter, seems on the surface to be out of character for a sculptor who had invested so much in wood. Yet, this experiment is evidence of Dimé’s interest in local crafts beyond the political borders of Senegal, foreshadowing his eventual incorporation of mixed materials in his récupération period objects.

In December 1980, Dimé requested and received permission from the Senegalese government to occupy studio No. 4 at the Village des Arts (doc. 4). Here, he worked alongside Joe Ouakam (Issa Samb), El Hadji Sy, Seydou Barry and others in the Laboratoire Agit Art. During the three years he maintained a studio there, he participated in many group exhibitions in the Village. Tenq (Wolof, meaning “connection”) was the most widely recognized of these. Tenq

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Sylla, "Practique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’".
was a series of artist workshops at the Village in 1981-2 that maintained an open door policy with the general public, often resulting in collaborations between artist and audience.\textsuperscript{272}

Along with his active collaborative work, Dimé’s solo exhibition in 1982 at the Daniel Sorano National Theater stands out as being the most personally significant for the artist at this time. It was Dimé’s first solo exhibition, and one that he curated, organized and paid for himself. While the artist expressed frustration that he did not sell any of the nearly thirty works on display, the exhibition served as a denouement for his artistic intentions. It was primarily a tour de force of his filiform sculptures, some of which had been completed before Dimé’s trip to Mali, but most of which had been produced in 1980-2, following his return to Dakar (see checklist for the exhibition, doc. 5). Dimé invited Makhily Gassama, then Minister of Culture, to attend the opening (doc. 6), and subsequently received a letter of congratulations for the event from the Director of the National Theater (doc. 7). As the exchange of communication attests, by 1982 Dimé had enough experience dealing with the Senegalese government to invite the Minister of Culture himself to his own exhibition. This is a marked departure from the French Ambassador inviting Government officials to attend the 1979 group exhibition at the CCF. I stress the significance of Dimé’s interactions with government officials for the members of the Senegalese government prove to be Dimé’s earliest and most consistent audience of patrons. Government ministers bought the vast majority of his sculptures from the early to mid-eighties, either for themselves or for the state.\textsuperscript{273} A flurry of correspondence in the archives at Dimé’s studio attests to Dimé’s active pursuit of support, both financial and in the form of publicity from

\textsuperscript{272} Teng was later recreated in St Louis, as part of the “Africa95” global exhibition organized out of London, England. Senegalese artists, including Dimé, set up workshops in St Louis, Senegal that were open to the public.\textsuperscript{273} McEvilley, “Interview with Moustapha Dimé,” 44, 45. This is also proved through the letters, invoices and shipping receipts for works of art that were exchanged between Dimé and various government officials. These documents remain in the artist’s studio archives on Gorée Island, in his brother Amadou Dimé’s archives, and in the family archives of his mother, M’Bene, in Louga.
government officials. Most of his requests were honored. Files in the archives abound with letters of praise from every Minister of Culture from 1982 until the artist’s death in 1998.\textsuperscript{274} As a result of his early success with the filiforms, Dimé went on to secure exhibitions for his work in no less than one major venue in Dakar nearly every single year from 1979 until his death.

Beginning in the 1980s Dimé was recording his career in regularly updated Curriculum Vitae, photographing his sculptures and documenting information about them in a series of bound view books (doc. 8).\textsuperscript{275} The 1980s therefore attest to Dimé’s establishment as a professional artist and signal his dedication to this career path.

A brief, but devastating setback occurred in 1983 when Dimé and his fellow residents at the Village des Arts were evicted when President Diouf ordered the Senegalese army in at night to reclaim the barracks by force. The army emptied the artist’s studios into the streets outside, which Dimé photographed (fig. 3.20). Having lost his new studio and a series of works that were damaged beyond repair, Dimé went back to working out of the residence he had previously shared with Abdoulaye Ndoye in the HLM IV.

\textbf{The Filiform Sculptures}

Between the completion of \textit{l’Homme} and 1980, Dimé’s sculptures underwent a radical formal transformation, resulting in his first of very few textile works and the series of filiform

\textsuperscript{274} The Senegalese Ministers of Culture that corresponded regularly with Dimé over the course of his artistic career were Makhily Gassama, minister from 1980?-1986; Moustapha Kâ, 1991-93; Coura Bâ Thiam, 1994-5; and Abdoulaye Elimane Kane, 1996-7. Letters exchanged with all of the above remain at the Gorée studio archives and are included in the digital photographic archives produced by me.

\textsuperscript{275} As of the 1980s Dimé kept records (albeit incomplete) that noted at least the dimensions and materials of his sculptures and sometimes the buyers and prices, indicating that he did think of them as works of art, ergo requiring proper cataloging information. Many of Dimé’s archival records, however, do not contain dates or eventual buyers, rendering the exact chronology and current location of some of his sculptures difficult. Wherever possible I have supplemented his own records with research and information from secondary sources and interviews in order to provide as complete a history as possible in the Catalogue Raisonné with this dissertation. See Appendix A - Catalogue Raisonné (cat.) and Appendix B – Documents and Primary Sources (doc.)
sculptures. The latter are smoothly carved three-dimensional sculptures that depart from his previous works in their abstract forms and conceptual subjects. Composed of undulating, thickly carved ribbons of ebony or mahogany, these are the sculptures that first drew attention from government patrons and include *Progrès*, the sculpture purchased by Pierre Goudiaby and given to President Senghor.

*Progrès* (1980), evinces Dimé’s deepening philosophies regarding sculpture that emerged out of his tenure at the École Nationale des Beaux Arts and his subsequent trip to Mali. The sculpture is a lyrical study in ebony, and suggestive of human bodily form. What is evident in the sculpture is Dimé’s mastery of carving, as the sinuous form rises from itself and crescendos in a roiling of loops that are tightly controlled as they descend rhythmically to the ground. Despite its smooth and seamless composition, the object is paradoxical in nature. The coils of the object appear to have been carved in dialogue with the concentric bands of the natural wood grain, only Dimé’s rings are set perpendicular to those that nature made, making the grain of the wood not only more evident to the viewer, but also creating a dynamic tension between the hand of the carver and the natural properties of his medium. As such, the grain appears to expand and contract unnaturally where it crosses with Dimé’s chiseled forms. Dimé’s dexterous manipulation of the characteristics of his medium attest to his nearly two-decade relationship with wood, and it proves the profundity of the sculptor’s investigations into his material.

Two additional works from the period, *Angoisse* (c. 1980-82) (fig. 3.21) and *Recherche* (1982) (fig. 3.22) reinforce this point (cat. 10 and 17).276 Both are smoothly carved, and the

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276 Despite our current inability to securely date *Angoisse*, as Dimé provides no date for the sculpture, it is so similar in style and philosophy Dimé’s other works from the early eighties that I conclude it must belong to the period of work the artist realized between 1980 and 1982. An additional piece of proof that dates *Angoisse* to the same period as *Recherche* is that Dimé signs both pieces. Of the few works of art that Dimé actually signs, *Angoisse* and *Recherche* bear similar signatures by the artist. He engraves ‘MDIME’ at the base of *Angoisse* and simplifies this further to carve a more abstract ‘MD’ at the base of *Recherche*. Both sculptures’ signatures are done in a similar
wood in each is transformed into ribbon-like forms. *Angoisse* undulates symmetrically around a central vertical axis, and *Recherche* traces two angles of an equilateral triangle. In both sculptures, as with *Progrès*, the original grain of the wood is an important component of the finished composition. In *Angoisse*, Dimé carves the wood into sinuous twisting forms whose thesis is, apparently, the natural grain of the ebony. Dimé blurs the boundary between his manmade forms and the intrinsic beauty of the two-toned wood block as he interferes with the axial structure of the wood. While a viewer knows that the darker wood forms the core of the wooden ebony log and the blond wood is the younger wood at the periphery, Dimé’s forms dive in and out of the dark wood core, creating the illusion of freeing the heartwood from its fixed location. The two colors of wood seem to slide along the surface of the sculpture in tandem, denying their positional integrity. Along with this concern for the formal properties of his medium, Dimé inserts a psychological narrative into *Angoisse* by carving it in dialogue with the human form. *Angoisse* is a human figure that, while abstracted, is clearly recognizable: the figure has arms and head, torso, and hips, while a single arc of wood reads surprisingly easily as a pair of legs. The most startling emotional aspect of the sculpture is the fact that the head is disembodied from the torso, as if the agony of the emotion were so great that the sculpture has literally ripped the head, the center of emotional resonance, from its own earthly body. As the grain of the wood is set up in lyrical yet forceful opposition to the carved forms of the object, so the silky forms of his object are opposed to the violence of the emotion depicted. The object, upon examination, is fraught with contradictions; it silently screams its agony from inside its graceful physique.

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*font style that is markedly different from Dimé’s early signature on his bust *Eya Dema*. Once Dimé begins signing his sculptures in the mid-seventies, this is short-lived, lasting only through the mid-eighties. While the artist generally signed his works on paper, none of his sculptures realized after the filiforms bear any identifying signature by the artist.
Both the object’s formal and psychological qualities are the direct result of Dimé’s sustained inquisition into the properties of the wood and his desire to manipulate both medium and subject matter in directions previously untried in Senegalese sculpture. It is his ability to simultaneously work both with and against his medium that creates the dynamic tension in the filiform sculptures and warrants scholarly awareness of them. Dimé himself was aware of the significance of his filiforms and their impact on his contemporaries and collectors from the early eighties onward. Furthermore, he was proud of them. They marked a moment for the artist when he felt successful about his methods and the results he achieved. He recounted for McEvilley: “They were ‘filiforms,’ stringlike. Those tend to be very openwork, figurative and fantastical, a little bit like the Makonde things you see. Very smoothly finished, very virtuoso in workmanship. When I worked in that style, I did it so well that it surprised me. Each time I worked in that style I was feeling farther and farther along, and I worked a lot.”

The filiforms also seemed to resolve a connection with Négritude that Dimé may have desired at the time. Unlike his early-carved panels, the filiforms are not didactic or narrative in nature. Their avoidance of naturalism, in fact, frees them from participating in the visual imagery established by the powerful École de Dakar. By 1980 this style was under attack from all fronts for being stale and driven by overly literal interpretations of Senghor’s writings. Unlike l’Homme and the bas-relief panels, Dimé’s filiforms address Négritude from the more conceptual perspective of rhythm. As rhythm is an abstract, yet perceptible concept, as opposed to the more prosaic representations of so-called “tribal” masks and “native” peoples and animals that were heavily promoted in the École and the National Tapestry, it gave Dimé more latitude to

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277 Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 43.
participate in *Négritude* without having to buy into the stereotypical imagery that was often the result.

In Senghor’s rhetoric, rhythm had germinated into one of his defining characteristics of black African culture. I repeat his words here: “Respiration slows and quickens, it is regular or spasmodic according to the tension within the being or the degree and quality of its emotions. Such is primitive rhythm in its purest form.” While Senghor wrote this in 1939 and would not receive Dimé’s sculpture, *Progrès*, until 1980, one could imagine him writing this as a description of Dimé’s filiform sculptures. *Progrès* and all of Dimé’s filiforms in fact, produce exactly that dynamic tension of respiration between the wood that forms the undulating body of the sculpture and the negative space, or air, that circulates through it. The filiforms therefore, are a testament to maturation on the part of the artist as a technical specialist in wood, and also to his deepening philosophical interrogation of *Négritude*. The filiforms resolve to a certain extent Dimé’s place as a modern artist in the 1970s and 1980s tasked with negotiating the political and artistic possibilities of *Africanité*.

Along with their abstract definition of rhythm, the filiforms contributed to *Africanité* in 1980s Senegal through their incorporation of other contemporary art styles from the African continent, primarily, the Makonde sculptures, as Dimé stated above. His reference to the Makonde is deserving of note, as he is not appropriating traditional or archetypal objects, along the lines prescribed by the state version of *Négritude*, which he had embraced in his early panel carvings. He is not constructing his works in dialogue with “traditional” Makonde *Mapiiko* initiation masks, for example. Based on the style of his filiforms he means to direct McEuilley,

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279 Senghor, "Ce que l'homme noir apporte," 309.
280 Also spelled “Maconde.”
rather, to the new phenomenon of *shetani* sculptural production being practiced contemporaneously in Tanzania and Mozambique as part of his inspiration for the style.

In the late 1950s Makonde expatriates living in the Dar es Salaam area of Tanzania began carving a new genre of objects that, while related to historical understandings of spirits (jini or *shetani*), were new in both composition and purpose. They were, and continue to be, carved specifically as market commodities, primarily for sale to foreign tourists in Dar es Salaam, rather than as objects destined for use by the Makonde themselves.\(^{281}\) The objects, as fantastical imaginings of spirits are carved in ebony (or else in cheaper woods dyed black). Their forms are loosely based on human figures, but they are defined by sinuously carved wooden elements, or else rough driftwood that deviate from naturalism in order to produce lyrical arabesques or deviant grotesques in wood (fig. 3.23). Scholars have interpreted the sexual aspects of some *shetani* sculptures produced in Tanzania as a direct appeal to Western tastes for erotic exoticism, as overt sexuality is not present in other Makonde carving genres.\(^ {282}\) Others have noted that while the genre finds great appeal among tourists, this has proved reason for Western scholars and art institutions to view the objects with derision due to their commodity nature and perceived “inauthenticity” as the objects were conceived of as items of modest expense for export, rather than for domestic consumption.\(^ {283}\)

The genre, thus, maintains a complex relationship with modernity. The new objects are reflective of the expatriate Makonde’s modern social and economic realities in Dar es Salaam. Paradoxically perhaps, they use artistic forms that were not previously part of their culture’s


\(^ {283}\) Kasfir, "African Art and Authenticity," 49.
visual imagery to give new form to historical spirits long a part of Makonde religious and spiritual life.  

Lastly, it should be noted, these modern forms are no more derived from Western imagery than they are from Makonde. While the objects may respond to Western desires (sexual or otherwise), they do not do so with an artistic vocabulary that is identifiably “Western.”

The ramifications of the shetani genre for Dimé’s filiform sculptures are two-fold. First, the artist was clearly aware of the formal strategies of the nascent genre half a continent away, and aware of his objects’ own physical resemblance to them. That Dimé acknowledges this similarity indicates he did not see his own work as imitating or deriving from the artistic movement in East Africa. The second lies in the fact of Dimé’s recognition of the cosmopolitan nature of the Makonde objects themselves. They are handcrafted in workshops, but they negotiate African and Western modernity as they participate in the urban culture of the international city of Dar es Salaam. While they are made for sale they are not “knock-off” derivatives of older genres being re-manufactured. The Makonde artists are not carving copies of Dogon or Yoruba-style figures for example; theirs is an independent genre of object that has found a niche in the global present of internationally circulating art.

Dimé’s filiform objects functioned in much the same way. In Dimé’s words they “were more or less modern,” having “nothing to do with tradition” in that they did not replicate earlier forms of so-called “traditional” African objects. They were also “modern” in that the

284 Ibid., 52.

285 Zachary Kingdon relates an example of this where the Makonde carver Chanuo Maundu was given a photograph of a Yoruba equestrian figure by the art dealer Mohamed Peera. Peera wanted Maundu to carve replicas of the equestrian figure for sale as Yoruba figures, which fetched high prices. Maundu complied, but altered with his own gestures the sculptures so that none would be recognized as “Yoruba.” Recognizing that the artist was not going to slavishly imitate the works of others, Peera began encouraging a market for new genres of objects in Dar es Salaam. Zachary Kingdon, “Chanuo Maundo Master of Makonde Blackwood Art,” African Arts 29, no. 4 (Autumn 1996): 58.

286 Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 41.
artist made them specifically for sale as art objects – not as crafts or embellishments on functional objects like furniture. At the same time, however, they did not achieve this modernity by imitating or embracing aspects or values of modern European sculpture, as Dimé was clear in pointing out to McEvilley during their interview.\textsuperscript{287} As with the Makonde objects, Dimé’s filiforms captured the cosmopolitan nature of Dakar. Ironically, the filiforms represented a modern art form, indigenous to the country that fulfilled the Négritude hunger for a locally born modernity. They did so without the trappings of the Africanité-Latinité visual paradigm that had stifled painters after more than a decade of success with the École de Dakar style. Lastly, Dimé, in citing the Makonde shetani sculptures as having resonance with his own work, indicated his interest in contemporaneous African artistic genres. Rather than being obligated to look to archetypal models for artistic inspiration or over to Europe for modern models to follow, Dimé signaled his intention to participate in the modern condition of African artists and their production. As this modernity is all too frequently circumscribed by Euro-American canonical preferences, the shetani objects, and Dimé’s own filiforms provided a way to capitalize on Euro-American buying power without having to buy into the artistic precedents of Western cultures themselves. We are aware from Dimé’s later interviews that he did not want to be considered an “African” artist up for consumption by Euro-American aesthetic standards. As he told Harney: “I am not a representative of an ethnic group... No one can represent African Art.”\textsuperscript{288} Furthermore, he never fully embraced the Western model of art making, telling McEvilley he “vomited acculturation,”\textsuperscript{289} due to his frustration with concurrent demands on the “African”

\textsuperscript{287} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{288} Dimé qtd. in Harney, \textit{In Senghor's Shadow}, 172.
\textsuperscript{289} Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 41.
artist to accept the values of European modernism while remaining purely African in his own work.

Along with his investigations of contemporary Makonde sculptures, Dimé’s interest in contemporary African paradigms led him to an early experiment in found objects resulting in _Recherche_. There are actually two significant inventions at play in _Recherche_. One is the use of raw or uncarved wood, and to this I will return momentarily. The other is the addition of twine wrapped around the upper extremity of _Recherche_ and nailed into the wood at regular intervals (fig. 3.24). As Dimé acknowledged the Makonde objects’ relationship with his filiform works, I would like to draw attention to an additional parallel between Dimé’s twine, and later wire, wrapped objects and Christian Lattier’s twine over wire sculptures from the 1960s and 1970s, one of these being _Le Voleur de Coq_ (Rooster Thief), 1962 (fig. 3.25). Lattier’s process of wrapping twine over wire frameworks to make three-dimensional objects evolved as he attempted to distance himself from both traditional “African” art making and “Western” modern art. He recalled: “If I had worked with wood, I would have been accused of copying my ancestors. If I had carved stone, I would have been shunned for copying the white man. So I had to find something new.”

Lattier’s comments on the dilemma for contemporary artists of African descent resonate deeply with Dimé’s subsequent struggles as a young artist attempting to find his own signature style. Unlike Lattier, Dimé remained dedicated to his chosen material of wood, but the parallels between the older artist’s working philosophy and Dimé’s own are striking. While the formal similarities of the twine wrapped over an armature could be coincidental, it would be nearly impossible for Dimé to be unaware of Lattier’s sculptures. Lattier was a featured artist at the

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1966 Premier Festival des Arts Nègres in Dakar where he was awarded the Grand Prize by President Senghor. Given that Dimé had arrived in Dakar that same year and his interest in starting his own career as an artist, I suspect he was very aware of what the generation ahead of him was doing. Someone with Lattier’s credentials and obvious success would have no doubt made an impression on Dimé. Since being honored with the Grand Prize at the Senghor-sponsored 1966 Premier Festival des Arts Nègres in Dakar, Lattier (though born in Côte d’Ivoire) has remained widely influential to Senegalese artists working at the time and in the decades since. The 2004 edition of the Dak’Art Biennale featured a solo exhibition of Lattier’s work commemorating his enduring influence on Senegalese contemporary art production.

Another departure *Recherche* makes from Dimé’s earlier filiforms lies in the formal handling of the wood. Rather than carve against the grain of the wood in order to stress the juxtaposition between artist and nature as he did with *Progrès* and *Angoisse*, Dimé simply strips the bark off of the two branches he uses for *Recherche* and sands them smooth, allowing the grain, knots and gnarls of the branches to dictate the finished form of his sculpture. His intervention into the medium is therefore restrained, and the hand of the artist is subdued in relation to the natural shape of the branch. Dimé further resists the artistic urge to smooth off the chopped end of the log where it was removed from the tree. This element of the sculpture is a significant methodological shift for the artist, as previous filiform works in wood do not exhibit raw edges. Even his filiforms that have gouged surface treatments are not left in a raw state; the hand of the artist is omnipresent in the creation of the finished surface (see cats. 19, 23, 32, 103, 142). Dimé’s only previous work that makes use of raw wood in the finished object is *l’Homme*, as witnessed in the pedestal element of the sculpture.
In comparison with Dimé’s works from the seventies, the filiform sculptures from the early eighties are markedly more abstract and more conceptual in both compositional strategy and in matters of subject. As this shift occurs after Dimé’s tenure at the École, and after his research trip to Mali, it is quite likely that his experiences there contributed to his comfort with formal abstraction and his desire to express less tangible subject matter via this route. While his loyalty to the figure in his work never wavered, his attachment to naturalism and academic constructions consistently waned from the late seventies onwards. Beginning with the filiform series, Dimé made philosophical and abstract sensibilities the subjects of his sculptures. He adhered to figural representations until the end of his career, but the eighties and early nineties marked a period of increased experimentation and the complete removal of naturalism and academic proportion from much of his work.\(^{291}\)

Acknowledging the modern African-based influences of Makonde shetani sculpture and Christian Lattier on Dimé’s own sculptural evolution strengthens my arguments about how Dimé’s objects from the mid-1980s participated in a new international vocabulary of modernity that drew more from contemporaneous African models than either to past African archetypes or to European models. Over the course of the 1980s Dimé gradually transformed his interest in symbolic archetypes and the pan-Africanism they implied into an interrogation of the primacy of locally obtained raw materials. Dimé’s use of found material, the hallmark of his récupération objects from the 1990s, was no less pan-African in theory, but he diverged from a generic embrace of “Africa” to create objects that were resolutely specific in their localization to particular environments, objects, and cultures.

The Bogolan “Paintings”

As Dimé did not have the opportunity to study textile production either at the CFA or at the École Nationale des Beaux Arts, his state-funded trip to Mali afforded him the opportunity to learn for the first time about the bogolan tradition that was as significant to Senegalese craft heritage as woodworking and furniture production. In addition, the rising national significance of the tapestries being produced by École de Dakar artists at the National Tapestry in Thiès, might have sparked Dimé’s interest in the study textile design and production with a view to relating some of this future works to the emergent interest in tapestries.

Bogolan, or mud cloth, however, is Malian in origin. Woven by men on narrow looms, the strips of fabric are sewn together and then women take responsibility for dying the bogolan fabrics. In traditional bogolan, this is achieved by applying a solution of leaves fermented in clay slurry to the negative areas of the design. The normal practice is to dye the fabric black in such a way as to allow the remaining positive images to then be bleached or stained in colors to complete the patterns.292 Abstract and symbolic imagery dominates in traditional textiles, while pictorial representations of landscapes, people and animals now exist in textiles made for the tourist industry.293 In addition, textiles destined for the tourist market, or else produced by artists of lesser skill are frequently not decorated by filling in the negative spaces with the black clay mixture, but rather by using the black solution as ink to paint black shapes and designs onto the tea-colored cloth.294

294 Toerien, "Mud cloth from Mali," 54.
This “lesser” variety of bogolan is most popular amongst Senegalese craftspeople, and is sold so readily on the tourist market, that it has become a “local” Senegalese phenomenon. Stalls of these textiles are sprinkled throughout the Sandaga market in Dakar and visitors are readily shown piles of textiles stacked from pavement to ceiling by eager salesmen. As such, the bogolan textiles as craft were, and remain, a significant part of Senegal’s artisanal economy and a large part of the visual culture on display along the market streets of Dakar.

For this reason, studying the bogolan tradition in Mali broadened Dimé’s knowledge of craft production in Senegal and brought him into contact with yet another African artistic tradition from beyond the borders of his own country. As Dimé had made clear to Senghor when asking the President for a fellowship to Mali rather than Europe, he intended to expand his international training through greater awareness of contemporary African, rather than European, artistic productions. By refusing to acknowledge the cultural supremacy of European models of training, education and production, Dimé effectively challenged the merits of such a system for contemporary artists in Senegal, and his two surviving bogolan textiles from 1980 offer up visual proof of the artist’s priorities.

Both fabrics are approximately one meter high and half a meter in width, making them suitable for wall hangings, yet modest in comparison with the one by two meter pieces usually seen in Dakar market stalls. An additional difference is that they are not made of strip cloths, but rather a single piece of fabric, or in the case of one, two panels sewn together by machine at the midpoint of the long side of the fabric. Dimé’s fabric is also machine-made and much thinner than the traditional hand woven cotton fabrics associated with bogolan production in Mali.
One of Dimé’s textiles shows a rather one-dimensional woman nursing a baby and holding a basket on her head (fig 3.17)(cat. 187). She is portrayed against a flat circular motif that draws attention to her torso and head, highlighting the areas of women’s body most associated with labor: the breasts for nursing children, the head for carrying a manual load, and the arms for their ability to do all at once. The remaining background is shaded through the technique of tightly spaced parallel lines, arranged not in organic patterns to indicate natural space, but rather in triangular, trapezoidal and arc shapes that further accentuate the flatness of the textile and the blocky imagery of the woman it contains. A concentric double border of ovoid and lozenge patterns derived from traditional Malian bogolan designs surrounds the whole.

While the mother and child theme looks like an awkward presentation of a genre seen ubiquitously in bogolan textiles sold at the tourist stalls in Dakar, this textile is evidence of Dimé’s continued investment with the points of intersection between high art and craft, and between the global and local demands placed on bogolan textiles. The image of the mother and child is not only a nod to popular tourist images, but also reflective of the significant status mothers are accorded within Senegalese society. Dimé imitates the folksy, untrained style of lesser bogolan painters, by painting his imagery in black lines onto the cream-colored cloth background, rather than by outlining his shapes in black and then filling in the negative spaces with color as is done in traditional bogolan practice. This additionally brings his textile into dialogue with painting or drawing techniques used in fine art practice even as his imagery and

295 On a checklist for his 1982 exhibition at the Sorano Theater, Dimé lists three titles for the bogolan textiles included in that show. They are La Mythologie Dogon, Dépravé, and Recherche. Moustapha Dimé, "Programme de l'Exposition (Exhibition Checklist) Hall Daniel Sorano," (Dakar: Archives of the Artist, Gorée Island Studio, Senegal, 1982). As of yet, I have not found images that would verify which two of these textiles are the ones left in the artist’s studio and the ones I discuss here. Rather than project which textile I think goes with which title (I could make arguments for all three titles applying to each of the two textiles) I have opted not to label the fabrics with titles at this juncture.
technique veers towards the folk. By using the black as his positive color rather than as the fill for his negative spaces, he is able to intentionally shade the face and upraised arm of the woman with overly thick gestures in a manner that appears unskilled, but also serves to actively thwart the dictates of European naturalistic representation being taught at both the CFA and the École Nationale des Beaux Arts during Dimé’s tenure at each. We know from the assembled catalogue of Dimé’s drawing presented here (cat. 188-294) that Dimé was a highly skilled draftsman; therefore his callow presentation of the woman and child is intentional.

Additionally, the fabric Dimé uses in both of his bogolan textiles is not hand-made. It resembles a painter’s canvas, the kind the École would have prescribed for its painting students. Dimé apparently used this industrially made fabric intentionally, based on the meanings a calculating observer would draw from this choice of material. First, the mechanically produced fabric distinguishes Dimé’s painted canvases from authentic handmade Mali bogolan fabrics, which are made from strip cloth. The latter is woven in narrow bands on handlooms. It is a thick material with heavily pronounced seams due to the nature of the whipstitching that holds the narrow lengths together. Dimé’s material is thinner and despite the correspondence between his imagery of the mother and child with those seen in the tourist trade, the thin texture of the fabric is enough to ensure that Dimé’s textiles would never be confused with those for sale to tourists in the Sandaga market. This distinction is significant, for it indicates that Dimé’s painted textiles neither imitate nor create actual bogolan textiles along the lines of those made in traditional or tourist contexts.

As evidence, I introduce Dimé’s second bogolan, also from 1980 (fig. 3.18) (cat. 186) in which he either bought a fabric made from two pieces or else he stitched the canvas together

296 For comments on the weaving and assembly techniques of bogolan, see Toerien, "Mud cloth from Mali," 53.
himself. The artist has allowed for the seam to occur prominently across the middle of the composition (fig. 3.26)(cat. 186 det.). Ostensibly, this appears to be a gesture born of poverty: want of either means or talent could cause an artist to so obviously use two smaller pieces of canvas to achieve a larger. Given that Dimé was in Mali on a research fellowship funded by President Senghor, however, lack of means can be ruled out as a reason for working with scraps of canvas; the decision to do so logically seems to have been aesthetic. The conspicuous stitching recalls the seams of traditional bogolan fabrics, and yet its singularity means that it plays a formal role rather than a structural one; it functions as a sign referencing at once the multiple seams in traditional bogolan, but in its singularity it documents its difference from them.

In reading the seam as a sign, the canvas itself becomes the object signified; the textile simultaneously carries meaning as a bogolan, but it is also a “painting” as the artist signed the canvas (fig. 3.26). It is furthermore “not bogolan” as it is not a hand-made fabric, but an available material either purchased or obtained from the artist’s environment. This gesture of the seam reinforces the painterly gestures Dimé makes in his other textile, where he uses the imagery of the mother and child combined with painting techniques to simultaneously reference easel painting and craft tradition. As with his imitation of the local painting tradition seen in the mother and child textile, Dimé’s seam in the more abstract piece creates the same critique of European methodology. The seam effectively destroys the integrity of the canvas, making this work function as “not painting.” This places greater value on the craft aspects of the work and ties the textile more firmly to the Malian painting tradition while seemingly shunning established European easel painting values.

Furthermore, whereas the imagery in the textile of the mother and child carries the weight of the interpretation, the critique of academic values in the second textile is relayed through a subtle seam, thereby freeing the imagery from having to bear the same burden. This textile is awash in dramatic abstract forms that cover the surface in asymmetrical patterns, painted with a confident brush in long, lyrical strokes that are the visual and technical opposites of those seen in the mother and child textile. This textile in fact looks remarkably similar to filiform sculptures in wood that Dimé created just before his trip to Mali, but are predominant in his oeuvre only after his return. In these sculptures, smooth forms function as abstract images that frequently draw their inspiration from the human figure. This textile suggests a female form embedded in its honeycombed structure, and yet it is only the illusion of a body that is present; no definitive figure is articulated on the surface of the fabric.

I argue that in their exploitation of abstracted imagery, signs and referents, folk imagery and painting, these textiles read as a pair of “not paintings” that signal awareness of the problematic place of the “African artist” in the European driven and dominated art world. Consistently relegated to the sidelines of canonical art historical values, the African artist, according to Ruth Phillips and Christopher Steiner, is given a role to play within the canon as a “primitive” artist: an imagined figure working with limited training in an abstract style that deviates from proper naturalism evinced in European painting. As Dimé is able to play on this fictionalized and yet omnipresent figure of the “African artist” he does so in order to critique its merits. Arguably, his critique is so subtle and so skillfully played over the surfaces of these two seemingly banal experiments in bogolan textile, I suggest this as the reason it has gone unnoticed in broader scholarship on his work. I find Dimé’s active critique of the European tradition to be

unconcealed, and due to the artist’s mastery of his craft, his artworks further enjoin viewers to look beyond the surface. For looking at Dime’s works through the lens of European art only makes us to see only those elements that they seem to share with postmodernism, or for their failure to live up to the aesthetic values of modernist painting. This attitude overlooks the intrinsic critique Dimé makes on those same artistic values, and the inherent merit in his work because of the skillfully constructed condemnation of canonical art practice.

That Dimé experimented with bogolan textiles/paintings while in Mali may be more than mere coincidence. It is possible that he may have had strategic motivations as well as artistic ones. After the founding of the National Tapestry in Thiès under Papa Ibra Tall in 1965, the success of the École de Dakar artists working there was well established by the end of Senghor’s tenure as president in 1980. The primary patrons for tapestries were government officials, and this was a target audience for Dimé as well. As Harney points out, “In addition to the presidential office, the government ministries served as the primary consumers of the artworks [the tapestries from Thiès], hanging them in their departments and public buildings, or giving them as state gifts to foreign embassies in Senegal, visiting dignitaries, and foreign governments.” As a means of expanding his collector base at home, therefore, Dimé may have wanted to include textile production into his own oeuvre. This would also explain some of the Négritude motifs, I argue, are present in his bogolan-like textiles such as the rudimentary image of mother and child and the traditional geometric border that surrounds her, or the adoption of a

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299 This attitude is articulated in Phillips and Steiner’s essay via an example they give of the European reception of Australian Aboriginal art: “The arts of hunter-gatherer groups like the Eskimos and the Australian Aborigines, for example, became the focus of study because these peoples were perceived to live in an extreme state of dependence on nature. Because the “primitiveness” of their arts was taken as a given, Victorian anthropologists focused almost exclusively on the “inferior” category of “ornament” and often willfully blinded themselves to the existence of objects that could have fit their fine art category.” Phillips and Steiner, “Art, Authenticity and Baggage,” 8.

300 Harney, In Senghor’s Shadow, 69-70.
West African dyeing technique as a substitute for European easel painting as a means to create a wall hanging.

Despite the presence of such powerful artistic and career-minded objectives in his bogolan-like textiles, Dimé did not continue to work in the medium, with the exception of two later multi-media paintings and some wall sculptures that use bark or canvas as support. In fact, as I will argue in the next chapter, he found stronger voice for his philosophical connections with Africanité and European art in his récupération style. Indeed, the critique of methodology in his bogolan textiles is very subtle in comparison with what would follow in the late 1980s and 1990s. The bogolan project was short-lived; Dimé claimed to have made four, which he exhibited only once in his 1982 solo exhibition at the Daniel Sorano Theater that included 25 of his sculptures to date. Of the 1982 exhibition, Dimé later stated that he felt completely disheartened, as he did not sell a single item, despite the presence of the Minister of Culture and several other well-placed government officials at the opening. Perhaps his failure to capitalize financially on the bogolan project led him to abandon textile production. More assuredly, however, it was because the artist was always compelled by sculpture and never focused on two-dimensional work the way he did on object making. In fact, it is my opinion that Dimé used two-dimensional work primarily as a means to work out or else record his sculptural compositions, of which the bogolan themselves seem to be no exception.

301 Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 44.
302 According to the artist’s checklist of works for the exhibition, of the 25 sculptures five were in stone, the rest in wood. Only three bogolan textiles are listed, in contradiction to Dimé’s recollection of four textiles during the McEvilley interview. Dimé, "Programme de l'Exposition."
303 Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 41, 44-5.
Chapter 4  The Récupération Works (1980s-1997)

1990s – Leading a Movement

The year 1992 was a milestone for Dimé. He and Abdoulaye Ndoye organized their second duo exhibition, Ruptures II, which opened at the Galerie Nationale to critical acclaim. On the occasion, Dime presented, for the first time, works made exclusively from found objects, works now associated with his récupération style. Ndoye’s contribution consisted of new abstract paintings. The exhibition was underwritten by the President of the National Assembly, Abdoul Aziz Ndaw (doc. 9). Guests at the formal opening included government ministers and other dignitaries, including Dimé’s Marabout, Cheikh Fall Khady Guèye. The same year, Dime participated in the Fifth National Salon of Visual Artists in Dakar. His works were also selected for the first Dak’Art Biennale, organized by the Minister of Culture. At the opening ceremonies of Dak’Art, President Abdou Diouf presented Dimé with the President’s Grand Prize for his récupération sculpture La Femme à la Culotte (fig. 4.1)(cat. 57). With the prize money, Dimé traveled to Europe, visiting Paris, where he visited the Louvre, later commenting on how he was taken by Michelangelo’s sculptures of dying slaves.

With the remaining funds from his Dak’Art Biennale prize, and a grant from the Swiss Embassy, Dimé was able to finance the substantial renovations of a new studio space. Dimé had petitioned the Diouf government late in 1992 for a lease to the blockhouse property known as the “Fort Portuguais” on Gorée Island to use as a studio. In early 1993, Moustapha Kâ, then Minister

304 See the review published by Ndiaye: Ndiaye, "Moustapha Dimé, le défricheur."
305 Published previously by myself and others as La Dame à la Culotte. Dimé’s own archives reveal however that the name he gave to the sculpture was La Femme à la Culotte, and this is the title that this dissertation will use throughout.
306 Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 38.
of Culture, granted his petition and Dimé was given a 100-year rent-free tenure to the state-controlled property (doc. 10). Recognizing that his success had come not as a result of academic training or trips to Europe to study Western art alone, Dimé wanted to found his own art workshop based on the master-apprentice system of traditional Lawbé woodworkers, where rigorous training was provided while creative direction was the purview of the students themselves. In his letters to the government requesting the lease for the Fort Portuguais blockhouse on Gorée, he stressed that the studio would not be used just by him and for his own work, but that his goal was to contribute to the Senegalese patrimony by training emerging artists. He saw this not as a fly-by-night apprenticeship, but a serious academic undertaking. The Gorée Studio was Dimé’s chef d’œuvre, even though it has never been understood as such by the international community. The studio was intended to be his masterpiece and his legacy – his gift back to his country, his people and his profession.307

In 1993 he was invited by Susan Vogel and Thomas McEvilley to be a part of their exhibition of African Art at the Venice Biennale.308 As previously mentioned, this exhibition proved to be the launching pad of Dimé’s international career, and the catalyst for all subsequent international exhibitions and publications of his work. Dimé’s objects soon were in demand in Europe and the artist travelled to Belgium, Germany and France to exhibit and create work.

307 While it has taken much time, and the dedicated efforts of Gabriel Kemzo Malou and his wife Isabelle Blanche, the studio is now a functioning artist workshop for students of all ages, scholars, and artists from Senegal and around the world. The space is now called C.I.F.R.A «Atelier Moustapha DIMÉ» (Centre International de Formations et de Résidences Artistiques). Information is currently available on the blog for the space: http://artsrightsjustice.net/group/mustafadimesenegal
308 Vogel and McEvilley selected three painters, Tamessir Dia, Gérard Santoni and Ouattara were from the Côte d’Ivoire, and three artists were from Senegal: the late painter Mor Faye, sculptor Ousmane Sow and Moustapha Dimé (1952-1998).
These invitations and workshop residencies furthered his engagement with European methodological art practice.\textsuperscript{309}

Back home in Senegal in September of 1994, Dimé helped organize the second \textit{Tenq} workshop with El Hadji Sy (one of the original founders of the \textit{Laboratoire Agit Art}). The workshop was held this time in St. Louis, a cosmopolitan town just south of the border with Mauritania on the Atlantic coast. It was based off of the open studio workshop model El Hadji Sy and the artists of the Village des Arts had pioneered over a decade earlier. Fellow artists Djibril N’Diaye, Fodé Camera, Souleymane Keita and Dimé, along with the South African Anna Kindersley were the primary participants.\textsuperscript{310} \textit{Tenq} ultimately included twenty-six artists from ten countries, and intentionally intended to kick off the massive festival “Africa95” being launched in England.\textsuperscript{311}

Just prior to \textit{Tenq} Dimé had taken his first group of four apprentices at the Gorée workshop studio. Jules Anani Amu, Gabriel Kemzo Malou, Oudoula Assad and Sada Tall studied with him from June to August of 1994 after they had all graduated from the École Nationale des Beaux Arts (doc. 11).\textsuperscript{312} The four students traveled with Dimé to St. Louis to

\textsuperscript{309} See Dimé’s composite CV (translated into English) included as Appendix C for the artist’s international workshops, travels and exhibitions.

\textsuperscript{310} Clementine Deliss, "Returning the Curve: africa95, Tenq, and "Seven Stories,", "\textit{African Arts} 29, no. 3 (Summer 1996): 41.

\textsuperscript{311} Additional participants in \textit{Tenq} St. Louis were Mohamed Kacimi (a Moroccan, who would write one of Dimé’s many obituaries), David Koloane from South Africa, Yinka Shonibare from the UK, and Ndidi Dike from Nigeria. Africa95 was a festival of art, music, film, literature spread over 60 venues in Britain. Very much in the vein of Senghor’s 1966 Festival Mondiale des Arts Nègres, Africa95 was successful enough that the project was repeated in 2005 as Africa05.

\textsuperscript{312} Moustapha Dimé, "Attestation [of completion of sculptural internship for Amu, Malou, Asad (sic.) and Tall].," (Gorée: "Atelier Ecole Castel Gorée", 26 August, 1994). Bacary Diop, later joined the group when Amu and Tall left. Diop was not an École graduate and after his residency with Dimé he switched into painting. He credits Dimé with instilling in him a sense of community responsibility as an artist. Bacary Diop, Personal Communication to the author, May 2009. Diop now works with psychiatric patients in Dakar hospitals as part of a highly successful art therapy program established by the artists’ group \textit{Association Nit Nitey Garabam} (People are the Peoples’ Medicine). Malou remained on with Dimé until the latter’s passing in 1998. At the request of Dimé’s family, Malou subsequently stayed on as overseer of the studio and Dimé’s estate, a role he maintains to this day.
participate in *Teng*. Malou recalls Dimé speaking of a young woman, the concierge from the Hôtel Residence where the artists were staying in St. Louis as being particularly helpful.³¹³ Malou and the other apprentices did not know it at the time, but Dimé began dating the woman in question, Dieumbé Fall, and the two were quietly married the following year. Their only child, Ndèye Yacine, was born in 1996. Souleymane Keita, a friend of Dimé and an influential École de Dakar painter, stressed that perhaps no other event at this time period marked Dimé as much as his relationship with Dieumbé. Keita felt she was a tremendous new influence on Dimé’s productivity and joy in his work.³¹⁴

In 1996, President Diouf awarded Dimé the title of Chevalier in the Ordre National du Lion, a society similar to the Legion d’Honneur in France, and headed by the President himself. According to a letter sent to him by the Minister of Culture the honor was presented “in recognition for services rendered to the Nation” (doc. 12).

While Harney, Snipe and Sylla all successfully argue that Diouf policy undermined the position and financial stability of many artists as compared to what they had previously enjoyed under Senghor,³¹⁵ Chevalier Dimé seems to have defied the odds stacked against artists under Diouf. The height of his career in fact, occurred under Diouf, and his success can be attributed in part to direct support from the latter’s government. Diouf was from Dimé’s hometown of Louga and the two men shared loyalties based on their mutual roots. This connection with Diouf, while not an artistic or intellectual bond, meant that Dimé had a greater level of access to the President and his government than did many of his contemporaries. Dimé constantly

³¹³ Malou, Interview with the Author, 15 June 2004.
³¹⁴ Keita, Interview with the Author, 26 June 2008.
promoted his own career to the government, for example, notifying the Minister of Culture when he sold an important work to the Museum of Modern Art in New York (La Femme au Long Cou, 1992) (fig. 4.2) (cat. 51).\textsuperscript{316} Dimé also wrote the Ministry of Culture nearly every time he exhibited, whether in Senegal or internationally, to keep the office apprised of his career. Keita points out that the Louga connection is most assuredly one of the reasons why Dimé continued to receive funding from the Diouf government despite the paucity of artistic support in those years.\textsuperscript{317}

**Dimé’s engagement with Pan-Africanism, Négritude and Anti-Négritude**

On the surface, Dimé’s earliest works appear to be rather uncritical renderings of the Africanité ideals espoused by Senghor. As discussed in Chapter 3, during the 1970s Dimé was carving human and animal imagery on his panels that loosely recalled West African sculpture, metal casting, and Sahelian houses among other prototypes. His subsequent filiforms engaged with rhythmic forms and abstraction that still seemed tied to a Senghorian theory of Africanité, albeit without the didactic and narrative structure seen in Dimé’s earlier panels. As Abdou Sylla points out, under Senghor’s twenty-year control over the cultural atmosphere of Dakar, Négritude was inescapable:

As for the arts, Senghor’s influence was so pervasive and coercive that all the young artists’ creations referenced the theories and imperatives of Négritude: overemphasis on an originary and pure Africa, celebration of ancestral values, dependence on traditional negro art, articulations of negro cultural identity, etc.

\textsuperscript{316}After Dimé wrote a letter (believed lost) to the Minister of Culture on December 2, 1994, he received a response the following January, which is still saved in the archive in his studio. Coura Ba Thiam, "Lettre: Félicitations," (Dakar, Senegal: Ministère de la Culture, République du Sénégal, 1995).

\textsuperscript{317}Keita, Interview with the Author, Dakar, 26 June 2008.
The result of this was the consistency of themes and subject matters dear to Senghor in the finished works.\textsuperscript{318}

It was impossible therefore, for Dimé or any artist of his generation to work without using \textit{Négritude} as a basis for artistic inquiry. While I believe that Dimé was critically engaged with Senghor’s theories throughout his life, he never adopted the École de Dakar style, and used regularly used \textit{Latinité} as a basis for critique rather than for its connection to \textit{Négritude}. Rather, he maintained an intellectual relationship with \textit{Négritude}, wary of its tendency to stereotype and frustrated with its elitist underpinnings, despite its altruistic aims of culture building.

By the 1990s, Dimé had adopted a more theoretical and abstract vision of \textit{Africanité}, one built on conceptual and philosophical Pan-Africanisms, rather than a direct reading of Senghor’s \textit{Negritude}. I reason that this comes from the artist’s engagement with the writings of Cheikh Anta Diop, which seem to have emerged as a point of influence for the artist in the early 1990s. Diop, while having trained as a physicist in Paris, eventually wrote his doctoral thesis under French anthropologist Marcel Griaule. Diop espoused the thesis that Egypt was a Black African nation, thus reclaiming the ancient empire for sub-Saharan Africa and removing it from the realm of Eurocentric study. Diop was an early critic of, and political threat to, Senghor due to his rejection of continued French influence of all kinds in post-colonial Senegal.

Diop’s more radical stance was no less based in intellect than Senghor’s. His call for Black artists to look up only to African, not European, models for inspiration definitely resonated with Dimé, who assiduously transcribed passages from Diop’s seminal publication, \textit{Nations}

\textsuperscript{318} “Pendant vingt ans, il [Senghor] a fait régner tout au moins à Dakar, une ambiance et une atmosphère culturelles dominées par la Négritude, dont il voulait qu’elle fût le fondement de toute la vie Sénégalaise moderne: vie politique, sociale, culturelle et artistique, etc. Au plan des arts, l’influence de Senghor était si présente et si coercitive que tous les jeunes artistes créaient en référence aux théories et impératifs de la Négritude, magnifiaient l’Afrique originelle et pure, célébraient les valeurs ancestrales, s’inspiraient de l’art nègre ancien, exprimaient l’identité culturelle nègre, etc. D’où la constance des thèmes et des titres chers à Senghor dans leurs œuvres.” Sylla, "Art africain contemporain," 56.
nègres et culture, into a journal probably dating from the early 1990s.\(^{319}\) His journal lifts entire passages from Diop’s book, specifically those that draw attention to connections between Dogon and Egyptian cultures. For example, Dimé wrote:

In this regard, the parallel that [Diop] makes between [Egyptian] and Dogon cosmogony as recorded by Marcel Griaule is edifying in many respects. For example: the importance of symbolic numbers in the ceremonial death of the Egyptian King during his initiation as instituted by the Pharaoh Djoser translates into the Dogon *Sigui* tradition where Priest-Kings are symbolically put to death every seven years.\(^{320}\)

As Dimé visited Mali in 1977 and returned specifically to the Dogon region in 1980, he must have felt a personal connection to Diop’s analysis, which granted elevated status to Dogon culture. Also significant to Dimé’s own aesthetic preferences are the passages he copied from Diop regarding African art forms and styles. Diop argued: “African art had always been at the service of social causes and it should remain so. As such, the African artist had always created aesthetic beauty based on functionality.”\(^{321}\) Diop believed this functionality was the reason that the African artistic cannon had never been dependent on anatomy or proportion like Western art. Senghor too had proposed very similar ideology, but whereas the President espoused surrealism as the visual objective in African sculpture, Diop identified two trends, realism and expressionism. Realism, he suggested was to be found in the pre-colonial figurative arts of the Ife, Pangwe, Guro, Baule and the central African Mangbetu, Luba and Teke among others.\(^{322}\) He


\(^{320}\) Dimé, "Journal," section 2. “A ce niveau le parallèle qu’il fait entre la cosmogonie dogon d’écrite par Marcel Griaule se révèle à bien des égards très edifiantes: par exple [sic] l’importance de la symbolique des nombres ou la cérémonie de la mise-à-mort symbolique du roi initiée en egypte par le pharaon Djozer se traduit chez les dogon par le *SIGUI* qui est un rituel de mise à mort symbolique du roi-prêtre tous les sept ans.”


\(^{322}\) Ibid., 341.
divided Expressionism into two categories: “hollow” (typified by the highly stylized Kota reliquaries) and “flat” (epitomized by art of the Dogon, and the “cubist” sculptures of the Dan and Songye objects). All of the above, Dimé transcribed into his notebooks, carefully noting the cultures Diop cited as examples of each style. Dimé then copied eight pages of transcription from Diop’s arguments about Egyptian culture, its early contact with the Greeks and subsequently with European civilization.

In the same journal, Dimé also included a statement by the relatively obscure Russian sociologist, Georges Gurvitch, who gave an address to the 2nd Pan-African National Congress (The Congress of Negro Writers and Artists) in Rome in 1959. According to the passage transcribed by Dimé, Gurvitch implored the audience to uphold the primacy of Black African culture as the root of all civilization, and like Diop, argued that without Black Africa, Egypt would never have come to be.

Dimé’s journal, therefore, offers irrefutable proof of his engagement with Pan-Africanism, and more specifically with the Senegalese national discourse on the subject as mediated by Diop. From 1989 to 1992, when the Set Setal movement was gaining momentum in Dakar, Dimé, influenced in part by Diop, became more deeply engaged in the anti-government and concurrent anti-Négritude projects it engendered. The artists of the Laboratoire agitated for less government control (and consequently, support) of their work, which gave them the autonomy from proscribed styles and governmental dictates. With freedom from the state, however, came the burden of financial self-sufficiency, and the avant-garde projects of the Laboratoire spoke directly to the political, social and financial state of the artists who chose to

323 Ibid., 342.
325 Ibid., section 1.
practice it. As *récupération* began to gain international acclaim, however, Dimé began exploiting its ability to produce a similar critique of European artistic production and the history of colonial relations between France and Senegal, and by extension, Europe and Africa.

The Transition to *Récupération*

While its goals have changed over time, *récupération* in the early 1990s focused primarily on local politics, drawing attention to the failure of the government to support a diverse program in the arts, on the one hand, and, on the other, the inability of the state to provide basic services to Dakar residents. Because of their *outdoor* activities – theatrical performances, street murals and open air installations at the Village des Arts – *récupération* artists succeeded in capturing the attention of the general public in ways that *Négritude* and the École de Dakar never did, given the latter’s emphasis on *indoor* exhibitions of tapestries and paintings in fine art galleries, government offices and venues outside Senegal.

The *récupération* movement therefore was the first truly indigenously motivated, populist art movement in Senegal. Its rejection of the state sponsored paradigms promoted via *Négritude*, combined with its connection to public service and humanitarian aims, supplied many artists, Dimé paramount among them, with potent social and artistic metaphors for their sculptural projects.

Because Dimé began his career as a conventional sculptor working from a single block of wood, some scholars tend to view his shift to producing assemblages or *récupération* as a kind of rupture or direct rejection of his early works.\(^{326}\) I have a different take on the subject. While this switch may be regarded as a departure, it is neither a rejection of his earlier work, nor the result

of his ambivalent encounters with European aesthetics at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts and during his overseas travels. Rather, Dimé seems to have arrived at récupération through a sustained investigation of sculptural methodology over the course of his career. Interpreted thus, Dimé’s sculptures define a much more calculated approach to material and to the meaning of sculpture in post-colonial Senegal than has been previously understood.

Dimé’s récupération sculptures, additionally, stand apart from those of his contemporaries. His primary materials consisted of found wood, hand-made utilitarian objects, Qur’anic boards, rope, sheet metal, wire and nails. While a long list, this is quite a restricted vocabulary of materials – primarily iron and wood - compared to those favored by his colleagues. For instance, Issa Samb, co-founder of the Laboratoire Agit Art, often used commercially-made objects (radios, plastic mops and buckets) in conjunction with tourist arts (masks, statuettes) and assorted items such as the Senegalese flag, t-shirts, shoes, furniture, automobile parts and street signs in his installations and performances.327

One possible explanation for Dimé’s choice of more limited array of found objects lies in the fact that mixed media sculptures from so-called “traditional” African societies are frequently composed of metal and wood. For example, in Central Africa Chokwe Pwo ancestor masks and Fang byeri reliquary figures include brass furniture tacks and metal disks punched into the faces and torsos of wooden figures. West African Fon bocio guardian figures are made of wood with attached bells, locks and decorative jewelry.328 Given Dimé’s attraction to African carving

327 See Ebong, "Negritude: Between Mask and Flag. Senegalese Cultural Ideology and the "École de Dakar."
techniques, I suspect that this may be a likely reason he was attached to the wood and metal materials he sought out to use in his récupération sculptures.

One other distinction between Dimé’s récupération sculptures and those of his contemporaries was his retention of the original meanings of many of his found objects in his final sculptures. Viyé Diba explained that unlike his own interest in found objects, which was based on formal qualities, Dimé saw the original purpose of the found object as crucial to the finished sculpture. Souleymane Keïta also attested that while he too used found objects in his paintings, primarily as signifiers of original objects that they resembled, he deeply admired Dimé’s ability to preserve, and even expand on, the original meanings of found objects within his sculptures.

Belgian art critic, Daniel Sotiaux, further remarked: “For Dimé, the object must be located in a chronological continuum. There should not be a rupture between the previous life of an object and its integration into a sculptural work. Rather than refer to Dimé’s works as recuperated, one should think of them more as ‘found again’. The substratum of Dimé's found objects is the notion of the past - a human past "found again" and re-created in the present tense. Dimé's récupération palette was, as it were, created from a recycling of humanity, both natural and man-made.

Initially, however, Dimé did not see the found object materials as having a past life with which he wanted to work. They were just raw materials, and his use of them was more formal.

329 Viyé Diba, Interview with the Author, 9 June 2004.
330 Keïta, Interview with the Author, 26 June 2008.
331 Sotiaux's original words translate rather awkwardly into English. I provide them here for clarity: "Pour Dimé, il faut que l’objet se situe dans une trame temporelle. Il ne doit pas y avoir rupture de vie entre sa fonction ancienne et son intégration dans l’œuvre. Plutôt qu’objets récupérés, on devrait dire que Dimé utilise des "objets retrouvés."" Sotiaux, "Moustapha Dimé," 13.
than analytic, similar to the practices of Diba and Keita. He discussed his early récupération process with McEvilley during their 1993 interview:

Thomas McEvilley: In your use of materials that had already been used formerly, was there a sense that this was a way to plug into the life of the culture? Moustapha Dimé: No, not yet. I had a different view then, which was to have access to natural materials – materials that, from the point of view of the material itself, had particular qualities to it. But not because it had been used. I was searching for something that belonged to me.  

However, four years later (during a conversation at his Gorée studio), Dimé presented a more nuanced explanation for his use of found objects to Olivier Cena. By this time, Dimé had spent over a decade engaged in found object art making, and a more profound conceptualization of the materials had emerged in the artist’s philosophy. According to the artist:

The harmony [of the object] plays out in the equilibrium between the material and the immaterial. This bowl, for example, serves as a vessel out of which I eat. Were a Marabout to speak a few words over it, however, it would become a sacred ritual vessel. Yet, it is still the same bowl. These two aspects of the bowl, the material and immaterial, are nothing but two currents of the same movement. What is important is to find the balance between the two. This point of equilibrium, in the movement between the material and immaterial, is sculpture.

Dimé stresses the concepts of harmony and balance in his finished works as coming from the dynamic interplay between the utilitarian and sacred object. The successful balance between the two creates art – sculpture in Dimé’s case. His reflections on movement and harmony dovetail with Senghor’s own philosophies about rhythm and movement when speaking on the subject of creativity in African poetry, music, dance and sculpture. Despite its flawed manifestations, therefore, Négritude still offered Dimé a philosophical platform for catalyzing

332 Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 43-4. Here, Dimé was most likely referring to his early hybrid (Hybride) series, dating to the same epoch as Recherche. The objects in the series were all produced prior to 1991. See the Catalogue Raisonné for examples.

333 Olivier Cena, "Et l'homme-oiseau observait la mer..." Télérama 2460, no. 5 mars (1997).

his visions of récupération. He also tried to link such visions with the harmony found in the seeming paradox between the sacred and the banal. Dimé’s mastery of récupération, in fact, stems from his ability to negotiate a found object into a relationship between the seen and the unseen, the mystical and the physical in order to produce a finished sculpture.

The transcendental nature of materials is a foundational component of récupération, and one that Dimé linked explicitly to his own spirituality. This speaks to the artist’s engagement with the historical understanding of African art as functional, in contrast to the non-utilitarian or self-referential focus of modern European art. His objects, as he defines them above, purposefully blur the artificial line between the functional and the aesthetic in order to force a renegotiation of the traditional canons in the visual cultures of Africa and the West.

Dime’s found-object sculpture Femme Sérère, (1992) is a case in point. It consists of two wooden mortars stacked mouth to mouth and a pestle rising out of a hole in the upper mortar to form the body, neck and head of a female body, so that the mortars become her hips and legs (fig. 4.3) (cat. 62). Two wooden bowls on the upper part of the pestle serve as her breasts, while the iron spikes pounded into the head of the pestle indicate hair. The truncated, abstracted body of Femme Sérère, however, visually diverges from the “readymade” as it was established in Western art where industrially fabricated objects were renamed by artists. Despite Dimé’s use of the related method of assemblage, a critical distinction is the hand-made or nature-made qualities of most of his found objects. Femme Sérère, additionally challenges the functionality of African arts by including functional tools of labor in a now non-functional object. Dimé therefore stresses the manufactured or processed nature of art, not through the processes of industry, but through the tension he creates between the functions of the absent user or maker of the object (women, carvers), not the functions of the objects themselves (mortars, pestles, bowls). The
aesthetics of the object (the labor of the artist) are equally important and this is another distinction between Dimé’s *récupération* and the early 20th century European readymade.

Bodily Presence: The *Récupération* Figures

Dimé’s ability to envision found objects as human bodies, and the larger interrogation of the human form in his works, demands an analysis of how the human body is translated into sculpture and constructed in found object form.

As the artist engaged with portraiture at the outset of his career, it is tempting to view his late figural works as a continuation of this theme. This would, however, deny the more general theoretical interest in the body expressed in Dimé’s late works, which was two-fold. Formally, the body offered Dimé a framework for manipulating notions of abstraction and realism, the two primary poles around which Western art historical understanding of African art has revolved. Conceptually, however, (and this is where I would argue for a certain amount of tempered autobiographical involvement with the figure) the human body for Dimé represented the most significant of God's creations. While portraits or biographies of individuals are not Dimé's primary interest, he certainly focused on humanity as a transcendental process of being and becoming. The figural body is hence a visual manifestation of Dimé's personal spiritual path as a Mouride and *Baye Fall*.

Also at stake is the capacity of Dimé’s found materials to function in tandem with metaphorical and visual mining of society and culture via the form of the human figure. As with Dimé’s bas-relief panels from the 1970s in which the artist appropriated animals, architecture and objects from “pan-African” precedents, the *récupération* objects continue this investigation.

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335 Parts of this section were published previously in Kart, "Bodily Presence," 70-85.
of the cultural past, albeit with greater ties to specific and identifiable cultural motifs rather than
generic or symbolic gestures. In a 1994 journal entry, Dimé wrote: “After more than 20 years of
experience, I do not pound away with my meager tooling skills, rather my greatest desire lies in
this example: to take an old skin that has lived through the inclement weather of time and space
and make it young again is inconceivable for me. However, to make it blossom physically and
spiritually, this is what I want my creative work to be.”

Two things strike me as revelatory in this entry. The first is his use of body metaphor; he
describes his found objects as being “old skins.” The second is his insistence that he is not
recycling these old skins into something new, or “young again.” Rather his focus is
transformative – a liberation of the found object both physically and spiritually. His journal
makes it clear that one of the objectives of his récupération work was to use objects to reveal
concealed meanings of humanity.

The configuration of a body in sculpture is, however, intimately linked to its perception
in society, and by clarifying this point, we are in a better position to relate Dimé’s bodies to
humanity, rather than conflate the two. Dimé is not sculpting bodies, but rather transforming
them into spiritual and conceptual objects. His récupération works that are figural in nature, and
this includes almost all of them, must be analyzed from this perspective.

Anne Wagner has stated that the power of the sculpted figure lies in its elision with the
living human body. The physical body, like a piece of sculpture, is a material object: tangible,

n’égrige [sic; should be égruge] pas mes mègres capacités d’outillage, mais mon grand souci se situe à cet exemple :
tiré une vielle peau qui a vécu les intempéries du temps et de l’espace pour le rendre jeune est inconcevable pour
moi; mais de le voir épanouir physiquementet spirituellement, c’est là où se situe mon orientation créatrice.”

337 She states: “Art and life are perfectly attuned, their antagonism fully erased. Monuments are mutable, and real
bodies exemplary; the two are one and the same.” Anne Middleton Wagner, Mother Stone: The Vitality of Modern
6.
visible, physical. Though this physicality constitutes a body it does not make that body human. Feminist scholars have noted that the requisite humanity of bodies comes in the form of acculturation: psychological and social contexts inform the body, while an audience must be present to witness these social states in order to attest to the reality of the human being inside the housing of the body.\(^{338}\) Both the actual human body and its sculptural equivalent have at their root a sense of mass that is palpable, three-dimensional, and identifiable as *Homo sapiens*. Furthermore, both the human body and the sculpted figure require an audience to appreciate or understand them.\(^{339}\)

Like any artist, Dimé was incapable of producing bodies that could elude the social categorizations made by the audiences observing them. He therefore opted to produce figures that specifically exposed social and cultural categories as they have been defined for so-called “African” bodies. This meant working through both local and international definitions of figuration and culture, and more specifically, Senegalese modernity and *Négritude*. All of Dimé’s *récupération* figures contain references to exact African (and usually Senegalese) antecedents used in combination with various international methodologies. The purpose of

\(^{338}\) Carla Peterson, in the introduction to Michael Bennett and Vanessa Dickerson’s anthology, *Recovering the Black Female Body*, makes a distinction between the physicality of the body (hair, bone, skin) and the observation of the body from outside, which, depending on the social context will dramatically alter in interpretation. Carla L. Peterson, "Foreword: Eccentric Bodies," in *Recovering the Black Female Body: Self-Representations by African American Women*, ed. Michael Bennett, and Vanessa D. Dickerson (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), vii-x. I am also following the body logic established by Elizabeth Grosz in her essay "Bodies-Cities." Grosz writes: "The body becomes a *human* body, a body which coincides with the "shape" and space of a psyche, a body whose epidermic surface bounds a psychical unity...in psychoanalytic terms through the intervention of the (m)other, and ultimately, the Other or Symbolic order (language and rule-governed social order)." Elizabeth Grosz, "Bodies-Cities," in *Sexuality and Space*, ed. B. Colomina, *Princeton Papers on Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), 243.

which, I argue, was to offer up critique of both international assumptions about “African” art and the domestic oversimplification of the same that occurred under Négritude.

To back up my assertion, one of the most famous of Dime’s later récupération figures is the seven-foot tall, 165-pound sculpture, Le Gardien (1995) (fig. 4.4)(cat. 87), one of Dimé’s largest. The pieces of wood comprising the torso, legs and head of the object are recovered driftwood. Advanced state of deterioration makes it difficult to determine the original functions of the pieces; although they might have served as pier supports (fig. 4.5). A broken wooden seat, possibly from a horse cart, forms the buttocks of the figure; its rounded form artfully mimics the curvature of the human anatomy despite the object’s intrinsic flatness (fig. 4.6). The longest flank of driftwood, along with a smaller one, represents the left side of the figure’s torso and the weight-bearing left leg. A third timber, inserted between the two halves of the upper body (chest) serves as the neck. A forth, serving as the right leg, intervenes between the two halves of the torso, serving as the fulcrum for the disparate sections at the groin (fig. 4.6). In lieu of arms, Dimé attaches wing-like steel sheeting to the sides of each torso member. A series of rusted carpenter nails are pounded into the front of the torso, studding the open seam of the figure’s chest. The configuration terminates in a starburst of nails accentuating the base of a two-and-one-half foot long oversized boat spike that functions as the erect phallus of the figure. Dimé’s intricate handling of the torso joints complicates the bodily assemblage as the two thick pylons of wood are structurally secured, not to each other, but to the appendages of

340 I base this on the extensive wood rot, the remnants of large round iron rivets sunk into their flanks, eaten clean through by the sea where they would have fastened the pilings to their neighbors, and the plethora of tiny holes drilled in the wood from marine borers

341 Dimé also titles this piece Virilité (Virility) in some of his documentary materials, indicating his intentional use of the boat spike phallus to enhance the figure’s sexual presence.
wood forming the neck and leg of the figure. The opus of nails tenuously connecting the two lateral halves of the body actually serve no structural purpose, but function rather as metaphors for chest and public hair on an anatomical body.

These nails, in fact, perform triple duty as they further signify a formal relationship with the *minkisi n’kondi* figures made by the Kongo of Equatorial Africa. While theories vary on when these objects came into use, they were well documented during the colonial period by traders, colonial administrators and missionaries. *Minkisi n’kondi* were communal judicial objects; they were safeguarded by a elder and called upon by community members who had suffered an injustice. Figural *minkisi n’kondi* are often male, with large heads, wide–open eyes and mouths. They stand in aggressive poses, a few have a raised right arm that held a spear or knife. Petitioners would swear an oath to the *nkisi n’kondi*, which they formalized by driving a piece of metal personalized with their own saliva, clothing or hair into the object. Alternatively, a petition was personalized to its clients through hanging a prescribed bundle of cloth and *bilongo* (medicinal substances) from the *nkisi*. This served to activate the object on the petitioners’ behalf. The *nkisi n’kondi* could then go out and seek the truth of the matter and punish the guilty party accordingly.

The *minkisi n’kondi* are composed in such a way as to embody ambivalent qualities of healing and punishment. An early photograph of an *Nkisi Mabyaala ma Ndemb* e, depicts a nail-laden figure with its right arm raised wielding a knife (fig. 3.15). The wide-open eyes and mouth

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342 Souleymane Keita felt this open torso construction was an incredibly unique aspect of this sculpture. He saw it as foreshadowing a new direction in Dimé’s *récupération* work, one that was forestalled by the artist’s death. Keita, Interview with the Author, 26 June 2008.

343 The structural nails holding the two halves of the torso together are concealed deep within the open joint, rendering them nearly invisible in relation to the nails zippering over the open gap.

344 Note that *Nkisi* is singular for *Minkisi*.

coupled with the raised arm convey movement and aggressive forward action. Visser, the French colonial photographer, was apparently not immune to this and carefully hitched up the cloth waist wrapper on one side as if it were blowing back in the wake of the moving figure. This sense of movement is counterbalanced by the stillness of the feet, which rest flat on their base, perfectly parallel to each other. White kaolin pigment dresses the face and bilongo stomach packets. For the Bakongo, kaolin symbolized the spirit realm, and by extension, death and the ancestors. The presence of kaolin in an nkisi also represented clairvoyance, and the ability to see the unseen, or to divine the unknowable. The Mabayaala Ma Ndembe, as with other objects of this genre, thus stands as a mediator between life and death, between healing and killing, able to enact whichever side of this equation is most suitable to the purpose at hand. As a user or viewer of such an object, it is doubtful that one would ever know which aspect of the n’kondi’s character would emerge in a given situation, thus making them highly unpredictable and likely frightening.

Dimé’s Le Gardien, produced nearly one century after the Nkisi Mabyaala ma Ndembe, evokes a similarly coded ambivalence. While Dimé’s sculpture lacks an upraised spear-holding fist like the Nkisi Mabyaala ma Ndembe, the sheer size and mass of Le Gardien coupled with the fact that it stands directly in the viewer’s same space with no mediating pedestal proves threatening. The forward motion of the historical n’kondi is reinterpreted through the forward lean and step of Le Gardien onto its left leg. The psychologically jarring erect phallus, in lieu of the traditional raised spear, further signifies the aggressive forward motion of the masculine

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figure. Not incidentally, while he lived, Dimé positioned this sculpture at the entrance to his Gorée studio where it served as a metaphorical sentinel for the space.\textsuperscript{348}

The overall posture of Dimé’s figure also contains a direct bodily reference to the earlier Central African figures. \textit{Minkisi} bodies were positioned along a firm vertical axis, with the only deviation occurring in the forward lean of some \textit{minkisi n’kondi} wrestler figures (to suggest the power to spring into action), and the asymmetrical positioning of the upper extremities.\textsuperscript{349} The single trunk of wood serving as left leg and torso of \textit{Le Gardien} recalls the columnar solidity of the \textit{minkisi} objects, artfully re-appropriating the gesture while avoiding direct imitation of the earlier sculptures. Additionally, the propensity of Dimé’s sculpture to seem both alive (the erect phallus) and inanimate (the re-used wood, the lack of a human face) further captures the paradoxical qualities of stillness, death, and aggressive action in the Bakongo objects.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that the Bakongo \textit{minkisi} genre is not the only possible African prototype for \textit{Le Gardien}. A pronounced phallus (symbolizing virility and dynamism) also distinguishes the image of the ubiquitous deity Eshu, a Yoruba orisha. Also known as Legba amongst the Fod, he serves as the gate-keeper and guardian of the cross-roads in \textit{Vodun} religion in both Togo and Republic of Benin. Being a trickster deity, Legba is said to be capable of assisting humans as easily as he can leads them astray,\textsuperscript{350} if only to create an opportunity for himself to assist them again.\textsuperscript{351} A Fon image of the deity (called \textit{bocio}), illustrated in the book \textit{Soul of Africa: Magical Rites and Tradition} is made of wood, but coated

\begin{footnotes}
\item[348] See Roberts and Roberts et al., \textit{A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal}, 209.
\item[349] It should be duly noted that not all \textit{minkisi} (of the \textit{n’kondi} class or otherwise) were figurative. Dogs, monkeys and other animals exist in the genre, and these did not necessarily share the same vertical qualities that I describe here for the human \textit{minkisi} figures.
\item[350] Thompson, \textit{Flash of the Spirit}, 166-7.
\end{footnotes}
with organic substances. Bundles of small bottles, figurines and other significant items are tied around its torso with twine encrusted with mud (fig. 4.7). From the seated figure’s groin emerges an erect phallus that is far out of natural scale with the figure itself. While this image differs dramatically in scale from Dimé’s *Le Gardien*, the two objects resonate deeply with each other iconographically, especially in their emphasis on the offensive and defensive implications of masculine virility. It is significant to note that in his own documentation of *Le Gardien*, Dimé also titles the sculpture *Virilité*, indicating his intent that the boat spike enhance the sexual prowess of the figure.

While the visual and symbolic resonances between Dimé’s *Le Gardien* and the *bocio* genre may be coincidental, I do not believe this to be the case. Public images of Legba abound at street intersections throughout Fon areas of Benin and Togo – countries that Dimé visited during his travels. It is highly likely that he became familiar with the guardian objects during this time. *Minkisi n’kondi* objects, furthermore, are some of the most well-published and well-known objects from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and Dimé references them in many of his *récupération* period objects. Dimé’s interest in Kongo *minkisi* might also be more critically related to the nail figure’s impact on many European artists at the beginning of the twentieth century. As the French-born American artist Arman (aka Armand Pierre Fernandez) puts it: “Such fetishes, which reflected a sense of the “accumulative,” were somehow close to some of my own work in their allover multiplication of elements and the resultant power of suggestion.”

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352 Müller, *Soul of Africa: Magical Rites and Traditions* 168.
354 Arman qtd. in ibid., 68-9.
It is not surprising therefore that Dimé’s *Le Gardien* would draw inspiration from the “accumulative” presence of these African prototypes to reinforce his “recuperative” quest for a contemporary medium of expression or, rather, to serve as a metaphorical bridge between the past and present. Where an *nkisi n’kondi* received input from the community in the form of personalized petitions attached to its form, and *bocio* were frequently placed at public crossroads in Togo, Dimé’s object is similarly linked to its community through the objects recuperated from it and its semi-public installation at the entrance to his studio. *Minkisi n’kondi* and *bocio*, furthermore, are accumulative objects, built up and added to over time, such that the objects record their own use over their lifespan.\(^{355}\) In a similar fashion, *Le Gardien* attests to a slow accumulative process, not only in the timeworn materials used, but also resulting from the unpredictable nature of Dimé’s collection process. He did not select items at random, but rather waited until a perfect piece turned up that suggested a sculpture to him. I recall here Dimé’s interview with fellow artist Pascale Marthine Tayou when he pointedly stated: “I don’t go digging at random through trashcans and garbage dumps. I look for the exact item that will help me create exactly what I want to create... I’m drawn to certain types of materials by their potential for expressing my message: the sense of harmony between things.”\(^{356}\) As such, both the *n’kondi* and *bocio* genres and Dimé’s *Le Gardien* signify humans and the products that make up their environment, past and present.

*Les Hommes de Kayar* (1992) (fig. 4.8)(cat. 52) is another piece by Dimé’s that prioritizes local history and context in both its medium and message. It was exhibited in Dakar prior to being selected for the 1993 Venice Biennale and is currently housed in the artist’s former


\(^{356}\) Dimé qtd. in Tayou, "Moustapha Dimé: Je ne rêve que de lumière," 90. Translated by Jonathan Kundra.
studio on Gorée Island (fig. 4.9). Like *Le Gardien*, it is composed of driftwood only this time the foraged pieces are ocean-worn planks from hand-hewn pirogues, the traditional fishing boats used along the Senegalese coasts. Dimé has only slightly modified each of the planks so that his handwork blends easily with the original carving done by the shipbuilders as well as the wear and tear of repeated use. Leaning against each other, the triad of planks is reconceived as a group of figures. They stand over eleven feet tall, with the largest and smallest members receiving additional embellishment in the form of iron scrap metal that has been pounded into the wood in a manner reminiscent of Bakongo *minkisi n’kondi*.

The sculpture relies heavily on the original forms of the driftwood to suggest figuration, as there is no attempt by the artist to render limbs, torsos or any other anatomically recognizable features. The found object is the dominant compositional element forcing the viewer to read humanity into the resulting configuration. Unlike *Le Gardien*, which possesses prominent male sexual organs, *Les Hommes de Kayar* is a visually sexless and abstract object that asserts its gender and humanity only by implication. In other words, it achieves figuration by referencing men from a Senegalese town. Formally, we might attempt to read this work through a postmodern vocabulary, where found objects are subtly re-worked via abstraction to suggest the presence of bodily mass. Dimé, however, does not let us rest there. Without knowledge of where Kayar is, or what its inhabitants do, an outsider or a layman is left with only visual clues as to the meaning of the piece. In this case, the abstracted forms prevent a visual

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357 The sculpture rests outside at the artist's studio at Gorée, Senegal and is currently in an advanced state of disrepair, caused by its exposure to the elements over 18 years. It is my sincerest hope that this and other publications may bring attention to the need for conservation and preservation of Dimé’s works, so that they will not be lost to future generations.

358 Alternately spelled “Cayar.”
interpretation of the object as figurative; the body in this work is only revealed through its connections with Senegalese cultural history and geography.

Kayar is one of the oldest and largest artisanal fishing villages in Senegal. Traditionally, fishing was a caste profession, reserved for specific families. The fathers and sons of these families were believed to hold spiritual powers that helped them calm the seas.³⁵⁹ Fishing takes place at night, and due to the dangerous nature of the work, fishermen were and are held in high esteem in Senegalese culture. Today fishermen continue to use hand-made wooden pirogues and hand-sewn throw nets to retrieve their catch.

In this object, Dimé figuratively reinterprets the history of Senegalese fishing culture. His method visually articulates the argument put forth by Moira Gatens that “Rather than viewing the forms and functions of bodies as determinant in the organization of culture, we can view them as products of the way that culture organizes, regulates and remakes itself.”³⁶⁰ Dimé has taken boats, specific cultural products, and converted them into bodies, thus allowing viewers to empathize with the sculpture in one of two ways. One can look at the object as a cultural product of a contemporary Senegalese artist or as the product of a long-standing fishing tradition in coastal Senegal.

The Gatens’ model, when applied to Dimé, “allows us to shift the conceptual ground from the question ‘How is the body taken up in culture?’ to the more profitable question ‘How does culture construct the body so that it is understood as a biological given?’”³⁶¹ Gatens’ key argument is that bodies are built by cultures that socialize them, and she thus refutes the more traditional belief that bodies are “biological givens” that determine cultural conduct.

³⁶¹ Ibid.
Dimé’s cast-off man-made objects of Les Hommes de Kayar are re-imagined as the bodies of the humans that originally made them. To this we add his own physical labor – the labor involved in finding and collecting the enormous pieces of driftwood, iron, and industrial steel, the precise chopping and hatching away at the wood to achieve the desired form and the assembling of various parts into a solid and concrete whole – and Dimé’s point of entry into the body is almost Marxist. He begins and ends with the remnants of production and human labor. It is precisely this component of labor, that allows for the first of many connections between the artist’s sculpture and his faith. In Mouridism, the practice of manual labor and physical work, specifically work for a spiritual leader, is the most highly revered quality in an individual.

It is further worth noting here that Le Gardien and Les Hommes de Kayar are male and Dimé constructed them out of the remains of male labor. The Lawbe carvers (always men) would have done the original carving of the pirogues and wooden pier pilings, while the fishermen used the wooden objects to perform their own profession. Dimé’s objects, therefore establish a close relationship between the original makers of the wooden objects and the original use of those objects in his own sculptures. Dimé’s male figures in the récupération genre depend on these male-made and male-used materials to inform their final meanings as constructions of manhood, masculinity, protection and physical labor. Similar to how Le Gardien invokes the power of a male protector figure based on earlier genres of Bakongo and Fon sculptures, Les Hommes de Kayar may be said to have a similar protective aspect. Artisanal fishing is an extremely dangerous profession, the mere fact that many of Dimé’s récupération sculptures use destroyed fishing pirogues spat up by the ocean on the rocks surrounding his Gorée studio testifies to the dangers involved.
The original use of the found object is no less important for Dimé’s series of female figures crafted in the *récupération* style, but we do notice an important switch in the types of found materials he used. Given that Dimé carefully used found objects associated with men to craft his male figures, we would expect a similar relationship to exist between his female figures and the materials with which he assembled them. Indeed his female figures are frequently composed of items related to women and women’s labor in Senegal: female bodies configured from mortars and pestles, bowls and calabashes replace male bodies derived from pirogues and related materials. However, the female sculptures introduce a more complicated and nuanced relationship with the found object, since not all of his female figures are composed of “female” found objects and in all cases, the original makers of the bowls, pestles and mortars were male *lawbe* carvers. The female figures therefore embody a more ambiguous and dual nature, both in terms of gender and society’s construction of gender, than is apparent in the male sculptures.

Three sculptures from 1992 serve to make the point: *La Femme à la Culotte*, *La Femme au Long Cou*, and *Femme Sérère* (figs. 4.1–3)(cats. 51, 57 and 62). Of the three, *Femme Sérère* is most closely related to the male figures I have discussed previously in both material and meaning. As described earlier, she is made from objects of domestic female labor. The other two female sculptures are not composed of objects associated with women and their meanings deviate from those I propose for the male figures and *Femme Sérère*. This indicates Dimé was using his *récupération* strategy to exert differing meanings based on his selection of materials and his impregnation of the found objects with conceptual markers rather than physical ones in order to code the bodies as he saw fit.

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362 *La Femme au Long Cou* and *Femme Sérère* are both now in public collections in the United States, MoMA having purchased *La Femme au Long Cou* in 1994 and *Femme Sérère* being donated in the same year to the National Museum of African Art by Marcia and Irwin Hersey. *La Femme à la Culotte* still resides on Gorée Island in the private collection of Marie-José Crespin.
The large breasts of *Femme Sérère*, owing to the size of the wooden serving bowls used to replicate them, leave no doubt as to the sex and gender of this figure. Apart from evoking the action of a woman pounding grain, the mortar and pestle in this sculpture further signify the act of intercourse, where the insertion of the pestle into the mortar emphasizes the figure’s sexual presence. Dimé’s emphasis on the sex and sexuality of the woman produces an analysis similar to that of the masculinity of *Le Gardien*. We must exercise restraint here, however. For while *Le Gardien* may be read as a potent expression of male virility based on various West and Central African models, this is not the case with *Femme Sérère*. Dimé carefully constructed the latter so as to specifically reference women of the Seereer ethnic group, who traditionally lived in the Sine-Saloum delta region in Senegal. While sexual connotations are certainly apparent in the work, Dimé neither portrays the woman as a generic female recipient of male voyeurism, nor implies that Seereer women are sexual vessels. Here, sexuality connotes fecundity and procreativity, with the Seereer woman being understood as a life-bearer and nurturer.

The Sine-Saloum delta region in Senegal is famous for its millet farms. Seereer farmers have since dispersed to other parts of Senegal and also engage in a variety of trades and professions. Seereer women, however, are respected as the historical producers of foods from millet, a staple of West African diet. After being cultivated by men, the raw grain is turned over the women who pound and prepare it into edible flour, *sajj* (couscous), porridge, and beer. All of this labor requires baskets for fanning (separating grains from husks), mortars and pestles for pounding, and bowls for collecting, storing, transporting and serving the finished food. Of all the women in Senegalese society, the Seereer are most associated with the mortar and pestle due to their historical connections with grain and milling. The act of hulling grain in a mortar to break open the seeds revealing the grain inside parallels sexual intercourse and also the breaking open
of the womb to release a child. Thus, Dimé’s use of the pestle to penetrate the mortar in *Femme Sérère* has deep local cultural significations: the release of millet grain from hull, the penetration of the female womb through intercourse, and the womb’s subsequent release of the child.

According to Rev. Father Henry Gravrand, writer of the most well known anthropological study of the Seereer, a pestle, despite its phallic form, is a well-known symbol for a woman. In recognition of female contributions to nourishing their community, a Seereer symbol of female fecundity comprises three pestles placed on the ground to form a triangle. Tradition requires that this triangle should enclose or be sited near a woman who has just given birth. The pestle in *Femme Sérère* is a visual link to these protective posts, and to the ability of the woman to sustain life through childbearing and milling. There is a copy of Gravrand’s text in Dimé’s Gorée studio, indicating that he was familiar with the text. Malou confirmed that it was in the studio before he became its overseer upon Dimé’s death. He is convinced that Dimé had read it and was potentially influenced by it in the case of *Femme Sérère*. According to Malou, rather than read the pestle exclusively as a male phallus penetrating the female mortar, we must also recognize Dimé’s interrogation of the ancient symbols of the Seereer culture and his reinterpretation of them in this sculpture.

Along with the pestle imagery, the bowl or calabash adds to the metaphorical importance of the found objects in *Femme Sérère*. The precedent to the wooden bowl is the calabash, a widely used container across Western Africa. The calabash has associations with women and the

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363 This study, while aged and slightly problematic was saluted by President Senghor, himself a Catholic and a Seereer, as one of the finest studies of his people. Senghor frequently cited Gravrand in his own writings about the Seereer. Henry Gravrand, *La Civilisation Sérère: Pangool* (Dakar: Nouvelles Éditions Africaines du Sénégal (NEAS), 1990). 155-60. For Senghor’s writings on the Seereer, see in particular Senghor, "Ce que l'homme noir apporte," 300-1. Senghor, "Vues sur l'Afrique noire, ou assimiler, non être assimilés [1945]," 47-54. Senghor, *Ce que je crois*, 9-14, 119-22.


365 Malou, Interview with the Author, 15 June 2004.
womb that stretch far beyond Senegal’s borders and the Seereer population. In the northern part of the country, historically nomadic Fulani peoples used the calabash for food, but also in ritual contexts that involved the presentation of foodstuffs to the gods and ancestors. When the Fulani intermarried with the Wolof and Seereer the complementary uses of the calabash further informed the importance of the vessel and primarily its associations with the procreative and nurturing power of women.\textsuperscript{366}

As with the men’s handmade pirogues that appear often in Dimé’s \textit{récupération} sculptures, the calabash and its connection to women’s lives fascinated Dimé as well. Along with his many female sculptures that include wooden serving bowls or calabashes, he produced many drawings of women using the vessels. The drawings depict the preparation of a meal including women cutting vegetables, pots on the fire, food items, tables, colanders, and stools. In two of Dimé’s ink drawings (fig. 4.10) (cats. 277 and 280), a woman with a calabash is the dominant compositional focus, stressing the importance of this vessel and the woman using it for preparing meals.

Dimé’s drawings of women reinforce the meanings of the original objects seen in his \textit{récupération} sculptures of women. When Dimé uses women’s tools to craft female figures in sculpted form, he stresses the social and gender coded roles that specific women hold within their societies. For example, \textit{Femme Sérère} is a rendition of the female based on the role she

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serves as provider in Senegalese society. The tools of female domestic labor recruited by Dimé make this point: bowls, mortars, pestles and calabashes are kitchen utensils used by women to procure and produce food for their families. In Senegal, while men are farmers and food producers, they do not cook and therefore all of Dimé’s bowl-mortar-pestle sculptures draw on the very vital role that women provide through their abilities to make edible the agricultural products grown by men. A second sculpture from the same time period, *Femme Calebasse,* therefore, could never be mistaken for anything other than a female despite her lack of obvious breasts or female anatomy, as the very materials that compose her dictate her femininity to a locally cognizant audience (fig. 4.11) (cat. 48).

Dimé does not restrict himself to the strategy of using women’s domestic objects to depict female forms, however, and in his récupération sculptures of women we find the artist using found objects not related to women, in which case the raw materials dictate a different set of visual codings for the finished objects.

In *La Femme au Long Cou* and *La Femme à la Culotte,* Dimé uses solid tree trunks as the bodies for the female figures. *La Femme au Long Cou* is the simpler of the two, consisting of a long trunk which the artist has modified only at the level of the neck by carving and smoothing the upper extremity of the log into a slender projection. Along two sides Dimé attached iron sheeting with flayed edges so that the final sculpture reads as a slender figure with wings running down the lateral edges of the “body.” *La Femme à la Culotte* is a squat trunk that comes from a fork in a tree that Dimé inverted so the forked branches become the amputated legs of the figure. Dimé applied a slightly heavier hand to the carving in this figure, creating pendulous breasts from the trunk. A knot in the stump serves as a navel for the figure and Dimé created a head and neck by driving a large boat spike, similar to that used as the phallus in *Le Gardien,* into the top
of the figure. A handful of shredded fishing net hangs from the boat spike as hair. Dimé painted the torso black, but left the belly and legs in their natural state and applied a burlap sack “panty” to the figure, which he coated in tar. While both sculptures are abstractions of the female form, *La Femme à la Culotte* despite its visual complexity is more immediately decipherable as a woman; *La Femme au Long Cou* declares its femininity only through its title, as the sculpture itself is one of Dimé’s most abstract récupération compositions.

It is, in fact, the combination of found object and abstract composition that forms the dynamic tension in works such as *La Femme au Long Cou* or *La Femme à la Culotte*. The resulting figurative nature of the works is as unexpected as the humanity that emerges from the material. While Dimé’s earlier filiform sculpture *Angoisse* speaks of anguish, and the terrible internal torment that comes with such an emotion, the delicateness of the figure somewhat negates the gesture of the hands gripping the severed head in pain (See cat. 10). In *La Femme à la Culotte*, on the other hand, the rough wood, tarred panty and the presence of discarded plastic netting enforce a formalized negativity towards the subject. The title itself, “A Woman in Underpants” introduces a reading of sexual negligence: a generic woman is caught exposed in nothing but her underwear, demeaned by the cloaking of her genitals in tar and the charring of her breasts in black. The pounding of a metal spike into the torso further annihilates the figure.

*La Femme à la Culotte*, in fact, seems completely contradictory to the presentation of the woman as the domestically significant, historical, nurturer and producer seen in *Femme Sérère* and *Femme Calebasse*. Dimé’s own statements about his female figures however, account for the presence of a different type of woman amongst his oeuvre: “My work speaks first and foremost
about women. And Senegalese women, whom I see everyday are sculptures of beauty. But in speaking about them, I am speaking about all women.”

Dimé reminds us that his project with his figural works is to construct beauty in all its forms, and in his statement, he indicates his use of the female form as a vector for the communication of beauty. As I have pointed out, beauty and femininity are not universal; they are socially inscribed onto bodies by cultures in unique and changing ways. What Dimé seems to be after in La Femme à la Culotte is an interrogation of the contradictory nature of beauty as it is understood not just within Senegal, but also in a larger, more international context. A woman with aged breasts but youthful hips, partly blackened and partly pale, wears a Euro-American form of underwear (the traditional Senegalese undergarment for women is a thin wrap skirt). She displays her breasts openly (not done in American society, but more common in European and Senegalese contexts), and she reveals her panties publicly, which is taboo in all of these cultural contexts. As such we cannot interpret her as either Senegalese or Euro-American, for she more accurately represents all at once.

La Femme à la Culotte may be a figurative sculpture, but I argue that Dimé complicates this figure's humanity through a psychological challenge to its bodily manifestation. As a sculpture, La Femme à la Culotte can do what a human cannot: tread the fractious line between "human" and "body" in order to be both and neither at the same time. She is bodily in material: wood and metal replacing the flesh and blood that Carla Peterson describes. Her form evokes pathos as her amputated torso reminds viewers of the fragility of human life, yet her humanity has been depleted to a rendering of merely sex and genitalia. Gatens has argued that the human body is actually un-representable, reasoning that: “Many anatomical depictions which purport to

represent the human body turn out to be depictions of white male bodies—with the bodies of others called upon to illustrate specific capacities: the female reproductive system, for example."^{368}

This becomes the viewer's challenge in confronting La Femme à la Culotte, which could be viewed as a sculpture of the generic "female reproductive system" and hence, dehumanized. This formalizes Dimé’s claim that he is sculpting all women. He is not interested in portraiture, but rather the process of creating humanity, all of humanity. If the human female body is anatomically un-representable, then what the body truly is, is a gendered construction of a psychological state rendered in material form. This further accounts for the presence of abstraction in both La Femme à la Culotte and La Femme au Long Cou, beyond the formalistic argument that holds abstraction to be the result of the form of the original wooden tree trunks. I argue that the abstraction is actually more of an anti-realism, and it is intentionally present to focus the viewer's attention on what is missing from these two female bodies, literally and conceptually.

One of the most significant conceptual markers of La Femme à la Culotte and La Femme au Long Cou in fact, is the wooden trunk from which each is composed. In true Diméan manner, the original use of the trunks is locally obvious yet internationally obscure, and an important signifier of Senegalese culture. To a non locally-cognizant audience, the tree trunks used in these two sculptures appear raw and unfinished -different from the finished utilitarian objects like the pirogues in Les Hommes de Kayar or the bowls and mortars of Femme Sérère and Femme Calebasse. To a Senegalese, and to many Africans, the solid wooden trunks are quickly recognized as chopping blocks used by rural and independent butchers across the continent to

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^{368} Gatens, Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality vii-viii.
carve large animal carcasses into sellable portions for market (figs. 4.12–13). That Dimé built female figures of chopping blocks formerly used by men wielding machetes to dissect bodies of animals adds a rather gruesome component to the sculptures. *La Femme au Long Cou* actually re-enacts the connection of the knife to the wood via the metal flanges that are stabbed into the sides of the figure, like overlarge cleavers left in the block after a day’s work. Dimé connected these sheet metal “wings” to the two sides of the log that were most heavily used by the butchers from whom he most likely obtained the piece. The cut marks in the wooden log attest to heavy use by the butchers, for when one side of the log became unusable, it was rolled over and used on the other side until that too was no longer functional. Thus the piece of wood, when Dimé finally obtained it, was no longer usable and replete with wear and tear, not from the ocean as with the driftwood or pirogues, but from the process of use.

I was initially struck that Dimé would use such an object for a female sculpture as it seems to go against my analysis that materials used by men become male sculptures in Dimé’s hands, and that female tools become the raw materials for his female sculptures. Additionally, the element of violence invoked by the butcher block and its clear association with death means that interpretation of the female figures veers from the beautiful towards the heinous. Of course, in mulling this over, it seems clear to me that Dimé has neither abandoned his professed constructions of beauty and the universality of beauty of women. Nor has he relented in the significance of the original object so that we may view these as strictly formal objects without any historical or cultural context. Rather, he has gone a step further in exposing the societal constructions of both beauty in the human context and beauty in the domain of art. A socio-cultural reading of *La Femme au Long Cou*, therefore produces an understanding of the object as the union of the male and female labor roles in society. As with *Les Hommes de Kayar*, Dimé’s
tree trunk was originally used by men to produce meat, as boats were used to catch fish, but in neither case is the food procured ready to eat – it is raw. Women must intervene, therefore, to prepare, cook and serve the meat in order for it to be edible. In building a female figure from a (male) tool of labor, Dimé stresses the anthropological history of Senegalese society. He further signals, from a Mouride perspective, the spiritual importance of this highly physical labor on the part of both the male and female to provide nourishment for society. Without the devoted attention of both men and women to their roles as hunters, farmers, fishermen, millers, cooks, and procreators, society would crumble.

A formal interrogation of Dimé’s union of the male and female genders in the sculpture reveals that except for its title, La Femme au Long Cou is, again like Les Hommes de Kayar, a visually sexless object, and its connotations of female beauty are thereby determined by Dimé’s cue to the audience that the object is a woman. This steers viewers to interpret the woman along their own cultural lines as beautiful: a translation of natural wood in a raw state into a lithe and elegant sculpture – or ugly: a slaughter block tipped on its end. Of course, the sculpture is not merely a binary of beautiful/ugly, Dimé has insisted that it function as both at once, and therefore the object creates an awareness that beauty not only exists in the eye of the beholder, but also exists only in tandem with ugly. This further informs my previous deconstruction of La Femme à la Culotte, where Dimé also used a butcher block, and where it is now evident how the multifaceted readings of sexuality, disgust, youth, age, desire and revulsion are intentional and emerge directly from the very material from which she is formed.

Given Dime’s statement that the “Senegalese women, whom I see everyday, are sculptures of beauty,” the question arises: Does the sufferance evident in La Femme à la Culotte allude to the “inner” or “meta-empirical” beauty of women? Put differently, does the wear and
tear on “her” body signify the sacrifice that women are ever ready to make on behalf of humanity? For apart from putting her life on the line to give birth to children, a typical Senegalese mother toils day and night to nurture them into adulthood. One wishes the artist were around to answer this question.

In a related work, *Hermaphrodite* (1994), Dimé used found objects in a formal, rather than anthropological manner to draw attention to a metaphysical aspect of gender different form its physical appearance (fig. 4.14)(cat. 73). The piece consists of a painted canvas body sewn around a rope framework and stuffed with straw. The artist employs a knobby seam over a piece of rope running between the navel and groin of the figure to suggest the male genitalia while embroidered concentric circles of thread indicate female breasts (fig. 4.15).

Unlike Dimé’s *récupération* sculptures discussed so far, *Hermaphrodite* is not freestanding. To be displayed, it must be hung. Formally, the object reinforces its state of liminality that makes it seem neither male nor female, neither painting nor sculpture, but all of the above. The intentional vacillation between a hanging sculpture and a three-dimensional painting comes about through Dimé’s use of fabric and rope, both pliable and soft materials, with no frame of support, internal or external. *Hermaphrodite* expands the formal ideas Dimé explored with rope and twine in his Lattier inspired wrapped works, by removing the armature ostensibly required to give a body solidity and stability. The sculpture also bravely reveals the fragility and instability associated in all cultures with a body that does not conform to a proscribed gender role. In addition, it reminds us of the phenomenal ability of the female body to give birth to both male and female children. That Dimé would even consider sculpting such a

369 Dimé in fact used the strategy of hanging sculpture rather frequently in his *récupération* works. Other examples are *Femme* (cat. 98), two works entitled *Oiseau* (cat. 96 and 97), two works, *Sans Titre* (cat. 74 and 78), *L’Âme d’un people* (cat. 54), and *Femme Nue* (cat. 41).
body indicates his fascination with teleological and ontological mysteries concealed and revealed in physical reality.

While *Le Gardien* exemplifies specific codings of masculinity, virility, protection and spiritual power as they are understood both from the original use of its raw materials and its finished sculptural form, *Hermaphrodite* challenges viewers to rethink the social and historical importance of such identities. Moreover, DiMé’s female sculptures question the validity of stereotypes as they are applied to women and ideals of feminine beauty. While the artist insisted on the local significance and specificity of his materials and meanings, his objects participate in universal discussions of gender, race, beauty and culture.

Faith, Service and the Sculptor’s Work

The paradox evident in DiMé’s professional practice as a sculptor particularly dedicated to figural work, and his religious values as a practitioner of Islam, are reconciled through an understanding of his role as a Baye Fall within the Mouride tradition of Sufi Islam. There are key tenets in Mouridism that support an understanding of DiMé’s sculptures as being fully sanctioned by the tradition. The first is DiMé’s recognition of pre-Islamic traditions (artistic, cultural, spiritual and otherwise) as viable precedents to the modern Senegalese condition. Mouride practice integrates, rather than condemns these indigenous practices, and folds them into contemporary spiritual practice. The second is the Baye Fall tradition that stresses the importance of work, or manual labor in the service of one’s Marabout, which by extension reinforces one’s faith. They also stress the need for community service. A Baye Fall’s work for the Marabout is unremunerated, although the Marabout is tasked with providing for the needs

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370 Parts of this section were published previously in Kart, "Bodily Presence."

371 Cruise O'Brien and Messiant (trans.), "Le talibé mouride," 571.
of his followers.\textsuperscript{372} This encourages a positive moral understanding of the collective subsistence-level condition (God will provide for all), and yet the Marabout encourages personal success amongst his followers if the result will provide benefit for all.

In addressing the first issue or, the accessibility of pre- or non-Islamic traditions to a modern sculptural project, one confronts a tenacious misunderstanding regarding Islam and art making. In common understanding, image making (and certainly figurative sculpture) seems prohibited by Islam. Artist Ndary Lô, who came of age in Dakar during the heyday of the \textit{récupération} movement, comments that this was a major concern for him when he began sculpting. He frequently sought advice from Dimé as to how to sculpt figural forms while maintaining proper respect for Islamic traditions.\textsuperscript{373} Reconciling the overtly sexualized figures of some of Dimé’s late works, \textit{Femme Sérère} or \textit{Le Gardien}, for example, with the religious beliefs of their maker appears to require a forced separation of the artist’s spiritual and artistic practices as the two do not appear compatible. Scholars of Islam agree, however, that there is no prohibition in the Qur’an against the making of art, including art with pictorial images.\textsuperscript{374} Finbarr Barry Flood has summarized the situation thus:

The opposition to figuration in Islam is based not on Qur’anic scripture but on various Traditions of the Prophet, the Hadith. The two principal objections to figuration in the prescriptive texts are a concern with not usurping divine creative powers and a fear of shirk, a term that came to mean polytheism and idolatry but originally meant associating other gods with God. Both suggest a concern with the materialism of worship in non-Islamic traditions.\textsuperscript{375}

\textsuperscript{372} Ibid., 570.
\textsuperscript{373} Ndary Lô Interview with the Author, Mbao, 27 May 2008.
\textsuperscript{375} Finbarr Barry Flood, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum " \textit{Art Bulletin} LXXXIV (84), no. 4 (December 2002): 643.
Flood also notes that these fears of idolatry were not unique to Muslims, but common to early practitioners of Judaism and Christianity as well.\textsuperscript{376} Flood reasons that the association of Islam with textual, rather than figurative, visual culture stems from an “essentialist approach to Islam” dating to the Middle Ages, and therefore cannot be extrapolated to a late 20\textsuperscript{th} century context.\textsuperscript{377} In Senegal specifically, the Mouride practice of Islam used the arts (both literary and visual) as an important tool to challenge the dominant French cultural order during colonialism. According to historian Cheikh Thiam, “Ignoring the Western influences, Mouride artwork developed around the mysticism of the Cheikh, the holy city of Touba, and the education and cultural pride of Wolofs. Mouride art contrasts with the traditional conception of art in Africa. It is not a reaction to the Western influence and the artist does not curl up in an imagined African art characterized by masks.”\textsuperscript{378}

Thiam points out that a significant current of Mouride thought in Senegal dictates the arts serve as a necessary component of religious life. Indeed, and as noted earlier, an entire genre of Mouride glass painting arose in Senegal beginning in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century dedicated to depicting Amadou Bamba and his descendants as well as images of the holy city of Touba. The modern-day phenomenon of under-glass painting (\textit{sooweer}) in Senegal testifies to the acceptance of figural image making by Muslim artists. The subjects of \textit{sooweer} are depicted in colorful pigments, outlined carefully in black ink and frequently portray saints, Marabouts, women and children, farmers, but most ubiquitously, Amadou Bamba himself.\textsuperscript{379} Art therefore, remains a

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\textsuperscript{376} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{377} In discussing the outcry over the recent Taliban destruction of the Buddhas at Bamiyan in 2002 in Afghanistan, Flood argues that to Western thought, “The iconoclastic outburst of Afghanistan’s rulers thus confirmed the status of that country as out of time with Western modernity, by reference to an existing discourse within which image destruction indexed the inherently medieval nature of Islamic culture.” Ibid., 641.
\textsuperscript{378} Thiam, “Mouridism,” 7-8.
\textsuperscript{379} See Roberts and Roberts et al., \textit{A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal}.
\end{flushleft}
crucial component of Mouridism and Thiam notes that it is a significant means by which the Mouride philosophy was, and continues to be, disseminated to the public.\textsuperscript{380}

Senegalese historian, Mamadou Diouf, notes that for Senegal “[modernization] has been supplemented by Islamic modernity, which is both modern and cosmopolitan.”\textsuperscript{381} The role of Islam in nineteenth century colonial Senegal, argues Diouf, is evidence of a modern condition existing independently from European colonial dictates.\textsuperscript{382} According to Diouf, the brotherhood attracted “people from every level of society, but particularly freed slaves and people belonging to castes such as jewelers, cobblers, itinerant minstrels, coopers, and weavers.”\textsuperscript{383} This was because of Bamba’s belief that all of the above, and certainly indigenous artists, were disenfranchised by both French colonial practice, which was informed by Christianity, and by Islam, which traditionally called for the enslavement of blacks. Thiam, goes further and notes that “[A]ll those who were considered outcasts in the Wolof society and the new colonial system found shelter in the Mouride brotherhood, notably, descendents of royal families, ex-ceddos, and low caste members of the society. Mouridism was a refuge for the “wretched of the earth” and a hope for a society administered by a foreign power whose project was to disintegrate all traditional structures.”\textsuperscript{384} Here, Thiam recalls not only the foreign colonial presence, but also the hierarchies of indigenous kingdoms in pre-colonial times that disenfranchised large swaths of the population. From its inception, Mouridism served as a collective for pacifist economic and cultural resistance to indigenous power structures, French colonial and Arab commercial and

\textsuperscript{380} Thiam, “Mouridism,” 7-8.
\textsuperscript{381} Diouf, “The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism,” 111.
\textsuperscript{382} Amadou Bamba is buried in Touba, the religious city he founded, which has been led ever since by his surviving sons and now grandsons. Diouf uses the date of 1853 for Bamba’s birth, but the year is also recorded as 1850 in some accounts. See Villalón, Islamic Society and state power in Senegal, 68.
\textsuperscript{383} Diouf, “The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism,” 115.
\textsuperscript{384} Thiam, “Mouridism,” 2. Thiam’s “wretched of the earth” quote is from Franz Fanon.
Supplementing Diouf’s claims about the modern roots of Mouridism, Leonardo Villalón also offers evidence that the local Mouride system emerged as a response to colonial pressures. Because of the brotherhood’s orientation towards rural environments (away from the urban French colonial cities of the Four Communes), and through its focus on work – specifically in the agricultural production of cash crops – its followers were successfully able to maintain a level of autonomy during French colonial rule. The tradition from its inception, therefore, was designed to meet the challenges of current and fluctuating social conditions through economic and religious means. Today Mouridism remains an active definer of social, economic and spiritual modernity in Senegal. It still appeals to individuals born into families traditionally part of caste society, and many artists, including those of géwël (musicians) and lawbe (sculptors) birth, are Mourides.

In Dimé’s case, while born to a non-caste family, he chose to practice a caste profession of carving. While offensive to his father, this is historically significant in that a non-caste individual was able to make the a-historical (read: modern) decision to practice such a profession without fear of societal retribution. Tellingly, Diouf informs us that “in its desire to appropriate possibilities offered by globalization, the Murid locality does not seek to annex the global, but, rather, to take advantage of it and to be borne by it in every sense of the word.” Mouridism thus seeks out influences, cultures and structures from outside its ranks if those serve to advance the conditions (primarily defined as economic) of its participants. I argue that Dimé’s own

385 Villalón, *Islamic Society and state power in Senegal*, 61, 68.
387 Please note that variations in the spelling of “Mouride” occur. In all cases I use “Mouride” except when quoting authors and their variant spellings (i.e. Diouf’s use of “Murid”). See Diouf, "The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism," 113.
engagement with Mouridism permits an understanding of his sculptures as “appropriations” of local and international ideas, models and cultures to the “advantage” of Mouride spirituality and cosmopolitan aesthetics in Senegal.

Dimé himself notes the historical change brought about by the emergence of Mouridism in Senegal, stating that during the early centuries in his country, “the Moslems destroyed Senegalese sculpture—anything related to sculpture they destroyed on the basis of the Islamic prohibition against figuration.” However, he attested that this was no longer the case in Senegal, certainly not for a Mouride. He personally felt the old prohibition against image making to be “a shallow interpretation of the Islamic text, because God created visual beauty in the world. And there is nothing more beautiful than a work of art, so the work of art is very close to God, and should be part of God’s sacred text, not a part of that which is destroyed for the sake of that text.”

Here, Dimé draws a very clear distinction between God the creator of beauty, and man the creator of a work of art that reveals that beauty. In so doing, Dimé articulates how his sculptures avoid the charge of idolatry, as he is not sculpting people (or gods) *per se*. Rather, he defines his work as the construction of the far more abstract concept of beauty itself. This is arguably where the *récupération* style served him most potently. The found object’s unique quality is that it is *already formed*. Dimé’s talent lies in his ability to envision the human body as *already existing* within the shapes of the found objects. As Dimé was not a Marabout or a spiritual guide, his final products were not, and could not therefore be misconstrued as religious, and the *récupération* methodology prevented his objects from being understood as idolatrous.

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388 Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 51. Please note that variations in spelling (i.e “Moslem”) occur in the literature. I have opted to use “Muslim” in my own text. Spelling quoted in this document, however, is consistent with that used by the original authors.

389 Dimé qtd. in ibid.
While his process was aligned with his practice of Islam, his finished objects are not sacred objects from an Islamic standpoint. This was true even when Dimé incorporated religious objects or confronted religious issues in his sculptures. An example would be Les Lances Croisées (1995) (fig. 4.16) (cat. 67). The sculpture is two-dimensional and geometric, a wall piece rather than a freestanding sculptural work. Three spears are formed through the attachment of prayer boards to the ends of rebar construction rods. The faded wooden boards serve as the heads, or blades, of the spears, which are contained within a rebar triangle. In describing Les Lances Croisées Dimé stated that, “the triangle signifies the presence of God, the sign being fundamental. Qur’anic boards are a support for the power of God. The board serves as the means of communication.”

The piece, therefore, is not a religious sculpture per se, but an object that speaks to humankind’s methods of communicating with God. Furthermore, Les Lances Croisées is not merely a depiction of communication with the spirit, but includes a larger social commentary about faith.

While the prayer boards certainly attest to Sufi Muslims’ belief in direct communication with God through Qur’anic scripture, Dimé placed this scripture in a dialogue with violence by creating weapons out of prayer boards. This is the antithesis of Mouride pacifism. The juxtaposition between Mouride communion with God and non-Mouride violence in God’s name is clear not only in the title of the piece, but also in the sharp edges and projectile-like nature of the rusted rebar spikes. It seems as if the “communication” in this piece is a commentary about religious violence dividing the larger Islamic community or perhaps a prayer for peace. The abstracted geometric shape of the object adds to this uneasy dialogue, for while all of the items used in the sculpture are recognizable, foraged from the local environment, the finished form is completely abstract in its composition. Clearly, Dimé intended this piece to start a conversation.

390 Roberts and Roberts et al., *A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal*, 211.
of its own – one between followers of Islam over how to better their own connections with God and avoid using religion as a tool for obtaining power. The object therefore, performs a social function, it links its maker to God while, at the same time, connects its audience to their own belief systems. In so doing, Dimé has embraced an additional tenet of Mouridism, the elision of boundaries separating production, prayer and service to God and community.

One of the most unique aspects of Mouride art is the connection artists make between the creation of an aesthetic object and religious servitude. Mouride art makers see their artistic production as labor done in service of their Marabouts and in service of God. As such they do not draw a distinction between art making, work and prayer. Rather they see all three as conjoined aspects of service to God. For example, Roberts and Roberts document the incredible labors of Marabout Serigne Sy, who resides in Djourbel in a multi-building compound he and his Baye Fall built and continue to rebuild entirely out of sticks, reeds and straw. At the time of their visit, the Roberts’ interviewed Adis Seka, a famous international drummer who chooses to take many weeks off from performing and traveling in order to work with Serigne Sy at the compound. As Seka explained to the Roberts’: “Being a taalibé to Serigne Sy helps my artistic talents. In music, one must work with all kinds of contracts. But this [construction] work is linked directly to God. Music is theory and this is practice.”

The Mouride understanding of work is predicated on the teachings of its founder, Amadou Bamba, who emphasized the spiritual value of labor. In Senegal this became affiliated with agricultural labor in particular. The Baye Fall maintain this rigorous adherence to the

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391 Adis Seka qtd. in ibid., 214-15.
392 The followers of a Marabout traditionally move to his rural compound where they work his lands for free. This labor, usually resulting in the production of peanuts or other cash crops, is offset by the Marabout who uses the proceeds of the land to provide for his disciples. This may eventually result in the Marabout gifting land and/or a wife to a disciple as a reward for his devotion. Villalón, *Islamic Society and state power in Senegal*, 69, 118-19.
work and spiritual demands of their Marabout, largely above all others. As a result, they frequently forgo the traditional practices of regular fasting and recitation of daily prayers as their work and hence their spiritual activities are all-consuming. At the Venice Biennale in 1993, Dimé told McEvilley “I’m Moslem but not practicing like the Moslems who go to the Mosque every week…[F]or me sculpture is a form of practicing Islam.” As the Roberts’ noted, the compound of straw housing Serigne Sy and his followers is never finished. As one section is completed by the Baye Fall, an older section requires repair and rebuilding. Thus, the compound itself is a monument to work a means by which sculpture and architecture are used to practice Islam. As work is never ending and as Mourides see all work related acts as prayer, their every labor relates to God. This seems to be the revelation that most connected Dimé’s spiritual life to his sculptural practice. The Roberts’ point out, “As Amadou Bamba taught and teaches, work is a form of prayer.”

The Roberts included excerpts from two interviews with Dimé (from 1996 and 1997) in their catalogue A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal and the intertwined topics of work and religion dominated their conversations. Dimé pointed out: “I no longer feel about my work as I once did. Now when I work, I no longer feel like someone who comes, works, and leaves. For me, work is even a prayer. Do you understand what I mean? I divinely transcend myself through my work.” While Dimé implies that he originally viewed art and art making as a secular activity, perhaps along the lines in which it is viewed in more recent Euro-American

Please note that Villalón is building on observations previously noted by Cruise O'Brien and Messiant (trans.), "Le talibé mouride," 562-5.

393 Villalón, Islamic Society and state power in Senegal, 69.

394 McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 51.

395 Roberts and Roberts et al., A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal, 221.

396 Dimé qtd. in ibid., 208-9. This is the passage that the authors misinterpret as being about his alleged alcohol abuse and recovery.
contexts, by the mid-nineties he had come to view art making in Mouride terms, as a spiritual undertaking akin to the act of prayer. Furthermore, he came to see the practice of sculpture as one of manual labor, in parallel with the traditional agricultural labor given to the Marabout by his followers. One can postulate that Dimé’s expression of his art as “work” in the Mouride sense was clearly sanctioned as such by his Marabout, much the same way Serigne Sy sanctioned the musical career of his taalibé, Adis Seka. In fact, Dimé’s family attests that the artist turned over much of the profits earned from his récupération sculptures to his Marabout. Rather than turning over agricultural abundance, Dimé replaced agricultural labor with artistic endeavor, thus participating in the practice of dedicating the profits of his labor to his Marabout.

Agricultural labor therefore, became a metaphor for Dimé’s harvesting the land and seaside for found objects to be transformed into works of art. This literal dependence on the environment introduces a further contextual basis for the finished works: only awareness of the local community and environment allows full recognition of the multivalent meanings Dimé assigned to his objects. He switched over his practice from one of purchasing expensive virgin hardwoods to harvesting materials provided (by God) free of charge. He wrote in his journal: “For a while now, I have made excursions over the rocks around the Island [Gorée], and I realize

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397 Dimé, Interview with the Author, 26 June 2008. Dimé, Interview with the Author, June 15 2008.
398 The practice of “paying” a Marabout for his services, while traditionally done in the form of agricultural labor and crop donation, is also frequently done in cash, or other gifts in kind, especially if the disciples are not farmers by trade. Dimé is not unique in this regard. See Cruise O'Brien and Messiant (trans.), "Le talibé mouride," 570.
399 Sylla documents the steep prices that Dimé typically paid when purchasing ebony and other hardwood pieces for his carvings. He states a block of tropical hardwood sold for 1250 CFA (25 FF) per kilo, while a piece of ebony measuring about 5cm in diameter and 1 meter long sold for 8000 CFA (160 FF). An important note is that this precedes the 50% devaluation of the Senegalese CFA against the French Franc in 1994, and Sylla’s price estimates reflect the value of the wood at the rate of 1 CFA to .02 FF. Sylla, "Practique et théorie," under section “Moustapha Dimé I: ‘Etudes et Formation’”. ibid., under section “Moustapha Dimé II: ‘Practique et Technique Sculpturales’"
more and more how generous is the sea in sending me material for my work; material that speaks to me of its history and its limitless visual potential.”

Dimé’s *récupération* process was therefore more organic than that of his contemporaries, with its roots closer to harvesting than creating. This mimics the self-sufficient practices of the rural Mouride farmers rather than the established urban art practices of painting and sculpture as espoused by the École Nationale des Beaux Arts. The shift away from carving to assemblage, from purchasing to “harvesting” is an intrinsic component of Dimé’s *récupération* practice, and one that was unique to him. *Récupération* sculptures by other artists of Dimé’s time and since do not exhibit this same deep connection to Mouride practice. Furthermore, Dimé insisted repeatedly that he wanted his *récupération* sculptures to not only be derived from locally found objects, but also to be capable of interacting with the communities from which his objects were gleaned. This community connection was a unique aspect of Dimé’s late works, and one that found little resonance in *récupération* sculptures by other artists of his time.

On the other hand, Dime employed *récupération* not only to draw inspiration from the local community for its materials and social focus, but also to connect to the Senegalese religious outlook of his community. The economic and cultural crises motivating the *Set Setal* urban cleanup were resolved through means that were ultimately religious in nature. In the Mouride

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400 Entry dated 06/06/94. Dimé, "Journal." “Depuis un certain temps, je fais des excursions à travers les rochers de l’île, et je me rend [sic] compte de plus en plus de la générosité de la mer en envoyer [sic] du matériel pour mon travail, un [sic] matériaux qui me parle de par son histoire de par ses possibilités plastiques sans limite.”


402 For example, fellow artist Tita Mbaye makes *récupération* paintings, sculptures and mixed-media objects that are not primarily exhibited or sold to local audiences. Rather, he markets these directly to international buyers. Where Tita does participate in the local community is in his work in *bogolan* textile making and dying. He regularly holds workshops where he teaches *bogolan* artistry to women’s and youth groups. Tita makes his own textiles as well, and these are exhibited and sold locally along with those produced in the workshops he offers. At the last three editions of the Dak’Art Biennales (2004, 2006, 2008) Tita held impressive group (2004, 2006) and solo (2008) shows while opening his studio to foreign visitors. The painting and sculptural works featured at these exhibitions were largely composed using *récupération* techniques. The artist discussed and showed his *bogolan* workshop projects and resulting textiles only upon being asked.
tradition labor is understood as benefiting the entire community that follows a given Marabout. Enfolded into this is the renunciation of material acquisition for one’s self, of earning one’s keep from that which God provides, and of seeing one’s place in relation to the community in which one lives and to which one is a servant. The manual labor of cleaning the streets, painting murals, devising ways to recycle discarded items were aspects of Set Setal that came directly from local Mouride practices: non-remunerated, community-focused, and religiously motivated as filth is offensive to Islam.

In Dimé’s works that post-date the Set Setal movement, his community focus is more apparent and more consistent than was expressed by his filiform or bas-relief sculptures. La Famille (n.d.) (fig. 4.17), for example, is composed of six wooden mortars stacked mouth to mouth to form three rotund figures of varying heights indicating a well-fed (and therefore well-off) trilogy of mother, father and child (cat. 149). Le SIDA (1994), made of bent rebar wrapped with wire, resembles two rather frightening skeletal beings engaged in simulated sexual intercourse, warning viewers of the ravaging effects of AIDS (fig. 4.18)(cat. 71). As previously witnessed, Les Hommes de Kayar made use of ocean-worn pieces of pirogues to depict the fishermen from the famed fishing village of Kayar. Not only do these sculptures include materials with which any Senegalese would be familiar, they also interpret the subjects of family, health and cleanliness, and manual labor, all locally resonant with Sufism and Mouride practice in Senegal.

Dimé’s own comments on the issue indicate he not only drew inspiration from his locality, but also intended his art to be integrated into it. This interest undoubtedly stemmed from the Set Setal movement, which turned painting out of the galleries and into the streets.

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403 Villalón, Islamic Society and state power in Senegal, 189-90.
While avant-garde practitioners were quick to move récupération into the galleries to replace the fading École de Dakar movement, Dimé felt that art belonged to the people as well as to the avant-garde elite. He commented:

> Before Senghor, art was completely cut off from society in Senegal. Only people who had gone to school, who were in the administration, only they went to exhibitions. You have museums, galleries, cultural centers, all made for intellectuals who are the elite, not for the people at large. It is very important for me to use materials that don’t alienate the society where I live...There’s no difference between these materials and people.”

He continued: “Considering the level of development of Senegalese society, I think you should try and reach the whole population, to let them all reeducate themselves on an equal level. I am trying to do that.” Dimé was as good as his word. Not satisfied with merely using récupération to build sculptures that spoke of Senegalese cultural ideas, he installed his pieces in the streets for all to view. Photos taken by the artist (now in his archives) show the filiform, *Lamentation II* (1980-84), installed en plein air in the HLM IV where Dimé lived and had his studio until the 1990s (fig. 4.19). A young boy passes behind the sculpture looking quizzically at the artist, who must have waited for just such a moment, as no other pictures of the sculpture en plein air exist in the artist’s archives. Dimé did have traditional documentary photographs of this work, staged with just the object in the frame (cat. 12). The plein air photograph, however, indicates a desire to document the object’s ability to negotiate public spaces without the gallery or cultural center as mediator.

At the exhibition at Gallery 39, he installed *Les Hommes de Kayar* outside the front door on the sidewalk so it was accessible to passers-by (fig. 4.8). Other photos depict Dimé installing *Le SIDA* at the rocky seashore behind his studio, in a natural rather than gallery setting (fig.

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404 Both excerpts are Dimé qtd. in McEvilley, “Interview with Moustapha Dimé,” 48.
405 Both excerpts are Dimé qtd. in ibid.
4.20). Other photos document his famous group installation *La Grande Danse* (1995) (cat. 80), the subject of his solo invitational exhibition at the 1996 edition of Dak’Art. In its initial configuration, the eleven figures of *La Grande Danse* were not exhibited in a gallery, but rather in an open sandy plaza on Gorée Island (fig. 4.21). As with *Lamentation II*, children are seen playing in the background of several photographs, their small bodies artfully framed by, or mimicking the movements of, the limbs of the delicate wooden dancers arranged in a circle (fig. 4.22).

According to all the evidence I have gathered to date, Dimé saw his greatest contribution to art in Senegal coming not from his ability to sell his art around the world, but rather in using his studio on Gorée Island as a functioning workshop for emerging artists. At the Gorée Studio, Dimé created an apprentice system for young artists to accommodate alternative strategies for the teaching and learning of artistic methods other than those promoted by the established art schools in Dakar.  

This too, stems from a Mouride ideology. Senegalese Sufism functions as a master/apprentice system where supplicants first declare themselves “a follower, a disciple, of a marabout” and the Marabout’s subsequent transmission of religious knowledge, or the *wird*, to the disciple “establishes a theoretical relationship of subordination between the master and his disciple.”  

This subordination, however, encourages personal growth, community connectedness, social responsibility and activism, all of which are apparent in Dimé’s own life and professional work. Just as Dimé’s profits from his work went to his Marabout to support the

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407 Villalón, *Islamic Society and state power in Senegal*, 64.

408 Ibid., 119-21.
Baye Fall community, Dimé’s conceptualization of a working studio to serve the needs of emerging artists was his way of directly supporting the local artistic community. He named the studio the “Atelier École Castel Gorée,” and he provided attestations of interns in residence and certificates of completion for residencies. Prior to his death, he was preparing to install the equipment for a forge and a textile workshop to increase his ability to train artists along with himself in the indigenous West African techniques of metal working and weaving.409

The Islamic tradition, of which Dimé was a part, therefore, served as a spiritual, philosophical and practical model for his own artistic practice. Mouridism provided an open door into an exploration of a modern avant-garde expression that valued the downtrodden over the wealthy, the modern over the medieval, local over global, manual labor over personal profit, and the community over the individual. In other words, Dimé explored different aspects of Récupération in order to draw attention to Mouride values. As Cheikh Amadou Bamba recruited the overlooked and downtrodden members of Senegalese caste societies and slaves to his Mouride movement, Dimé recuperated (or rather, ‘rehabilitated,’) the overlooked and tossed out detritus of Dakar; both arguably had the intent of making something beautiful and productive out of the bits that seemingly had no potential.

A Mouride Answer to Négritude

Mouridism provided several alternatives for Dimé in his artistic practice. Primarily, it granted the artist emotional and spiritual sustenance and a means to confront the challenging circumstances of his youth and professional career choice. Philosophically, Mouridism provided a modern counter-narrative to the entrenched discourses of Négritude, which by the mid-1980s

were rapidly falling out of favor in Senegal. Senghor’s most famous critic was undoubtedly the Nigerian Wole Soyinka, who coined the famous phrase: “The tiger does not proclaim its ‘tigritude.’” Soyinka’s well-known critique of Senghor’s supposedly complementary binary of pan-African antiquity and pan-European modernism pointed out that because of its colonial foundations, Négritude could not accept local, independent African modernisms as viable alternatives to European modernity.

Examining Dimé’s récupération as “work” along the lines defined by Mouridism, rather than as “art” as defined by either Négritude or European paradigms, makes several aspects of his project clearer. The most significant of these is his ability to assimilate aspects of the past with elements of modernity in a manner unburdened by the programmatic constraints of Négritude. Interpreting Dimé’s sculptural practice using the Mouride conceptualization of “work as prayer” takes the objects out of an exclusively art-for-art’s-sake paradigm as established in Euro-American and Négritude systems. His récupération sculptures renegotiate the politics of the colonial-postcolonial divide and examine it for the hybrid condition it represents. Récupération resolved, ironically, Dimé’s vouchsafed anger with “acculturation” and allowed more fluid assimilations (what Senghor wanted, although he articulated it differently) between the old and the new, between African and European. Récupération allowed his sculptures to serve as cultural critiques of not just European but also Senegalese systems of art appreciation. Lastly, it explains the connection between the artist’s figural (and often sexualized) sculptures and his religion. The human body in Dimé’s practice serves as a site for contemplating the modern

410 This point is also remarked upon by Harney, although she does not delve into the reasons for which this proves true. Harney, In Senghor’s Shadow, 167.
human condition. The works alternately function as some kind of moral barometer – as with *Le SIDA* and *La Femme à la Culotte*. Or, they serve as a bridge between artistic and cultural traditions within and external to the continent of Africa as seen in *Le Gardien* and *La Grande Danse*. This connects neatly with the Mouride notions of community responsibility, cosmopolitan outreach, economic betterment for the group, and a deep spiritual communion with God.

The Mouride idea of process is also reflected in Dimé’s *récupération*, especially since it is an interface of prayer, labor and production in service of God. Process is related to work, not just in Dimé’s acts of harvesting, assembling, carving and painting of found objects, but also in manual labor and worship as conceptualized and practiced by the Mourides. Process also allows for understandings of mutation, change and chance as it values the working labor of the artist over time. The length of time required by the artist for the labor may not be immediately visible in the completed work of art, but like *La Femme au Long Cou*, all of Dimé’s *récupération* sculptures contain within them a chronological component that is at once literal, formal, metaphorical and historical. The wing-like forms that undulate down the sides of *La Femme au Long Cou* are rusted from long exposure to the elements, and they were already in this state when Dimé made the object. *Le Gardien*, for example chronicles the length of time required by the sea and its creatures to turn freshly cut pier pilings of solid wood into the delicate substance resembling pumice that Dimé used for the body of the figure. The presence of this calcified material in the body of *Le Gardien* formally allows for the visual comparison with the pocked wooden bodies of the Bakongo *minkisi n’kondi*, objects dating from the turn of the twentieth century. The wood further accentuates the object’s exploration of decay, the passage of time, the
systematic shift away from indigenous animist traditions towards global religions that interpreted the *minkisi* as expressions of primitive and pagan cultures.

A sculpture like *Le Gardien*, therefore, issues from Dimé’s intention to accord the indigenous visual productions of the African continent a place of prominence alongside those imported over the centuries. Based on Dimé’s concerns over early Islam practices that sought to destroy local sculptural production, objects like *Le Gardien* and *Femme Sérère* function as corrective gestures, as reinsertions of indigenous models into modern sculpture. The technique of *récupération* is therefore a necessity in these particular objects. It refers the viewer not only to the re-imagined use of older objects of Senegalese manufacture into a modern form, but also to the *récupération* of older sculptural genres from across the continent that pre-date the modern, Muslim, post-colonial condition in Senegal.

The presence of such a powerful and truly domestic cultural, spiritual and economic force in Mouridism was clearly problematic for *Négritude*, as it undercut many of Senghor’s convictions about the values of modern Europe, and France in particular, for the economic and cultural development of Senegal. For Dimé, on the other hand, this meant that a culturally-sanctioned, Senegalese platform existed outside of the political platform of *Négritude* from which to construct cultural modernity. It further meant that modern art in Senegal could exist from outside the framework of the European academic model, which had been a defining component of *Négritude*, and was ever present in international art markets.

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413 This view is supported by the fact that Islamic leaders in Senegal, while a driver of popular sentiment and action regarding politics, do not participate directly in governing. Senegal remains a secular state with Islam functioning as an important counterweight on behalf of the people against the political powers of the state. The separation of religion from politics and the role of religion as an important check against state power is what I argue formed part of the appeal for Dimé in his search for a non-government controlled means of artistic expression. See Villalón, *Islamic Society and state power in Senegal*, 2, 15, 35.
Charting a New Course: Toward a Synthesis of Filiform and récupération

 Had he lived longer, Dimé would conceivably have developed other visual strategies to reinforce his figural récupération sculptures. Souleymane Keita argues that Le Gardien exhibits signs that Dimé was on the verge of charting a new course in the way he conjoined the two torso sections with hidden sets of nails.\textsuperscript{414} There is additional evidence in a new direction in a group of sculptures he created in 1995 around the theme of “The Dance.” The rest of this chapter will be devoted to this group, especially since it has not been given enough attention in the literature on the artist’s works.

The sculptures in question manifest a marriage of his filiform and récupération styles from the 1980s and 1990s. Among them are: La Danse Contemporaine -- with three figures (fig. 4.23)(cat. 81a); La Danse – with two (fig. 4.24)(cat. 85) – Le Couple – also with two figures (fig. 4.25)(cat. 81); Le Circle – with seven (fig. 4.26)(cat. 81b) and La Grande Danse – with eleven total figures all composed of long, slender figures, delicately balanced and almost ethereal in form (fig. 4.27)(cat. 80).\textsuperscript{415} The delicate wooden forms resonate deeply with Dimé’s earlier filiforms; they undulate around their axes, balanced lightly on the ground with no carved pedestal for support.

Instead of being hand-carved as were Dimé’s earlier filiform sculptures, the elements in the Dance series consist of slender forked tree branches, steel wire, nails and the recovered tool heads from agricultural hoes. All, except for Le Circle, are taller than the average human. In line with Dimé’s other récupération objects and many of his filiforms, they possess no

\textsuperscript{414} Keita, Interview with the Author, 26 June 2008.

\textsuperscript{415} Dimé and subsequent writers have assigned variant titles to all of these. For clarity, I adopt the titles used in the exhibition “Moustapha Dimé – Retrospective,” the last exhibition on which Dimé himself worked, and the one that produced the most widely circulating and comprehensive visual catalogue of Dimé’s récupération works. Association pour la Promotion des Arts, Moustapha Dimé.
mitigating pedestal or base. Dimé’s refusal to supply the figures with pedestals ironically makes them lose a critical feature of sculpture in the round; they are not free-standing objects, possessing only non-supportive tree-branch ‘feet.’ *La Danse, Le Couple, Le Circle* and *La Danse Contemporaine* achieve a fragile upright stability from their groupings in twos, threes and seven, where the figures lean against each other to remain standing. *La Grande Danse*, however, follows a different program of display. Its figures, arranged in a circle, do not touch each other in a way that would allow them to stand on their own. In a gallery they must be strung from the ceiling with monofilament so that the branch tips of the “feet” rest upon the floor, giving the illusion of standing (fig. 4.28). The need for suspension was mitigated in Dimé’s original display when he installed them *en plein air* by inserting their bases into the sand of Gorée Island (See fig. 4.21).

The assimilation of Dimé’s older filiform style into his new *récupération* template is in fact the clue that signals the attentive viewer to search for past precedents. Dimé’s formal interrogation of his own filiform style using *récupération* techniques indicates the circularity and consistency of his artistic project.

The chief significance of *La Grande Danse*, and the rest of his filiform-cum-*récupération* Dance series, I believe, lies in its dual installation aspect – *en plein air* and inside the gallery setting. I surmise that Dimé’s interrogation of differing Euro-American and Senegalese practices of consumption and viewership of the same art object is the focus of this final series. The filiform-cum-*récupération* sculptures thwart a single interpretation, for a viewer in a gallery and a viewer in a public plaza would reach completely different, if not contradictory, visual conceptions of the same sculptural group. The parallactic nature of *La Grande Danse*
warrants an investigation of the way Dimé manipulated the group to create a simultaneous dissonance and convergence between his works and those of European modernism.

When installed outdoors in the public sandy plazas of Gorée Island, *La Grande Danse* recalls the public dancing events, or *sabars*, that are ubiquitous in Senegalese society. These events are always held outside, late at night and are community affairs.416 Drummers from the *gëwël* (griot) caste are hired to perform, and anyone within earshot of the drums can participate, either as audience member or dancer. Usually sponsored and primarily danced by women, most *sabars*, however include a moment for male dancers, although the genders do not dance at the same time. The crowd assembles in a circle, and individuals or pairs of dancers will run forward to dance briefly in front of the drummers before rushing back to their place in the audience.417

A recent *sabar* performance on May 2006 at Gorée Island coincided with the 7th edition of the Dak’Art Biennale and was held in the same plaza where Dimé installed and photographed his dancing figures in 1995.418 As I noted in a prior publication, Gëwël gi Seck, a young drumming group, set up in front of the City Hall and succeeding in exciting the attending women into a joyful dance frenzy.419 Having witnessed the whipping sequined skirts, the flying sand, the lost jewelry, the playfully erotic antics of the woman, and the energetic direction of lead drummer Ndiaw Seck, I was struck by how quiet and restrained Dimé’s sculptures seemed by comparison. The delicate, nearly two-dimensional figures of *La Grande Danse* are arranged in a

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416 Where there are nightclubs, however, some *sabar* dancing events, called *Soirées Sénégalaises*, may be held indoors at these clubs rather than outside. These become more private affairs, as club-goers must pay for their entry, and thus the event is not open to all passers-by as it is in its traditional setting.

417 For a recent study of Senegalese traditional dance, see Francesca Castaldi, *Choreographies of African Identities: Négritude, Dance, and the National Ballet of Senegal* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

418 This *sabar* was independently sponsored by the young women’s association of Gorée Island, and was not affiliated with the Dak’Art Biennale.

circle. Some are touching each other at the tips of the ‘fingers,’ while others do not make contact of any kind. They are male and female nudes, with their genitals clearly demarcated in twined wire and nails to represent flesh and pubic hair respectively (fig. 4.29). Unlike in sabar, Dimé’s males and females dance together. Furthermore, they are resoundingly meticulous, delicate-looking figures, which is not an aspect of Senegalese traditional dance. While technically masterful and scrupulously performed, as Francesca Castaldi has described, the sabar is not a delicate matter:

I could write calmly ... about the drums that are used for the sabar...I could tell you about all the sounds that the drums produce ... But how to understand the rhythms played during the sabar? I listen to a cascade of sounds, exploding downward like water-bombs striking the floor. I imagine the impact of all that water, the weight of the sound-bombs created by the hands and sticks of the drummers exploding onto the dancers’ bodies, activating their limbs into four independently circling mills while the spine shoots upward and the head and the eyes wander towards the sky. ... The density of sounds excites the dancers to action, like water warmed to the boiling point erupting into motion.420

Where La Grande Danse does pick up on the traditional sabar lies in the circular arrangement of the figures, mimicking the crowd standing in a plaza in the evening, and the overtly obvious genitalia of the wooden figures, which suggests the erotic underpinnings of the male and female flirtations within the sabar performance. Suggestively, however, the sculpture moves beyond this one interpretation. La Grande Danse begins with the local, but is completed via a dialogic with the global, which happens when the object is moved indoors.

When installed in a gallery, the suspended figures seem to float in space, unnaturally free from gravity. The two-dimensional aspects of the figures, the delicate gestures between their hands, the nudity, the alternating male and female dancers and the rejection of gravity are only a few of the visual formalisms that place this object in tantalizing dialogue with one of the icons of

modern painting – the mural *La Danse* in its second iteration of 1910 by Henri Matisse (fig. 4.30). Matisse’s circle of dancers float in a gravity-defying composition. The male and female figures touch one another without appearing to offer any real support, and in one instance, the circle is broken between two dancer’s hands. Even the tangerine fabric that was part of Dimé’s original gallery display recalls the vibrant orange pigment Matisse used as fill for his delicately outlined dancers (fig. 4.31).

*La Grande Danse* was first installed indoors as part of Dimé’s solo exhibition at the 1996 edition of the Dak’Art Biennale. Dimé purchased meters and meters of orange cloth for the floor and walls of the space in order to camouflage the traditional white-walled space of the gallery. At once decorative, the fabric was also employed to be gravity-defying: to conceal the fact that the feet of the figures were resting upon a hard floor. Malou, in charge of installing *La Grande Danse* with Dimé’s other apprentices at the time, notes that Dimé’s instructions were specific about how the fabric was to obliterate the floor and as much of the wall space as possible in order to make the figures seem to float in the space. Was it supposed to be a direct appropriation of Matisse’s *La Danse*? Malou’s reply: “The man was very cunning…”

Dimé himself argued against simple binary readings of the installation. When Belgian critic Roger Pierre Turine asked whether Dimé used *récupération* objects for *La Grande Danse* because everything is recycled in Africa or because European artists were famous for their found objects, the artist retorted: “I speak neither for Senegal nor for Africa, but for the world. And the world, as it is now, has become totally savage. I tried to capture the spirit of the material in order to fix that…And I hope that in looking at my sculptures, viewers will see themselves rather than

421 “Maitre était très malin.” Gabriel Kemzo Malou, Interview with the Author, May 29 2012.
seeing others.” While caustically implying that Turine’s ignorance of contemporary sculpture made him a “savage”, Dimé more importantly draws two important conclusions about his late work. First, in refusing to be pigeonholed as an “African” artist, he signals a desire to use his works to reach a global audience. And, the notion that viewers see themselves in his works dovetails neatly with Peterson’s thesis on how spectators will identify the figural bodies based on their own cultural and social backgrounds. Dimé intended his bodies to be read through the lenses of their viewers, and in so doing, capture the multiple and fragmentary visions of a post-colonial world.

Dimé’s filiform-cum- récupération figures, however, complicate the artistic projects of Europe, just as his earlier récupération objects defected from contemporary art making in Négritude and post-Négritude Senegal. The dissonance created by the combination of two styles particular to Dimé’s own history - filiform and récupération - creates a “sculpture” that does not fit the definition of such as per Western art models, and “bodies” that do not properly code with European art historical expectations. La Grande Danse has no base and it is not self-supporting as Krauss tells us European sculpture through the 19th century was expected to be. Even in more modern language, this grouping does not fit easily into any Euro-American category. It is not hand-carved sculpture, and neither is it industrially fabricated, rejecting the early 20th century prototype of the French readymade. Since Dimé professed great admiration for Louise Bourgeois, his La Grande Danse presumably reflects his awareness of more recent feminist, minimalist and postmodern movements. In fact, one is tempted to compare it with Hesse’s

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423 Dimé in McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 51-2.
hanging panels of heavy-duty chessecloth in *Contingent* (1968-9) (fig. 4.32); but then, the similarity suddenly disappears due to the figuration in Dimé’s installation and the fact that all its figures remain in contact with the ground. There seems to be a negotiation of the “specific object” strategy as defined by the minimalist artist Donald Judd based on how Dimé’s installation challenges the traditional boundaries between painting (it hangs in a gallery) and sculpture (it sits on the floor) and the environment that contains the object (gallery vs. open air). This argument is brought down, however, through recognition that Judd’s minimalism, while focused on rejecting the boundaries between painting and sculpture, was confined to the gallery. Judd’s “specific objects” reflected awareness of the viewer onto the unnoticed aspects of canonized exhibition spaces that are interior by definition (ceilings, floors, corners, doorways).\[424\] Dimé’s sculptural group, while aesthetically beautiful, fits only awkwardly into the indoor exhibition space of the white box environment. In fact, in a very anti-Judd gesture, Dimé did his best to destroy the gallery environment altogether by swathing the floor and walls of his installation space in orange fabric.

Culminating with the Dance series, throughout Dimé’s oeuvre we are presented with ultra modern objects that look undeniably "old" and "historic" while, at the same time, are defiantly liberated from historical precedent. The only referent all of Dimé’s objects share is to his own artistic evolution from style to style. From the bas-relief panel of *Samba Wagne* to the fully dimensional uncarved figures of *La Grande Danse*, bodies and wood remain a constant metaphor and medium for his work. I argue that this is done to renegotiate history and specifically art history, where it failed to register the original meanings, artists and often cultures of objects from the African continent. Hence portable Bakongo *minkisi* objects are transformed into a life-size

\[424\] See Judd’s theories and writings as skillfully analyzed by Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*, 269-72.
megalith in *Le Gardien*, while ancestor figures are not carved, but rather amassed from found objects in *Les Hommes de Kayar*. Dimé’s critical inclusion of aspects of the past in his sculptures - the figural sculptures of the Bakongo kingdom of central Africa, the Seereer of (present day) Senegal and the Makonde expatriates in Dar es Salaam, among others is crucial to understanding his defiance of the canonicity of Western art. His allusions to these earlier carvings serve not only to acknowledge, for example, the contributions of un-named Makonde artists working under colonial or tourist influence, but also to de-prioritize the colonial voice in the telling of African Art History. Dimé effectively re-narrates this history from an alternate perspective, forcing a renegotiation of the relationship between history and modernity on the African continent. Heir to the rich yet devastating legacy of Western consumption, scholarship and display of African objects, Dimé questioned, reformulated, and argued with the West to an extent that proves surprising even to those familiar with his art.

In conclusion, I wish to return for a moment to McEvilley’s interview with Dimé on the 1980 exhibition, “The Face of Senegalese Sculpture,” held at the Centre Culturel Français in Dakar. McEvilley asked Dimé about the abstract qualities of the work he exhibited there. The following exchange ensued:

Thomas McEvilley: What was the work like?...Was that figurative work?
Moustapha Dimé: No. It was more or less abstraction ...
TM: When you say abstraction, do you mean geometric abstractions based on traditional African forms?
MD: No, they were more or less modern, it had nothing to do with tradition.
TM: Based to some degree on Western models?
MD: No, not exactly, because these were things that each artist wanted to imagine for himself. Each wanted to create his own originality, his own style. That's what pushed people to try and create their own designs.\(^425\)

\(^{425}\) McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 41.
Here, Dimé uses the word “modern” to describe his abstract compositions is in response to McEvilley’s use of the word “traditional,” which in all art historical literature is understood as “tribal” or “primitive.”

McEvilley, however, extrapolates Dimé’s “modern” to mean (Euro-American) modernism, which thus presumes modernity to be exclusively a Western condition, neglecting the modern engagements with sculpture from across the African continent that Dimé himself signals as a significant influence.

The racism that such analysis propagates, whether overt or unintentional, is an issue of major concern to some art historians who then avoid the discussion of figuration (and hence differentiating the traditional vs modern types of figuration that ensue) in contemporary African art all together. At times, scholars have altered their vocabulary from that of the troublesome West-centric or anthropological models to that espoused by postmodernist studies. The supposedly culture-, gender-, and style-neutral vocabulary of postmodernism seems like a healthy alternative, and yet this vocabulary was built to accommodate minimalism, conceptualism and performance arts specifically in Euro-American urban centers. This makes it an improbable fit for Dimé’s corpus of late 20th century figurative sculpture. In addition, writers’ attempts to use the rhetoric of postmodernism for analysis of African continental or diasporic arts typically result in awkward justifications of why and how the vocabulary is being used in the first place.

426 The “Tribal Art” label was originally promoted by William Fagg as a less pejorative term than that of “Primitive Art,” which preceded it. See William Butler Fagg, The Tribal Image: Wooden Figure Sculpture of the World (London: Trustees of the British Museum Publications, 1977).

For example, more than a decade ago Salah Hassan found he could not use the term “modern” to discuss the sculptural works by Amir Nour and multi-media paintings by Mohammed O. Khalil without justifying why he was not using the word “postmodern” instead:

Despite recent negative connotations associated with the term “modern” in western intellectual circles, the term “modern” is more suitable for such new African artistic expressions, because it symbolizes the experience and practices the art forms embody. To call it “modern” distinguishes it from the merely “contemporary”; for where the contemporary refers to time, the modern refers to sensibility and style, and where the contemporary is a term of neutral reference, the modern is a term of critical judgment. Moreover, modernism in the African context, as it is elsewhere, entails a self-conscious attempt to break with the past and search for new forms of expression.428

Whether or not we agree with Hassan’s definitions for “modern” and “contemporary” we can be sure that the need for such a lengthy explanation of two terms detracts from the larger analysis of artistic creation. The structure of current literature that addresses Euro-American 20th century material (minimalism, conceptualism, performance) is not the most effective framework to support Hassan’s argument that 20th century “African” arts be held in equal standing with their “Western” contemporaries.

Proposing alternate strategies is something that this dissertation seeks to do in practice. In the process, I have tried to present specific and local, rather than universal, paradigms for contextualizing Moustapha Dimé’s oeuvre. This type of inquiry fundamentally allows for a more in-depth approach to material. This needs not sacrifice comparative or over-arching analysis, and yet as my examination of the figure as it is found in Dimé’s works has shown, proper comparisons must be utilized. We cannot place Dimé’s sculptures from the 1990s in an international framework alone, for this sacrifices the local significance that imbues the objects with their most profound meanings.

Today, Dimé’s *récupération* objects stand apart from those of his Senegalese contemporaries because of his unique ability to impregnate found objects with transcendent meanings and then reconfigure them to generate transnational art paradigms. He created each piece from recycled objects in such a way as to draw attention to the fact that he is not just recycling *things* from his environment but also using them to embody histories, philosophies, aspirations, ideas, instincts as well as cultural, religious and aesthetic impulses in which the past, present and the future are inseparably interwoven. In sum, his *récupération* project, more often than not, reflects a synthesis of visual strategies, leaving viewers to wonder whether they are a celebration of a Euro-African modernity or a subversive interrogation of that hybrid modernity.
Dimé’s influence on the arts of Senegal from 1973 when he began sculpting in earnest until his death in 1998 cannot be overstated. He achieved early recognition for his filiform sculptures and through his thematic explorations of the figure and found-object sculpture, he was able to ensure not only his success on an international stage, but also generate support at home from the political and cultural elite of Senegal. His efforts in the realm of figurative sculpture influenced not only his contemporaries, but also subsequent generations of Senegalese artists. He succeeded in procuring long term and meaningful government support for his sculptures, including those he did in the radical new genre of récupération. This was despite his ambivalence about adopting wholeheartedly the tenets of Négritude and despite his affiliation with the openly anti-Négritude groups of the Laboratoire Agit-Art and Set Setal. These achievements identify him as one of Senegal’s eminent artistic personalities and one of its most influential, locally and internationally.

While Western influence can be found in the choice of materials for and the aesthetic context of late 20th century récupération, the method arguably began as an aspect of object making in rural traditional societies across the African continent. Well-documented examples exist of cultures across the African continent that use found, used, or recovered objects to aesthetic ends. Robert Farris Thompson details the use of imported white china plates on gravesites in Kongo territories in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the colonial

period. Suzanne Blier has photographed similar use of domestic objects in shrines built by the Fon in present-day Benin.

It suffices to say that precedents for Dimé’s type of recuperation abound in many parts of the continent. As Jean Laude once observed, the “traditional” or indigenous African artist “takes advantage of a natural distortion in he wood, such as a knot or forked branch, which strikes him as a figurative element that will enhance his own idea.” A relevant comparison to the work done by Dimé is that of the Lobi artists from Burkina Faso who make particularly good use of natural forms in their sculptural compositions. They frequently allow the character of the raw wood come through in their finished work, especially in altar sculptures (bateba) (fig. 3.14).

Along with his reuse of objects, Dimé was particularly known for retaining the pre-existing shapes of his found materials in his finished sculptures. La Grande Danse is one of the best examples related to Lobi bateba prototypes, where dancing figures are composed from uncarved tree branches that stand on their tips.

Additionally, the Lobi create shrines for found (metal) objects of unusual shapes thought to embody protective spirits called wathila. Other found objects as well as sculptures may be added to such shrines; so much so that the some Lobi shrines invite comparison with some “fine art” installations by contemporary African artists. For example, the accumulative nature of a

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434 According to Christopher Roy, “Wathila are encountered in the bush by men, women, or children who may find a strange object, usually made of iron, which he takes to a diviner who says that it belongs to a wathil that has appeared to the person and that the spirit wants to enter his home and receive sacrifices from him. The person then builds a shrine in the courtyard of his house or on the roof, which includes a pot for sacrifices to which is added the iron object the person found.” Christopher Roy, “The Art of Burkina Faso,” University of Iowa, http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/Art%20of%20Burkina%20Faso.html. See also Scanzi, l’Art traditionnel Lobi = Lobi Traditional Art.
1984 Lobi Mâwuó shrine (fig. 5.2) resonates with the accumulative récupération sculptures such as La Joola (2004) by Ndary Lô, a practicing récupération artist in Senegal (fig. 5.3). The Lobi shrine combines wooden sculptures, cowrie shells, seashells, seedpods, feathers, pots, and bundled amulets to protect a family’s fertility. Lô’s La Joola, is a récupération sculpture that serves as a contemporary shrine to the capsized Senegalese passenger ferry of the same name. Lô combines plastic dolls, shoes, market bags, television sets, electric fans, wire figures, bundled cloth amulets and more to represent the almost 2000 people, primarily families and young children, lost in the ferry disaster.

While the emergence of récupération as an avant-garde style is credited to the Laboratoire Agit-Art, it must not be forgotten that the earlier indigenous models were of great relevance to many of the style’s practitioners. In fact, as the La Joola sculpture by Lô attests, it is the local significance of the materials themselves that proves to be the most powerful metaphor for Senegalese artists engaged with récupération production. Of further significance for Senegal, is récupération’s connection with the local Set Setal movement, which offers an additional rationale for the sustained popularity of style. In 1991, Dimé told Sylla during an interview that he had been blown away by Set Setal. He admitted appreciating the collaborative, rebellious and independent spirit that pervaded the studios of the Village des Arts and the activities of the Laboratoire Agit Art. In addition, he was moved by its public engagement with the city and the beautification efforts he witnessed during the summer of 1990. Sylla reports how Dimé “affirmed that a collective awareness was at the heart of the socio-artistic Set Setal phenomenon, over the course of which he [Dimé] witnessed the Senegalese population’s attachment to their material objects (tools, utensils, accessories, etc) and to their traditional
societies which made use of these objects."\textsuperscript{435} The sentiment expressed by the population towards their traditional objects was so strong: “…that the economic and cultural crises that gripped the city actually provoked a reappropriation and a re-valuation of hand-made objects, recently condemned to oblivion by modern tools and industrial manufacture."\textsuperscript{436}

Sylla expresses a key tenet of Dimé’s attraction to the found object: not only did he derive artistic satisfaction from converting abandoned quotidian objects into figures, but also he was committed to the hand-made or hand-used nature of those objects prior to his revival of them as art objects. Dimé’s own value of the hand-made item parallels the systematic re-valuation of them that Sylla claims, and the connection was important to Dimé. In an interview with Daniel Sotiaux, the artist expressed his pleasure at the Senegalese public’s response to an early exhibition of his \textit{récupération} sculptures in Dakar:

In 1993 during my exhibition at Gallery 39, I received feedback from many Senegalese who said they were awed. I am not speaking about the cultural elite, but the people who were just passing by. When they saw the large sculptures I had made with pieces of boats, they were blown away. The material spoke to them. When they saw the pestles, the mortars, the water jugs, the calabashes...the people were surprised. I could tell that the figures I had composed from these objects were familiar to them.\textsuperscript{437}

The connection Dimé’s objects maintain to his community reinforces the artist’s stated commitment to socially responsible art and to his own perceived community responsibilities as a Mouride. In large part, Dimé’s objects managed to create a new direction for Senegalese modernity by merging Senghor’s call for indigenous African expression not with European modernism, but with Mouride modernism instead. At issue here is a key element in understanding Dimé’s critical use of \textit{récupération}: its ability to relate the past to the present (or

\textsuperscript{435} Sylla, "Les arts plastiques senegalais contemporains". under "4: Ruptures et Récupération" par. 18. under section "4: Ruptures et Récupération" par. 18.

\textsuperscript{436} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{437} Sotiaux, "Rencontre," 50.
traditional and modern) at the same time, and to do so from within a space delineated as modern predominantly because of its identification with Islam.

**International Scope**

As I argued earlier, Dimé's primary objective in his late works was the fashioning of humanity in sculpture, most frequently via the human body itself. Because these late works use the found object as the vector for formulating this process, Dimé had to confront the possibility that these *récupération* works would be interpreted on the international stage as participating in the European late modernist traditions of found-object and *bricolage* sculpture, and not as interlocutors for a local Senegalese sculptural and cultural modernity. In order to continue his project of challenging Western methodologies of art making and art criticism, Dimé insisted on impregnating his sculpted figures with oblique references to Senegalese bodies.

Beginning at the turn of the twentieth century, so-called African art was valued in Europe primarily for its abstract nature. Prior to this, European art historical discourse was immersed in the multitude of paths for achieving realism in art in any medium. By introducing non-European objects into a previously restricted artistic repertoire, early twentieth century European artists forced a renegotiation of realism and figuration in Western art. Nineteenth and early twentieth century African objects were among those held up as examples of a new kind of anti-realism, or “primitivism” where figuration and abstraction collided.

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439 See for example, Senghor’s favorite text on the subject, Guillaume and Munro, *La sculpture nègre primitive*. 
Furthermore, primitivism came with the notion of authenticity attached. African sculptural figures had to be produced and used in a purely African context (or at least allow for this fiction to be upheld) in order for them to have value in eighteenth and nineteenth (and twentieth) century Euro-American cultures. That is, the objects had to maintain their (often fictionalized) status as existing in the past, before contact with colonial Europe. This not only reinforced the understanding of the works as “primitive” rather than “modern,” but also differentiated them significantly enough in time and space from Euro-American objects so that the two were not seen to participate in the same art historical canon, hence requiring separate ones.

I introduce this excruciatingly brief summary of the Western conceptualization of abstraction and primitivism in African art in order to clarify Dimé’s challenge of it in his récupération figures. Returning to Les Hommes de Kayar and La Femme au Long Cou, for example, Dimé seems to have produced objects that could follow from this European historical narrative: an abstract “African” sculpture, made in wood, not directly engaged with visual realism. He even goes so far as to present crude hackings into the dorsal aspects of the members, tantalizing the viewer to revisit the myth of the barefoot carver, chopping away with technologically primitive tools. This line of inquiry is brought to its knees, however, by the realization that the objects forming the bodies in Les Hommes de Kayar and La Femme au Long Cou are not actually carved, they were found. These sculptures dialogue with the method used by historically-recognized found-object artist Marcel Duchamp. Both Dimé sculptures further resonate with the postmodern project of minimalism, for the hand of the artist is largely absent.

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They thus refuse to be "primitive" objects. *Les Hommes de Kayar* could be a judicious contribution to Western postmodernism, and yet the titular reference to a determinedly local Senegalese industry, way of life, and men's bodily engagement with nature, thwarts a reading of it as such. Neither primitive nor postmodern, *La Femme au Long Cou* is rather a challenge to both art historical genres, and in the subtle manipulation of its forms, Dimé constructed a female body that fits in no social category – neither African nor Western.

Dimé’s objects engage with the art historical rhetoric of récupération for they refuse to be conscripted within the discourses of primitivism and “scrap heap” art I outline in the introduction to this dissertation. Dimé emerged in opposition to this ideological construction of récupération, for as I have pointed out, Dimé at his most impoverished invested tremendous sums into his raw materials in the form of expensive blocks of wood. At his most successful and financially stable juncture, he refused to do this on principle, embracing the bounty of his environment, rather than see it as destitute, as the Euro-American authors would have it.

On the other hand, Dimé’s objects function equally from within the domestic, Senegalese context, as his plein air installations of his objects, and his récupération materials attest. While his inclusion of found objects certainly revels in the local histories of the reinvented materials, I argue that Dimé’s use of found objects is frequently ironic, meant to expose the inherent prejudices of the international art market. In considering Dimé’s work, one must remember that despite critical attempts to prove the contrary, Dimé was not interested in pursuing a “Western” aesthetic in his art.\(^{442}\) He actively strove to disengage himself from Western categorization and his objects overtly challenge the fractious line arbitrarily drawn between African and European conceptions of sculpture and modern art. As he bluntly told Harney,

\(^{442}\) "Il a valorisé la sculpture Africaine, ce qu'il a trouvé spirituelle et profonde, sur la sculpture occidentale." [He valued African sculpture, which he found to be spiritual and profound, above European sculpture.] Malou, Interview with the Author, 15 June 2004.
[people think] that I am a member of a certain ethnic group, and that I must work specifically in relation to that ethnic group – that’s not right. I am not a representative of an ethnic group…To work as an African – that is not correct, it is dishonest. I will never accept the West’s attempts to imprison me in this racist concept. …No one can represent African art. One can say that the work of Moustapha Dimé has African roots. I have, more precisely, Senegalese roots but I read books by Mao, books by French and African authors. If I go to the West, I will come back with something. Man is formed by his environment. But I do not want Westerners to imprison me in my African environment\(^443\)

While Harney is a recent example of a scholar attempting to rewrite the theory of found-object sculpture in Africa by moving away from anthropological discourse, her work underestimates Dimé’s search for a contemporary art form that was uniquely Senegalese – and specific to him – in nature. All too often Dimé was questioned about his role as an “African” artist, and not about the strategic means by which he involved African and European methodologies in the fabrication of his objects.

The fact that scholarship continues to blur the biography of the artist uncritically with the works produced is certainly cause for Dimé’ frustration. While Dimé was clearly engaged with multiple forms of modern art production, the oversimplification of his project into something contemporary and “African” in opposition with “European” was something he fiercely rejected. In Dimé’s earlier interview with McEvilley, the art historian asked: “So they [the récupération sculptures] are a connection not only with people, but also with the environment, the reality of the continent, of Africa, of African culture?”\(^444\) To which Dimé replied "Exactly" before going on to stress that his objects reference Senegalese culture and environments, not those of the entire continent. The importance of the ubiquitous “African roots” about which Dimé complained to Harney is frequently invoked in Occidental scholarship on contemporary African art in which a generic connection between past and present is formulated. Indeed, McEvilley’s


\(^{444}\) McEvilley, "Interview with Moustapha Dimé," 48.
comments about Dimé’s work being “a connection not only with people, but also with the
environment, the reality of the continent, of Africa, of African culture” deserves attention, not so
much for the connection it imagines, but rather for the inherent misunderstanding it represents.
Most significantly, Euro-American speech and literature frequently codes all African peoples as
monocultural, implying that they share a common “reality” and a definable “African culture.”

This type of universalism in art historical literature denies the international and
cosmopolitan experiences of most artists, including Dimé. The construction of an identity that
Dimé blames for imprisoning the artist in his African environment stems undoubtedly from the
history of primitivism in Europe, when objects from African cultures were introduced into
Western art via the modernist movements of fauvism, cubism, surrealism and abstract
eexpressionism. That the language of primitivism, a turn-of-the-century European phenomenon
should be used when discussing the work of a late twentieth century Senegalese artist ought to be
problematic, for art historians do not use this language when discussing Euro-American artists of
the same generation as Dimé.

And yet many of Dimé’s late sculptures directly confront European modes of production,
method, and display. Dimé forthrightly includes European primitivism, a tenet of its modernism,
into his own modernity, but as a critique of the way in which he was expected to perform within
such a construct. The way in which European modernity created a primitive “Africa” as a foil to
itself is reconstructed in Dimé’s objects, where a primitive Europe is imagined in order to make

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446 Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Art Since 1900: Modernism,

447 Ibid., 540-616. In discussing two exhibitions of contemporary non-Western art, “Primitivism in 20th Century
Art: Affinities of the Modern and the Tribal” (MoMA, New York 1984) and “Magiciens de la terre” (Pompidou,
Paris 1989) Foster and his colleagues also use the same universalizing vocabulary that is being critiqued here in
regards to McEvilley. See ibid., 617.
way for a modern Africa. The Eurocentric view of the art world is rejected in favor of local styles, local rhythms, local materials and history.

**Dimé’s Contemporaries and Followers**

Since the early 1980s artists have invested in the visual and conceptual power of the *récupération* style. Dimé was a key individual among the first generation of post-colonial artists to work with the found object rather than virgin raw materials. This group of artists included the founders of the *Laboratoire*, Issa Samb, Youssouf John and El Hadji Moussa Babacar Sy, along with Mansour Ciss, Moussa Tine, and Serigne N’Diaye.448 These men had no unifying artistic manifesto or creed, yet were united nonetheless by their artistic coming of age during the first flush of independence in Senegal. Amadou Makhtar Mbaye (Tita) and Viyé Diba also figured prominently at this early juncture. Most of the above worked in painting, or else began as painters and gradually moved towards mixed-media painting, wall and free-standing sculpture and finally to full *récupération* sculptures and paintings.449 These artists were later joined by Djibril Ndiaye (who renounced his earlier work in favor of the new *récupération* style), Ousmane Sow (perhaps now the best-known Senegalese sculptor), Pape Youssou Ndiaye, and Abdou Traoré (these last two being the nephew and brother, respectively, of Babacar Sadikh an influential *École de Dakar* painter)450

In Dakar, much of the material found and acquired by *récupération* artists is from three sources: industrial overproduction (aluminum sheeting, rebar, wood scrap), the result of Dakar’s

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449 Mansour Ciss is the only one of the group to have moved from sculpture into graphic and digital art, producing his (in)famous series (now in two editions) of the *Afro*, a run of digitally-produced and printed monetary bills, modeled on the Euro used by the European Union.
continual architectural expansion and urban development; flotsam, recovered from the
eceanfront of Dakar’s peninsular landmass; and refuse, the tossed-away flip flops, seed pits,
plastic baby dolls, animal bones, fishing nets, TV sets and portable radios rejected by the city’s
dwellers. Dimé drew primarily from the first two sources, although the third has been exploited
to great success by younger artists such as Ndary Lô, Gabriel Kemzo Malou, Cheikhou Bâ, Henri
Sagna and Serigne Mbaye Camara.451

Viyé Diba, Abdoulaye Ndoye, Souleymane Keita and Amahdou Moctar Mbaye (Tita) were all fellow artists and friends with Dimé while he lived. Diba and Tita had trained as
painters at the École Normale Supérieure d'Education Artistique in Dakar, while Keita studied
under Iba N’diaye at the École Nationale des Beaux Arts. In their early years, all three were
devoted painters, with Keita being a critical member of the École de Dakar artists’ group in the
1960s and early 1970s. All three, however, eventually embraced various aspects of the avant-
garde récupération as the style emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. For Diba and Tita,
both of whom began using récupération at about the same moment as Dimé, the initial found
object that attracted the painters was the amulet, known as gri-gri in French or teeré in Wolof.
These amulets, made by Marabouts, are worn by Muslims of all ages in Senegal and are used to
assist in all matters of life. Tita is fond of using actual (used) amulets in his paintings in order to
imbue them with spiritual resonance. He commented that this was something he learned from
Dimé – that the original meaning and use of the object could be a significant component of the

451 All of these artists, along with Dimé, were featured in the 2006 exhibition Sénégal Contemporain at the Musée
Dapper. Falgayrettes-Leveau, Sénégal Contemporain.
finished artwork. Tita however never uses found objects as the primary compositional elements of his paintings.

Diba, on the other hand commented that for him the amulets he incorporates into his paintings (sometimes found, sometimes made by himself) hold a strictly formal role. The original meaning of the object in its use lifetime was not what attracted Diba to use it in his art; rather it was the formal presence that recycled objects gave to his canvases. Diba notes that many Dakar painters, like Tita, include cloth bundles in their canvases, and that these bundles serve as amulets, frequently with significant prayers or substances enclosed within them. One cannot see the insides of such amulets to know whether they are real or merely symbolic, but their significance is that they function as such, and hence their contribution to the work of art is as a conceptual spiritual marker.

One area where Dimé did parallel his contemporaries was in his use of religious objects. While Diba and Tita used amulets, Dimé used Qur’anic boards. These boards, which are inked with Sura (verses) from the Qur’an, are used in the Dahra to teach children to read Arabic, and to aid in the memorization of the holy book. A second overlap with some of his

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453 Even when he did more into sculpture in the late 1990s, inspired by the three-dimensional works of the younger récupération artists, Mbaye’s objects were principally inspired by how to merge found objects into a handmade sculpture to produce a whimsical or even folksy finished sculpture. Mbaye’s first forays into sculpture were small three-dimensional diorama boxes with doll-like puppets that narrated stories from Wolof fairy tales and folklore. He still makes these and sells them very inexpensively. His récupération sculptures are modest-sized figures composed of wood, canvas and found objects of men and women in societal roles like policeman, washerwoman, African queen, diplomat, etc and are frequently humorous. Mbaye himself makes the distinction between his more folksy sculptures and his paintings, which he sees as his true “high art” productions. Amadou Makhtar (Tita) Mbaye, Interview with the author, Dakar, 25 May 2004.

454 Diba further commented that while he himself may use an amulet-like cloth bundle in a painting surface, it is without the concealed inner spiritual substance. Diba, Interview with the Author, Dakar, 9 June 2004.

455 Diba, Interview with the Author, 9 June 2004.

456 Diouf, “The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism,” 116. A Dahra is a Qur’anic school that combines religious teaching with (in rural areas) agricultural work. The center for these organizations is the mosque at Touba, the city founded by Cheikh Amadou Bamba.
contemporaries was his insistence that his artworks be viewed locally and in open public thoroughfares – this is undoubtedly thanks to his participation with the Laboratoire and the public projects initiated by Issa Samb, El Hadji Sy and others during the Set Setal movement.

Diba, Tita and Keita all signal the most obvious distinction between their use of found objects and Dimé’s: Dimé used found objects as the primary materials in his late sculptures, expecting the original meanings of the objects to dictate the form and meaning of his artworks. The important question to ask is why this is so. Clearly Dimé’s contemporaries and many subsequent followers of the récupération style saw no need to use found objects strictly according to their original functions. Similarly, Dimé’s use of primarily two raw materials, metal and wood, in his récupération objects was unique to him as the rest of the artists in the movement explored more diversity in their materials.

More than any other artist of his generation, Dimé exhibited flexibility both in his choice of media and in his visual strategies that set him apart from his peers. While Dimé rejected Senghor’s embrace of Latinité as a requisite partner to Africanité in Négritude practice, many of his contemporaries were initially enthusiastic supporters, in part as a means of enticing wealthy French patrons to sustain their artistic aspirations. Not inconsequentially, the works of two of these artists, Ousmane Sow and Viyé Diba are more well-documented and well-researched than anything by Dimé. Ousmane Sow’s sculptures are frequently exhibited internationally as the quintessential expression of post-colonial Senegalese avant-gardism. And yet, both Sow and Diba document Dimé’s work as inspiration for much of their own. Despite his distaste for Francophonie, Dimé adroitly engaged with Senghor’s philosophies on Africanité, and he used localized African cultural expressions for his artistic inspiration. This he managed to do without
resorting to stereotype or kitsch in his work – a pitfall that befell many other artists in the heydays of Négritude.

The culmination of Dimé’s diverse personal and professional experiences to date meant that he had confronted many enigmatic conditions dominating art, politics, religion and society in post-colonial Senegal. The paradoxes of his own circumstances are analogous to those of his artistic production. Despite his consistent success with his filiform style sculptures and his stated pleasure in making them, he rather abruptly abandoned the style at the end of the decade. One reason he gave repeatedly for this was that a colleague was copying his work. This is overly simplified, however, as by the late eighties and early nineties many artists in Dakar had picked up either on the successful Makonde/shetani-style objects made in Tanzania, or on the local Senegalese variant promoted by Dimé. Interestingly, while Ali Traoré’s copying of his filiform style devastated the artist, he was not shaken by those around him who also used récupération methodologies. In 1997, Dimé noted for Olivier Cena that:

Today, there are many who imitate me because it seems so simple to just assemble pieces of wood. But I say to them: you cannot do this work without having lived through the stages that brought me here. For me, this is not a fad or a style, it is the evolution of my own life. In reality, I do not see what it serves to follow a trend or a style. More important is to find one’s own way, and that way is always going to be different from any other.

Dimé’s work continues to defy easy categorization both within the context of modern art and the more localized expressions of récupération as they existed and continue to evolve in Senegal. Dimé’s shift from direct carving to récupération was religiously, as well as artistically, potentiated. He was not interested in creating new items from new materials, or even new items

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458 Cena, "Et l'homme-oiseau observait la mer...".
reborn from old, processes understood in more orthodox contexts as paralleling godly creation – the making of something from nothing. Rather, Dimé began to work preëxisting materials into different things, all the while allowing for their former lives to come through in his final compositions. Prayer boards became spearheads while pier pilings, mortars and bowls became bodies. Dimé’s récupération process was therefore more organic than that of his contemporaries, with its roots closer to harvesting than creating. This mimics the self-sufficient practices of the rural Mouride farmers rather than the established urban art practices of painting and sculpture as espoused by the École Nationale des Beaux Arts. The shift away from carving to assembling, from purchasing to harvesting is an intrinsic component of Dimé’s récupération practice, and one that was unique to him.

Furthermore, unlike many artists of his own generation and those that succeeded him, Dimé maintained his financial support from the Diouf government in the form of continued government purchases and the granting of the 100-year tenure to his desired studio space on Gorée Island. This is significant and reflects his iconic status in Senegal, given Diouf’s near complete disregard for the arts. Dimé’s success under both Senghor and Diouf speaks to his abilities not only to navigate political protocol in order to secure support for his work, but also to the power of his sculpture. Arguably, a sculptor like Dimé should have benefited neither from Senghor’s Négritude program, nor Diouf’s budget cuts. Dimé’s objects, however, were so successful at capturing local and international attention due to their forms and subject matter, that government officials under Diouf began to acknowledge sculpture as a viable counterpoint to painting. The eventual result of Dimé’s efforts, in conjunction with those of subsequent generations of sculptors, was that sculpture and specifically récupération came to replace
painting as the most unique and powerful avant-garde art form in Senegal from the 1980s until today.

Little wonder that at the first edition of Dak’Art in 1992, Moustapha Dimé won the Presidential Grand Prize for his sculpture *La Femme à la Culotte*. This object, made from a large tree trunk into which the artist carved only breasts, was the first to achieve national recognition for *récupération*, now Senegal’s most famous Avant-garde style. The Dak’Art editions, in fact, have provided a unique forum for viewing the multiple *récupération* strategies used by artists around the world. In the Dak’Art Biennale of 2002, Ndary Lô was awarded the President’s Grand Prize for his sculpture *La Longue Marche de Changement* (2000-01) consisting of a group of emaciated walking men made out of recuperated rebar (fig. 5.4). The most prestigious gallery exhibition of a Senegalese artist at Dak’Art 2004 was held at the now-defunct Gallery Éberis and featured the found-object sculptures and drawings of then twenty-four-year-old Cheikhou Bâ (fig. 5.5). Bâ’s installation, *La Joola*, made of chicken wire, industrial wire and paper mâché figures took over one corner of the Galerie Eberis with its over-life-size ghosts – eventually numbering 1836 – one for each person that died on the Joola ferry disaster.459

Both young artists owe a debt of inspiration to the late Moustapha Dimé, and perhaps a financial one as well. Had Dimé not worked so diligently to capture the attention and the financial support of the Senghor and Diouf governments, subsequent generations of artists may not have been able to capitalize on the same benefits in later years. Lô comments that whenever he touches wood, he thinks of Dimé, and he maintains an ongoing installation of objects in his

459 In 2002, the MV Joola, the Ziguinchor-Dakar state ferry sank off the coast of Senegal due to overloading. In total there were 1863 deaths and only 64 survivors. The ferry was meant to carry only 550 passengers. Many artists participating in the “Off” exhibitions during the 2004 edition of the Dak’Art Biennale commemorated this event in their work.
studio entitled *Hommage à Moustapha Dimé*, comprised of branches and tree roots found by Lô that resemble the human form (fig. 5.6). Bâ sees less of a direct connection between his work and Dimé’s, although when asked about what artists have inspired him he lists the sculptors Serigne Mbaye Camera and Ndary Lô, as well as the painter/multi-media artist Soly Cissé, all of whom either studied under Dimé or readily acknowledge his impact on their work.

In Dak’Art 2006, works by Dimé were again exhibited *en plein air* on Gorée Island in an outdoor group display (fig. 5.7). This exhibition, curated by Dimé’s former apprentice Gabriel Kemzo Malou included *La Vierge et son Double* (1992) by Dimé along with récupération works by three artists who were deeply inspired by him. These included Malou himself, Djibril Sagna, and Henri Sagna. Dimé would have been pleased to see his works installed out of doors on his favorite island for all to see, free of charge.

At the 2008 edition of Dak’Art, following in Dimé’s footsteps, Ndary Lô, was (again) a winner of the Grand Prix Léopold Sédar Senghor for his *La Muraille Verte*, a room-sized installation of welded rebar tree-people rooted in sand, seed pods and dried leaves laid on top of mirror plates (fig. 5.8). Lô confesses that with the success he has garnered over the last decade with his récupération sculptures, that he no longer salvages the rebar from the rapidly developing industrial zone of Mbao, just on the outskirts of Dakar where he lives. “I can’t find enough of it by myself” he laments, so now he buys the rebar from the factories. But, he winks, the sand, he did “recuperate” himself from the tiny re-forested area just in front of the industrial city, known as the “Mbao Forest.”

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460 Lô, Interview with the Author, 27 May 2008.
461 Cheikhou Bâ, Interview with the Author, 28 May 2008.
462 Lô shared the prize this year with digital/new media Mansour Ciss “Kanakassy,” who produced a sculpture/digital media project.
463 Lô, Interview with the Author, 27 May 2008.
Not to be outdone by the official selection, récupération artists over the years, including Dimé, Lô and Bâ, have made some of the biggest statements in the “Off,” or non-official, exhibition venues scattered throughout the city during the Dak’Art biennale month. Viyé Diba, former participant in the École de Dakar and currently, professor of painting at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts, took a leaf out of the younger generation’s récupération play book and covered the floor, walls, ceilings and people (performance artists) of the privately-owned Galerie Arte with painted linen and plastic for an “Off” exhibition in 2008 (fig. 5.9). Plastic baggies filled with cotton, spat-out seed pods and spices hung from paintings and littered the floor. Brick roofing tiles, stripped rubber inner tubes and woven nets of thread and paper animals created sculptural towers in front of wall-to-ceiling installations of paintings whose pigments were made from milk, coffee and juice from the baobab tree. Photographs of Dakar’s bountiful markets, recycling centers, roadsides and refuse collection areas lined the remaining walls depicting all the fuel and raw materials of the West African récupération artist. For viewers used to seeing Diba’s restrained abstract canvases demurely hung on clean white walls, the exhibition at Galerie Arte was a tremendous shock, and a testament to the longstanding success and firm establishment of récupération to modern Senegalese artistic expression.

Indeed, Dakar has been the venue par excellence for the production, exhibition and consumption of récupération, which has proved popular to both Dakarois and international audiences. Dimé’s prize-winning sculpture in 1992 introduced the localized genre to the

464 It should be noted that Dakar is only venue on the continent right now doing large-scale international exhibitions of living artists from African countries and descent. The Johannesburg Biennales in 1995 and 1997 have not been maintained. There are efforts underway in South Africa to restore a similar event in Cape Town, but they have been unsuccessful thus far to procure funding and support at the governmental level necessary for such an undertaking. This is why I focus on Dakar and its biennales as this is currently where African artists are meeting, exchanging ideas and getting their careers jumpstarted as they exhibit for each other. Dak’Art is an active and extremely successful feeder market for Euro-American venues like the Venice Biennale (i.e Moustapha Dimé’s inclusion in 1993 resulted from the curators seeing his prize-winning work at the 1992 Biennale). The Biennale has also witnessed it artists move into modern art museums like the Hayward Gallery in London (Simon Njami’s 2005
world, and Dak’Art has ever since paid careful attention to récupération artists, a compelling institutional endorsement of the phenomenon.

While perhaps not done with the same intentions, the Dak’Art commitment to récupération follows the long-standing tradition in Senegal of institutionalized support of the arts. At independence, President Léopold Sédar Senghor utilized his culture-building program of Négritude to advance modern painting and textile fabrication in his country. Récupération emerged largely as a protest to the favored status of painting and the rigid corpus of imagery espoused by École de Dakar painters and tapestry-makers. Ironically, the protest movement has now usurped the place of the art it once protested. One cannot help but wonder if the institutionalization of récupération will calcify the creativity of its artists as many argue happened to the École de Dakar. Future Dak’Art biennales will, no doubt, provide the venue for new interventions seeking to replace the récupération revolution begun at the 1st Biennale in 1992 by Moustapha Dimé.

I do not believe that Dimé was the gentle, quiet, religious artist-hermit-sage that others have invoked rather romantically in their descriptions of his temperament and his works. Respectful, yes, spiritual, yes, a philosophical intellectual, yes. But Dimé was also a radical, a pioneer, a combative force in his own right, and the challenge he issued to the art world has gone nearly unrecognized. Now, however, with the passage of time, and with the benefit of history, I argue that his challenge to all art viewers is becoming clearer, and as such, merits our collective critical analysis and reckoning.

exhibition Africa Remix included seven artists’ projects from the 2004 Dak’Art edition), MoMA (which purchased Dimé’s La Femme au Long Cou 1992 when their curator saw it at the Center for African Art, where it was exhibited after the 1993 Venice Biennale), and PS 1 in Queens. More traditional venues for African art have also scooped talent from the Dakar Biennales, among them the Musée du Quai Branly and Musée Dapper in Paris, and the Fondation Blachère in Apt, France.
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Fig. 1.1
Iba Ndiaye (Senegal, 1928-2008)

*Tabaski*, 1970, oil on canvas
250 x 150 cm

Fig. 1.2
Papa Ibra Tall (Senegal 1935-)

*Autour de l’Arbre*
gouache and ink on paper, ND

Source: S. Kart, photo 17 May 2012, “Hommage à Papa Ibra Tall” exhibition at the Place de la Souvenir, Dakar, Senegal May 11-June 10, 2012
Fig. 1.3
Alpha Wouallid Diallo (Senegal, 1927-)

*Debarquement de Blaise Diagne à Saint Louis*, ca. 1970s.
Oil on canvas, 100cmx 150cm (39.4" x 59").

Collection of the Government of Senegal

Fig. 1.4
Seydou Barry

*Return of the Boal Queen*, 1967, oil on canvas

Fig. 1.5
Papa Ibra Tall (Senegal 1935-)

*Chevauchée Solaire*, 1960s
tapestry

photo: S. Kart, 05/2012, Dakar
Fig. 1.6
Ibou Diouf, *Day and Night*, tapestry

Fig. 1.7
Pierre Lods and students in his classroom at Poto Poto. Note the masks hanging on the wall to either side of Lods.

Fig. 1.8
Bocar Pathé Diang

*Masks*

Fig. 1.9
El Hadji Sy (El Sy) (Senegal, 1954-)

Installation of paintings at the courtyard of the Laboratoire Agit Art, Dakar, 1992

Fig. 1.10

Installation of found objects at the courtyard of the Laboratoire Agit Art, Dakar, 1992

Fig. 2.1
Photographer Unknown

Group of Baye Fall at Touba, Senegal.
Moustapha Dimé is at far right. 23 March, 1986.

Photo: S. Kart 6/20/2004 from a photograph in the archives of Cheikh Umu Dimé, Dakar
Fig. 3.1
Moustapha Dimé

Panel (Seated Woman), 1974
palm wood, unidentified collection

Photo: S. Kart 6/11/2004 from a photograph in the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Fig. 3.2
Moustapha Dimé

Two Panels (Animals, Musician), 1974
palm wood, unidentified collections

Photo: S. Kart 6/11/2004 from a photograph in the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Fig. 3.3
Moustapha Dimé

Two Panels (both: mother and child), 1974
palm wood, unidentified collections

Photo: S. Kart 6/11/2004 from a photograph in the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Fig. 3.4
Moustapha Dimé

_Samba Wagne_, 1974
palm wood, Collection of Mamadou Thiam, location unknown

Photo: S. Kart 6/11/2004 from a photograph in the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Fig. 3.5
Moustapha Dimé

Panel (Rural Homestead Scene), 1974
palm wood, Collection unknown

Photo: S. Kart 6/11/2004 from a photograph in the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Fig. 3.6
Moustapha Dimé

Panel (Figural Scene), 1974
palm wood, Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

Photo: S. Kart 6/15/2004
Fig. 3.7
Moustapha Dimé

*Eya Dema*, 1974
palm wood, Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

Photo: S. Kart 6/19/2009
Fig. 3.8
Dogon Peoples, Ireli village, Mali

Entrance (top) and Storehouse (bottom) doors with human, animal and equestrian motifs

Fig. 3.9

Senufo peoples, Central or Western region

Door showing human, animal and equestrian figures.
Private Collection, NY

Fig. 3.10
Senufo peoples, Central or Western region

Door showing human, animal and equestrian figures
Musée du Quai Branly (transfer from Musée de l’Homme), Paris

Fig. 3.11

Asante (Lagoon Peoples), Ghana

top: Bird Goldweight, 20th c, bronze
1 3/4 in. x 1 7/8 in. x 3/8 in.
Source: University of Virginia Art Museum, Gift of Michael R. Sonnenreich, 1982.101.8.c

Bottom: Crossed Crocodiles Goldweight, 20th c, bronze
2 x 2.5 in.
Source: University of Virginia Art Museum, Anonymous gift, 1982.17.22
Fig. 3.12
Moustapha Dimé

_Eya Dema_, 1974, (side view)
palm wood, Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

Photo: S. Kart 6/19/2009
Fig. 3.13
Moustapha Dimé

*l'Homme* 1977-78 wood
Private Collection, Current location undetermined

Fig. 3.14
Top: Male *Bateba ti puo*, wood, 23 cm
Bottom: Female *Bateba ti puo*, wood, 71 cm
Photos: Hugues Dubois, Brussels
Fig. 3.15

Postcard of *Nkisi Mabayaala Ma Ndembe*. c. 1882-94
Archival photograph by Robert Visser

Fig. 3.16
Moustapha Dimé

Progrès, 1980, 65cm H, wood
Collection of the Estate of Léopold Sédar Senghor, current location unknown

Photos: S. Kart 6/11/04 from photographs in the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Fig 3.17
Moustapha Dimé

[Title Undetermined], c. 1980
*Bogolan*, 100 x 50cm
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

Photo: S.Kart 6/1/06
Fig. 3.18
Moustapha Dimé

[Title Undetermined] 1980
*Bogolan*, 100 x 50cm
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

Photo: S.Kart 6/1/06
Fig. 3.19

Left: Dogon, *Togu Na* Post, 19th century. Wood, 48 x 16 1/2 x 7 in. (121.8 x 41.8 x 17.8 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Eugene and Harriet Becker, 1991.226.1. Creative Commons-BY-NC

Right: Moustapha Dimé
Catalogue 232. no title given, ink drawing
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio
Fig. 3.20
Moustapha Dimé

Photographs of the Destruction of the Village des Arts, 1983

Photos: S. Kart 6/11/04 from photographs in the Artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Fig 3.21
Moustapha Dimé

Angoisse, (c. 1980-82)
Ebony 70 cm H. signed "MDIME"
Collection Moustapha Tambadou, Senegalese Ministry of Culture, Dakar.

Photos: S. Kart 6/21/04
Fig. 3.22
Moustapha Dimé

Recherche, 1982
wood, cord, 68 x 60.5 cm
Estate of Moustapha Dimé, on long term loan to the Fondation Blachère, Apt, France

Photo: S.Kart 9/26/08
Fig. 3.23
Makonde artists, Tanzania

L: *Shetani*, openwork style
R: *Shetani*, driftwood style
both Collection of Anthony J. Stout, Washington D.C.

Fig. 3.24  
Moustapha Dimé  

*Recherche*, 1982, detail  

wood, cord, 68 x 60.5 cm  
Estate of Moustapha Dimé, on long term loan to the Fondation Blachère, Apt, France  

Photo: S.Kart 9/26/08
Fig. 3.25  
Christian Lattier (Côte d’Ivoire)  

*Le Voleur de Coq* (Rooster Thief), 1962  
129 x 61 x 52 cm wire, twine, bronze  
Installation view at the Galerie Nationale, Dakar Senegal for the 2004 edition of the Dak’Art Biennale  

Photo: S. Kart 5/21/04
Fig. 3.26
Moustapha Dimé

[Title Undetermined] 1980, details
Bogolan, 100 x 50cm
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

Photo: S.Kart 6/1/06
Fig. 4.1
Moustapha Dimé

La Femme à la Culotte, 1992
Wood, pigment, burlap, tar, nylon netting, iron spike.
Collection of Marie-José Crespin, Gorée, Senegal

Photo: S. Kart 05/30/04
Fig. 4.2
Moustapha Dimé

*La Femme au Long Cou*, 1992,
Wood, steel
Collection Museum of Modern Art, New York City

Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist’s Gorée studio archives
Fig. 4.3
Moustapha Dimé

_Femme Sérère, 1992 145 x 49 cm (HxW)_

Photo: S. Kart
7/20/05 in the
storage facilities of
the NMAFA
Fig. 4.4
Moustapha Dimé

*Le Gardien*, 1995
wood, metal, mixed media
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, on long term loan at the Fondation Blachère, Apt, France

Photo: Courtesy Fondation Blachère
Fig. 4.5
Moustapha Dimé

*Le Gardien*, (details of wood rot and back of sculpture) 1995
Wood, metal, mixed media
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, on long term loan at the Fondation Blachère, Apt, France

Photos: S. Kart 9/26/08
Fig. 4.6
Moustapha Dimé

*Le Gardien*, (details of neck and groin) 1995
Wood, metal, mixed media
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, on long term loan at the Fondation Blachère Apt, France

Photos:
S. Kart 9/26/08
Fig. 4.7
Fon peoples, Benin or Togo

*Bocio of Elegba*, wood, mixed media

Fig. 4.8
Moustapha Dimé

Les Hommes de Kayar, 1992
Wood, iron Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé, currently housed at the Gorée Studio

Installation view at Galerie 39, Centre Culturel Français de Dakar “Moustapha Dimé Retrospective,” 1993 (Moustapha Dimé and singer Bigué N'Doye shown in foreground.)

Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's archive, Gorée, Senegal.
Fig. 4.9
Moustapha Dimé

*Les Hommes de Kayar*, 1992, wood, iron
State of the object showing current state of disrepair
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé, currently housed at the Gorée Studio

Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04
Fig. 4.10
Moustapha Dimé

Top: no title given (Woman cleaning Rice)
Bottom: no title given (Women Cooking)

drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

Photos: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio
Fig. 4.11
Moustapha Dimé

_Femme Calebasse_, 1992, wood, iron
177 x 132 cm, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)

Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère.
Fig. 4. 12
Documentary image of artisanal butcher shop in Rundu, Namibia. Note the solid wood trunks placed horizontally on the ground that serve as chopping blocks.

Photo: © Christopher Kohler, http://www.flickr.com/photos/chriskohler/3814780213/
Fig. 4. 13
Documentary images of artisanal butcher shop, Dakar, and Sembedioune fish market in Senegal. Note the solid wood trunks placed horizontally on the tables that serve as chopping blocks.

Fig. 4. 14
Moustapha Dimé
_Hermaphrodite_, 1994
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, on long-term loan to the Fondation Blachère, Apt, France

Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère
Fig. 4. 15
Dimé, Moustapha *Hermaphrodite*, 1994, details of genitals and breasts
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, on long-term loan to the Fondation Blachère, Apt, France
Photos: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère
Fig. 4.16
Moustapha Dimé

*Les Lances Croisées* (Crossed Spears), 1995
151 x 155cm, Qur'anic boards, string, wire, iron

Photo: S. Kart 6/8/06 from a photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga
Fig. 4.17
Moustapha Dimé

*La Famille* n.d.
wooden mortars
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé
Currently housed at the artist’s Gorée studio

Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04
Fig. 4.18
Moustapha Dimé

*Le SIDA*, 1994
rebar, steel wire
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé, on long term loan to the Fondation Blachère
Photos: S. Kart 9/26/08
Fig. 4.19
Moustapha Dimé

Undated Photograph of *Lamentation II* (1980-84) installed outdoors in the HLM IV

Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 from a photograph at the Gorée Studio Archive
Fig. 4.20
Unknown Photographer

Moustapha Dimé installing *Le SIDA* on the hillside outside his studio on Gorée Island (c. 1994)

Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph at the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Fig. 4.21
Moustapha Dimé

La Grande Danse, 1995
Wood, iron, nails
installed by the artist in a public plaza on Gorée Island in front of the old colonial hospital

Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist’s Gorée studio archives
Fig. 4.22
Moustapha Dimé

*La Grande Danse*, (details) 1995
Wood, iron, nails
installed by the artist in a public plaza on Gorée Island in front of the old colonial hospital

Photos: S. Kart 6/11/04
from photographs
in the artist’s
Gorée Studio Archives
Fig. 4.23
Moustapha Dimé

La Danse Contemporaine, 1995
Wood, wire, nails, metal
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé on long term loan to the Fondation Blachère

Photo: Courtesy Fondation Blachère
Fig. 4.24
Moustapha Dimé

*La Danse*, 1995
Wood, wire, nails, metal
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé on long term loan to the Fondation Blachère

Photo: Courtesy Fondation Blachère
Fig. 4.25
Moustapha Dimé

_Le Couple_, 1995 wood, wire, nails, metal
Collection and Current Location undetermined

Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph (taken 16 Sept 1997) in the artist’s Gorée studio archives of the object installed at the Centre d’Art Contemporain, Brussels
Fig. 4.26
Moustapha Dimé

*Le Circle*, 1996

wood, wire, string
Collection: unknown

Photo: ©Revue Noire
Fig. 4.27
Moustapha Dimé

*La Grande Danse*, 1995
Wood, iron, nails
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé currently on long term loan to the Fondation Blachère

Photos: S. Kart 9/26/08 of installation at the Fondation Blachère
Fig. 4.28
Moustapha Dimé

La Grande Danse, (installation view showing suspension of figures using monofilament) 1995
Wood, iron, nails
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé currently on long term loan to the Fondation Blachère

Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère
Fig. 4.29
Moustapha Dimé

*La Grande Danse*, (details showing genitalia of figures) 1995
Wood, iron, nails
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé currently on long term loan to the Fondation Blachère

Photos: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère
Fig. 4.30
Henri Matisse

_La Danse_, 2nd version 1910, oil on canvas
State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia

Fig. 4.31
Moustapha Dimé

_La Grande Danse_, 1995
Wood, iron, nails
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé currently on long term loan to the Fondation Blachère

Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 of a photograph taken of the installation at Dimé’s solo exhibition at the 1996 edition of the Dak’Art Biennale
Fig. 4.32
Eva Hesse

*Contingent*, 1968-9
fiberglass, latex, cheesecloth
Collection Estate of Eva Hesse

Photo: http://www.whalecrow.co.uk/whalec/2009/10/28/eva-hesse-contingent/
(Accessed on 12 July 2012)
Fig. 5.2
Lobi Mâwuó Shrine, 1984
Djilegnoura, Kampti District, Burkina Faso
Photo: Daniela Bognolo

Fig. 5.3
Ndary Lô (Senegal)

*La Joola*, 2004, partial view
mixed media
Installation at Dak’Art 2004
Courtyard of the French Cultural Center, Dakar

Photo: S. Kart, 5/12/2004
Fig. 5.4
Ndary Lô (Senegal)

La Longue Marche de Changement, 2000-01
Rebar

Fig. 5.5
Cheikhou Bâ (Senegal)

“Off” Installation at Galerie Eberis during Dak’Art 2004 (top) Detail of Le Joola (2004) installation (bottom), papier-mâché

Photos: S. Kart 5/18/04
Fig. 5.6
Ndary Lô (Senegal)
_Hommage à Moustapha Dimé_, installed in Lô’s studio in Rufisque; Lô seen at bottom working on another installation with _Hommage_ in the background
Photos: S. Kart 5/27/08
Fig. 5.7
Dak’Art “OFF” Installation on Gorée Island, 2006


Photo: S. Kart 5/11/06
Fig. 5.8
Ndary Lô (Senegal)

*La Muraille Verte*, 2008  Rebar, sand, mirrors, tree stumps

Photos: S. Kart 5/9/08 of installation at Musée Théodore Monod (Former IFAN) at Dak’Art 2008.
Fig. 5.9
Viyé Diba (Senegal)

Nous sommes nombreux, et nos problèmes avec... 2008 mixed media

Photos: S. Kart 5/13/08 of “Off” Installation at Galerie Arte, Dak’art 2008
Appendix A

Catalogue Raisonné
Since space limitation allows me to focus only on selected examples of Dimé’s work in the textual analysis of the dissertation, this catalogue raisonné presents the rest of Moustapha Dimé’s oeuvre as I can document it to date. This component of the dissertation will help the reader gain a better understanding of Dimé’s development as an artist, most especially his teleological arrival at récupération.

I compiled this catalogue from photographs covering more than four decades and from data supplied by the artist, his colleagues, family, professionals and myself. Ironically, perhaps, and yet consistent with his independent streak, Dimé was also a talented painter and draftsman. Many of his drawings, including studies of his sculptures, survive. I present them here for the first time, to stress that his predilection for sculpture, therefore, takes on additional weight in my analysis of his work. His choice of sculpture as his preferred medium appears to be the right decision – he could have just as easily followed a career in painting.

The catalogue, does, however, have its limitations. In print, I am limited by space, so the illustrations are small and the descriptions of the objects cursory. The online database (http://kart.whirl-i-gig.com) that houses this catalogue is much more extensive. In the digital catalogue, multiple photographs of objects are included as are original photographs by the artist. Objects are cross-referenced so that drawings Dimé did of his sculptures are linked to the object records for the sculptures themselves. Information about the objects, their current locations, photographers, publications, and current condition is also recorded online.

Another difficulty for the cataloguer is that Dimé frequently referred to his works by casual nomenclature, resulting in the same object being given more than one title, often by the

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1 The catalogue continues to expand as works continue to come to be brought to the attention of Gabriel Kemzo Malou (overseer of Dimé’s estate) and myself. I strive to present the most up-to-date version with this dissertation, but undoubtedly omissions, albeit unintentional, exist.

2 This website is password protected. Login information is provided upon request via email: susan.kart@gmail.com.
artist himself. In other instances, publications of his sculptures provide erroneous titles (or erroneous translations thereof). In all cases I take pains to provide the information accorded the objects by Dimé himself, including any notable variants (all of these are noted in the online catalogue, while in print I have listed only the primary object titles).

I am unable to confirm the identity of some works based on available records, and some works of art are no longer extant. In these cases, I have included as much known information about the object as possible, both for archival purposes of works that are destroyed or in very poor states of conservation, and also in the hopes that information will surface in the future allowing us to identify unknown objects. In all cases, I have attempted to document the last known collector, location and condition of all works of art in the digital catalogue. I fully expect that the catalogue I present here is a work in progress, and that the gaps at present time will be filled in by myself and others in the coming years.

A few observations, however, are appropriate to summarize Dimé’s changing styles over the years. Dimé’s early sculptures, circa 1974-1986, are a diverse group both in technique and subject matter. His earliest works for which we have visual documentation are a series of bas-relief panel carvings in wood dating to 1974 when the artist was in Ghana (cats. 1-7). These exercises in panel carving ended abruptly in 1977 when the artist returned to Louga, organized his first art exhibitions and began producing freestanding wood sculptures (cat. 8-16). The first documented work from this period is l’Homme (cat. 8) and is clearly a transitional work as the artist moved from panel to three-dimensional work. After sculpting l’Homme, Dimé moved into his first group of what he would later call his filiform sculptures (cats. 9-16, 99, 100, 164, 174). These are smoothly carved three-dimensional sculptures that depart from his previous works in their abstract forms and conceptual subjects. Composed of undulating, thickly carved
ribbons of ebony or mahogany, these are the sculptures that first drew attention from government patrons and include Progrès (cat. 13), the sculpture purchased by Pierre Goudiaby and given to President Senghor. A second filiform that ended up in a state collection was Angoisse (cat. 10). Angoisse relates to one of Dimé’s filiform series in which all the subjects of his work focused on suffering. Other objects in this thematic group include Lamentation I, Lamentation II (both 1980-1984) and Souffrance (1986) (cats. 11, 12 and 19). In this group the artist focuses his subject matter on the sufferings inherent in the daily life around him.

In 1982, the artist made the unusual object, Recherche (cat. 17), his first mixed media sculpture that incorporated found/purchased materials (rope and nails) and examined the natural state of the tree branch from which it was formed. Progrès and especially Recherche signal new theoretical and conceptual directions in the artist’s methodology. The first distinction I draw between Angoisse and the other two objects is the nature of the titles. Progrès and Recherche, at the risk of seeming overly literal, break from this subjective stance in order to indicate the artist’s own formal “progress” and “research.” The form this work took after the mid-eighties was multi--media, of which Recherche is the earliest.

Later in the 1980s Dimé expanded on themes begun with Recherche, in a series of sculptures he called hybrides. The hybrides (cats. 17, 24, 43, 44, 112-114) date from 1986 to 1991, although some are undated and only presumed to belong to this same period. In the hybrides, wood is left largely in its organic state and found objects in metal and wood are assembled together. The ultimate visual effect of all of Dimé’s hybrid sculptures, however, is very much in line with that of the filiforms that Dimé continued to make throughout the 1980s.

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3 Recherche is so unusual for this period in Dimé’s work – it seems to belong to the work he was doing a decade later in the early nineties – that I doubted its date. However, upon further research it is clear from Dimé’s own records that the work does truly date to this early moment, although the artist will not return to this experiment in any dedicated way until 1989.
In the mid-1980s, perhaps as a response to those who were copying his objects, Dimé split his filiforms into two additional sub-styles. He seemed to continue making the thick ribbon-like sculptures that he began in the late 1970s (although many undated sculptures make it difficult to state this as fact). To these he added a heavier, more solid style of freestanding, abstracted figural objects. These sculptures are finished with either a smoothly polished or a modeled gouged surface, both of which the artist waxed (cats. 19, 23, 32, 103, 142 have gouged surfaces and cat. 20-22, 25, 27, 104, 108-111, 161-162, 165, 173. 175, 182 are of the smooth-surfaced variety). The second filiform sub-style comprises a much lighter, sinuous series of objects, often with projecting branch-like elements (cat. 29, 31, 79, 101-102, 105-107, 120, 146, 159, 163, 176-178). In both new series of filiforms, elements of the *hybrides* are visible, verifying that Dimé was working in both styles simultaneously. Some of the new filiforms contain found objects like the *hybrides*, such as *Memoire Totemique* (cat. 33). Still others are like *Recherche*: defined by the raw forms of the wood from which they are carved. *L’Envol* (also documented by Dimé as *Hybride Libre*) (cat. 115) is one such work.4 Again, while many of the sculptures in both of these subsets of the filiform style are undated, like the *hybrides* they begin appearing in 1986 and remain in the artist’s oeuvre until about 1991.

Beginning with *Recherche*, Dimé used twine and wire frequently in objects of both the filiform and *hybride* genres as well as in later *récupération* sculptures. Three early *hybride* sculptures in this wrapped twine category are *Les Jumeaux* (1986) (cat. 24), *Hybride l’Esclave* (n.d.), and *Hybride Tabara N’diaye* (n.d.) (cats. 112 and 113), all of which make use of a wooden and/or metal armature over which Dimé wrapped twine to form tight coils. In the filiform genre, Dimé used twine very naturally, for example in one small untitled sculpture

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4 *L’Envol* is arguably also a *récupération* sculpture, which is how I catalogued it in the Catalogue Raisonné. It clearly draws on the filiform style however, and hence could be categorized as a true hybrid within the artist’s oeuvre.
the twine represents the cloth used by a mother to tie her infant child onto her back (cat. 100). Later récupération objects that relate back to this early wrapping technique are Sans Titre (1990) (cat. 39), two sculptures called Hybride, both from 1991 (cats. 43 and 44), and two more Sans Titre figures from 1993 (cat. 69) and 1996 (cat. 88). Dimé also modified his technique of wrapping twine over wood to create sculptures of wire and tar coiled over wooden armatures, or else wire wrapped around rebar skeletons. Three such works in wire, wood and tar from 1996 two entitled Figure (cat. 89 and 94) and one Sans Titre (cat 93) are joined by wire and rebar pieces like Le SIDA (1994) (cat. 71) and two additional works whose titles are unknown (cat. 151 and 152).

Of the few works on canvas that Dimé did, only the two bogolans (cats. 186 and 187) and two multi-media painting/wall sculptures (cats. 195 and 246) remain. The paintings are themselves an exercise in récupération art. Catalogue No. 195 (the title is unknown) incorporates nails, wire, a full Coca-Cola bottle and wooden scaffolding in and around the painted canvas, while Catalogue No. 246 (also with no known title) makes use of rope, a mirror, fence slats and a hoe blade on a plywood support.

While Dimé was prolific on paper, the vast majority of his drawings are either sketches for sculpture ideas or drawings done of the completed objects themselves (see cats. 188-294). Although most of Dimé’s drawings are undated, many seem to date to the early 1980s as they depict the filiform style objects that the artist began making at this time (cats. 188-189, 212-228, 253, 260-262, 272).

Dimé’s primary récupération materials consisted of found wood, hand made objects of domestic, agricultural or seafaring use, Qur’anic boards, rope, sheet metal, wire and nails. There are five known works by Dimé containing Qur’anic boards, of which Les Lances Croisées is the
most frequently published (cat. 67). Dating from 1993-1995, it was exhibited in Belgium at the Centre d’Art Contemporain as part of a two-man show with Viyé Diba in 1997. The others are 

*La Voix Divine*, 1993, *Arc*, n.d. (cats. 68 and 117), and two untitled works, presumably from the same time period (cat. 116 and 157).

Native hardwoods such as ebony, as well as driftwoods, came to Dimé shaped by nature. These he collected along with discarded hand-carved items such as sections of broken fishing boats (pirogues) and utilitarian social items such as calabash bowls, wooden mortars and their pestles. To these items Dimé added machine-made industrial scraps of metal, cable spools, wire, rebar left over from the fabrication of steel-reinforced concrete, and nails. Significant works he made with these include *Mémoire Totémique* (1989) (cat. 33), *La Vierge et son Double* (1992) (cat. 50), *La Femme au Long Cou* (1992) (cat 51), *Sans Titre* (1993) (cat. 69), *Le SIDA* (1994) (cat. 71), *Oiseau* (1994) (cat. 72) and *Le Gardien* (1995) (cat. 87).

The pirogue, however, stands out as a favorite material in Dimé’s *récupération* period. *Les Hommes de Kayar* (1995) (cat. 52) is the most well-known of these, and it is joined by *Les Amis* (1996) (cat. 92) both made of broken down pirogues. Dimé’s attention to the sea, fisherman and the tools of their trade was pervasive in his thought, and not merely present in objects directly addressing the ocean. Some of his other sculptures utilizing the pirogues do address fishing and fishermen, such as the straightforward *Le Bateau* (1995) (cat. 83) and *Les Amis* (1996), where two male figures, one standing and one sitting are composed of pieces of pirogue (cat. 92). While the reference to fishermen is more oblique in *Les Amis* than in *Le Bateau*, Dimé insisted that the pair be photographed in such a way that the men appear to be
looking out to sea.\textsuperscript{5} Other sculptures that make use of the fishing boats but do not necessarily reference fishermen as their subject are \textit{Le Cheval} (1993) (cat. 70), where a pirogue prow is refashioned as the head and neck of a horse, and \textit{Le Soldat} (1994) (cat. 76) where one-half of a dugout canoe is configured as a soldier.

Another favorite group of found objects are women’s tools. The combination of the mortar and pestle motif seen in \textit{Femme Sérère} (cat. 62) is repeated frequently in Dimé’s sculptures. He used it in \textit{Femme Calebasse} (cat. 48) and \textit{L’Âme d’un Peuple} (cat. 54). In \textit{Femme Calebasse} the mortar serves as the legs – envisioned as being cloaked in a wrapped skirt – while the pestles serve as arms and neck of the female figure. In \textit{L’Âme d’un Peuple}, Dimé used an inverted mortar with its base broken off as the chest for the figure and pestles serve as head, neck and arms with seven more strung from the mortar like over long bell clappers. In other female figures, Dimé replaces the receptacle of the mortar with wooden bowls or calabashes that he used in conjunction with the projectile pestles. \textit{Sans Titre} from 1992 (cat. 53) uses wooden bowls for the breasts and pelvis of the figure, while two pestles are hung from the “pelvis” bowl as legs. \textit{Femme Calebasse} incorporates four calabashes and one wooden bowl along with the mortar and pestle to complete the figure of a woman. One small calabash is placed rim to rim with a wooden bowl to form a spherical head, while three more inverted calabashes serve as the torso of the figure. Another calabash sculpture is \textit{Femme Nue} (1991) (cat. 41), while pestles are used in \textit{Le Griot} (n.d.) (cat. 145) and mortars form the entirety of \textit{La Famille} (n.d.) (cat. 149).

While his calabash, mortar and pestle sculptures are highly abstract, many of Dimé’s drawings of women are narrative and didactic, indicating his interest in the historical and quotidian relationship of women to the vessels with which they work. For example, three ink on

\textsuperscript{5} Photographer Bruno Campagnie indicated this was the case when he was photographing objects for inclusion in the \textit{Moustapha Dimé} catalogue produced by the Hôtel de Ville de Paris. Campagnie gave permission for the resulting photograph to be included in the Catalogue Raisonné of this dissertation. (cat. 92)
paper drawings remain in his estate of women preparing food using large calabash vessels (cats. 276, 277 and 280). Two variation drawings from about 1991 of the hanging rope and calabash figure, *Femme Nue*, remain in the artist’s archive, a pastel (cat. 191) and a charcoal and colored pencil version (cat. 242). In both drawings the calabash breasts of *Femme Nue* are prominently figured along with the heavy ship sheeting (rope) that forms the neck, torso and legs of the figure. Catalogue No. 191 also depicts the third bowl that Dimé used for the abdomen (womb) of the sculpture, which he left out of the charcoal and colored pencil drawing.

Neither the formal nor conceptual accounts of Dimé’s late works actually require the presence of the human body to function as such in his art. In fact the artist frequently dealt with themes of the body and humanity in a consciously non-figural format, as seen previously in *Progrès, Les Lances Croisées,* and *Le SIDA.* Further examples from Dimé’s career would be the paired filiforms *Généalogie “Griot” Élément I* and *Généalogie “Griot” Élément II* (ca. 1980) (cats. 14 and 15). He also made two paired bark sculptures that symbolized the spiritual liberation of humankind, or the “flight of man” entitled *L’Envol de l’Homme I,* and *L’Envol de l’Homme II* (1990) (cats. 37 and 38).

A final category of materials is that of tree branches and roots, and the objects Dimé made from them are so unique, they constitute a separate section of analysis at the end of chapter 4. In the mid-1990s Dimé had begun using very large tree branches and sections of root as the forms for sculptures of human figures. He merely peeled off any remaining bark, added decorative elements such as nails and wire or sheet metal, sometimes charring the surfaces, and

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6 The majority of Dimé’s drawings are undated. Therefore I only give dates with drawings when the artist himself included it on the drawing or in his supporting documents. Many drawings that remain in his estate are images of his own filiform and récupération sculptures, therefore it is my presumption that the drawings date around the same time as the sculptures. Roughly all drawings therefore date from c. 1980 to 1997.

7 As the drawings are undated, it is potentially unclear as to whether they were preparatory or else drawings that Dimé did of his finished sculptures. Given the exactitude of the details in Cat. 191, I would propose the latter: that Dimé drew his sculptures rather than sculpting his drawings.

The Catalogue that follows is divided into the following groups:

Part I: Dated Sculptures (Includes extant and non-extant objects), listed chronologically

Part II: Undated Sculptures, listed by style (*filiform, hybride, récupération* and miscellaneous)

Part III: Unidentified Works (works whose titles, locations and owners can not yet determined)

Part IV: Works on Paper and Canvas, listed first chronologically and then by undated works

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8 I accidentally neglected to include *La Danse Contemporaine* in the Catalogue Raisonné when I transferred it from the database to this document, hence the catalogue number of 81a, indicating its late insertion. *Le Circle* is a work that I discovered towards the end of my dissertation project and thus had to insert it after the fact as well. To minimize disruptions to the catalogue numbering, and because it is related stylistically to *Le Couple* and *La Danse Contemporaine*, I inserted it as Catalogue Raisonné number 81b. These numbering inconsistencies will be corrected prior to publication of the Catalogue.
Part I: Dated Sculptures

1. panel (seated woman), 1974, sculpture, bas relief, palm wood
Collection: Private Collection (unidentified)
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive

2. two panels, (L: animals; R: musician), 1974, sculpture, bas relief, palm wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive

3. two panels, (both: mother and child), 1974, sculpture, bas relief, palm wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive

4. Samba Wagne, 1974, Sculpture, bas-relief, palm wood
Collection: Mamadou Thiam, location unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
5. panel (rural homestead scene), 1974, Sculpture, bas-relief, palm wood
Collection: unidentified collection, location unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

6. panel (bas-relief with figural scene), circa 1974, sculpture, bas-relief, palm wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

7. Eya Dema, 1975, view and detail (det.), Sculpture, Bas-relief, palm wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/19/2009
8. *l'Homme*, 1977, sculpture, wood
Collection: Private Collection (unidentified), location undetermined

Collection: Ministry of Culture, Republic of Senegal, location unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

10. *Angoisse*, 1980 to 1982, view and detail (det.), Sculpture, filiform, 70 cm H, ebony
Collection: Collection Moustapha Tambadou, Ministry of Culture, Republic of Senegal, Building Administratif, avenue Léopold Sédar Senghor, Dakar, Senegal
Photo: S. Kart 6/21/04 from the original in the office of Moustapha Tambadou, Building Administratif, Dakar, Senegal
Collection: unknown  
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

12. *Lamentation II*, 1980 to 1984, sculpture, filiform, 1m 13 x 26 cm, n'gueidiane wood  
Collection: unknown  
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in a viewbook by the artist in the Gorée Studio Archives

Collection: provenance: L.S. Senghor; current collection unknown, location unknown  
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from photographs in the artist's Gorée Studio archives
14. *Généalogie Griot: Élément 1*, circa 1980, sculpture, filiform, 60 cm H, mahogany
Collection: Ministry of Culture, Republic of Senegal, location undetermined (presumed Senegal)
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

Collection: Ministry of Culture, Republic of Senegal, location unidentified (presumed Senegal)

16. *Le Couple*, 1981, sculpture, wood; shown installed *en plein air* (presumed at the artist’s studio in HLM IV, Dakar)
Collection: Private Collection (unidentified)
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/06 from a dated photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga
17. *Recherche*, 1982, view and two details (det.)
sculpture, hybrid, 68 x 60.5 cm, wood, cord, nails
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé,
Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photos: Susan Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère, Apt, France

18. *Végétal* (unidentified sculpture), 1985,
Sculpture, wood
Collection: Unidentified
Described by Abdou Sylla in his doctoral dissertation, 1992 (See Bibliography)

Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/21/08 from a photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga

Collection: Ministry of Culture, Republic of Senegal, location unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives; shown at the
opening of the exhibition “Rupture” as installed at the Gallerie Nationale in Dakar

21. Loxo, circa 1986, sculpture, 80 cm H, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives; shown at the opening of the exhibition “Rupture” as installed at the Gallerie Nationale in Dakar

22. Personnage, circa 1986, sculpture, wood, 54

23. Rencontre, circa 1986, sculpture, 162 cm H, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives; shown at the opening of the exhibition “Rupture” as installed at the Gallerie Nationale in Dakar
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in a viewbook by the artist at the Gorée Studio Archives

Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/06 from a photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga; shown at the opening of the exhibition “Rupture” as installed at the Gallerie Nationale in Dakar

26. title unidentified, circa 1986, sculpture, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/06 from a photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga; shown at the opening of the exhibition “Rupture” as installed at the Gallerie Nationale in Dakar
27. *le Deuil*, circa 1986, sculpture, 42.5 cm H
Collection: unknown, unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from the original brochure from the “Rupture” exhibition held in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

[no image]

28. *Le Crieur* (unidentified sculpture), 1987, Sculpture, wood
Collection: Unidentified
Described by Abdou Sylla in his doctoral dissertation, 1992 (See Bibliography)

29. *Nature*, 1988, sculpture, 129 x 93 cm, wood
Collection: Fondation Blachère (on long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

30. *Masque sur Regard Doux*, 1989, sculpture, recuperation, 70 x 98 cm, plow blades
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

31. *l'Homme Arbre*, 1989, sculpture, filiform, hybrid, 50 cm H, ebony
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive
32. *Sans Titre*, 1989, sculpture, wood, pigment
Collection: unknown, Morocco (believed)
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/06 from a photograph in the
Dimé Family Archives, Louga

33. *Memoire Totemique*, 1989, sculpture, hybrid,
227 x 44 cm, wood, nails
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/04 from the *de Warande*
exhibition catalogue in the artist's Gorée Studio
archives

34. *Masque au Regard Doux*, 1990-1992,
Sculpture, recuperation, 1.71 m H, wood, rope,
pigment
Collection: Private Collection, Unidentified
Photo: S Kart 6/12/04, from photograph in
artist's Gorée Studio Archives

35. *Sans Titre*, 1990, sculpture, 73 x 50 cm,
wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé,
Fondation Blachère (long term loan through
June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère
36. Personnage, 1990, sculpture, recuperation, 56.5 x 9 cm, wood
Collection: unknown

37. l'Envol de l'homme I, 1990, sculpture, recuperation, 1 m 10 cm H, bark, pigment, burlap
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 from a photograph in a viewbook made by the artist at the Gorée Studio Archives

38. Envol de l'Homme II, 1990, sculpture, recuperation, 116 cm H, bark, pigment, burlap
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 of a photograph in the Gorée Studio Archives
39. *Sans Titre*, 1990, sculpture, recuperation, wood, twine
Collection: Private Collection (unidentified)
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/09 from a viewbook by Dimé in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

40. *La Croix Cassée*, 1990, sculpture, recuperation, 175 cm H, wood
Collection: unknown, Toulouse, France
Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive

41. *Femme nue*, 1991, Sculpture, recuperation, 287 x 48 cm, wood, twine
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan until June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

42. *le Gardien*, 1991, sculpture, recuperation, 96 x 43 cm, baobab bark, twine
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée
Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

43. *Hybride*, 1991, sculpture, hybrid, 132 x 75 cm, wood, twine, iron
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

44. *Hybride*, 1991, sculpture, hybrid, 130 x 23 cm, wood, twine
Collection: Unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from a photograph at the Gorée Studio Archive

45. *Sans Titre*, 1991, sculpture, recuperation, 12.5 x 4 cm, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
46. *Les Amoureux*, 1991, sculpture, recuperation, 186 x 100 cm, wood
Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

47. *Bawnaan*, 1991, sculpture, recuperation, 105 x 102 cm, baobab bark
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the artist's Gorée

48. *Femme Calebasse*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 177 x 132 cm, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère.

49. *la Mère et son Enfant*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 152 x 39 cm, wood, rebar, iron
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
50. *La Vierge et son Double*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 224 x 44, wood, iron
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive

51. *la Femme au Long Cou*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 203 x 100 cm, wood, iron
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive of the installation view at Galerie 39, Centre Culturel Français de Dakar for the exhibition “Moustapha Dimé Retrospective,” Dakar, Senegal 1993; Moustapha Dimé and singer Bigué N'Doye shown in foreground

52. *Les Hommes de Kayar*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 335 x 92 cm, wood, iron
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée studio archives
53. *Sans Titre*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 208 x 84.5 cm
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

54. *l’Âme d’un peuple*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 210 x 174 cm, wood, rope
Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

55. *Tête d’Oiseau*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 14 x 7.5 cm, wood
Collection: Unidentified
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio archives; a later photograph by Bruno Campagnie exists showing the base of the object having been burned by Dimé

56. *Sans Titre*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 30 x 12 cm, wood
Collection: Unidentified
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio archives
57. *La Femme à la Culotte*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 127 x 56 cm, Wood, pigment, burlap, tar, nylon netting, iron spike.
Collection: Marie-José Crespin, Gorée Island, Dakar, Senegal, Courtyard of Crespin family home, Gorée Island, Dakar, Senegal
Photo: Susan Kart 5/30/04

58. *Oiseau*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 60 x 20 cm, wood
Collection: Private Collection, New York, owners and current location unidentified
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from "Balafon" magazine in Gorée Studio Archives. Original photography of object in "Balafon" by Thomas Dorn

59. *Buste d'un Inconnu*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, wood, steering column
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
60. *Le Bossus*, circa 1992, sculpture, recuperation, wood, boat spikes, nails
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

61. *Le Couple*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 5' tall, wood, iron, canvas, nails
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

62. *Femme Sérère*, 1992, sculpture, recuperation, 145 x 49 cm, wood, iron, twine
Photo: S. Kart 7/20/05 in the storage facility of the National Museum of African Art, Washington D.C.
63. *Sans Titre*, 1993, sculpture, recuperation, 130 cm H, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 at the artist's Gorée Studio

67. *Les Lances Croisées*, 1993-1995, sculpture, recuperation, 154 x 153 cm, Qur’anic boards, iron, string, wire
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/06 from a photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga

68. *La Voix Divine*, 1993, sculpture, recuperation, 163.5 x 106.5 cm, wood, prayer boards, ink, string, iron
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: Courtesy of Fondation Blachère 4/5/2008 Apt, France

69. *Sans Titre*, 1993, sculpture, recuperation, 96 x 37 cm, rebar, twine, plastic, wire
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08; installation view at the Fondation Blachère
70. **Le Cheval**, 1993, sculpture, recuperation, 130 x 66 cm, wood (pirogue)
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

71. **Le SIDA**, 1994, sculpture, 101 x 106 cm, rebar
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08, installation view at the Fondation Blachère, Apt, France

72. **Oiseau**, 1994, sculpture, recuperation, wood, sheet metal, pigment
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island; installed cliffside about 100m from the artist's Gorée Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 from the original on Gorée Island, showing current object condition

73. **Hermaphrodite**, 1994, sculpture, 243 x 58 cm, burlap, pigment, twine, rope, hay
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
74. *Sans Titre*, 1994, sculpture, 268 x 70 cm, rope, burlap, pigment, hay
Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

[no image]

75. *Khath bi*, 1994, sculpture, 171 x 140 cm
Collection: Unidentified

76. *Le Soldat*, 1994, sculpture, recuperation, 155 x 64.5 cm, wood (priogue), barbed wire, helmet
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

77. *Homme Oiseau*, 1994, sculpture, recuperation, 304 x 72 cm, tree root, sheet metal
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère
78. *Sans Titre*, 1994, sculpture, recuperation, 175 x 53.5 cm, wooden bowl, mallets, burlap, beads, wood, pigment
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (on long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: Susan Kart (9/26/08) at the Fondation Blachère

79. *l'Oiseau*, circa 1994, sculpture, recuperation, wood, iron, steering column and wheel, 115 cm H
Private Collection, Belgium
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

80. *La Grande Danse*, 1995, sculpture, recuperation, dimensions variable, wood, wire, iron, pigment
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (on long term loan through July 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 of installation view at the Fondation Blachère

81. *Le Couple*, 1995, sculpture, recuperation, 199 x 62 cm, wood (tree branches), iron, hoe blades, pigment, nails
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
81a. *La Danse Contemporaine*, 1995 Wood, wire, nails, metal
Collection Estate of Moustapha Dimé on long term loan to the Fondation Blachère
Photo: Courtesy Fondation Blachère

81b. *Le Circle*, 1996, wood, wire, string
Collection: unknown
Photo: ©Revue Noire NO PERMISSION REQUESTED TO PUBLISH

82. *Banc de Poissons*, 1995, sculpture, recuperation, 22 x 173; 12 x 124; 11 x 109 cm, wood, sheet metal
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive

83. *le Bateau*, 1995, sculpture, recuperation, 143 x 285 cm, wood (pirogue), canvas, stone, chains
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

84. *Footballeur*, 1995, sculpture, recuperation, 38.5 x 13.5 cm, wood
85. *La Danse*, 1995, sculpture, recuperation, 185 x 93.5 cm, wood (tree branches), hoe blades
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (on long term loan until June 2013)
Photo: Fondation Blachère 5/4/08. Used with permission

86. *Oiseau*, 1995, sculpture, recuperation, 66.5 x 27.5 cm, wood, wire
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from *Balafon* magazine in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives. Original photography of object in *Balafon* by Thomas Dorn

87. *Le Gardien*, 1995, sculpture, recuperation, 233 x 68 cm, wood, metal, mixed media
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: Susan Kart 9/26/08 of installation view at
the Fondation Blachère, Apt, France

88. *Sans Titre*, 1996, sculpture, recuperation, 207 x 106 cm, wire, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Long term loan to Fondation Blachère (through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

89. *Figure*, 1996, sculpture, recuperation, 52.5 x 13 cm, wood, tar, wire
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/06 from a photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga

13 cm, wood, tar, wire
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/06 from a photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga

90. *Sans Titre*, 1996, sculpture, 50 x 33.5 cm, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: Fondation Blachère 4/5/2008. Used with permission

91. *Société de Masque*, 1996, sculpture, recuperation, 112 x 35 cm; 112 x 33 cm; 112 x 30 cm; 112 x 31 cm, wood (chairs), metal, wire, aluminum
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé,
Fondation Blachère (on long term loan through July 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

92. *Les Amis*, 1996, sculpture, recuperation, 296 cm H, wood (pirogues)
Collection: unknown

93. *Sans Titre*, 1996, sculpture, recuperation, 117 x 41 cm, wire, tar
Collection: unknown
94. *Figure*, 1996, Sculpture, recuperation, 42.5cm H, wood, wire, tar
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (on long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: Fondation Blachère 5/5/08. Used with permission

95. *Abdou Diouf*, 1997, sculpture, recuperation, 83 x 78 cm, driftwood, boat spike
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

96. *Oiseau*, 1997, sculpture, recuperation, 56 x 30 cm, wood, hoe blades
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (on long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: Fondation Blachère 5/5/08; used with permission

97. *Oiseau, Lac de Stamberg*, 1997, sculpture,
recuperation, 44 x 29 cm, wood, hoe blades
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé,
Fondation Blachère (on long term loan through
June 2013)
Photo: Fondation Blachère 5/5/08; Used with
Permission

98. *Femme*, 1998, sculpture, recuperation, 332 x
58 cm, burlap, pigment, rope, twine, canvas
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé,
Fondation Blachère (long term loan through
June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

Part II: Undated Sculptures

Undated Filiforms:

99. *Femme*, sculpture, filiform, ebony
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée
Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/2004 from a photograph at
the artist's Gorée Studio
100. *title unknown (mother and child)*, sculpture, ebony, twine
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive

101. *l'Homme Masque*, sculpture, filiform, 1m 29 x 54 cm, wood
Unidentified

102. *l'Homme Nature*, sculpture, filiform, 115 cm H, nime wood
Collection: unknown, unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
103. *Penseur I*, sculpture, 50 cm H  
unknown, wood  
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a page in a viewbook at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

104. *Penseur II*, sculpture, 60 cm H  
unknown, ebony  
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

105. *Femme et Enfant*, sculpture, 50 cm H, ebony  
Collection: unknown  
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

106. *Femme II*, sculpture, 40 cm H, ebony  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio  
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

107. *Femme III*, sculpture, filiform, 40 cm H, ebony  
Collection: unknown  
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the
108. title unknown, sculpture, filiform, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/2004 from the object at the Gorée Studio

109. title unknown, sculpture, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

110. title unknown, sculpture, filiform, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

111. title unknown, sculpture, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Undated Hybrids:

112. *Hybride l'Esclave*, sculpture, hybrid, dimensions not available, wood, twine
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
113. *Hybride* - Tabara N'diaye, sculpture, hybrid, 1m53 H x 20cm W, wood, twine
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/2004 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

114. *Ancienne*, sculpture, hybrid, wood, twine
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the
Undated Récupération Works:

115. *L’Envol; Hybride Libre*, sculpture, recuperation, 62 x 83 cm, bark, wood, twine unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio

116. unidentified sculpture (recuperation with Qur'anic boards), sculpture, recuperation, prayer boards, twine, rope, ink
Collection: unknown

117. *Arc*, sculpture, recuperation, 210 x 142 cm, wood, prayer boards, ink, string
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère, Apt, France, on long term loan (through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 of installation view at the Fondation Blachère

118. *Les animaux imaginaires*, sculpture, recuperation, driftwood, metal pipe
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
119. Nature I, sculpture, recuperation, 30 cm H, wire, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in a view book by Dimé at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

120. Le Héron, sculpture, recuperation, 120 cm H, ebony, iron
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in a view book by Dimé at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

121. Bawnaan, sculpture, recuperation, 1.15m H, bark, twine
Collection: undetermined, unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

122. Femme aux Cheveux Bouclés, sculpture, recuperation, carving, 70 cm H, ebony
Collection: unknown, unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
123. *Oiseau-Chat*, sculpture, recuperation, 50 cm H, bark, pigment
Collection: unidentified, unidentified
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

124. *Jeunesse*, sculpture, recuperation, 117 x 35 cm, wood, iron
unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

125. *Hommage à Cheikh Anta Diop*, sculpture, recuperation, 63 x 26 cm, wood, nails
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, on long term loan (through June 2013) to Fondation Blachère, Apt, France
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
126. title unknown, sculpture, recuperation, 95 x 37 cm, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, on long term loan (through June 2013) to the Fondation Blachère
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/2004 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio

127. title unknown, (charred wood sculpture), recuperation, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

128. title unknown (charred wood sculpture), sculpture, recuperation, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

129. title unknown (charred wood sculpture), sculpture, recuperation, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio
130. title unknown, sculpture, recuperation, 15 cm H, wood, iron
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

131. title unknown (miniature sculpture with metal picks), sculpture, recuperation
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

132. title unknown (miniature sculpture with stones), sculpture, recuperation
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

133. title unknown (miniature sculpture with keys), sculpture, recuperation
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio
134. *title unknown (miniature sculpture with Hindu figure)*, sculpture, recuperation
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

135. *title unknown (miniature sculpture with beach stone)*, sculpture, recuperation
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

136. *title unknown (miniature sculpture with seed pod)*, sculpture, recuperation
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

137. *title unknown (female figure)*, sculpture, recuperation, drum, burlap, pigment, twine
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

138. *title unknown (cruciform object)*, sculpture, recuperation, rebar, wood, rope
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio
139. title unknown (walking figure), sculpture, recuperation, wood, wire
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

140. title unknown, sculpture, recuperation, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

141. title unknown (wall hanging with hoe blades), sculpture, recuperation, wood, hoe blades, pigment
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/29/04 at the Artist's Gorée Studio

142. *Coiffure de Femme*, sculpture, 45cm H, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
143. *Attente*, sculpture, recuperation, 106 x 27 cm, wood, pigment
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

144. *Sans Titre*, sculpture, recuperation, 71 x 66 cm, wood, metal, twine
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a page in a view book by Dimé at the artist's Gorée Studio

145. *le Griot*, sculpture, recuperation, wood (chair, pestles)
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

146. *Nature II*, sculpture, 110 cm H, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
147. title unknown, sculpture, recuperation, wood, pigment, rope
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, On long-term loan to Fondation Blachère (Through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

148. title unknown (torso of woman), sculpture, relief, recuperation, wood, woven mat, plaster

149. *La Famille*, sculpture, recuperation, wood, wire, twine
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 at the Gorée Studio

150. title unknown (wood wall sculpture), sculpture, relief, recuperation
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio
151. title unknown, sculpture, recuperation, rebar, wire
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

152. title unknown, sculpture, recuperation, rebar, wire, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

153. title unknown (four chairs), sculpture, recuperation, wood, twine
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

154. title unknown, sculpture, recuperation, wood, rope, wire
155. *title unknown*, sculpture, recuperation, wood, rebar
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

156. *title unknown*, sculpture, recuperation, assemblage, feathers, beads, burlap
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 at the Artist's Gorée Studio

157. *Title unknown* (sculpture with Qur'anic boards), sculpture, recuperation, 73 x 83 cm, Qur’anic boards, fabric, iron
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: Courtesy Fondation Blachère, Apt, France

158. *title unknown* (recuperation sculpture), 498x200x150cm, wood, metal, twine
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through
159. title unknown (recuperation sculpture), 100x110cm, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)

160. *Poisson*, sculpture, recuperation, wood, sheet metal
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photo in the Gorée Studio Archives

161. title unknown (head of a woman), sculpture, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

162. title unknown, sculpture, wood, pigment
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from an unidentified photograph in a view book by Dimé at the
artist's Gorée Studio Archives
Part III: Unidentified Sculptures

163. unidentified sculpture, sculpture, wood
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from an unidentified photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive

164. unidentified sculpture, sculpture, filiform, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from an unidentified

165. unidentified sculpture (standing figure), circa 1986, sculpture, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/16/08 from a photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga

166. unidentified sculpture, recuperation, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
167. unidentified sculpture, recuperation
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

168. unidentified sculpture (two figures), sculpture, wood
Collection: Unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

169. Unidentified Sculpture, sculpture, recuperation, wood, stone
Collection: Unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Island Studio Archives

170. unidentified sculpture (cross), 1997, sculpture, recuperation, wood, rope, fabric
Collection: Unidentified
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio
171. unidentified sculpture, sculpture, recuperation, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from an unidentified photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

172. Three unidentified sculptures, recuperation, wood, sheet metal, stone
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from an unidentified photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive

173. Unidentified sculpture, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from an unidentified photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

174. Dimé with four unidentified filiform sculptures, sculpture, filiform, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from an unidentified photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
175. unidentified sculpture (*possibly Dundé Yaakar*); pictured with Dimé, sculpture, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

176. unidentified sculpture, ebony
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from an unidentified photograph in a viewbook by Dimé at the Gorée Studio Archive

177. unidentified sculpture, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from an unidentified photograph in a viewbook by Dimé at the artist's Gorée Studio Archive

178. unidentified sculpture, wood
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/06 from an unidentified photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga
179. unidentified sculpture, wood  
Collection: unknown  
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from an unidentified photograph in a viewbook by Dimé at the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives

178. unidentified sculpture, recuperation, wood, bark, pigment  
Collection: unknown  
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/06 from an unidentified photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga

180. unidentified sculpture, recuperation, wood  
Collection: unknown  
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/08 from an unidentified photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga

181. unidentified sculpture, recuperation, wood, bark, pigment  
Collection: unknown  
Photo: S. Kart 6/8/06 from an unidentified photograph in the Dimé Family Archives, Louga

182. unidentified sculpture, wood, over 6’, Dimé is seen 2nd from the left  
Collection: unknown  
Photo: S. Kart 6/16/08 from a photograph in the Dimé Family Archives in Louga
183. unidentified sculpture (tree trunk with and without sheet metal), recuperation; two views in two different states
Collection: unknown
Top Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from Cena, Olivier. "Et l'homme-oiseau observait la mer..."
Télérama 2460, no. 5 mars (1997): 51. Original photograph in Télérama by Boubacar Touré Mandemory; bottom, photo © Revue Noire, NO PERMISSION REQUESTED TO PUBLISH

184. unidentified sculpture, sculpture, recuperation, materials undetermined
Collection: unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from an unidentified photograph in the artist's studio archives

185. Four unidentified miniature sculptures (wire figures photographed in 1996 at the artist's Gorée Studio Archive), before 1996, sculpture, wire
Collection: Unknown
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archive (original photograph was printed in May of 1996 - as per developer's stamp on back)
Part IV: Works on Canvas and Paper

Dated Works:

186. no title given (abstract figure), view and two details (det.), circa 1980, Bogolan, 100 x 50 cm
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/1/06 at the Gorée Studio Archives

187. no title given (nursing mother carrying load on head), circa 1980, Bogolan, 100 x 50 cm
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/1/2006 at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
188. no title given (three filiform objects), circa 1982, drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/2004 from the original in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

189. no title given (two drawings of abstract figure groups), after 1987, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

191. no title given (Drawing of *Femme Nue*), after 1991, pastel
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original at the Gorée Studio
192. no title given (drawing of *Les Amoureux*), after 1991, drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio

193. no title given (drawing resembles *La Femme au Long Cou*), after 1992, drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio

194. no title given (drawing of *la Femme au Long Cou*), after 1992, drawing, pencil on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

195. title unknown, 1994, painting, mixed media (canvas, wood, wire, Coke bottle)
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio
196. no title given, 1995, drawing, pastel  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio  
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 at the artist's Gorée Studio

197. no title given, 1995, drawing, pastel  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio  
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 at the artist's Gorée Studio

198. no title given, 1995, watercolor  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

199. no title given, 1995, drawing, pastel and gouache  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio  
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original at the artist's Gorée Studio

200. no title given, 1995, acrylic and gouache on paper  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio  
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 at the artist's Gorée Studio
201. no title given (hanging skeleton), 1997, drawing, 29.5 x 21 cm, pencil on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

203. no title given (standing male figure), May 13 1998, drawing, pencil, dated by the artist
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère
Undated Works:

204. no title given (intersecting "V"s), drawing, charcoal
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

205. no title given (3 Baye Fall figures), drawing, pastel
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

206. no title given (Marabout and devote), drawing, charcoal
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

207. no title given (Marabout and devotees), drawing, charcoal and colored pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio
208. no title given (Marabout and devotes), drawing, colored pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original at the Gorée Studio

209. no title given (Baobab), drawing, charcoal
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original at the Gorée Studio

210. no title given (two Baobabs), drawing, charcoal
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original at the Gorée Studio

211. no title given (masks on tripod), drawing, colored pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original at the Gorée Studio
212. no title given (home-made sketch book, p. 1), drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

213. no title given (home-made sketch book pp 2-3), drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Studio Island
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

214. no title given (home-made sketch book pp 4-5), drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

215. no title given (home-made sketch book pp 6-7), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

216. no title given (home-made sketch book pp. 8-9), drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

217. no title given (home-made sketch book pp 10-11; appears to be drawing of Angoisse), drawing
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

218. no title given (Home-made sketch book pp. 12-13), drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

219. no title given (home-made sketch book pp.14-15; may be a drawing of Souffrance), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

220. no title given (home-made sketch book pp 16-17), drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

221. no title given (home-made sketch book pp
18-19), drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

222. no title given (home-made sketch book pp 20-21), drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

223. no title given (home-made sketch book pp 22-23), drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

224. no title given (home-made sketch book pp 24-25), drawing, ink on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

225. no title given (home-made sketch book pp. 26-27), drawing, pencil and ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

226. no title given (home-made sketch book pp 28-29), drawing, pencil on paper
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

227. no title given (home-made sketch book - pp. 30-31), drawing, pencil and ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

228. no title given (home-made sketch book pp. 32-33), drawing, pencil and ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original object at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

229. no title given, drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio

230. no title given, drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio
231. no title given, drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio

232. no title given, drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio

233. no title given, drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio

234. no title given, drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio
235. no title given, drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio

236. no title given, drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio

237. no title given, drawing, colored pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio

238. no title given, drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 at the Gorée Studio
239. no title given (Qur’anic boards), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from the original at the Gorée Studio

240. no title given (two figures), drawing, pastel
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, location undetermined
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from an unidentified photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

241. no title given (figure), drawing, pencil and charcoal
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, location undetermined
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

242. no title given (drawing of Femme Nue), drawing, charcoal and colored pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, location
undetermined
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

243. no title given (drawing of *Les Amoureux*), drawing, 21 x 14 cm, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, on long term loan (through June 2013) to the Fondation Blachère, Apt, France
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/04 from a photograph in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

244. no title given (possibly drawing of 'La Femme au Long Cou'); page from a journal, drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 from a journal by Dimé in the Gorée Studio Archives

245. no title given (possibly a drawing of *la Femme au Long Cou*), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/12/04 from the journal in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
246. title unknown, painting, canvas, wood, rope  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio  
Photo: S. Kart 6/15/04 at the Gorée Studio

247. no title given (two drawings), drawing, pencil and ink  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (on long term loan through June 2013)  
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

248. no title given (prayer board inscribed in triangle with figure), drawing, colored pencil  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)  
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

249. No title given (woman), drawing, pencil  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan though 2013)  
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère
250. *no title given (drawing of Untitled 1991)*, drawing, charcoal  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013), Apt, France  
Photo: S. Kart 9/26/08 at the Fondation Blachère

251. *no title given (figure)*, drawing, sketch, 21 x 15 cm, pencil  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Fondation Blachère (long term loan through June 2013)

252. *no title given (bending figure)*, drawing, pencil  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives  
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original in the Artist's Gorée Studio Archives

253. *no title given (filiform object)*, drawing, ink  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
254. no title given (three figures), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

256. no title given (abstract figure), drawing, pencil, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

257. no title given (abstract drawing), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

258. no title given (Figure Study), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/2004 from the original at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
259. no title given, drawing, pencil  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives  
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original drawing in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

260. no title given (three hierarchically sized figures), drawing, ink  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives  
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 of the original in the Gorée Studio Archives

261. no title given (abstract study), drawing, pencil  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio  
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/2004 from the original at the Gorée Studio

262. no title given (abstract drawing), drawing, pencil  
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
263. no title given (dancing female), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original at the Artist's Gorée Studio Archives

264. no title given (dancing female), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

265. no title given (dancing female), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

266. no title given (drawing of unidentified sculpture using chair backs), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original at the Gorée Studio Archives
267. no title given (abstract object drawing), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original at the Gorée Studio Archives

268. no title given, painting, gouache
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio Archives
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from the original in the artist's studio archives (Gorée Island)

269. no title given (flowers), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original at the Gorée Studio

270. no title given (possible drawing of les Amoureux), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
271. no title given (abstract elements), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

272. no title given (abstract forms), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Studio

273. no title given (group of women), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from the original in the Gorée Studio

274. no title given (Women doing Laundry), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Studio

275. no title given (Woman doing Laundry), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée
Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Studio

276. no title given (Women Preparing Food), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

277. no title given (Woman cleaning Rice), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

278. no title given (Woman doing Laundry), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

279. no title given, drawing, pencil, charcoal
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 from the original in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

280. no title given (Women Cooking), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée
281. no title given (abstract forms), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

282. no title given (Baobab), drawing, ink
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio

283. no title given (wild boar), drawing, pastel
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original at the Gorée Studio

284. no title given (woman dancing with drummer), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio
285. no title given (Baobab), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

286. no title given (two-headed figure), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

287. no title given (Baobab), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

288. no title given (Baobabs), drawing, pastel
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio
289. no title given (Mother and Children), drawing, charcoal
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

290. no title given (abstract and human forms), drawing, charcoal
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

291. no title given (crying eyes), drawing, charcoal
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio

292. no title given (Figure Study), drawing, colored pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/04 at the artist's Gorée Island Studio
293. no title given (Baobab), drawing, pencil
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. Kart 6/10/2004 from the original in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives

294. no title given (Baobab), drawing, pencil, section of paper on lower left cut out by the artist
Collection: Estate of Moustapha Dimé, Gorée Island Studio
Photo: S. kart 6/10/2004 from the original drawing in the artist's Gorée Studio Archives
Appendix B

Primary Documents
Doc. 1
Student ID Card issued by the Institut National des Arts (École Nationale des Beaux Arts du Senegal) to Moustapha Dimé in 1977 and renewed in 1978. Photo: S. Kart 6/6/08 from the original held in the Dimé family archives, Louga
Doc. 2
James Bruce Benoit
"Attestation Letter" [Regarding the completion of Dimé’s bust of Léopold Sédar Senghor]
Accra, Ghana: Ambassade de la Republique du Sénégal au Ghana, 1 Sept, 1976
Photo: S. Kart, 6/7/2004 from the original in the artist’s Gorée Archives
Doc. 3
Moustapha Dimé

Curriculum Vitae, 1989

Photo: S. Kart 6/12/2004 at the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
"Letter: Attestation d'Occupation (Statement of Occupancy)." [letter giving Dimé permission to maintain a studio in the Village des Arts]
Dakar, 4 December 1980

Photo: S. Kart 6/8/2004 from the original document in the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Doc. 5
Moustapha Dimé

*Checklist* Solo Exhibition at Daniel Sorano National Theater, 1982

all documentation by the artist, 2 pp.

Photo: S. Kart 6/11/2004 at the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
"Lettre: Monsieur le Ministre” [Invitation to the Minister of Culture to attend Dimé’s Solo Exhibition at the Daniel Sorano Theater], Dakar, 15 March, 1982

Photo: S. Kart 6/7/2004 from the original document in the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Doc. 7
Maurice Sonar Senghor, Director of the Daniel Sorano National Theater.

"Letter: Attestation d'Exposition" [Statement of Exhibition]
Dakar, 29 June 1982

Photo: S. Kart 6/8/2004 from the original document in the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Doc. 8
Moustapha Dimé

Page from a Viewbook showing *Couple*, 1981, wood, Private Collection, all documentation by the artist.
Photo: S. Kart 6/11/2004 at the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Doc. 9
Attestation [Receipt for funds received from President of the National Assembly for the Opening of *Ruptures II* dated January 14, 1992]

Photo: S. Kart 6/7/2004 from the original document in the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Doc. 10
Moustapha Ka, Minister, Senegal Ministry of Culture

"Letter: Référence: M/L No 4535 du 3 Novembre 1992 [Permission to lease the Fort Portuguais Blockhouse on Gorée Island for an artists’ studio].” No. 00704, 20 April, 1993

Photo: S. Kart 6/26/08 from the original document in the archives of Amadou Dimé, HLM Grand Yoff, Dakar

Photo: S. Kart 6/8/2004 from the original document in the artist’s Gorée Studio Archives
Doc. 12
Abdoulaye Elimane Kane

Letter to Moustapha Dimé granting him the title of Chevalier in the Ordre National du Lion, 27 December 1996

Photo: S. Kart 6/7/04 from the original document in the Artist’s Gorée Studio Archives

AS/
REPUBLIQUE DU SENEGAL
Un Peuple - Un Bé - Une Foi
MINISTERE DE LA COUTURE

Le Ministre

A Monsieur Moustapha DIME
Artiste sculpteur
Gorée - DAKAR -

OBJET : Cérémonie de remise de décorations

Monsieur,

Par décret n° 96,217 du 11 mars 1996 le Président de la République, Grand Maître de l’Ordre National du Lion, vous a promu au grade de chevalier dans l’Ordre National du Lion en reconnaissance des services rendus à la Nation.

Je sais cette occasion pour vous adresser mes vives félicitations et vous exhorter à persévérer dans vos efforts méritoires.

Par ailleurs, je voudrais vous informer que la cérémonie de remise de décorations aura lieu le lundi 30 décembre 1996 à 16 heures précises à la Galerie Nationale d’Art 19, Avenue Albert Sarraut.

La mise en place des récipiendaires est fixée à 15 h 30.

Veuillez croire, Monsieur, à l’assurance de ma considération distinguée.-

Abdoulaye Elimane KANE
Appendix C

Moustapha Dimé Curriculum Vitae
Moustapha Dimé
Born Louga April 23, 1952
Deceased St. Louis, June 30, 1998

Curriculum Vitae

Contact:
Gabriel Kemzo MALOU
Visual Artist : Sculptor & Engraver
Director of C.I.F.R.A "Atelier Moustapha DIME"
Fort Portugais rue du Chemin de Charrois B.P:24 Gore
T:(221) 30.100.62.47 / (221) 70.109.20.11
gabrielkemzomalou@gmail.com

Solo Exhibitions – Posthumous

2008 Moustapha Dimé “Je ne rêve que de lumière… Exhibition: Hommage to Moustapha Dimé,” 17 June – 12 October, Fondation Jean-Paul Blachère, Apt, France
2000 “Moustapha Dimé: Sculpteur contemporain sénégalais,” Collégiale du Sainte Esprit, Auray, France
2000 “Moustapha Dimé Retrospective,” Château des Carmes, La Flèche, France
1999 “Moustapha Dimé Retrospective,” Salle Saint-Jean,Hôtel de Ville, Paris,

Solo Exhibitions
1997 Centre d’Art Contemporain, Brussels, Belgium
1997 Dany Keller Galerie, Munich, Germany
1996 Solo Exhibition, Dak’Art 96, Biennale, Dakar, Senegal
1993 “Moustapha Dimé Retrospective,” Galerie 39, French Cultural Center Dakar, Senegal
1982 Daniel Sorano National Theater, Dakar, Senegal
1982 “Culture Week,” Sainte Marie de Hann, Dakar, Senegal

Group Exhibitions – Posthumous
2006 Dak’Art “Off”, Place du Palais du Gouverneur, Gorée Island
2006 “Sénégal Contemporain” Musée Dapper, Paris, France
2006 “There and Back” La Casa Encendida, 31 March – 11 June, Madrid, Spain
2000 “Viýé Diba – Moustapha Dimé,” Galerie Arte, Dakar, Senegal

Group Exhibitions
1997 2nd Johannesburg Biennale, Johannesburg, South Africa
1997 “Die anderen Modernen” House of World Cultures, Berlin, Germany
1997 “Suites Africaines,” Cordeliers Convent, Paris, France
1996 “Bogardenkapel,” Galerie Bogarde, Bruges, Belgium
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Johannesburg Biennale, Johannesburg, South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Exhibition at de Warande Cultural Center, Turnhout, Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>(Unidentified Exhibition) Liverpool, England</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>“Inside Story. African Art of Our Time,” Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>“Tenq,” St. Louis, Senegal, as part of Africa ’95 season</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Theater of Merlan, Marseilles, France (Dates disputed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Museum for African Art, New York City, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>Dak’Art ’92, Inaugurale Biennale, Dakar, Senegal</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Fifth National Salon of Visual Artists, Senegal, Dakar</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>“Ruptures II,” Galerie Nationale des Arts, Dakar, Senegal</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>Summit of the OCI (Islamic Community Organization), Dakar, Senegal</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990/91</td>
<td>“Exposition d’art Contemporain du Senegal,” various European tour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>locations (Paris, Brussels)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>“Crossroads of Francophone Art,” Toulouse, France</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Senegal representative artist at the “Premiers Jeux de la Francophonie,” Rabat, Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>“Rupture” with Abdoulaye N’Doye, Galerie Nationale des Arts, Dakar,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>“Arts plastiques et musiques,” Blaise Senghor Cultural Center, Dakar,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Senegal</td>
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<td>1981-2</td>
<td>“Tenq,” Village des Arts, Dakar Senegal</td>
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<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Young sculptors’ exhibition, French Cultural Center, Dakar, Senegal</td>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>“15 Years of Youth,” Centre Culturel Blaise Senghor, Dakar, Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>“1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Anniversary of the region of Louga,” Centre Départemental</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>d'Education Physique et Sportive, Louga, Senegal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Workshops and Conferences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>Helsen Studio Workshop, in Conjunction with its traveling exhibition, Mariama Bà School for Girls, Gorée, Senegal and Geneva, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Symposium for Wood Sculpture, Schwarzenberg, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Workshop in Cosmale and Exhibition at Turnhout, de Warande Cultural Center, Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>“Tenq,” workshops St. Louis, Senegal, as part of Africa ’95 season</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>“Rencontre Itinérance” Workshop and Exhibition, Musée National des Arts d’Afrique et d’Océanie, Paris, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Meeting of the Artists and the American Museum Conservators, Dakar, Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Yewuri Yeurur Seminar, Dakar, Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>?????????SISAC Conference, Foire International de Dakar (FIDAK, aka CICES), Dakar, Senegal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Collections**
Marie-José Crespin, Gorée Island, Senegal
Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York City, USA
National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Awards and Distinctions

1992  First Prize of the First International Biennale Dak’Art, in honor of the President of the Republic of Senegal Léopold Sédar Senghor

Education

1977-79  École Nationale des Beaux Arts, Dakar, Senegal
1966-70  Centre de Formation Artisanale, Dakar, Senegal
1964-66  Ecole Nguelaw
1960-64  Ecole II de Santhiaba-Sud

Travel

1997  Munich, Germany; Brussels, Belgium
1995  Geneva, Switzerland; Schwarzenberg, Austria; Turnhout, Belgium
1994  Marseilles, France
1993  Venice, Italy; New York, United States
1992  Paris, France
1980  Travel to Dogon country, Mali, funded by President Senghor and the Senegalese Ministry of Culture
1973-77  Education-related travels to the Gambia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria