

Cassi Namoda

The Day a Monkey is Destined to Die *All Trees Become Slippery*

March 23 - April 28, 2019

François Ghebaly Gallery is proud to announce Cassi Namoda's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles, *The Day a Monkey is Destined to Die All Trees Become Slippery*. Like the exhibition's title, a folk saying in Namoda's birth country of Mozambique, the works in the show explore the mythologies and proverbs of daily life in East Africa from the perspective of a vibrant young storyteller.

Born in Maputo to a Mozambican mother and American father, Namoda uses painting to negotiate the intricacies of mixed cultural heritage, intricacies that reflect the wider cultural dynamics of a formerly colonized nation. Namoda initially studied film as a cinematographer, and her understanding of how to visually construct narratives suffuses her canvases. The scenes range from bustling, faceless crowds, to concentrated individual portraits. In each mode, Namoda intermingles the heartfelt with the absurd, the macabre with the joyous, the specific with the societal, creating a complicated affective and political universe.

A recurring figure that Namoda names Maria crops up repeatedly across the works, standing for a multifaceted womanhood encompassing a wide ranging female gender roles in postcolonial Mozambique. Maria is gentle, saintly, vivacious, yet simultaneously melancholic, ill-tempered, and maligned. Her many scenes of triumph, peril, compromise and heartbreak underscore the emotional elasticity Namoda brings to her work.

Historical context sets the stage of many of Namoda's paintings. Portraits of historical figures, such as Eduardo Mondlane, the founding President of the Mozambican Liberation Front, join homages to significant places, like Hotel Chaubo, a local institution in Quelimane which remained in operation throughout the whole of the independence struggle and civil unrest. Homages to other African cultural figures also surface throughout the work, including odes to the filmmaker Djibril Diop Mambéty, the poet and political theorist Léopold Senghor, and the painter Malangatana Ngwenya. Throughout, Namoda masterfully plays the role of the charismatic narrator, unifying her subjects into a grand and nuanced story of Mozambique within an increasingly globalized world.

Cassi Namoda (b. 1988, Maputo, Mozambique) lives and works in Los Angeles. Her recent solo exhibitions include Nina Johnson Gallery, Miami; Library Street Collective, Detroit; and Oof Books Gallery, Los Angeles. Her work is held in the public collection of the Pérez Art Museum Miami. Namoda has been the subject of profiles in *Cultured Magazine*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Artnet*, and *Vogue*. A suite of new paintings will be included in the upcoming group exhibition *LA Dreams 2* at CFHILL, Stockholm.