

VOGUE

This Mozambique-Inspired Perfume From Painter Cassi Namoda Is a “Woody Tropical” Work of Art

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by ZOE RUFFNER



“[When painting] you think about everything: the place, the setting, the time, the fragrance. . .” says Namoda, who teamed up with Capsule Parfumerie on a limited-edition scent, which launches in April.

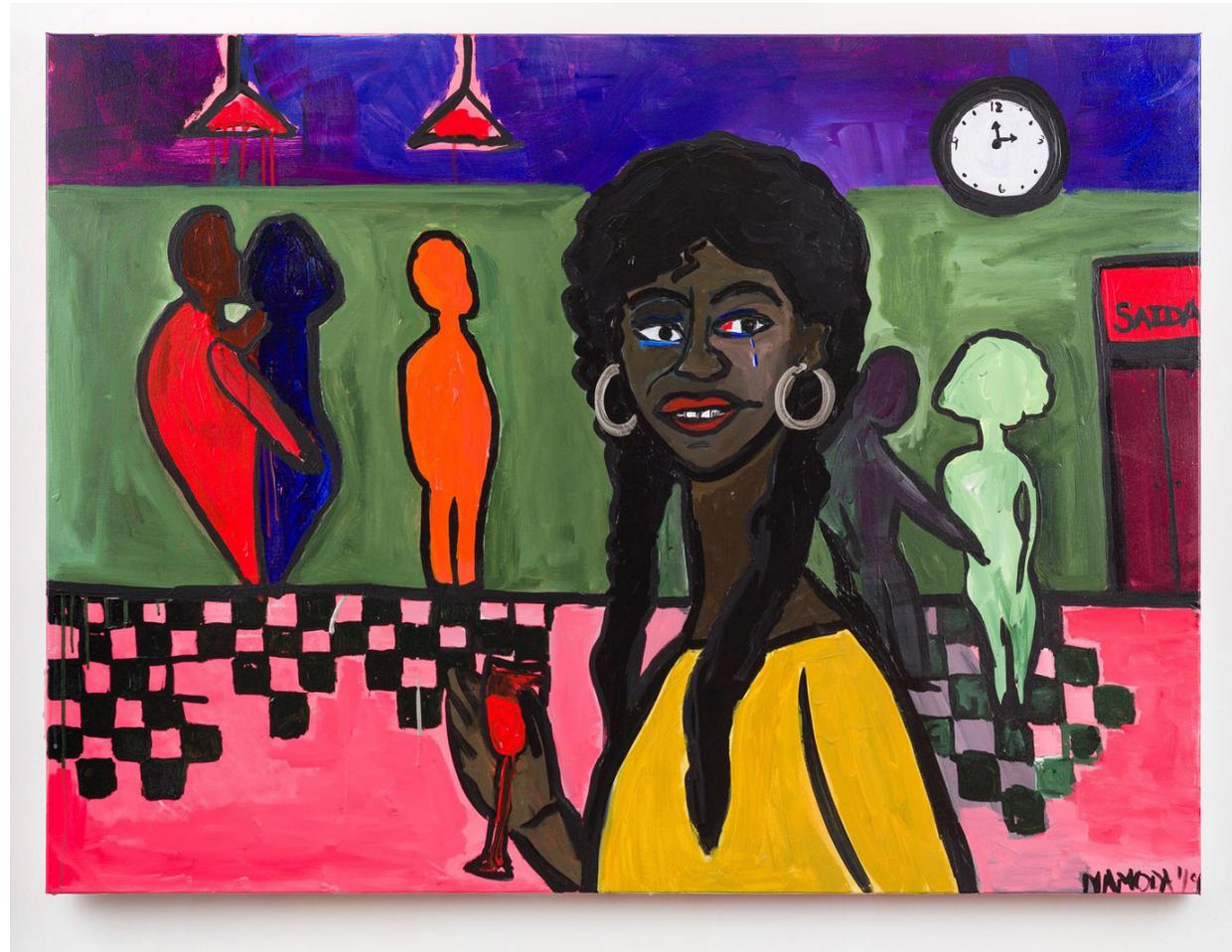
Photographed by Phil Oh

It should come as no surprise that in today’s digital-first landscape, the painter Cassi Namoda and Capsule Parfumerie’s Linda Sivrican—two Los Angeles transplants by way of Mozambique and Vietnam, respectively—met over Instagram. What does inspire wonder is just how perfectly paired the creatives turned out to be. “It made all the sense in the world,” Namoda says of their partnership, which has, most recently, seen the duo collaborate on a limited-edition fragrance.

In honor of her first solo exhibit in L.A., “The Day a Monkey Is Destined to Die All Trees

Become Slippery”, on view at François Ghebaly’s gallery, Namoda sought an experimental project that could bring to life her dreamlike acrylics, which explore daily life in postcolonial Maputo, her birthplace and the city that she returned to in her 20s.

“It was about trying to paint an essence of her work through scent,” muses Sivrican, who began the sensorial undertaking by paying a visit to Namoda’s South L.A. studio. It was there that she learned about Maria, a striking figure full of opposing forces, that crops up again and again in Namoda’s oeuvre. “[She has a] slight grit that ends up being sexy, because she’s tough in a way, too,” Namoda notes. “I said to Linda, ‘I’m not going to tell you exactly what I want. I’m telling you about the character, who she is, and you can take it from there.’”



Cassi Namoda, *Eyes like moon, eyebrows like the rainbow, mouth like it doesn't eat anything*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 36 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the Artist and François Ghebaly, Los Angeles

With only the directive to include deep oud, an oil prized for its meditational properties, Sivrican set out to work on what she calls a “woody tropical fragrance.” Many days (and one sleepless night) later, it was, at long last, ready. “It overwhelmed me,” Namoda says of her first impression of the singular scent, whose ingredients read like a biography of the artist: There’s black tea absolute for Namoda’s grandfather, who owned tea plantations; smoky vetiver from Java, where Namoda once lived; tobacco in the spirit of Maria, who Namoda often portrays with a cigarette in hand—all rounded out with traces of Namoda’s hometown (think flakes of Indian Ocean salt, coconut pulp, ripe mango, and muhuhu, African sandalwood).

For the finished product, proceeds of which will go to Save the Children's Cyclone Idai relief fund, Namoda hand-painted a red chair, a recurring motif in her canvases, onto 70 100-milliliter bottles, which can now be found at Orris Perfumery, MOCA, and various galleries. At \$625, consider it a work of art to have and to hold, and, of course, to spritz (sparingly).



Namoda x Sivrican Eau de Parfum, \$625

Photo: Courtesy of Capsule Parfumerie

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<https://www.vogue.com/article/cassi-namoda-linda-sivrican-perfume-mozambique>