

Huw Davies Gallery  
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## L'Homme et son Environnement

Babacar Traoré (Doli)

In L'Homme et son Environnement (The Man/Humankind and his/its Environment), Senegalese artist Traoré digitally re-works snapshots to tell the story of the Bujukat, an architect of refuse.

The Bujukat is a person of creative intelligence, rummaging through the detritus of our lives and re-constructing it as useful. Through giving new life to trash, the Bujukat reintroduces what we have discarded into our individual and collective conscience, challenging the values of a consumer society addicted to disposal.



Babacar Traore, Trésor Retrouvé (dusk), 2018, Photography and digital paint printed on photographic paper, 45 x 60 cm

### Trésor Retrouvé

For Babacar Traoré, aka Doli, photography starts without a camera. He roams through the streets of his native Dakar and develops an intuitive understanding of the politics and poetics of his streets: he decodes the social relations, observes the seemingly small missions carried out by some, sees on the decrepit walls and colonial houses of Medina the memories of his own childhood and discusses with passers-by without any worry of time, how the world feels from their side. Eventually, with his camera at hand, he chooses to raise his camera to capture the imperceptible scenes and concealed gestures filled with hopes that live on the streets.

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In *Trésor Retrouvé* (treasure found again), Doli exposes the Bujukaat - a person that survives financially in the Senegalese society by saving from trash discarded objects to breathe into them another life, re-introducing them in the circulation of goods. Beyond the dirt of it all, he browses through our undesirable debris, and with an inventive eye, selects the piece that can be functional to some: a jar, a stick, a pan. Once the pieces are selected, he cleans and sells them in the streets. In the artist own words, "there is gold in our waste for the Bujukaat." The material crumbs of our used society hold the power of renewal for those in need and for the creative minds too. For Doli, through the Bujukaat's act, our trash we once believed dull and gone slides back into our consciousness to remind us of our disposable society, that consumes mindlessly, blindly.

Drawn to cinema in photographic terms, Doli decomposes the scene in 5 sequences similarly to mythological narrative structure: dusk, early morning, zenith, afternoon and dawn. These 5 acts grants each photograph with a specific moment in the story. From the Bujukaat's arrival on site, his search of a treasure, to its extraction from the rest of the trash - every image is a step towards the resolution at dawn: the disregarded and saved treasure.

To the photograph, Doli adds a colorful composition digitally to emphasize the scene unfolding before his eyes. He paints on his computer the photographs with countless colored dots of varying size, one by one. In this months-long painting process, he dissolves the background under various patterns to finally put forward the Bujukaat, too-often viewed with contempt. In *Dusk and Morning*, the composition resembles an urban colonial plan like that of western cities, with numerous horizontal and vertical lines crossing. In between boulevards, main avenues and elegant roundabouts - indicative of a western urban taste - co-exist pockets of streets, communities and stories that obey their own rules, their own internal rhythm. In *Zenith, Afternoon and Dawn*, the circular marks gradually overflow the carefully designed geometric composition, as if Dakar's street madness that emerges in the daylight and soothes at dawn, imposes itself and prevails over the rational city plan. A visual vibrancy and throbbing rhythm stem from each piece: we hear with our eyes the cacophonous sounds of traffic, the street sellers, the distant musical rhythms, and imagine all the elements that makes Dakar a poetically delightful and tiring city. Poetic for those that pay attention to details like Doli; resourceful for the inventive ones in need like the Bujukaat.

As trash becomes treasure, this marginalized individual performing a supposedly trivial act, becomes an urban alchemist carrier of a fresh gaze, a fighter against the generalised throw away current. In an eternal consumption and production of waste, this daily ritual endlessly repeats one day after the next for the Bujukaat. Under the pondering sun, he drifts from trash to trash, with the hope to find in the undesirable residue of collective living, what will allow him to subsist in the cycle of society.

Jennifer Houdrouge, 2021

Jennifer Houdrouge is a curator, writer and founder/director of Selebe Yoon, Dakar - a gallery and residency located in Dakar, Senegal. Her curatorial practice and writing combine her interdisciplinary interests, namely, philosophy, art history, and psychoanalysis. She holds an MA in Art History from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University and an MA in Contemporary Art from Sotheby's Institute of Art. Jennifer is based between Dakar and Europe.

## Babacar Traoré (Doli) | About

Babacar Traoré (aka Doli) is a Senegalese photomedia artist based in Dakar. For 15 years Doli has been photographing the streets, people and lively culture of Dakar. His creative medium crosses many disciplines from photography, painting, installation and performance. Through his images Doli documents the current period in history for future generations.

His images tell stories, writing poetry through photographs, presenting an original vision that reflects life as it is.

## List of Works

1. Babacar Traore, Trésor Retrouvé (dusk), 2018, photography and digital paint printed on photographic paper, 45 x 60 cm \$2500
2. Babacar Traore, Trésor Retrouvé (morning), 2018, photography and digital paint printed on photographic paper, 45 x 60 cm \$2500
3. Babacar Traore, Trésor Retrouvé (zenith), 2018, photography and digital paint printed on photographic paper, 45 x 60 cm \$2500
4. Babacar Traore, Trésor Retrouvé (afternoon), 2018, photography and digital paint printed on photographic paper, 45 x 60 cm \$2500
5. Babacar Traore, Trésor Retrouvé (dawn), 2018, photography and digital paint printed on photographic paper, 45 x 60 cm \$2500