

Direction, Direction?



“If you were looking for direction, this is definitely not the place” – spell the billboard-sized words on the aluminium wallworks. The message doesn't sound reassuring, yet it offers a warning, suggesting that there could be more to it. In the video *a coin is a coin* candidly speaking into the camera, the artist wishes to clear a misunderstanding and offer advice. Impersonating a figure that could emerge from the news and entertainment, Ndayé performs a specific kind of wayfinding. The artist prompts the question of movement and triggers spatial interrogation, not so much about where one is going, but where one stands – how one ‘looks’ and sees things. The video questions the position of viewers and their inherent biases. Ndayé knows that language controls and captures. Like in the series of small artworks that oscillates between layers of clarity and opacity, using fabrics imbued in resin covered by a text printed on a clear resin.

He also wears flashy eyeshadow and one earring only. In the studio where he moves, the unconcealed tripods and backgrounds point to a dissolution of boundaries: between what's on stage and behind the scenes, inner and societal, truthful and constructed. By playing a double of himself and remixing visual and cultural traits, Ndayé moves through various linguistic and aesthetic codes, showing how he can be one and many. He seems to enact what art historian Claire Lambert-Beatty names ‘parafictions’ – those narrative ploys whereby artists perform other versions of themselves, which confound cultural desires to order, categorise and ‘make sense’ of complex narratives. These strategies, Lambert-Beatty explains, ‘train us in scepticism and doubt, but also, oddly, in belief’. To change course when confronted by a system that claims order and binaries, Ndayé embraces a parafictional persona where self and character merge into multiplicity. He morphs and shapeshifts. He changes his outfits and posture. He goes nowhere and anywhere, blurry and unbound.



Ndayé knows that language controls and captures. Like his visual appearance, his speech oscillates between layers of clarity and opacity, irony and seriousness, wanting to pin down meaning and establish concrete truths while counteracting the necessities of uncertainty. A coin is just a coin - but also a catalyst for conversation. 'Change' is action but also a tool, a metaphor to switch viewpoints.

Like the artist says in his video: orality is vital. Even if there isn't a clear direction or a plot, but feelings and intricate thoughts, Ndayé showed me (in a bar one night and consistently in his work) that to get lost in words is to find multiple ways. It's about the dialogue and entering the room where one can be. The many dimensions a person can inhabit.

Giulia Civardi

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