



"From paper that has been trampled on, bearing the marks of the 'small morning steps,' I build a world—a story of ordinary people whose lives are nevertheless so rich. A story that belongs in a modern tale, drawn from real life."

Christophe Sawadogo was born in 1972 in Tikaré, Burkina Faso. Initially driven by the desire to serve others, he first aspired to a career in medicine. He eventually turned to visual arts, studying arts and communication at the University of Ouagadougou from 1992 to 1997. In 1999, he trained as an art critic at the University of Dakar in Senegal, but soon left theory behind to fully devote himself to painting. A lover of poetry and calligraphy, his early works were ink and colored pencil drawings on paper, inhabited by floating figures—imagined or remembered—within a dreamlike world. Suspending the viewer between dream and reality, his work opens a window onto new horizons.

Christophe Sawadogo has taken part in solo and group exhibitions in Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Mali, as well as in Europe: France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Belgium.

Today, Christophe Sawadogo immerses his brushes in the pressing social concerns of our time. His work unfolds along two complementary paths and techniques. The first is a fluid, airy ink practice that hovers between figuration and abstraction. When Sawadogo embraces figuration, the subtlety and lightness of his ink compositions lie in their apparent simplicity—deceptive, as they are intricately constructed. Their charm and poetry reside in the presence of enigmatic figures, reminding us that these images tell human stories, narratives from which our imagination can only piece together fragments. The second facet of his work explores other materials and formats: a thick, textured painting style, like a crust of earth from which figures emerge to meet our gaze—as if to ask: What are you looking at? Or rather, What do you see? Once again, beneath the surface simplicity, nothing is obvious, nothing is easy.

The artist often refers to the classical unity of action, time, and place. His studio becomes a stage, where the creation of the artwork unfolds in the here and now. Encountering Christophe Sawadogo's work at spaced intervals means witnessing with wonder the stylistic leaps he achieves each time, without ever losing coherence. One might even say that the seeds of his most recent pieces can be found in his earliest ones. Not because they look alike—quite the opposite, as an acorn bears little resemblance to the oak it holds in potential—but because the same rigour is always present: the same explorations of materials, textures, colours, and techniques.

One of the enduring tensions in Sawadogo's work, evident from the 1990s to today, lies in the delicate balance between beauty and distortion. Or more precisely, between deformation, erasure, fragmentation—even the shattering—of the figure, and the undeniable allure of the works. Sawadogo plays with meaning as he plays with representation; nothing reveals itself all at once. Seeing the work is only the beginning—what follows is its gradual unfolding. And yet, he never relinquishes beauty. The faces—even when diffused or fractured—and especially the purity of the colours, vibrant, light, almost festive, rise from muddied backgrounds to dance before our eyes. Likewise, the sharp, precise lines and marks emerge from indistinct grounds to lend his paintings and ink works a delicacy and refinement unique to his practice.

Christophe Sawadogo lives and works in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Solo exhibitions (selection)

- 2024 Galerie Mokuwa, Deventer, Pays Bas
Galerie Arte, Dakar, Sénégal
Creative Africa, Galerie Moogoo, Frankfort, Allemagne
- 2021 Galerie Houkami, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
- 2019 Galerie Art-Z, Paris, France
Festival Burkin'Arts, Villeneuve les Avignon, France
- 2018 Galerie Medina, Bamako, Mali
Galerie houkami, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Galerie de Fyret, Danemark
Villa Sponte, Allemagne
- 2012 Branderingården Museum, Viborg, Danemark
- 2005 Centre culturel de Genappe, Belgique
- 2001 Invité d'honneur au centenaire de la Ligue Belge des Droits de l'Homme, Genappe, Belgique
- 1999 Fondation Olorun, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Collective exhibitions (selection)

- 2025 *Papier Libre*, LouiSimone Guirandou Gallery, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Galerie Art-Z, Paris, France
Festival d'aquarelle de Brioude, Paris, France
Les Arts du plateau, expositions Boisset, Paris, France
- 2024 Galerie Christophe Person, Paris, France
Galerie Mokuwa, Deventer, Pays Bas
Galerie le Réservoir, Sète, France
- 2023 Biennale de Beijing, Chine
Découvertes 5, LouiSimone Guirandou Gallery, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
- 2021 Collectif Wekré, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
- 2016 Museum of contemporary art, Roskilde, Denmark
- 2014 Institut Français, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
- 2013 Arts en Vrac, Salies de Bearn, France
- 2008 *Africa now*, Denmark, Finland, Norway
- 2006 Festival de l'Eau sur le fleuve Niger, Mali
Palais de la culture, Bamako, Mali
Centres culturels de Vanlose, Copenhague et Gimle, Denmark
- 2005 Groenlo, Netherland
- 2004 Centre culturel Wallonie, Bruxelles, Belgium
- 2003 Grugapark, Essen, Germany
- 2002 KuBa Kunsthalle, Wolfenbüttel, Germany
- 2001 Galeries Arte and Gallery Atiss, Dakar, Senegal