Shining a spotlight on women artists of the Dakar Biennale 2022
Protect your Soul. No matter what, stay loyal to yourself. If the day is too dark and the light at the end seems blurry, and you can't see clearly, sit down, breathe deep, stay still, do nothing, let your mind speak up, listen, and keep your Soul protected.

Read books, don't stop reading, read more, read again, read when you can and where you can. Stay curious, question those books, question everything, read again, research what you just read, re-write if you found missing parts, unfair lines, deliberated notes or incomplete paths.

Re-write with your tools: mind, body, pen, brush, camera, microphone. Re-think, re-write, re-do. That's the reason we are here.

Susana PILAR
Cuba
I had always been a fighter and active advocate against any violence against women. Since I was an eighteen years old art student, my work, mainly photography at the time, has been a tool to stand up for our rights.

My commitment is there and my art practice is the way I have to sum my voice to all the voices which are here visible and others that are not so visible, or have been shut down.

My intention is to keep reminding people that equality isn’t there yet. And gender equality for black women is something we all need to acknowledge, with its specificities and with our particular history which sometimes isn’t quite recognized by women who haven't gone through what we, black women, are going through still.

Susana PILAR
Cuba
Dakar Biennale and Senegal mean for me an opportunity to be back to the land where my African ancestors were seen for the last time in Africa, their land, right before they were kidnapped and moved away against their own will.

Coming back for me is a way to find their energy, reconnect and let them know I am here, honoring them and their resistance to survive and letting me be here today.

No matter what, stay strong, stay loyal to your ideas, speak up for those who can't but gave you the space to represent, do not forget from where you come from, be present.

Susana PILAR
Cuba
We were told that **feminine powers** are weak. I want to dissolve this destructive paradigm. As an artist from Germany I find my **sources** of creation in **Africa**. Here I realised a new dialogue with the material and a fundamental connection between body, colour and **the power of life**.

I was encouraged by the strong African women to trust **my vital forces** that had been buried by European education.

Katharina LOKENHOFF
Germany
In my interviews in Dakar I was looking for an exchange regarding the African origin of the “Archetype of the Mother”. I was curious about the recent role models of a new humanity, overcoming the destructive patriarchal patterns.

My exhibited “Brunhilda”, as a forging midwife, is the patroness of this transformative process, where we get rid of fear and hate and become able to see. Thus, my participation in the Dakar Biennale means to me to share my art as a kind of magical instrument.

Katharina LOKENHOFF
Germany
Resilience is becoming synonymous with women's long suffering experiences. Thus, if we persist in our passion and goals with adequate effort, we will succeed!

Ngozi-Omeje EZEMA
Nigeria
Through my participation in the biennale, I want to show women that they can achieve anything. There are no barriers to what we can achieve with grit, determination and the ability to dream big.

Convention tell us that women after a certain age are invisible, but I think women in their mid-lives have a huge and meaningful contribution to make. The world needs our particular wisdom and life experience, which are rooted in resilience and empathy.

Beverley BUTKOW
South Africa
Being an Arab Egyptian female artist, an art professor, a wife, and a mother, I convey a message to the whole world that women are winners, achievers and capable by nature. [...] Unlike before, women have taken up the space; becoming modern art pioneers, they are finally taking up the recognition they deserve, instead of just being a subject of art. They became names in art, the creative force behind the artwork.

Shereen ELBAROUDI
Egypt
I would tell younger generations to believe in themselves, to stand into their own power and express their true, authentic selves.

Working in the cultural and the creative sector is such a great responsibility, and a privilege!

Shereen ELBAROUDI
Egypt
Creativity isn't prone to a man or a woman. It is a talent which can be honed whether by research, practising, or studying. The creative experience with its modernity, and distinctiveness stands out and speaks for itself regardless of an artist's gender.

Shereen ELBAROUDI
Egypt
Our job is to pose questions or to shine light on the enfolded histories that collects like dust in the corners. Hone your intuition, read, listen to people’s stories, share and remember: life is long—SLOW DOWN.

Elize VOSSGATTER
South Africa
Gender equality is a moot point if we are out of balance with our ecology. The art sector could be leading the way to demonstrate the merits of intuitive and collaborative problem-solving; respecting organic processes and incongruous connections.

Elize VOSSGATTER
South Africa
Do not let yourself be pushed aside on the technical level for the absurd invalid reason that you are a woman.

Antje VAN WICHELEN
Belgium
While preparing for our participation in the Dakar Biennale, I came to Dakar to bury negative filmstrips in the soil. I did that with the girls who follow art workshops at the IFAN museum. We took the time to discuss the topics of the work (colonial images of people) and the techniques of celluloid film processing. I name each of the girls in the texts and the making of video that accompany the work. These small acts are important as the girls feel they really contributed.

Antje VAN WICHELEN
Belgium
I would like to tell younger generations to create work that speaks to their own audience to not get bogged down by the commercial avenues of the art market alone, but to seek a meaningful socially engaged practice that speaks to a mix of audiences and also highlights stories about their own contexts which are often either ignored or misrepresented.

Syowia KYAMBI
Kenya
I think the fact that women are still earning less than men in the same field with the same qualifications (this is beyond the art market but a global crisis) is atrocious.

I think that opportunities for women practitioners have emerged more so in the last five – seven years but there is still a lot of work to be done.

Syowia KYAMBI
Kenya
My advice to younger generations of women is to stand in your power. Women can only take our rightful place when we learn to love our imperfections as much as our perfections. We need to abandon what has been socialised into us and courageously speak through our unique authentic voices.

We can do anything, be anything, feel anything. It’s worth fighting to hold onto the independence of OUR values, finances, desires, even while we luxuriate in loving relationships.

Beverley BUTKOW  
South Africa