

# KILAMBA

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Exploring a Territory / Examining its Colors / Elucidating its Architecture / Portraying its Geopolitics / Building a New Space / A Pictorial and Powerful Space / Abstracting the Territory

The series I create outside of my commissioned work always come to me intuitively, born out of places and stories that I feel drawn to or that puzzle me. They are born out of my desire to make this or that space my own, to reveal something new within it, then to bring it towards a kind of metaphorical landscape, towards the poetry one can find in reality.

When I discovered the reality of Kilamba, a city in Angola, it was as if I was struck by lightning: I wanted to work there, in a place whose geopolitical history is closely related to the most contemporary issues, all the while being so distinctive and expressive in its architecture, urban design, and use of colors. In between African and Chinese universes, I wanted to explore and renew all these topics through my own aesthetical and pictorial outlook.

Kilamba can be found south of the Angolan capital Luanda, after driving for more than an hour ; it was funded and built by Chinese investment funds around 2008. It creates a kind of fictional space in the middle of the Angolan landscape, with its sculptural architecture, its pastel-hued walls, its neighborhoods with distinctive color schemes, its contrasted and geometric light, its evanescent atmosphere that seems unreal...as many aspects of the city that inspired and puzzled me, to the point of disorientation even. It also created a deep desire in me to go and explore its spaces, to grasp all the complexity that is at play there, be it social or structural.

So I decided to undertake this project and I left for Angola. These past two years, I have built and consolidated my vision and visited Kilamba several times so as to get a feel for the place, actually work on location in such a peculiar city, and finally get acquainted with its inhabitants.

First, I conducted what can be called an intuitive archeology of the territory, through studies of colors, lights, and shapes. Then, successively, I set out to meet the people living in Kilamba and take their portraits, to sketch out the relationship between this environment and humans.

This project came to a close only very recently: it includes more than a hundred images, in a dialogue between architecture and portraiture. It will come together also as a book, to be published by Louis Vuitton in 2022.

In my eyes, this is the transcript of a metaphor born out of feelings, a pictorial outlook on a territory through photography, to draw part of the future face of the world we live in.