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# African Connections: Artists to Watch at 1-54 and Frieze Masters

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Rebecca Anne Proctor highlights eight artists showing with 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, taking place at Somerset House in London (8–10 October 2020) alongside an online edition powered by Christie's (7–12 October 2020), plus Ben Enwonwu's focus with *kó* as part of Frieze Masters online (9–16 October 2020).



Joana Choumali, *I'm afraid i won't be able to attend this* (2020), 80 x 80 cm. Courtesy Loft Art Gallery.

### **Joana Choumali at Loft Art Gallery, 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair**

The alluring works of Abidjan-based Ivorian photographer Joana Choumali merge photography with embroidery to render intimate aspects of life in Côte d'Ivoire.

Presented digitally at 1-54, three works by Choumali (*I'm afraid i won't be able to attend this*, *The healers*, and *And still, my garden grows*—all from her series 'Albahian' and executed in 2020) demonstrate the artist's practice of embroidering directly on her images in meditative and attentive gestures.

'Textiles in general appeal to several senses at the same time—touch, sight and sometimes even smell,' Choumali explained by email. 'It is a sensory experience in itself, which often leads to the first memories of life, and to the most striking ones—birth, childbirth, but also death, in all cultures. Textiles transmit a wide range of emotions, both consciously and unconsciously.'

Choumali, who won the Prix de Pictet in November 2019, making her the first African artist to win the prestigious award, states that textiles could be a substitute for language. 'In my work, integrating textiles has given it a slightly different direction, as it has allowed me to express things that I was not attracted to express in words.'

Choumali likes to wake up early in the morning to walk around her neighbourhood in Abidjan. Then she gets to work. 'There is also the notion of dialogue and connection between reality and dream, between present and memory,' she says of her work. 'The different layers both veil and unveil, the feelings that coexist in my imagination.'

Source : <https://ocula.com/magazine/insights/artists-highlights-154-frieze-masters/?fbclid=IwAR1bhq8tM1M-sNmKVVQJUsBUxBZvE2RdtVx8q7gRxnHHgwoNQui788dkuEI>