

**Raphaël Dallaporta**  
***Nkisi Nkondi (2026)***

Traditionally, *Nkisi Nkondi* are ritual figures of the Kongo peoples (Democratic Republic of the Congo), statues mediating between the visible world and invisible forces. They are traditionally employed to ensure protection, justice, and sanctions in response to social and spiritual disorder. Activated by a *nganga* (priest-healer), the figure contains a magical charge (*bilongo*) that grants it power. Nails, metal blades, and mirrors embedded in the body materialize oaths, conflicts, and calls for the intervention of spirits. With its frontal gaze and assertive posture, the *Nkondi* embodies an active authority, capable of constraining, repairing, and conjuring.

Raphaël Dallaporta mobilizes this figure as an operative image in the sense of Vilém Flusser, which does not merely represent the world but acts upon it. Confronted with contemporary technical images and algorithmic devices — deep-learning neural networks and computational black boxes — the *Nkisi* functions as a counter-apparatus, opposing the automatism of programs with an image that is charged, opaque, and intentional. Its gaze reactivates a conscious magic, not as an obscurantist regression, but as a critical strategy to re-enchant the world, aimed at revealing and diverting the invisible forces that govern images.

Ensemble of 8 piezographic prints, 26 × 36 cm each.

Nkisi Nkondi statue (reference work)

Provenance: Kongo / Yombe (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Pietro Rosselli Lorenzini Collection — Museum of Civilizations, Rome