

Gallery 1957

Gallery 1957, London

Gideon Appah and Tiffany Alfonseca

'SOUTH FACING SOUTH (*ghanaman X quisqueya*)'

On view January 30 - March 2 2021



L-R: Tiffany Alfonseca, *Esta vez sera diferente* (2020), 30x40 inches, Acrylic paint, glitter, paint markers, and charcoal on stretched canvas; Gideon Appah *Strangers on a white horse* (2020), Oil and acrylic on canvas, 240 x 300 cms. Both courtesy the artists and Gallery 1957

Gallery 1957 are pleased to present works from Ghanaian artist Gideon Appah (b. 1987) and New York-based artist Tiffany Alfonseca (b.1994), in their new London space, from January 30 - March 2 2021 (virtual presentation by appointment, until Covid lockdown measures are eased).

Appah expands on his mystical landscapes and dreamlike narratives in large-scale oil paintings. A mixed-media artist, he draws from personal memories, informed greatly by early life experiences in Ghana's capital, Accra. Growing up in a large family, his works are often reflective of a life characterized by strong emotional bonds, religious activities, and folklore. Shown alongside new figurative works from New York-based artist Tiffany Alfonseca, whose vibrant and colourful artworks celebrate Black and Afro-Latinx diasporic lives, the exhibition explores the artistic landscape as a place of transcendence.

A continuation of his *Blue Boys Blues* series, new other-worldly creations from Appah depict surreal scenes populated by unknown figures - jewel-like greens alongside washes of peach and pops of colour, the barely clothed figures exist within a landscapes miraged with tropes from myth and legend. Appah's worlds

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are abstracted and fragmented, with glimpses of nature and ghostly reflections barely visible. Within his ethereal works, Appah focuses on presence or feelings evoked, in turn alluding to the organic transformations of memories over time. Using thick, rough application of acrylic to build up his compositions, his works respond directly to his own familial stories, whilst also reflecting on a country's national history.

Tiffany Alfonseca debuts a suite of paintings inspired by Peter Sollett's 2002 film *Raising Victor Vargas*, entitled *Esclavo de la Sociedad*. Collectively, the works presented in the exhibition challenge the trope of the hyper masculine Dominican-American man that too often informs broad representations of Dominican culture, through the lens of queerness. Alfonseca takes this film as a point of departure and conceives a scene in each painting that provides a rebuttal to the shots that compose Sollett's film. These intimate portraits of Black and Brown subjects inhabiting private moments and spaces—rendered in Alfonseca's singular palette of varying pink hues embellished with glittery accent colors—soften pictures we've been trained to see through a heteronormative lens. Each work in this show is about the things that are left unseen and unsaid and as such function as liminal snapshots—as the edited scenes of stories both personal and communal.

Notes to editors

About Tiffany Alfonseca

Tiffany Alfonseca (b. 1994) is a Bronx-based Dominican American mixed media artist. Alfonseca continuously taps into her Afro-Dominican roots and leverages it as a conceptual cantilever that provides a dynamic framework for her artistic practice. Moreover, her work aims to visually articulate that the Black and Afro-Latinx diaspora does not exist within a monolith, but that these communities are a cultural cornucopia that is vast, varied, and complex. Alfonseca's artwork is an intricate combination of beauty, diversity, and multilingualism that exemplifies the strength of the Black and Afro-Latinx diaspora.

About Gideon Appah

Born in Ghana in 1987, Appah lives and works in Accra. His works have been exhibited internationally, including at Mitchell-Innes & Nash (New York), Goethe Institute (Accra), Casa Barragan (Mexico City), Ghana Science Museum (Accra), Nubuke Foundation (Accra) and KNUST Museum (Kumasi). His work is included in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum, Canada and Absa Museum, Johannesburg - as well as private collections. He was shortlisted for the 2016 Kuenyehia Art Prize.

About Gallery 1957

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Based in Accra, with a London outpost opened in 2020, Gallery 1957 has a curatorial focus on West Africa. Presenting a programme of exhibitions, installations and performances by the region's most significant artists, the gallery serves as a vital platform, promoting West Africa's presence within the art scene by hosting ambitious exhibitions, providing resources for residencies and participating in international art fairs. Founded by Marwan Zakhem in 2016, Gallery 1957 has evolved from over 15 years of private collecting. The gallery now hosts two spaces in Accra - one in the Kempinski Hotel and another in Galleria Mall - and a London outpost in Hyde Park Gate.

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Dates: January 30- March 2 2021

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