

PRESS RELEASE

Kofi Agorsor

Tudevie (Calling)

15th June –2023 Accra, Ghana, Gallery III



MY BEAUTIES, 2010-2022, 225cm/88.10inches x W- 150cm/59inchesD-60cm/23.10 inches, African Tropical Wood
Image courtesy of the artist and Gallery 1957.

Gallery 1957 is pleased to present ‘**Kofi Agorsor: Tudevie (Calling)**’, a special collection of slow-growth sculptures that the artist has been developing for over a decade. The sculptures are complemented by a cluster of the kind of paintings that Agorsor is known for, to connect his established art to his less exposed vein of practice. Both lines of work have been at the core of Agorsor’s pursuits since his early childhood training across ritual and post-colonial learning environments. The public may be less familiar with the sculptural bodies that have been lurking in the background.

The exhibition ‘**Tudevie**’—meaning ‘Calling’ or ‘Awakening’ in Agorsor’s Ewe language—explores his shape-shifting position within and beyond established frameworks for art. Where to fit a fellow who

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flows like water? Is he a painter or sculptor? Is he modernist, or contemporary? Does his art live in the objects, or in the social processes that produced them? Is his thinking Ewe, African, Global, or Transcendent?

What is on show?

The exhibition presents several bodies of work: the **long**, the **lined**, and **illuminating** networks. The **long** includes two 'ensembles' of tree-sized women; fourteen as solos, twelve as a set ('My Beauties'). The alter-egos of both 'beauties' reappear in the paintings: twittering divinities of chromatic intensity.

The body of **lined** works consists of warped-and-carved heads ('Positive Tycoons'); as well as abstract layered paintings pulsing with pigments. The **illuminating** consists of a Queen-and-her-children: the sacred 'Da Kriso (Creatrix)' of Ewe mythology. Da Kriso exists as multiplicity-in-a-body; permutations of life and interdependent ecologies.

Tudevie presents the pieces in performative scenes: shrine-like, stage-like, nested, and singing. Light and sound act as mediums in a cosmic interplay between the art and environment; between the object and its (con)text. Agorsor's 'outdoorings' of his sculptures can be seen as a ceremonial occasion. The secret the artist stored, leaves the privacy of his home.

A tribute to women. Observations of his world. A patience, repetition. Breathing life into wood. Or rather, a drawing out of the soul already within. A call—and response—that cannot be repeated.

KA: He said, *Madam, you don't know what went on into that work. It cannot be repeated.* He said, *It's twelve years now, he's working on that.* You know? He thought it just . . . appeared.

RBR: The way I see it, it's not just an object that has a certain appearance and shape. It must carry with it . . . the charge of your life. Whatever you were experiencing at any of those moments.

KA: Sculpture takes a very long . . . takes life. Sculpture takes a *lifetime*. This sculpture like this, I've been working on it for so long that it has become antique. Sculpture takes you through a journey.

NA: Mm hm. It is a journey.

Kofi Agorsor (KA) – Robin Beth Riskin (RBR) – Nyornuwofia Agorsor (NA)

– Curatorial writing by Robin Beth Riskin

About the Artist

Kofi Agorsor (b. 1970, Kumasi, Ghana)

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Kofi is a versatile artist who uses his touch to bring out the spirits of his substrates. His practice spans painting, sculpture, installation, music, and performance. His studio is a collaborative and familial operation. Growing up in Akatsi Fiato in the Volta Region of Ghana, Agorsor was exposed to multi-faceted environments. His art forms are influenced by the Shrine as much as by the Gallery: two different outlets, one expressive vision. Agorsor's mediums wed the ancient with the modern and contemporary: a co-species endeavour that defies a 'single story'.

Agorsor has exhibited in hotels and diplomatic exhibitions across Accra and interconnected regions throughout the 1990s-2000s; 'Agorsor in Lusaka' (Alliance Française, Zambia, 2010); 'Totobieto' (Artists' Alliance, Accra, 2011); 'I Sing into the Cosmos' and 'Colours in Water' (Sofia, Bulgaria, 2014); 'Eternal Feeling' (Baginskaya Gallery, Dubai, 2022); 'The Colours of Life' (Artiana Auctions, Mumbai and Dubai, 2022); *Vorsanuwo* Exhibitions in Shrines (Volta Region, non-dateable); and 'everyday exhibitions' at the Agorsor Studio, Accra.

About Gallery 1957

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 three spaces in Accra – one in the Kempinski Hotel and two in the Galleria Mall – and a London outpost in Hyde Park Gate.

Artist: **Kofi Agorsor**

Title: *Tudevie (Calling)*

Dates: 15th June – 2023

Opening Reception: 8th June, 2023 - 6pm-9pm

Address: Gallery 1957, Accra, Gallery III
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