

UNLIMITED III: The African Family

Curated by Marwan Zakhem

23rd May – 13th July 2024

Third Floor

Galleria Mall



Thania Petersen, *BAWA MERA*, 2022, Embroidery thread on cotton poplin, Swarovski crystals, Japanese glass cut beads, stuffing, 205.74 x 160.02 cm. Image courtesy of Gallery 1957 and the artist.

Gallery 1957 proudly presents the third iteration of *UNLIMITED*. The first and second iteration of this monumental group exhibition took place respectively in 2022 and 2023. Both editions, curated by Gallery 1957's founding director Marwan Zakhem, invited artists from across the continent and its diaspora to produce specific works across all media to engage with the 1,400-square-metre of unfinished industrial space. The latest edition of the group show will be centred around the theme of *The African Family*, and what this means for us as artists and individuals in these uncertain times. The exhibiting artists include **Kofi Agorsor**, **Cornelius Annor**, **Rita Mawuena Benissan**, **Amoako Boafo**, **Kwesi Botchway**, **Gerald Chukwuma**, **Ibrahim El-Salahi**, **Kelvin Haizel**, **Isshaq Ismail**, **Yaw Owusu**, **Thania Petersen**, **Afia Prempeh**, **Jeremiah Quarshie** and **Otis Kwame Kye Quaiicoe**.

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Throughout history, family has been a cornerstone of survival on the African continent. The concept of family in African societies extends far beyond a nuclear unit, encompassing extended family members, clans, and communities. Families provided vital support networks for food, shelter, protection, and social cohesion. In times of adversity such as droughts, wars, and economic hardships, the strength of familial bonds allowed for collective resilience and survival. Elders pass down knowledge, traditions, and cultural practices to younger generations, ensuring the preservation of identity and values. Family ties have also served as a social safety net, offering care for the vulnerable and marginalised. The interconnectedness and interdependence within African families has historically played a crucial role in the survival, thriving, and continuity of communities across the continent.

In the contemporary context, the concept of the African Family is a multifaceted and evolving idea that reflects the complexities of African societies. Today, the African Family extends beyond biological relations to include chosen families, communities, and networks of support. None more so apparent than the artist-led ecosystem that can be found thriving in Ghana. The Black figuration movement finds a home base in Ghana and some of the game-changers are exploring the contemporary representation of African selfhood with distinctive style. From the bold portraits by Amoako Boafo, Kwesi Botchway and Otis Kwame Kye Quaiicoe which confer power onto their subjects through their piercing gaze, to the illuminating familial scenes accented with traditional fabric by Cornelius Annor. Collectively, these painters set their figures in environments which uplift their sense of purpose and disrupt monolithic understandings of African life, encouraging nuanced responses to moments frozen in time.

In this iteration of *UNLIMITED*, artists explore the subtleties of traditions, migrations, and societal changes within the African context. In her embroidered textile works, South African artist Thania Petersen maps out imperialism and colonialism across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, unravelling how hybrid identities are conceived as intricately entwined with religious and cultural aspects of life. Rita Mawuena Benissan's embroidered tapestries evoke a sense of cultural resilience amongst African societies, particularly the Ashanti kingdom which is the crux of her ongoing creative research. Benissan imposes archival photographs in her works, collaborating with the royal umbrella artisans in Kumasi and pulling tight the threads between tradition and contemporary art.

Drawn to a more tactile medium in his approach to sculptural installation, Nigerian artist Gerald Chukwuma portrays the diversity of the African family in his metal-based tapestry. Chukwuma centralises figures of a nuclear family with ephemeral figures in the background of the large-scale mixed-media work. In conversation with Chukwuma's transfiguration of metals, Yaw Owusu transforms the otherwise worthless material of 1 pesewa coins into an intriguing interplay of colour, texture and abstract patterns which merge into an encounter of value. Owusu's large-scale work on display takes the motifs of traditional kente symbols and patterns, reforming them into a striking geometric arrangement on wood panels. Kofi Agorsor's spiritually charged sculptures hand carved from African tropical wood present a feminine figure surrounded by the manifestations of her bloodline, divulging the interrelated familial bonds of the past which inform the present and inspire the future.

Abstraction also occupies a position of creative prominence in *UNLIMITED III*. Through the distinct approach of Ghanaian multidisciplinary artist Kelvin Haizel, possibilities emerge for art's role in the construction of a new kind of social reality. Haizel makes deliberate gestures in his practice to open up new forms of engagement with materiality and a juxtaposition of tactile and visual markers.

Through their works, the artists who constitute *The African Family* in *UNLIMITED III* evoke a sense of belonging, identity, and interconnectedness that transcends geographical boundaries. They offer a lens through which we can reflect on the past, navigate the present, and envision the future of the

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African Family unit. By highlighting themes of love, loss, strength, and unity, they invite viewers to reconsider conventional notions of family and embrace a more inclusive and expansive understanding of kinship in the African context.

About the Artists

Kofi Agorsor

(b. 1970, Kumasi, Ghana)

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.

Cornelius Annor

(b. 1990, Ghana. Lives and works in Accra and Brussels)

Working in the figurative and portrait tradition, Cornelius Annor depicts familial scenes in intimate, domestic settings, offering glimpses of Ghanaian life in states of gathering, repose, and leisure. The scenes depicted arise from recollections of his childhood as well as family photographs, rendering his work visual commentaries on memory and archives. The artist uses mixed-media to comment on the exchange between past and present, tradition and modernity that saturates everyday life in Ghana. His paintings are meant to inspire time travel, whisking the viewer away from the immediacy of the present to inhabit a memory from the past. For, while he depicts scenes from his personal life, Annor wants his work to tap into a universal quality that allows the viewer to see their family set within it. There is a warmth to the familial moments he represents which allows for such resonance across time and space, the way figures turn towards each other or touch in an easy familiarity that indexes the intimacy of kinship. Annor uses fabric lavishly in his paintings to evoke the domesticity and texturedness of family. His use of traditional Ghanaian textiles adds rich detail to the paintings, conveying the sensory environment of the home. Using a unique fabric transfer style, which entails imposing fabric onto canvas for several hours, he executes faded patterns onto the backgrounds of his work, which invokes the layered quality of memory as well as its disintegration over time.

Selected solo exhibitions include *Memories We Share*, Maruani Mercier Gallery, Knokke, Belgium (2022); *A Family Affair*, Gallery 1957 Accra, Ghana (2021) and *Lost But Found*, Venus Over Manhattan, New York, USA (2021). Group shows include *When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting*, Zeitz Mocaa, South Africa (2022-2023); *The New African Portraiture*, The Shariat Collections, curated by Ekow Eshun, Kunsthalle Krems, Austria (2022); *The Interior*, Venus Over Manhattan, New York, NY, USA (2021); *SANKOFA*, Gallery 2622, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, USA (2019); *Atelier 2017*, Alliance Française - Absa Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa, *Let's Talk Sh*t*, Alliance Française,

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UNICEF Art Project, Accra, Ghana (2016) and Silver Star Tower; African Regent Hotel, Accra, Ghana (2015). Annor has participated in the following fairs, Luxembourg Art Week; Art Basel, OVR; 1-54 New York; 1-54 London; FIAC, Grand Palais éphémère and Art Basel Miami Beach.

Rita Mawuena Benissan

(b. 1995, Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire. Lives and works in Accra, Ghana)

Rita Mawuena Benissan, a Ghanaian-American interdisciplinary artist, is on a mission to reimagine the royal umbrella, transforming it from a mere protective object into a potent symbol of Ghanaian identity. With a profound passion for art and cultural history, Rita collaborates with traditional artisans to breathe life into archival photos, immortalizing individual figures and communal scenes while embodying the beauty and power of her people.

Born in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire in 1995 to Ghanaian parents, Rita's journey led her to the United States as a baby, where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Apparel and Textile Design from Michigan State University in 2017, followed by a Master of Fine Arts in photography and an African Studies Program Certificate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2021.

In 2020, Rita established Si Hene, a foundation dedicated to preserving Ghana's chieftaincy and traditional culture, leaving a significant mark on Ghana's artistic and historical narratives. Through her foundation, she played a pivotal role in the reopening of the National Museum of Ghana in 2022 and served as the Chief Curator at the Institute Museum of Ghana (Noldor Artist Residency) until 2022. Furthermore, Rita served as the artistic director for the Open Society Foundation's Restitution Conference in Accra, demonstrating her commitment to cultural preservation and representation.

Rita's artistic prowess has garnered attention globally, with exhibitions at prestigious venues such as Arts + Literature Laboratory in Wisconsin (2021), the Foundation Contemporary of Art, Afrochella Festival (2021), Dak'Art - Biennale de l'Art Africain Contemporain at the IFAN African Art Museum in Dakar, Senegal (2022), and the group show "EFIE: Museum as Home" in Dortmund, Germany, Mitchell and Innes Gallery in New York (2023). Her solo exhibition, "In the World Not of the World," curated by Ekow Eshun at Gallery 1957 in Accra [2023], stands as a testament to her unwavering dedication to rewriting the narrative of Ghanaian identity through beauty and strength.

Amoako Bofo

(b. 1984, Accra, Ghana. Lives and works in Accra.)

Amoako Bofo uses painting to create his enticing characters and honour Black figures' place into the pictorial tradition of the Portrait. His elegant paintings elevate his subjects, capturing their confidence, style, and character. He is regarded as a notable young voice in art of the African Diaspora through his new approaches to the shaping of Black forms, and their dispositions in a larger global context. Bofo's portraits are enticing in their lucidity. The brushstrokes are thick and gestural, the contours of the body almost soften into abstraction. Accentuated and elevated figures are often isolated on single colour backgrounds, their gaze the focal point, to disrupt observations from canonical viewership.

Bofo's self-portraits are autobiographical explorations of his embodied self, expressions of vulnerability and creativity that challenge traditional narratives of masculinity. Other paintings represent men, women, and couples, with subjects chosen from friends and others he admires. They convey individuality and an active presence, with most of the figures locking eyes with the viewer and asserting a strong sense of identity. Bofo studied at the Ghanatta College of Art and Design, Accra,

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Ghana before attending the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, Austria. In 2017, he was awarded with the jury prize, Walter Koschatzky Art Prize and the STRABAG Art award International in 2019 both in Vienna, Austria.

The same year, he was the artist in residence at the Rubell Museum Miami, with the works completed during his stay comprising the museum's inaugural one-artist exhibition. 'Soul of Black Folks,' a traveling solo exhibition of over thirty portrait paintings, was organised in 2021–22 by the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco. Boafo is widely collected by private and public collectors and institutions, most recently by the Leopold Museum (Vienna, Austria); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, CA); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New-York, NY); Marie luise Hessel Collection Hessel Museum of Art(Annandale-On-Hudson, NY);Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College (Annandale-On-Hudson,NY), The Albertina Museum Vienna (Austria);the Rubell Museum (Miami, FL); The Blenheim Foundation, (Woodstock, Oxfordshire, UK); Minneapolis Institute of Art (Minneapolis MI, US) and the Louis Vuitton Foundation (Paris, France).In December 2022, Boafo opened dot.ateliers, a space intended to strengthen and advance the cultural ecosystem of Accra. It features a gallery, studios, an art library and a café, and offers exhibitions and residencies that encourage creative experimentation and support bold expression.

Kwesi Botchway

(b. 1995, Ghana. Lives and works in Accra)

Kwesi Botchway is inspired by artistic representations of Black beauty, joy, and futurity. Botchway locates himself firmly in the Black Art genealogy, using his work to respond to anti-Blackness as experienced by Africans as well as those in far-flung African diasporas. Resonant across his work is the mission to represent Blackness beyond the limits of dominant narratives, representing its loveliness, vitality, and expansiveness. Botchway works within the portrait tradition that bears a storied legacy in western art, reworking it by centering the long-absent and ignored Black figure. Blending styles of French Impressionism and African Realism, Botchway transforms the portrait into a study not of fixedness of identity, but of becoming and possibility. This oeuvre marks a shift from his earlier works, which sit more squarely in the realist style and are heavily influenced by Ghanaian street art traditions. Realism and abstraction also influence the artist's process of choosing subjects - while many are those Botchway knows from his life, others spring from his imagination or are composites of features he gleans from the world around him.

Kwesi Botchway is the Founder of WorldFaze Art Studio in Accra, a studio and residency space focusing on supporting young local artists. This support for emerging talent is deeply inflected by his own introduction to painting through apprenticing with a Ghanaian street artist at a young age. He studied art at the Ghanatta College of Art and Design in Accra before enrolling at the Academy of Visual Arts in Frankfurt, Germany. He has held solo exhibitions in Denmark, Ghana, the UK, and Belgium, some resulting from his residency at Gallery 1957 in Ghana in 2020. Group exhibitions have featured his work across Ghana, South Africa, the UK, Germany, Denmark, Belgium, while he has been exhibited at fairs such as Art Brussel Week in 2021. Botchway was nominated for the GUBA Awards USA as an Influential Artist in 2019, and has received significant press attention, profiled by publications such as Vogue, Financial Times, Flash Art, The Art Newspaper, Stylist, ArtNews, and Frieze.

Gerald Chukwuma

(b. 1973, Nigeria. Lives and works in)

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Gerald Chukwuma is one of Nigeria's fastest rising contemporary artists noted for his intricately crafted wood-slate sculptures. Using a multitude of techniques, his unique approach to burning, chiselling, and painting common materials captures a richly layered history imbedded with personal and political meaning. The use of traditional Uli and Nsibidi symbols links his work to the Nsukka art tradition which expanded and modernised the Igbo cultural aesthetic. Meanwhile, the transformation of object into highly detailed artworks roots him firmly in the contemporary moment of rapid environmental and ecological change.

In his work spanning paintings, sculptures and collage, Chukwuma explores migration as a constant process of transformation and reinvention. Considering the implications of globalisation on his local community, Chukwuma transforms everyday materials to render new stories of Nigeria's socio-political landscape. The artist is drawn to the movements of people through voluntary and forced migration as a vital stage in the progress of our collective humanity. This sense of optimism imbues his work with playfully illustrative characters drawn from a wide variety of visual forms present in Nigeria's deep cultural history.

Typical of the artist's detail driven approach, these works interweave a personal intimacy, the artist hand-crafts work, but they refer to global context of time, trade and travel. Some works appear as aerial views of road networks and urban landscapes, however upon closer inspection the surface appear to be collaged images constructed from sim-cards sourced from local communities. These are the very same communities that appear in the woodcarvings as symbols of urban societies galvanised by the realities of globalisation and coloured by internal and external conflicts.

Ibrahim El-Salahi

(b. 1930, Omdurman, Sudan)

is a Sudanese painter, former public servant and diplomat. He is one of the foremost visual artists of the Khartoum School, considered as part of African Modernism and the pan-Arabic Hurufiyya art movement, that combined traditional forms of Islamic calligraphy with contemporary artworks.

El-Salahi studied Fine Art at the School of Design of the Gordon Memorial College from 1949 to 1950, thereafter he attended the Slade School of Fine Art in London from 1954 to 1957. El-Salahi is considered a pioneer in Sudanese modern art and was a member of the "Khartoum School of Modern Art", founded by Osman Waqialla, Ahmad Mohammed Shibrain, Tag el-Sir Ahmed and Salahy himself.

His works have been shown in numerous exhibitions and are represented in collections such as the Tate Modern, the Museum of Modern Art and the Sharjah Art Foundation.

Kelvin Haizel

(b. 1987, Accra, Ghana. Lives and works in Accra, Ghana)

Working in a variety of media that includes photography, painting and archival interventions, Kelvin Haizel investigates the ontological question - what is the object of an image? His practice combines personal inquiry and emergence as strategies of experimentation across time to comprehend the manufacturing of images. After a long hiatus from painting, the artist has returned to the medium to engage with a visual language that is abstract, yet materialist and fictional.

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He is currently a PhD candidate at the Department of Fine Art and Curatorial Practice, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana. He earned his MFA (2018) and his BFA in Painting and Sculpture (2010) from the same institution.

Haizel's solo exhibitions include: 'Archive of Experiences', 8th Hamburg Photography Triennial, MARKK museum, Hamburg, Germany (2022) and 'Babysitting a Shark in a Cold room: Comoros Encounters', Zurich, Switzerland (2019) for which he was the recipient of A New Gaze 2 prize for contemporary photography.

Group exhibitions by the artist include: 'Beautiful Diaspora / You Are Not the Lesser Part' Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, IL, USA (2022); 'This is Not Africa- Unlearn What You Have Learned' ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark (2021), 'Tomorrow There Will Be More of Us', Stellenbosch Triennale, Stellenbosch, South Africa (2020); 'Afrotopia', Rencontres de Bamako, Biennale Africaine de la Photographie (2017); 'Oderly Disorderly', Museum of Science and Technology, Accra, Ghana (2017).

He was a resident artist at Hyde Park Art Centre in Chicago (2022) and a research scholar at Northwestern University in Chicago at the invitation of the Black Arts Consortium (2022). Haizel's work has been featured in articles and publications including *Monopol*, *Over Journal*, and *Contemporary And (C&)*.

Isshaq Ismail

(b. 1989, Ghana. Lives and works in Accra)

Isshaq Ismail is a visual artist known for his distinctive abstract style and unique approach to figurative painting. His paintings demonstrate a fidelity to what he has termed 'infantile semi-abstraction', a style that performs a technically and conceptually rich form of childish abandon. Marked by the liberal use of impasto, gestural lines, and a vibrant colour palette, his works speak to the human condition in postmodernity. The thick layers of paint that compose his figures add texture and depth, belying the simplicity that initially greets the viewer's eye. Ismail notes that his technique of painting mimics how a sculptor manipulates clay, which intimates a tactility to how the artist brings these subjects into being. There is an attentive freedom to the thick brushstrokes that sweep across canvas, imbuing the scene with the joyful possibility of liberation through non-conformity. Bold, bright, vivid colours saturate the scene, encasing both figure and background in pulsating energy. The figures themselves are surreal imagining of the human. Magnified lips, impressionistic noses, and two-dimensionality to faces and bodies which produces portraits that are raw and organic in their commentary on human life. Ismail explores the grotesque as an aesthetic form, asking what it means to confront the ugly and misshapen in a world, especially an artworld, that is fixated on beauty. These works stake a political argument in their interrogation of beauty standards, pressing questions of who gets to be deemed beautiful and who languishes in the realm of the hideous and, so, disposable.

In 2012, Ismail completed a Bachelor of Fine Art degree at the Ghanatta College of Art and Design. Layers, the first solo exhibition by the artist, took place at Nicholas Roman Fine Art in New York in 2018 and his sophomore exhibition, Beauty Behind the Madness, took place at Gallery 1957, Accra in 2020. He has participated in numerous group shows such as Naomi Campbell's EMERGE/Art and Fashion Exhibition in collaboration with Qatar Creates, Dubai, UAE (2022); Material+Earth, Christie's and Effe Gallery, London, UK (2022), Black Excellence - Black Elegance, Ross-Sutton Gallery, Miami Beach, USA (2021); Debut Exhibition, Effe Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2021); Say It Loud 2: Visionaries of Self, curated by Destinee Ross-Sutton, Christie's New York, USA (2021); Black Voices: Friend of My

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Mind. Ross-Sutton Gallery, New York, USA (2020); African Day Summer Show, WTC The Hague Art Gallery, Netherlands (2018); Holland & Ghana Growing Together, Netherlands Embassy, Accra, Ghana (2016) and more. The artist has been recognised for his talent through a residency at Gallery 1957 and in 2016, he was a finalist in the Barclays L'Atelier Art Competition in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the Kuenyehia Art Prize in Accra in 2015 and 2016, while being shortlisted for the 2019 GUBA (USA) Influential Artist Award.

Yaw Owusu

(b.1992, Kumasi, Ghana. Lives and works in New York, USA)

Yaw Owusu creates sculptural paintings and installations by shifting otherwise worthless materials into encounters of value. Working in a variety of media, he uses the least denomination of coins, stainless steel, wood, copper, found objects and social engagements to penetrate the histories of trade, exchange, and labour. His compositions reflect and are influenced by urban landscapes, architecture, historic iconography, and abstraction. Owusu's processes involve oxidation, plating and other experimental activities that transform the texture and colour of his materials to explore the transient nature of value across varied cultural and economic contexts. The artist's approach is rooted in a deep sense of playful alchemy that embraces the complexity of currency, symbolism, and meaning. He takes up the copper-plated steel Ghana *pesewa* coins which are minted by the Royal Canadian Mint and represent a failed attempt to curb inflation since 2007. The question of Africa's economic independence is at the crux of his work. In the instance of the US penny, marked by Abraham Lincoln's legacy of emancipation, Owusu asks what freedom means today. While juxtaposing these different currencies and objects, he investigates the multiplicity of what value can become.

His work is represented in several notable public and institutional collections, including the Presidential Residence of Ghana, the World Bank, the Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden, Marrakech, Morocco, the Shylon Museum, Nigeria, and Meta in New York.

Owusu has been featured in articles and publications including *Time Out New York*, *OZY.com*, *Africa in Dialogue*, *Daily Graphic*, *Gulf News* and *Khaleej Times*, Owusu was the recipient of the Kuenyehia Art Prize for Contemporary Ghanaian Art (2018), the recipient of the Pratt Circle Honorary Award (2019) and he was an AICAD Fellow nominee (2019-2020). Owusu was shortlisted for the Norval Sovereign African Art Prize (2023).

Thania Petersen

(b.1980, Cape Town, South. Africa. Lives and works in Cape Town)

Thania Petersen is a multi-disciplinary artist who uses photography, performance and installation to address the intricacies and complexities of her identity in contemporary South Africa. Petersen's reference points sit largely in Islam and in creating awareness about its religious, cultural and traditional practices. She attempts to unpack contemporary trends of Islamophobia through her analysis of the continuing impact of colonialism, European and American imperialism, and the increasing influence of right-wing ideologies. Threads in her work include the history of colonialist imperialism in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, as well as the social and cultural impact of westernised consumer culture. Her work is also informed by her Cape Malay heritage, and the practice of Sufi Islamic religious ceremonies.

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Petersen studied at Central Saint Martin's College of Art in London. She has held solo exhibitions at WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town, the AVA, Cape Town and at the Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions both locally and abroad.

Petersen is represented in various public and private collections including World Cultures Museum Rotterdam (Netherlands), Smithsonian Museum (Washington DC), Oscar Niemeyer Museum Curitiba (Brazil), The Durban Art Gallery, The IZIKO South African National Gallery, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA), The Kilbourn Collection, The Jochen Zeitz Collection (South Africa), and The Yeojoo City Collection (South Korea).

Afia Prempeh

(b.1986, Kumasi, Ghana. Lives and works in Ghana)

Prempeh's urge for independent practice was nursed during her time in the Kumasi College of Art. She earned her bachelor's degree in Painting from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (K.N.U.S.T.) in 2009, just as the Department's cross-genre curricular adjustments were intensifying. Having caught the early drifts of these conceptual currents, Prempeh could be considered among a crop of seedlings from the Kumasi Contemporary's 'disorderly garden'. Her practice continues to sprawl across Kumasi, Accra, and their imaginative extensions.

Prempeh's works have been exhibited in all three end-of-year exhibitions held by blaxTARLINES KUMASI, K.N.U.S.T., with the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board in Accra ('the Gown must go to Town', 2015; 'Cornfields in Accra', 2016; and 'Orderly Disorderly', 2017). Her paintings thus far are held in collections of Reverends, Presidents, Friends, and Fathers. Her most precious creations, she has kept for herself.

Jeremiah Quarshie

(b. 1985, Accra, Ghana. Lives and works in Karlsruhe, Germany)

Using the 'politics of painting' and its' traditional formalistic concerns as metaphors, he displays an acute social awareness in examining the connection between people who have previously been historically and culturally divided. These divisions have occurred because of social, economic or geographical conditions that have manifested on the African continent. Through his portraiture, he documents the lives of people in fabricated and genuine roles, using his own friends or so-called 'ordinary women' who he scouted for as his painting subjects. Quarshie's over-arching thematic concerns pertain to concepts of 'hope against failing political conditions.' With a keen interest in historical people and events, Quarshie makes subtle and sometimes bold references to such in his quest to state the recurring conditions and contexts that exists in different times and conditions. Quarshie, began exhibiting in 2007. He went on to exhibit internationally at Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (SMBA), Amsterdam (2012) and Gallery 1957 at 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, New York (2017). Quarshie has also participated in a number of shows in London, Munich, Marrakesh, Cape Town and Paramaribo.

Quarshie obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana in 2007.

His work forms part of numerous local and international collections such as, The Zeitz Museum, Cape Town, The Harn Museum of Art, Florida, The Seth Dei Foundation, Accra and The World Bank Collection, Washington D.C. among others.

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Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe

(b.1988, Accra, Ghana. Lives and works in Portland)

Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe's figuration is built upon a palette where color becomes its own language of transformation, be it social, political or personal. His are images of empowerment and redemption, sophistication and humility, curiosity and quietude. Each figure becomes a symbol of the reclamation of cultural dignity, embracing the idea of origin and personal narrative as it relates to gender and race dynamics.

Quaicoe attended the Ghanatta College of Art and Design for Fine Art in Accra, Ghana, with a focus on painting. His second solo show, ONE BUT TWO (Haadzii), opened Summer 2021 with a presentation of new works continuing his idiosyncratic perspective on Diasporic culture through the celebrated form of Black portraiture. This followed Black Like Me, the gallery's inaugural presentation with the artist and his first solo gallery exhibition in the United States, which took place in January 2020.

About Gallery 1957

Gallery 1957 is a contemporary art gallery with spaces across Accra, Ghana and London, UK.

It dedicates its programme to spearheading international exchanges between art practices from these communities and the rest of the world, presenting artists who interrogate concepts of belonging and identity, cultural exchange, and social history beyond Western narratives.

Launched by Marwan Zakhem in 2016 on Ghanaian Independence Day, Gallery 1957 has since expanded across three gallery spaces in Accra. Originally set up to promote Ghana and West Africa's presence in the arts scene, it now encompasses the Global South and its diaspora. Gallery 1957's London space opened in October 2020, providing a further platform for artists to build dialogues with its growing network of international collaborators.

Gallery 1957 presents exhibitions, installations, and performances by celebrated artists, fostering connections between local and international audiences. The Gallery's global gallery partnerships and ongoing artist residency program have attracted numerous international artists and arts professionals to Ghana. The Gallery's annual Cultural Week in September serves as a platform for encouraging deeper engagement with Ghana's vibrant contemporary art scene.

In 2021, Gallery 1957 launched the Yaa Asantewaa Art Prize for female Ghanaian artists, the first ever dedicated art prize of its kind. The prize aims to further strengthen the gallery's commitment to supporting and promoting emerging and established artists.

Gallery 1957's work expands beyond the gallery walls through a public programme that includes local and international art fairs, talks, off-site projects, and site-specific installations as well as the publication of books and catalogues – continuously supporting cultural initiatives in Ghana, Africa and beyond.

Title: *UNLIMITED III: The African Family*

Dates: 23rd May - 13th July 2024

Opening Reception: 23rd May 6pm-9pm

Address: Gallery 1957, Accra,

1957

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