Serge Attukwei Clottey
My Mother’s Wardrobe

Gallery 1957
The exhibition *My Mother’s Wardrobe* comprises a series of works inspired by the aftermath of the death of the artist Serge Attukwei Clottey’s mother, overlaying narratives of personal, family and collective histories.

According to custom in many parts of Ghana, a person’s wardrobe is locked up for a year after their death then released to relatives, often leaving the person’s offspring with little or nothing of the material memory of that person, especially as in the case of the artist, if he is an only son with no sisters.

Textiles and materials in Ghana, and other parts of West Africa, — each weft, line or mark — are potent carriers of memory, of communication, and the artist weaves into his sculptures subtle traces of loss, remembering, and of rebirth.

In form, Clottey draws on the interplay of the international and local, incorporating the universal and recurring theme of the barcode alongside the aesthetic structure of Ga Kpanlago rhythms, commenting on the enduring discourse of waxprint’s local demand and international production, from Indonesia to Holland to China.

Abstracting his environment, into monuments such as The Independence Arch, and the Jamestown and Labadi beachescapes so prevalent in his early paintings and current sculptural installations, the pieces, like the cloth they draw on, take on subtle semantic and communicative tones, there if you know where and how to look.

A performance on Independence Day, March 6th will expand on some of the themes of the exhibition, the personal brought into the collective, the feminine aspects of protest, and of becoming. Men and women dressed in their mothers’ wardrobes, reaffirming the quieter role of the feminine in the often masculinised, bombastic, conflict-driven narratives of history; honouring women as collectors and custodians of those cloths that act as markers of time and change, both in collective ways: documenting aesthetically the various political events of the country, and the changes in social values, from visual proverbs to symbols of technology, telephones, televisions, computers; as well as in personal ways: celebrating in colour and form the many stages of a person’s life, from birth to death.

The exhibition is a result of a residency with ANO, whose remit is to uncover some of the hidden and alternative, personal and collective histories, that make up what is now known as Ghana. Serge Attukwei Clottey’s is the first in a series of exhibitions under the Creative Directorship of ANO that look to expand the notion of exhibitions within a closed, limited space, and to that end, each exhibition I curate at Gallery 1957 will have an iteration in a public space, a lagoon, marketplace, on billboards, in town squares, as well as an accompanying research exhibition at ANO with a publication and film that will look into the elements and trajectories of each artist’s work as well as the deeper contexts from within which they stem, thus creating multiple layers of resonance and engagement.

Nana Oforiatta Ayim
Creative Director of Gallery 1957
Founder of ANO Centre for Cultural Research
Artist Biography

Clottey is the founder of Ghana's GoLokal performance collective and the creator of AfroGallonism, an artistic concept commenting on consumption within modern Africa through the utilisation of yellow gallon containers. Clottey has performed and exhibited widely at solo and group shows over the past decade, including; The Kampnagel, Hamburg (2015); Intelligentsia Gallery, Beijing (2015); The Mistake Room, Los Angeles (2015); 27th Festival Les Instants Vidéo, Marseille (2014); WUK, Wien (2014); Mohr-Villa, Munich (2014); Ozwald Boateng, London (2014); 11th Dak’art, Dakar (2014); Nubuke Foundation, Accra (2014); Studential Museum, Amsterdam (2012); The Drum Ace Café, Birmingham (2010) and at AfriCAM, Napoli (2009). Clottey has also held artist residencies at ANO Centre for Cultural Research Accra (2015-2016) and Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna (2013).

Exhibitions

2015
We Don’t Contemporary, Kampnagel, Hamburg, Germany
What is Matter, Intelligentsia Gallery, Beijing, China
Silence Of An Ordinary Things, The Mistake Room, Los Angeles, California

2014
Color Unfinished, 27th Festival Les Instants Vidéo 2014, Friche La Belle de Mai, Espace Culture, ADPEI, Vidéodrome 2, Marseille, France
Migration Messages, Collective Realities of African Migration, WUK Wien, Austria

Global Art Local View, European Monument Day, Mohr Villa Munich, Germany

5th Edition of MULTIPONT International art Symposium, Nitra, Slovakia
The Auction Room — African Contemporary Photography, Ozwald Boateng, Savile Row, London, UK
Masked Unmasked for the inauguration of the Cultural-Encyclopedia Project 11th Dakar 2014, Senegal
Du Bois In Our Time II ‘Colour Unfinished’, a collaboration with UCMA, University of Amherst, Massachusetts and Nubuke Foundation

2013
Muses, Goethe institute Accra, Ghana
Art Speaks, Wuk Kunst Exnergasse residency Austria, Vienna
Du Bois In our Time I ‘Colour Unfinished’, a collaboration with UCMCA, University of Amherst, Massachusetts and Nubuke Foundation

InsideTheMoskitonet — Concerned artists of environmental issues worldwide, Alliance Française Accra, Ghana
We Are Africa, Nubuke Foundation Accra, Ghana

2012
whose puppet are you? Street Performance on youth and politics awareness for Ghana election Accra, la (December)
Improvisation Global Art, Local view project (German Cooperation development), Goethe institute Accra, Ghana and Germany
Time, Trade & Travel, Studelian Museum Bureau, Amsterdam and Nubuke Foundation Accra

The Beautiful ones are not yet born Goethe Institut Accra, Ghana
Alternative Independence Day Celebration, Freedom Tour, Nubuke Foundation, Accra, Ghana

Inside The Mosquito Net, Brazil House, Jamestown, Accra, Ghana

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This catalogue accompanies Serge Attukwei Clottey's exhibition *My Mother’s Wardrobe* at Gallery 1957, curated by Nana Oforiatta Ayim, 6 March — 25 May 2016

© Gallery 1957
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PMB 66 — Ministries
Gamel Abdul Nasser Avenue
Ridge — Accra
Ghana

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