

Nana Bruce

In The Name Of Love: Introspection

Thursday, 31st July – Thursday, 11th September 2025

Gallery I, Accra



Nana Bruce, *I, You and Me*, 2025, Acrylic on canvas, 152 x 183 cm. Courtesy of the Artist and Gallery 1957.

Gallery 1957 is proud to present *In the Name of Love: Introspection*, a solo exhibition by Nana Bruce, opening in Accra on 31st July 2025.

This new body of work marks Bruce's second solo exhibition with the gallery and continues his intimate inquiry into the complexities of self-love and the turbulent journey toward it. Through figures caught in states of emotional flux and shadows that act as second selves, Bruce creates a deeply contemplative space—one that doesn't judge or instruct, but offers room for private reflection and honesty.

The exhibition will continue through 11th September 2025.

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We begin with a choice. A figure and its shadow, both calling.
The figure is bright, enticing, familiar. But the shadow speaks loudly too.
It holds its own kind of weight and refuses to be ignored.

In his second solo exhibition with Gallery 1957, Nana Bruce steps into this space of tension, where outward appearance and inner truth meet, resist, and reshape one another. He invites the viewer to join him there, not only to observe, but to begin their own introspection and embark on the uncertain but deeply worthwhile journey of learning to love oneself.

That journey is rarely linear. It unfolds in fragments—raw, fractured, shifting but always with the potential to move forward. Bruce's figures mirror this unfolding, caught in moments between revelation and quiet collapse; they embody the difficulty and joys of self-examination. Some hover on the edge of clarity, others drift in states of denial. But all are in motion, navigating however slowly, the layered terrain of the self.

Bruce often positions us above his subjects, framing scenes from a bird's-eye view and placing us, the viewers, as witnesses. This perspective creates distance yet insists on attention. We look down not with detachment, but with care, as though watching someone (perhaps ourselves) in the act of self-repair.

In the Name of Love: Introspection, builds on Bruce's earlier explorations into the role of shadows. Where in his 2023 works, shadows suggested internal conflict and unspoken emotion, here they evolve. They gain agency, they interrupt, they narrate. In one work, a shadow reaches for love while the figure withdraws. In another, it lifts its head and looks beyond, hinting at forthcoming clarity, the part of the self ready to rise, to take risks, to choose growth. These shadows make visible what we suppress, echo what we fear, and nudge us toward what is true.

The figures in this series are constructed through layers of unexpected colour: reds, blues, violets, browns, and greens. What might at first appear as black skin reveals itself, on closer inspection, as a symphony of undertones. This approach resonates with the underlying principles of incarnato, where skin is often explored not as a flat surface, but as a site of emotional and symbolic depth. These chromatic layers mirror the conceptual heart of the work: the self as complex and multifaceted, shaped by desire, doubt, religion, culture, and external expectations. It's within this same logic of layering that the bare form emerges, not as spectacle, but as a kind of emotional unveiling. Here, nakedness is not simply about the absence of clothing, but the shedding of persona, performance, and protection. Stripped of costume and context, the body becomes a site of reconstruction: a space for vulnerability, for clarity, and perhaps, for beginning again.

At the exhibition's entrance, "*Me Time*" meets you at the threshold. The figure's gaze is direct, absorbed, slightly irritated as if to ask: Why are you here? This is her ritual, her private space and we've arrived mid-moment, uninvited. But the boundary she draws isn't to shut us out, it's self-preservation, a way of holding space for herself. It's a moment that sets the tone for what follows: an exhibition that, at times, feels like entering another's solitude.

At the far end of the gallery, another encounter awaits. "*No Man Is an Island*" stages the final confrontation: the illusion of self-sufficiency. The figure stands alone cut off from the world, but the work warns that growth rarely happens in isolation. So our own shadows are invited to step in, and we are no longer just viewers, but participants in the scene. In this closing gesture, we meet our own shadows for the first time, not as illusions, but as reminders that self-love only begins when we step into the work ourselves.

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About the Artist

Nana Bruce

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

Nana Bruce is a figurative and portrait artist whose practice focuses on the dynamic layers of everyday life in contemporary Ghana. Working primarily with acrylic on canvas, Bruce employs bold, impressionistic strokes to document and reimagine the individuals and communities that shape his surroundings. His work draws from the rhythms of urban Accra—capturing the spirit of its people, the shifting social landscape, and the cultural narratives that define the present moment.

Bruce studied at the Ghanatta College of Art and Design, graduating in 2012. He has been practicing as a full-time artist, experimenting with tools and materials, and investigating, researching and experiencing the life behind the spirited crowds and individuals around him. By doing so, he unearths the latest trends in his country, identifies the topics he would like to address, and paints a picture of contemporary Ghanaian society. Ultimately, Nana Bruce offers the observer an inside look of the society through his eyes, both as an artist and a citizen. On the canvas, he applies thick strokes of acrylic paint in an impressionist technique to visualize his narrative.

Through portraiture and figuration, Bruce explores themes of identity, love, aspiration, and belonging. By observing and immersing himself in the daily lives of his subjects, he creates visual stories that reflect both personal and collective experiences. His paintings serve as a lens into the heart of Ghanaian society, offering insight into the challenges and vibrancy of modern life.

Bruce continues to live and work in Accra, where he remains committed to documenting and celebrating the evolving story of Ghana through paint.

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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.

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Artist: Nana Bruce

Title: In The Name Of Love: Introspection

Dates: Thursday, 31st July – Thursday 11th September 2025

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