

Gallery 1957

Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana

Could You be Loved, duo exhibition by Eric Adjei Tawiah and David Aplerh-Doku Borlabi

14 May – 17 June 2021

New: Gallery III space, Accra, ground floor of The Galleria Mall.



L-R The Gentleman, 2021 by David Aplerh-Doku Borlabi, Adinkra Earring, 2021 by Eric Adjei Tawiah. Images courtesy the artist and Gallery 1957

Gallery 1957 is pleased to announce the opening of our third gallery space in Accra; located on the ground floor of the Galleria Mall, opposite the Kempinski Gold Coast Hotel. For the inaugural exhibition, “Could You be Loved” we will be presenting new works by Ghanaian figurative painters Eric Adjei Tawiah and David Aplerh-Doku Borlabi.

About David Aplerh-Doku Borlabi (b.1987, Ghana)

Aplerh-Doku Borlabi was formally trained at Ghanatta College of Arts and Design, the alma mater of his mentor, acclaimed contemporary artist, Amaoko Bofo. Borlabi’s early works applied his foundational learning in academic painting, creating naturalistic compositions, and for years he grappled with finding a visual

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language that felt authentic. After 7 years of painting, Borlabi turned to his natural environment to embody his own culture and ethnic identity. Growing up in the CoCo Beach area of Accra, the coconut tree and fruit is a part of the artist's daily visual experience, and after spending a day sketching at the beach recently, the thought of using the coconut in his work emerged. From a distance, the mixed media works of oil paint and coconut husk on canvas, appear as richly toned brown skin. The intrinsic properties of the coconut husk's multiple layers, long hairs, and varying shades of brown whimsically renders skin texture and bone structure, while emulating the way natural light surfaces on skin.

With one medium, the artist was able to capture the physical color complexities of black people's skin, and visually narrate the physical organic connections of humanity, and plant life. Metaphorically, the coconut husks contemplate the tension between what is disregarded, discarded, and deemed ugly, and what is natural, strong, complex, multidimensional, and beautiful. Echoing prideful statements, such as Black is Beautiful, Borlibi captures the joy of the human experience lived in Black people globally, Ghana, and the continent at large.

About Adjei Tawiah (b.1987, Ghana)

Eric Adjei Tawiah is a Ghanaian artist living and working in Accra. Using a technique, he calls 'sponge martial' – an approach inspired by the experience of watching his mother's body being cleansed in a mortuary and evoking a figurative cleansing of negative thought processes – he creates brightly colored yet delicately textured portraits across mixed media.

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