

# Gallery 1957

**Kaloki Nyamai**  
***A New Country***

23rd July – 24th August, 2021. Accra, Gallery II.



Kaloki Nyamai, *Tumete Chathene (Came From The Meeting)*, 2021, Acrylic on Canvas, 200 x 200cm. Image courtesy the artist and Gallery 1957.

Gallery 1957 is proud to present a solo show of works by Kenyan artist **Kaloki Nyamai**, created while in residence at our studios in Accra, Ghana.

In Kaloki Nyamai's work we are invited to question what it is to truly be in ownership of anything - borders, language, time and even self. This series of large-scale works mirrors the complexity of translation through compositions of multiple figures whose features and expressions feel familiar, and a vibrant yet subdued colour palette which from piece to piece, borrow from one another, making a starting point indistinguishable – much like cyclical time. Densely layered, the historical and current moments signalled to reveal our collective and individual experiences prompting us to further ask whether we are truly moving forward or indeed backwards.

Words by Pájú Oshin.

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## About the artist

Kaloki Nyamai (b. 1985, Kitui, Kenya) currently lives and works in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. His first inspirations were his mother, who worked in fashion, and his grand-mother, who was a musician. It is his mother who first taught him how to draw and his grand-mother who would recount the stories history books do not tell. Drawing heavily on the stories of the Kamba people he was told by his grand-mother, Nyamai – a multidisciplinary artist who studied interior design, film and taught art classes before dedicating himself to his craft – explores how history and identity are intertwined. His works are multimedia and characterized by rich layers, offering fragments to be pieced together slowly. The lengthy, searching process employed in the making of the works is mirrored in the experience of viewing them. His work has been presented in fairs and exhibitions in Africa and Europe. In 2018, he participated in the third edition of the Kampala Biennale, curated by Simon Njami, with a monumental installation.

The Artist says of his practice “I think of my work as an open, multilayered conversation through which I question identity and how the tensions between past, present and future affect the way we are perceived and perceive ourselves to be. By layering and experimenting with different mediums, people, animals and abstract forms are revealed, working as symbols that help us look beyond the History we are taught in school, to the rich, often contradictory history made up of the stories of our ancestors shared directly, generation after generation, that took place before and without colonialism. It is only within and through these stories that we can begin the process of layering and texturing the flat identities provided to us by an education burdened by colonialism and its legacy.”

## About Péjú Oshin

Péjú Oshin is a British-Nigerian curator, writer and educator based in London. Her work explores liminality in culture, identity and the built environment through working with artists, archives and cultural artefacts to create and further explore shared experiences across a global African diaspora.

Péjú has a history of supporting young and emerging artists and cultural producers through her work at Tate, Barbican and Wellcome Collection and others. She is an Associate Lecturer at Central Saint Martins and has taught on courses in the Fashion and Culture & Enterprise departments. She is the author of *Between Words & Space* (2021) a collection of poetry and prose and was shortlisted for the Forbes 30 Under 30 Europe list in the Arts & Culture category in 2021.

## 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

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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: Kaloki Nyamai

Title: *A New Country*

Dates: 15 July – 24th August, 2021

Opening: 15 July, 2021 - 6pm

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