

PRESS RELEASE

Kofi Awuyah

WILL IT EVER END.....?

15th February – 26th March, 2022 Accra, Ghana



Kofi Awuyah, *Historic Recurrence* (22nd January, 1824), 2021, Oil and acrylic on canvas. Image copyright the artist, courtesy of Gallery 1957.

Gallery 1957, Accra is pleased to present ***WILL IT EVER END.....?*** a solo exhibition of new work by Ghanaian artist Kofi Awuyah with a curatorial essay by Asana Greenstreet.

WILL IT EVER END.....? brings together 10 canvases and 5 works on paper produced during Kofi Awuyah's 10-week residency at Gallery 157 in Accra. In his first major solo-show at the gallery, he employs an expressionist approach in his practice that takes its narrative from historical and contemporary events, in which the artist unabashedly stirs the muted world of injustice and the oppressed.

Produced in a period of solitude, this series of 15 new pieces is syncopated with the rhythms of Kurt Whalum and Richard Bone, which affords the artist the time he needs to feel the space and the tone of the paintings. He has perfected the painting process, a technique that is now uniquely his, one which references a bygone era of abstraction through which his vibrant surfaces convey the intense emotion of the scene depicted on the canvas. "I don't remember the first time I saw Picasso's *Guernica*, but it's ability to capture emotion stayed with me because it talks about everything from pain and hardship to life and death. As an artist I want to represent not only death and life but the culture of people." he says, explaining that his wish is to convey the intense emotion he feels about injustice in the world. Against this backdrop, Awuyah uses abstraction in his paintings to evoke a strong emotive response to

the myriad of cultural, ethical and historical questions that arise from his representation of injustice in the world, thus inviting the viewer to ask the question *WILL IT EVER END.....?*

Historic Recurrence (January 1824), is a diptych in which the Ashanti War against the British Empire is contrasted with the modern struggle of the people against the state, recently publicised through the Black Lives Matter movement that highlighted discrimination and police brutality in the USA.

In The Clash (8 October 2020), the perpetrators in this chaotic and bloody scene are robots dressed in blue police uniform, whose colours are contrasted to the soft brown hues of the eyes, lips and skin of the murdered. Here, Awuyah memorialises the plight of the people in the End SARS movement in Nigeria.

About the Artist

Kofi Awuyah (b. Accra, 1988) is a Ghanaian artist whose practice includes several mediums such as painting, sculpture and installation. He explores a range of themes from culture to religion, politics, human existence and death, with predominantly the use of acrylic, oil and charcoal on canvas. After high school, Awuyah enrolled in Business School. However, as he was spending all of his time painting with local artists, he eventually changed direction and decided to fully dedicate to the development of his artistic career by studying Fine Arts at the Vision Art College. Kofi does not merely mirror the socio-political realities that surround him, he instead engages and challenges them with his work by daring to confront difficult themes such as his community's oppression over the years. He has exhibited in Burkina Faso, Togo, Ivory Coast and Denmark and this is his first solo show with Gallery 1957.

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

Artist: Kofi Awuyah

Title: *WILL IT EVER END.....?*

Dates: 15th February – 26th March, 2022 Accra, Ghana

Opening Reception: 15th February, 2022 - 6pm-9pm

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