

Rita Mawuena Benissan

b. 1995, Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Lives and works in Accra, Ghana.

EDUCATION

- 2021 MFA in Photography, at University of Wisconsin- Madison
2017 BFA in Apparel and Textile Design, at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024-5 *One Must Be Seated*, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa
2023 *In the World not of the World*, Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana
2022 *Ghana, Land of Freedom*, The Mix Gallery, Accra, Ghana
2021 *Okuafo Pa*, Foundation of Contemporary Art, Accra, Ghana
Mo Apiafo, MFA Show, Arts + Literature Laboratory, Madison, Wisconsin, USA
2019 *Power of the Crown*, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA
2018 *Survive in America*, Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center, Birmingham, Michigan, USA
Survive in America, Baltimore Art Gallery, Detroit, Michigan, USA
Survive in America, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *Top Charity Auction*, Omenaa Art Fondation, Warsaw, Poland
2024 *Keeping Time*, Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana
Unlimited III: The African Family, Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana
2023 *Worldmaking*, Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York
Unlimited II, Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana
2022 *Unlimited*, Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana
The Medium is the Message- The African Diaspora Story, Grizzly Grizzly, Philadelphia, PA, USA

1957

Gallery 1957, I, II and III Accra
Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast
& Galleria Mall
PMB 66 — Ministries
Gamel Abdul Nasser Avenue
Ridge — Accra
Ghana
info@gallery1957.com

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- 2021 *EFIE: The Museum as Home*, Museum Ostwall im Dortmunder U, Dortmund, Germany
The Medium is the Message- The African Diaspora Story, Taylor Hall Gallery, Newark Delaware, USA
- 2020 *Arbitrary Ground: Queers and Complacency* Exhibition, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA
6 - Feet, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA
- 2019 *Manifest Photo Exhibition*, University of Wisconsin- Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA
What Now?, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA
- 2018 *Explore/Expose* Photo Exhibition, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA
MFA Photography Exhibition, University of Wisconsin- Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, USA
- 2016 Apparel and Textile Exhibition, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA
- 2015 Apparel and Textile Exhibition, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA

AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

- 2024 Shortlisted for Henrike Grohs Art Award
- 2023 Shortlisted for CIRCA Art Prize, *A Makers' Hope* video shown at Piccadilly Circus in London, London, UK
- 2020 Ghana Art and Culture Award: Media, Blog of the Year, Accra, Ghana
Racial Justice Award- African Studies Program UW-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin
- 2019 Professional Development Grant, Art Department, Madison, Wisconsin
IRIS Fieldwork Award, Institute for Regional and International Studies. Madison, Wisconsin
BLAC Foundation Grant. BLAC Foundation, Madison, Wisconsin
- 2017 Martin Luther King Scholarship, Detroit Annual Conference, Detroit, Michigan
- 2016 Martin Luther King Scholarship, Detroit Annual Conference, Trenton, Michigan
Best Print Award, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

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SIGNIFICANT ENGAGEMENTS

2024	Founder and Director, Vanishing Past: A Community Archiving Workshop
2023	Art Director at Open Society Foundation, Conference on Restitution
2021	Cultural Curator, The Noldor Residency
2020	Founder and Director, Si Hene

FAIRS AND BIENNALE

2025	Art Basel, Hong Kong, China Sharjah Biennale 16, Sharjah, UAE
2024	1-54 London, with Gallery 1957, London, United Kingdom Frieze Seoul, with Gallery 1957, Seoul, South Korea Unapologetic Woman, NY, Palazzo, Bembo, Venice Biennale 1-54 Marrakesh, with Gallery 1957, Marrakesh, Morocco
2022	Ghana Pavilion with Kwasi Darko and Kuukua Eshun, Dak'art Biennale, Senegal

RESIDENCIES

2025	WereldMuseum Lab, Nijmegen, Netherlands Gallery 1957, London, United Kingdom
2023	Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana
2022	(Un)Learning Distances, (Hybrid), Dortmund, Germany

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Fondation H, Paris, France
The Dean Collection, New York, USA
Fundación Yannick Y Ben, Mallorca, Spain
Fondazione Golinelli, Bologna, Italy
Nicolas Berggruen Private Collection
Amoako Boafo Private Collection, Accra, Ghana
Kareem Abou Private Collection, Accra, Ghana
Youssef Bouabid Private Collection, Rabat, Morocco
Joakim von Ditmor, Destinee Ross-Sutton Private Collection, New York, USA

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2025	July 11, True Africa https://trueafrica.co/article/how-the-artist-rita-mawuena-benissan-became-a-custodian-of-ghanas-memory/
2024	August 18, VOA Africa https://www.voanews.com/a/ghanaian-american-artist-calls-for-cultural-restitution/7747806.html June 28, Stir World

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<https://www.stirworld.com/see-features-a-group-exhibition-in-accra-focuses-on-the-family-unit-as-the-cornerstone-of-survival.html>

March 20, New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/arts/design/africa-gallery-57-influence-grows.html>

April 15, Cultured Magazine

<https://www.culturedmag.com/article/2024/04/15/pierre-huyghe-sarabsze-beatriz-milhazes>

2023

Aug 31, FAD Magazine, [“THE CIRCA PRIZE 2023 ARTIST SHORTLIST REVEALED.”](#)

Aug 23, New York Art Tour, [“Rita Mawuena Benissan in ‘Worldmaking’ at Mitchell-Innes and Nash Gallery”](#)

July 4, Art News Africa, [“ANA Spotlight : Rita Mawuena Benissan”](#)

June 10, ONART, [“Ceremonial umbrellas as works of art: The magical universe of Rita Mawuena Benissan”](#)

May 12, Art News Africa, [“Rita Benissan is Preserving The History of Royal Umbrellas”](#)

April, DW News, [“The hidden history of Ghana's royal umbrellas”](#)

2022

Aug 3, Braperucci, [“Art Attack: meet Rita Mawuena Benissan, visual storyteller reclaiming and curating Ghanaian history with Si Hene”](#)

June, Widewall, [“DAK’ART, Biennale of Contemporary African Art, Opens”](#)

June 17, Art News, [“Meet The Ghanaian-American Artist Helping Ghana Reclaim Its Royal History”](#)

May 21, E-Flux, [“Rita Mawuena Benissan, Kwasi Darko and Kuukua Eshun: Nkabom—The Museum as Community”](#)

2021

Dec 15, The Art Newspaper, [“From artist residency to fully-fledged museum: Ghana's new space for contemporary African art prepares to open in March”](#)

June 13, The Capital Times, [“Q&A: Artist Rita Mawuena Benissan captures her Ghanaian heritage under one big umbrella”](#)

May 21, E-Flux, [“Rita Mawuena Benissan, Kwasi Darko and Kuukua Eshun: Nkabom—The Museum as Community”](#)

Video

2022

Mar 7, Blend, [“Young Black Contemporary Artist: Rita Mawuena Benissan, The Umbrella Re-Imagined”](#)

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