

SULGER-BUEL GALLERY

Press Release (09 September 2019)
(For Immediate Release)

Solo Exhibition – Adjani Opku-Egbe
Surpassing the Eternally Mysterious Afro-surreal

07 November – 26 December 2019



Adjani Opku-Egbe | *The Death of Patriarchy* | 2018 | Mixed media on canvas | 160 x 130 x 5 cm

Sulger-Buel Gallery cordially invites you to attend the opening reception of *Surpassing the Eternally Mysterious Afro-surreal*, the latest solo exhibition by Cameroonian Artist Adjani Opku-Egbe. The exhibition will be opened in the presence of the Artist on Thursday 7 November 2019 at 18:30 and concludes on Thursday 26 December 2019.

About the Exhibition:

Surpassing the Eternally Mysterious Afro-surreal

Overtly characterised by the subject matter and themes that Okpu-Egbe considers relevant to the times, this exhibition contains works whose thought provoking social commentary are deeply embedded in semi abstract Afro-surreal figurative expressions voicing an urgent need to boost parallel structures for: "resisting injustice, demanding accountability, documenting events and generating awareness."

For this exhibition, Okpu-Egbe presents us with works that compel reflection and discussion to address issues regarding climate change, patriarchy, hate, racism, "occupation" and the struggles for independence in Ambazonia, West Papua and West Sahara. The Israel Palestinian conflict as well as the wars in Syria, the Central African Republic, and the genocide carried out on the Rohingyas in Myanmar by the regime. The artworks do not only intend to highlight "struggles", they go further to act as a call to rally support and resistance, advocacy for justice and above all, solidarity with those who bear the brunt of most conflicts – notably women, children, the less abled, the elderly and Prisoners of Conscience.

Although Okpu-Egbe is aware that the process of artistic creation does not come nicely packaged for philosophical preferences and wishes, especially as an Afro-surrealist – Expressionist (who considers creativity to be both a mystical and metaphorical process,) he remains determined to unfold these themes during this exhibition. Okpu- Egbe aims to use the exhibition as a platform to implore other Afro-surrealists to "seek ye first the 'woke' realms of the objective part of their creative process, as experience has taught him; the 'lit' of artistic satisfaction, entertainment, and creative appreciation in the modern era shall be added unto you."

He further intends to explore notions of 'White Supremacy', torture, solitary confinement in prisons, as well as police brutality, with specific reference to circumstances surrounding the death of lesser publicised cases, like that of Gugsu Abraham. Okpu-Egbe also reflects on Francafrique, neo-colonialism, which he interprets as echoes of historical and current voices of victory, legacy and inspiration amidst social struggles that are often seen as herculean tasks to both perpetrators and those committed to continuous advocacy and activism for example in the light of 'Black Lives Matter' and the global social justice movement.

About the Artist:

Adjani Okpu-Egbe

Born 1979 in Kumba, Southern Cameroon also known as Ambazonia
Lives and works in London, United Kingdom

Using a crude expressive painterly language that incorporates autobiographical content, Adjani Okpu-Egbe unfolds a wide range of complex themes relating to Archaeology, Feminism, Patriarchy, African History, Pan Africanism, Afrocentricity, the African diaspora and political activism reflective of and transcending the Southern Cameroons Ambazonian movement to highlight specificities within the realm of the global social justice movement. These are sometimes spiced with direct and indirect sense of humour that gives away an interest as a keen observer of people and a social commentator.

The mathematical formulae that was recurrent in many of his earlier paintings are an automatic scribble that became his distinguishing mark. These math exercises he was forced to do as a child were a repetitive sign of his relationship with his father who wanted him to abandon his dream of pursuing a career in professional football to instead become an economist or a businessman and consequently with any imposing or repressive authority have suddenly disappeared following the “passing” of the former and Adjani’s impulse and or emotional intelligence in allowing his practice to evolve naturally. The symbols that represented science and logic and became a subconscious automatic scrawl, and - perhaps the worst affront in the context of West and non-West relationships - a decorative element, has now given way to an emphatic use of unique materials suggestive of an artistic philosophical manifesto, perhaps in the near future.

Often painting on found materials such as reclaimed doors and bubble wraps, Adjani's boundless imagination and experimental curiosity allow him to take these salvaged materials to heart and use them as convincing metaphors.

Okpu-Egbe’s most noteworthy exhibition includes; *Regarding Africa: Contemporary Art and Afro-Futurism* curated by Ruti Direktor at Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel in 2016 and *The Underdog*, a solo presentation at the 2014 edition of the 1-54 African Art Fair in Somerset House London. In 2012, Okpu-Egbe was amongst the artists commissioned nationwide by BBC to interpret the Queens Diamond Jubilee Pageant on the River Thames, making him the first African Artist to officially partake in such an event.

Details of Venue:

Address: The Loft, 51 Surrey Row, Unit 2 La Gare, London SE1 0BZ

Telephone: +44 203 268 2101

Email: christian@sulger-buel-gallery.com

Duration: Thursday 07 November 2019 at 18:30 – Thursday 26 December 2019

Gallery hours during exhibitions: Monday - Friday: 10:00 - 18:00

Weekends or other times by appointment only.

About Sulger-Buel Gallery:

With over three decades experience in collecting and studying African Art, Christian Sulger-Buel became the remaining partner of Sulger-Buel Lovell Gallery which had been

in operation since 2014. Specialising in the contemporary art of Africa and its Diaspora, the team at Sulger-Buel Gallery builds on half a decade's commercial experience in presenting dynamic, challenging and exciting art exhibitions, publications and consultancy services. The gallery provides a focus for those in London to acquaint themselves with choice work from one of the fastest developing, ground-breaking and important areas in the field today - African art. Visitors and collectors can look forward to cutting-edge and influential exhibitions at its London space as well as at international art fairs by an international team of gallerists, consultants and curators.

Media Contacts:

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