

TABARI

ARTSPACE

Tabari Artspace Presents ***A special exhibition showcasing contemporary African Art in collaboration with Arthouse Foundation***

Dates: 8th October – 10th November

For Immediate Release

Tabari Artspace is proud to announce its first exhibition of contemporary African art that spotlights the uncommon elements of today's thriving African arts scene.

In collaboration with Arthouse Foundation, a Nigerian initiative known for supporting local creative talent through international residency programs, Tabari Artspace will display the works of three of the Foundation's promising artists - painter Nengi Omuku, mixed media artist Tyna Adebawale, and visual artist Thierry Oussou.

This collaboration draws awareness to a lesser-known aesthetic in African art, opening up a discourse around contemporary perspectives that deal with the issues of 'now' ranging from gender, identity, and mental health to the repatriation of African artefacts as highlighted in Oussou's recent works. African art exhibition reflects Tabari Artspace's long-standing commitment to nurturing the careers of emerging artists and providing them with a platform from which to showcase their works to the greater world.

The three selected artists are characteristic of the new wave of African creatives that are doing things differently, striking out from the tired themes and narratives that once typified the African art market. Oussou recently made international headlines through his 'faked' archeological dig, a performance in Southern Benin designed to draw attention to the African artworks and artefacts that he believes have been plundered from their homeland. Omuku is known for her vibrant and arresting paintings that detail her fixation with the politics of the body while Adebawale utilises texts, pigments and found materials to relay the poignant issues faced by the women of her nation today.

Notes to Editor

ABOUT TYNA ADEBOWALE

Tyna Adebawale (Nigeria, b.1982) is an award-winning painter and mixed-media visual artist who graduated in painting from Auchi Polytechnic. Adebawale has exhibited her work in eighteen group exhibitions in Nigeria, Brazil, Cameroon, South Africa and Ghana. She has taken part in workshops and artist residencies at the Foundation for Contemporary Art, Accra; the Nigeria Brazil Cultural Centre in Belo Horizonte, Brazil; the Bakassi Peninsul' Art in Limbe, Cameroon; the University of Cape Town, South Africa; the Center for Contemporary Art (CCA); and the Arthouse Foundation in Lagos, Nigeria.

On her work confronting issues of gender Adebowale says: *"I wonder why the power of a woman is being questioned and repressed by a male dominated society. How insecure are these men? What are they afraid of and why? These are problems in societies like mine, that are usually strangled by extreme religiosity and patriarchy. Which in my view, is almost a global issue. Women have to constantly fight, to achieve and attain what is normal to men. Why so? Are we supposed to just follow these stringent laws and not ask questions?"*

ABOUT THIERRY OUSSOU

Thierry Oussou (Benin, b. 1988) is a visual artist and recent resident at Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. After assisting with artists Ernesto Hounbo Meschac Gaba, and Barthélémy Togo, he created his own art studio, Yé, in Benin. He has received multiple awards for his work, including the first Jacqueline van Tongeren Fellowship 2016 at Rijksakademie and was nominated by the Dutch Royal Award for Modern painting at the Amsterdam Royal Palace in 2016. He has participated in recent exhibitions at Stevenson Gallery (Cape Town) and Belenzhino (Sao Paulo).

On his current work Oussou says: *"I'm currently working on murals made by children in the villages in Benin. I photograph the drawings made by children to create my own drawings. For me, it's a language of communication. There are villages here where children don't even have electricity or drinking water."*

ABOUT NENGI OMUKU

Nengi Omuku (Nigeria, b. 1987) is a painter who features dark, amorphous and human presences that float through active spaces. Her work functions as a metaphor alluding to wider themes of difference and mutual belonging. Omuku completed a BA followed by an MA in Fine Art at the Slade School of Fine Art. Recent exhibitions include the Armory Show, Focus: African Perspectives (New York); A State of Mind, Omenka Gallery (Lagos); and the Jerwood Drawing Prize Exhibition, Jerwood Gallery (London). She is the recipient of several awards including the British Council CHOGM Art Award presented by HRH Queen Elisabeth II.

On showcasing her work at Tabari Artspace Omuku says: *"It's a totally new audience and an exciting opportunity for me as I've never shown my work in the Middle East. I look forward to seeing how my work is received and of course encountering a completely new culture. It will definitely inspire new work!"*

ABOUT ARTHOUSE CONTEMPORARY

Founded in 2007, Arthouse Contemporary is an international auction house that specialises in modern and contemporary art from West Africa. Arthouse Contemporary aims to create awareness of the scope of contemporary art in the region, encourage international recognition towards its talented artists and strengthen the economy of the art market in Nigeria. Arthouse Contemporary African Art has recently expanded with Arthouse - The Space, which organises exhibitions of contemporary art, as well as the Arthouse Foundation, a non-profit residency-based programme based in Lagos.

ABOUT TABARI ARTSPACE

Founded in 2003 by Maliha Tabari, Tabari Artspace is a gallery based in DIFC, Dubai specialising in modern and contemporary Middle Eastern art. As an internationally-facing, commercial art gallery, Tabari Artspace plays a pivotal role in the advancement and growth of the Middle Eastern art scene supporting artists from Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and beyond.

Tabari Artspace offers both local and international audiences the opportunity to discover artists from this region through participation in international art fairs, and facilitating relationships with significant private collections and museums, including LACMA, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, and Barjeel Art Foundation.

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