

ADA \ CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY & HOUSE OF FINE ART (HOFA) PRESENT *MOTHER OF MANKIND*, AN ALL-FEMALE GROUP EXHIBITION

On view from July 22 – August 31, this first collaboration between the Accra- and London-based galleries, curated by Adora Mba, founder of ADA, brings together the works of 18 all-female emerging artists. Through their personal experiences and artistic approaches, they jointly deconstruct recurring tropes in the representation of the Black female figure, thereby forging the way for new narratives and identities to emerge.

July 22 – August 31, 2021

HOFA Gallery | 11 Bruton Street, Mayfair, London

Curated by Adora Mba



Left. Marcellina Akpojotor, *Set to Flourish II*, 2021. Fabric and acrylic on canvas, 121.9 x 152.4 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Rele Art Gallery, Lagos, Nigeria. Right. Sophia Oshodin, *While We Wait*, 2021. Acrylic on canvas, 91.4 x 91.4 cm. Courtesy of the artist and of ADA \ contemporary art gallery.

June 22, 2021 (London, United Kingdom) – ADA \ contemporary art gallery (Accra, Ghana) and HOFA Gallery (London, United Kingdom) have joined forces to premiere an all-female group exhibition, *Mother of Mankind*, showcasing an international selection of 18 emerging artists. On view from July 22 – August 31 at HOFA's London space, the exhibition is the first of its kind to be presented by both galleries. Curated by Adora Mba, founder and director of ADA \ contemporary art gallery, *Mother of Mankind* sheds light on a new generation of rising artists whose work challenges and deconstructs art historical canons of representation – recurring motives which often marginalize and obliterate Black figures, and in particular, the Black female figure. Each artist investigates, in her own unique way, current perceptions of identity, gender, sexuality, family and society, all-the-while bringing forth her personal experience and a distinct visual narrative across a range of media. More than a collection of global female artists, *Mother of Mankind* is envisioned as a statement, a sisterhood, and an artistic call to arms. Advancing the connection to Mother Earth, Mother Nature, and Mother Africa, the artists portray varied self-definitions of the Black woman, in light of a new approach and artistic contribution to contemporary art.

Placing her as the central figure, an active participant in their art, they draw upon visual cues from diverse galvanic portraiture to achieve a balance between realism and abstraction, forms and textures, power and vulnerabilities. In the spirit of social change and reform, each brings forth a new position, in lieu of a new definition, of the Black woman. Rather than attributing new roles to this marginalized figure, they establish a new space for existing roles to be unveiled and shared. Director of ADA \ contemporary art gallery and curator Adora Mba explains:

“At a time when singular voices demonstrate their strength when united, I feel privileged to showcase the works of these remarkably talented artists in one of the cities I call home. The women presented in this show are in the early days of their artistic careers, yet already making waves and drawing attention amidst an industry which tends to be more supportive of their male counterparts. In working with ADA, HOFA is lending us a space for their, for our, voices to be heard; our stories to be told; our creative spirits to conceive, unbound, forging our own narratives. Beyond being artists that I personally admire, these women are my sisters, my kin from across the globe.”

Elio D’Anna, co-founder and director of HOFA, pursues:

“This exhibition is the first of its kind at HOFA Gallery, and we are honored to showcase powerful and norm-defying visual narratives of Black femininity as told by Black female artists. Brought together through the lens of a Black female curator, Mother of Mankind engages boldly and critically with international events and discussions over the past few months, making it a particularly relevant, momentous exhibition in London this year.”

Moving the dialogue away from a normative femininity, *Mother of Mankind* places the frame on the specific Black experience, by showcasing artists whose construct of femininity is conceptualized in its application to women from Africa and its diaspora. Hailing from a range of countries, from Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa to Canada, the US, the UK and France, the participating artists consciously reject and redefine traditional standards of beauty, perception and representation – thereby reclaiming ownership over their narrative and elevating a Black female consciousness and identity.

Participating artists:

Jamilla Okubo
Adebunmi Gbadebo
Emma Prempeh
Ekene Maduka
Ayobola Kekere-Ekun
Muofhe Manavhela
Mookho Ntho
Cece Phillips
Alexandria Couch

Sola Olulode
Marcellina Akpojotor
Cinthia Sifa Mulanga
Chinaza Agbor
Damilola Onosowbo Marcus
Tobi Alexandra Falade
Dimakatso Mathopa
Sophia Oshodin
Bria Fernandes



Jamilla Okubo, I do not come to you as a reality. I come to you as The Myth (Pentecost), 2021. Mixed media, acrylic on canvas, 183 cm x 244 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Mehari Sequar Gallery.



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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Adora Mba:

Adora Mba (b. 1986, London) is the founder and director of ADA \ contemporary art gallery, a commercial art space based in Accra, Ghana, committed to representing emerging artists across Africa and its diaspora. Raised in London, Accra and Lagos, Mba spent her formative years cultivating a dialogue between her African roots and European education. Her extensive travels led her to develop a keen interest in contemporary art, and in particular the African art scene. An art advisor, collector and writer, Mba's experience working in the contemporary African art industry nurtured her expertise on the continent's artistic scene.

Starting her career in cultural journalism and public relations, she soon relocated to Ghana where she acted as art consultant for various actors of the cultural sector (Ghana Ministry of Culture; Adjaye Associates). In 2017, she launched The Afropolitan Collector, an art advisory platform specialized in the acquisition and promotion of contemporary art and design from Africa. Throughout her career, Mba witnessed a bounded African artistic scene, lacking the infrastructure necessary to achieve its full potential. Responding to this need and to her desire to support emerging artists, she founded the ADA \ contemporary art gallery in 2020 in Accra.

About ADA \ contemporary art gallery:

Based in Accra, Ghana, ADA \ contemporary art gallery specializes in the work of emerging artists across Africa and its diaspora. Established in 2020 by contemporary African art advisor Adora Mba, ADA is committed to nurturing Ghana and the continent's contemporary art community and to fostering its ties and influence amongst global audiences.

Highlighting individual early career artistic practices, the gallery's program includes dedicated solo exhibitions; off-site projects and exhibitions; site-specific commissions; talks; creative partnerships and philanthropic activities with local actors; and international art fairs.

In parallel, ADA will develop a residency program starting in the Summer 2021, bringing together a local Ghanaian artist and an international artist whose practice is rooted in Africa and its legacy. Cultivating a dialogue between the local and the international artists, the residency is a manifest to ADA's engagement in strengthening these ties and to establishing Ghana's emerging artistic scene and market internationally.

ADA \ contemporary art gallery

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About House of Fine Art (HOFA):

HOFA Gallery (House of Fine Art) specializes in contemporary art by established and emerging international artists. HOFA is determined to feature a multitude of artistic disciplines with an intent focus on exceptional talent, diversity and cultural relevance. Dedicated to supporting rare talent and making their work globally accessible, the gallery works closely with all of its artists to ensure the highest level of excellence and integrity across its locations in London, Los Angeles and Mykonos.

With a unique selection of highly collectable artworks of appreciative value and an uncompromising dedication to art world innovation, the gallery is committed to its mission in cultural leadership. Using new technologies and digital innovations, HOFA pledges an accessible entry point to the market and inclusivity to art collectors on all levels.

House of Fine Art (HOFA)

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