

ADA \ CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY PRESENTS
HIDDEN REALMS AND SHADOWS
A SOLO EXHIBITION BY ADA-IN-RESIDENCE ARTIST
THERESAH ANKOMAH

Theresah Ankomah's series of paintings and installations, titled *Hidden Realms and Shadows*, reveal her interest in Ghanaian basketry and her quest to discover untold stories behind the Kenaf baskets in relation to trade, underpinning issues of geopolitics, gender and capitalism that resonate in the everyday usage of these materials and objects.

October 21 – December 02, 2021
ADA \ contemporary art gallery
Accra, Ghana



Left Theresah Ankomah *The Emma Effect*, ink, acrylic and imitation gold leaf on canvas, 52 x 48 inches, right Theresah Ankomah, *Blood and Toil*, ink, acrylic and yarn on canvas, 39 x 69 inches, images courtesy ADA \ contemporary art gallery

Imported into the country from Niger, Ankomah's repurposed Kenaf baskets are made up of palm leaves, jute and rope-rattan dyed with sudine. In Ghana, the Kenaf baskets are used to store onions, cabbages, cocoyam, and mangoes. Ankomah is interested in rediscovering and re-contextualizing the complexities of weaving to discover and tell untold stories of its process, technique, and practice. *Hidden Realms and Shadows*, magnifies this practice of weaving which has moved beyond the construction of these objects to view its dynamic nature, sustainability, economic, trade, and attitudes.

Material metaphors and vibrant aesthetic forms characterize Ankomah's installations, which she perceives to be archival objects which have passed through various borders, cultures, processes, different owners, and many hands both named and anonymous.

The installed forms are reassembled baskets, manipulated through weaving and stitching, thus transforming the baskets into new tapestry and intricate designs. The installations form entangled and complex visual imageries, concocting enigmas, and curiosity.

Ankomah transfers the textures of her weaving and tapestries unto canvases through a conscious practise of twisting cords, yarns, and stitching, intensifying tactile three-dimensional experiences. Onion baskets merged and screened unto colorful canvases with thread stitched directly onto the centre of the canvas form an array of both visual and palpable designs. However, the designs transmit a deeper meaning despite their vibrant appearance. The series of paintings are aerial views of the Ghanaian urban landscape exposing its weak metropolitan system and poor city management.

The concept of this solo exhibition could be best summarized in her own words:

“Like my previous work titled The Wonderland (2016), Hidden Realms and Shadows is an ecosphere which exists in an author-conceived world. It is a state of being curious about my practice and getting lost at the same time. Exploring different mediums, wondering, ready to figure something out.”

About Theresah Ankomah

Theresah Ankomah (b.1989) is an artist who lives and works in Accra, Ghana. Her artistic expressions manifest in the form of performative installations, sculpture, weaving, photography, basketry painting and printmaking. Ankomah’s work explores the intricacies of ‘weaving’ through complexities of ‘craft’ in relation to trade and how underpinning issues of geopolitics, gender and capitalism resonate in the everyday usage of materials and objects. Through her work, the idea of weaving moves beyond the confinement of beauty, name-tagging such as ‘Feminist works’, primitive and the functionality of objects to explore more complex issues such as consumerism, geopolitics, gender, identity and capitalism.

Theresah has a background in Sculpture and holds a Bachelor of Fine Art and a Master of Fine Art Degree from the Department of Painting and Sculpture of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana. Ankomah was the recipient of the 2017 first runner prize of the prestigious Kuenyehia Prize for Contemporary Art in Ghana.

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; offsite projects and exhibitions; site-specific commissions; talks; creative partnerships and philanthropic activities with local actors; and international art fairs.

Previous exhibitions include the sold-out solo shows of emerging Nigerian artists Collins Obijiaku (Gindin Mangoro: Under the Mango Tree, October 15 – November 19, 2020) and Eniwaye Oluwaseyi (The Politics of Shared Spaces, November 27, 2020 – January 10, 2021); of rising South African star Zandile Tshabalala (Enter Paradise, March 4 – April 30, 2021), Ghanaian contemporary artist Hamid Nii Nortey (Cross Hatching Affluence, May 6 – June 16, 2021); and of British born Vincentian Ghanaian artist Emma Prempeh (In and Out of Time, 04 September – 17October, 2021)

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