

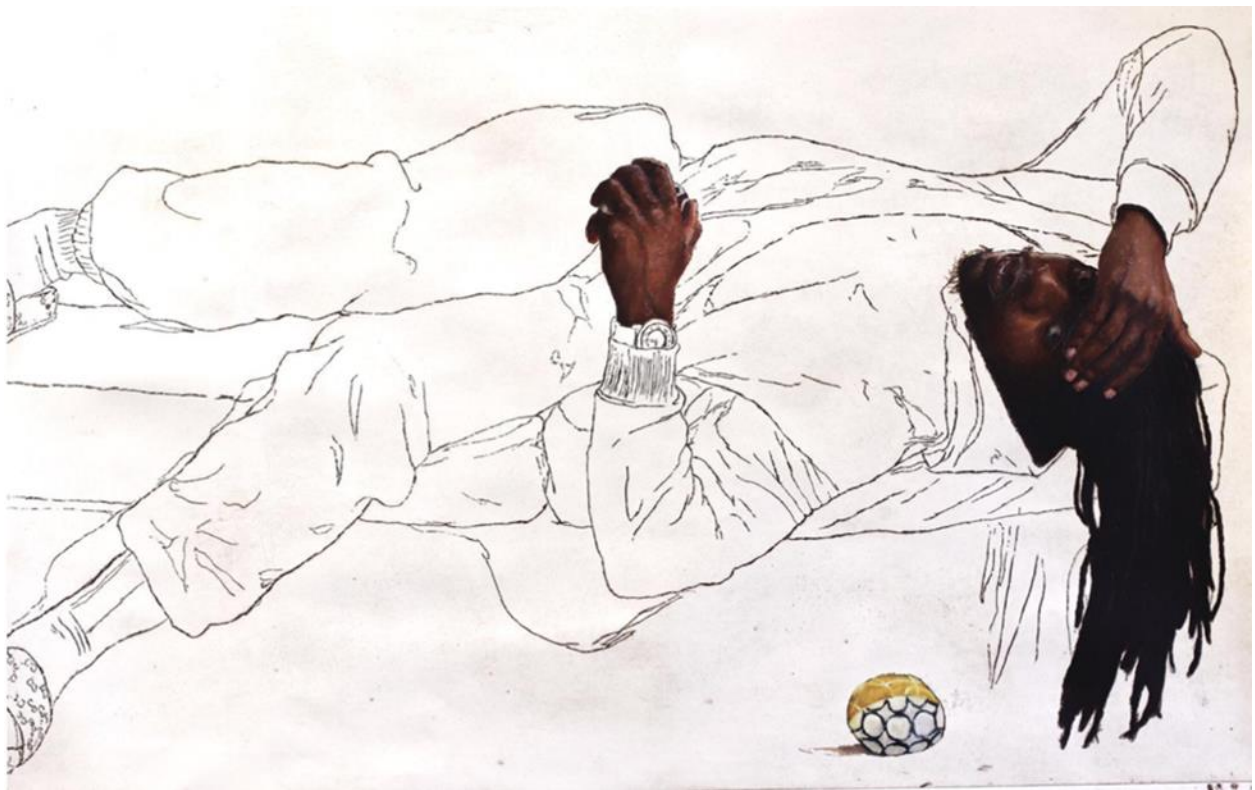
ADA CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY PRESENTS

Deep, Deep Down In The Belly Of The Earth

A SOLO EXHIBITION BY GABRIEL TENDAI CHOTO

APRIL 06 – MAY 28 2023

ADA contemporary art gallery is pleased to present *Deep, Deep Down In The Belly Of The Earth*, a solo exhibition by UK-based Zimbabwean artist, Gabriel Tendai Choto (b.1995).



Gabriel Choto, *I Hope You Know* (2023), oil on paper.

“Grief is just another form of love. The sense of sorrow and grief become the bricks I use to make a home within me, and love always opens a door in me, allowing the fresh air in and bringing with it a sense of hope. That emotion is what I try to capture in my work.”

- Gabriel Tendai Choto.

On view from April 6 to May 28 2023, Gabriel Choto presents large-scale wooden windows in oil on Somerset paper and delves into deeply personal narratives of grappling with grief and depression due to suppressed emotions shaped by trapped, constructed cultural norms where it is not socially acceptable for men to express their feelings.

The exhibition's title is inspired by a song called *Stimela* by the renowned South African musician and composer, Hugh Masekela. The eleventh line of the song's live introduction *Deep, deep down in the belly of the earth*, captures the political unrest in then apartheid South Africa and suggests grief, pain and empathy for struggling Black men, immigrants and labourers who were not encouraged to express moments of weakness outwardly. Connecting the dots within his own life and relating with the characters in the song, Choto takes his viewers on a metaphoric journey of emotional transparency.

The expanse of space in each painting alludes to glimmers of hope amid long periods of suppressed emotions and the daily struggle with mental health. Choto places himself as the subject in most of his compositions, unveiling difficult periods in his life. The surface of the oil paintings is imbued with semi-hyper-real elements, accentuating the strategic use of negative space, and soulful beiges take on a therapeutic hue, the perfect muted background to contain the catharsis of each character.

Deep, Deep Down In The Belly Of The Earth lays bare Choto's vulnerabilities. It builds up layers of aesthetic compositions as simple as the experience and as complex as the emotions he tries to evoke.

The exhibition on view until 28 May 2023.

CONTACT:

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ABOUT GABRIEL CHOTO

Gabriel Tendai Choto, born in 1995 in Harare, Zimbabwe and raised in Bradford, currently lives and works in West Yorkshire, England. After completing his Diploma in Art and Design at Leeds Arts University (formerly Leeds College of Art) in 2012, Choto gained a BAFA in Drawing from Camberwell College of Art (UAL) London in 2014. He has recently completed an MFA at Central St Martins in London, UK.

Choto has had solo exhibitions at FNB Art Joburg: GALLERYLABs (2020) and 'Kumba' at Anima Mundi Gallery, UK (2021). Selected group exhibitions to include Royal Academy of Arts, Summer Exhibition, London (2021), 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, Somerset House (2018), INTERSECTION, 2018 Tyburn Gallery London, FBA Futures, Mall Galleries, London, UK (2018); Flock, GX Gallery, London, UK (2017); Blxckout Revolution: The Exhibition at 198 Gallery in London (2017); BAME at the Hotel Elephant Gallery in London, UK (2016); and Long Live the New Flesh at Tower Gallery, London, UK (2015). In 2018, Choto was selected for the Clyde & Co Art Award. And the winner of the Clifford Chance Printmaking Purchase Prize in 2019.

ABOUT ADA CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY:

ADA contemporary art gallery, based in Accra, Ghana, specialises in the work of emerging artists across Africa and its diaspora. Established in 2020 by modern African art advisor Adora Mba, ADA is committed to nurturing Ghana and the continent's contemporary art community and 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; philanthropic activities with local actors; and international art fairs.

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