



AMASAKA GALLERY



ETHEL AANYU

Ethel Aanyu is a Ugandan photographer living and working in Kampala. She started her artistic journey as an apprentice at Andrew Tshabangu's studio before first exhibiting at the Kampala Art Biennale in 2020. In her work she employs digital layering techniques of positive and negative black and white images. Mainly using herself as a model, she stages scenes that portray visual self-reflections. Taking herself as an entry point to the conversation, she is interested in human conditions and how they influence behavior, connections, and relationships.

Her creative process begins with questions, from a point of view of open inquiry not directed towards any conclusion. Intertwining positive and negative layers that depict the artist in different poses, her photographs take the shape of soliloquies, mental conversations sometimes in the form of heated dispute, other times in gentle exchange. Her self-portraits in action open a space of exploration, negotiating states of being, unveiling the interplay of vulnerability and resilience, care and healing, unraveling the complex depths of human experience. Amidst the tension, ambiguity, and hybridity manifested in her images, Aanyu dissects complex emotions in visual form, creating piercing and proud images that give a human face to intricate topics.

Having grown up in Teso, in Eastern Uganda, and migrated to the capital city Kampala during school years, the artist's biography entails a level of hybridity which oftentimes manifests as inner conflict. Having to learn a new language, new ways of living and adapting to peers after moving to the capital city, has left Aanyu with layers of experience and knowledge as well as the ability and challenge of oscillating between them.

"I am behind and in front of the camera", Aanyu says, "Being that person is a fulfillment to me. I feel more attached to the image because it is me. I am being myself." Beyond the artist's personal connection to her work, her photographs act as a reminder that we are all connected through the struggles we face as human beings, through the manifold layers within our personalities and life stories, and through the questions we seek to answer throughout life.

Ethel Aanyu (b. 1994) most recently showed her work at a group exhibition curated by Ars Belga in Brussels and Amasaka Gallery, Kampala (2023). She is currently completing an artist residency at 32° EAST Ugandan Arts Trust Kampala.



Left: Ameje (I am a deserted place), 2023, digital archive print on canvas, 36 × 24 in, 91.5 × 61 cm

Right: Nikote Nepenen, 2023, digital archive print on canvas, 36 × 24 in, 91.5 × 61 cm





Left: Nikote
Nepenen, 2023,
detail

Right: Installation
view, ECHOES.
Amasaka Gallery,
Kampala, 2023





Left: Atikelekari,
2023, digital
archive print on
canvas, 36 × 24 in
| 91.5 × 61 cm

Right: Atikelekari,
2023, detail





Left: Installation
view, ECHOES.
Amasaka Gallery,
Kampala, 2023

Right: Ongolia Kau,
2023, Digital
archive print on
canvas, 24 × 36 in |
61 × 91.5 cm

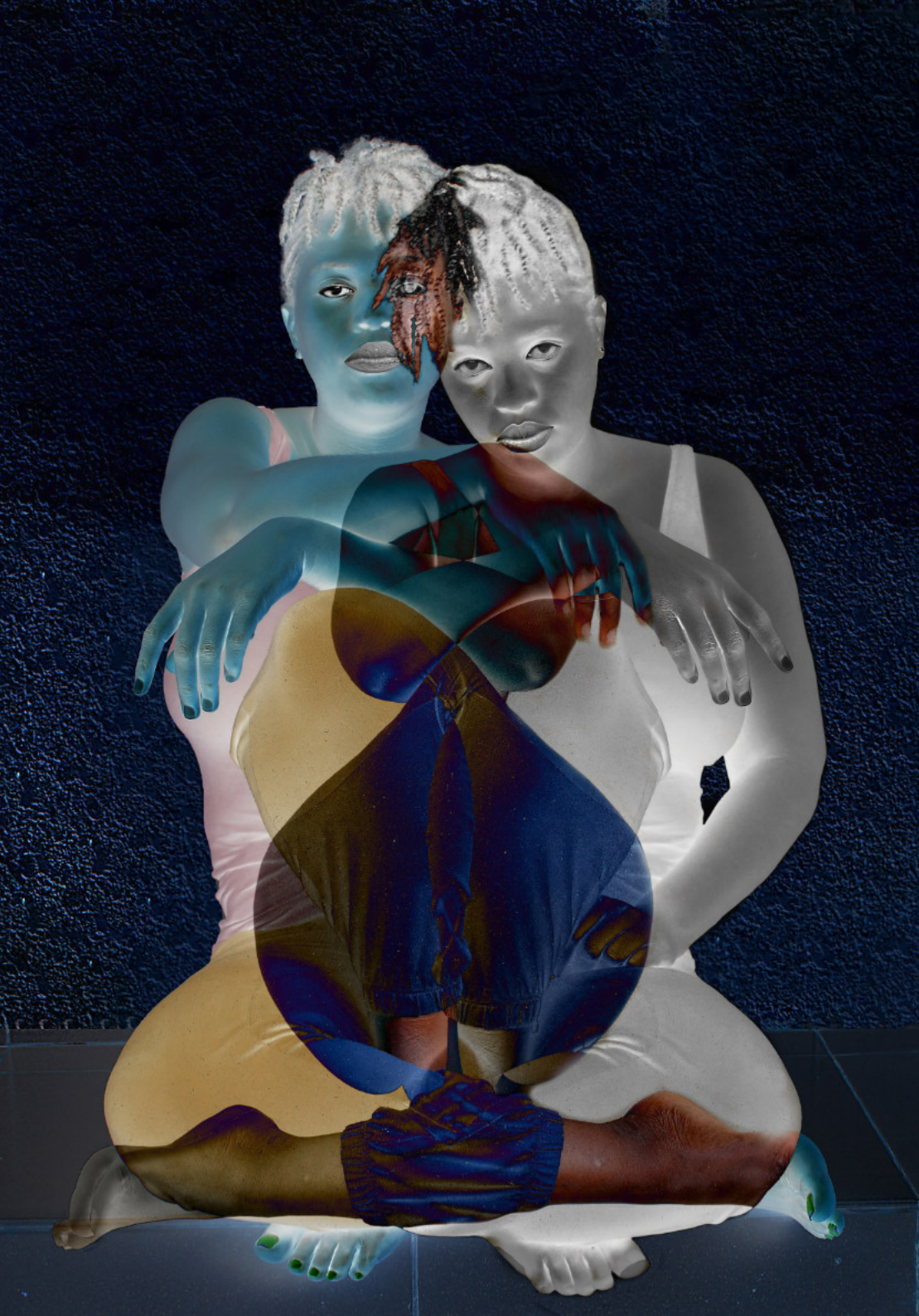




Arauni, 2023,
Digital archive print
on canvas, 24 × 36
in | 61 × 91.5 cm,
Installation view,
ECHOES. Amasaka
Gallery, Kampala,
2023

The performative process creates a space for self-reflection and growth, providing moments of unapologetically being myself, being inquisitive without having to present solutions.

Ethel Aanyu, 9 Questions with Ethel Aanyu,
in: Suboart Magazine, Jan 13, 2023

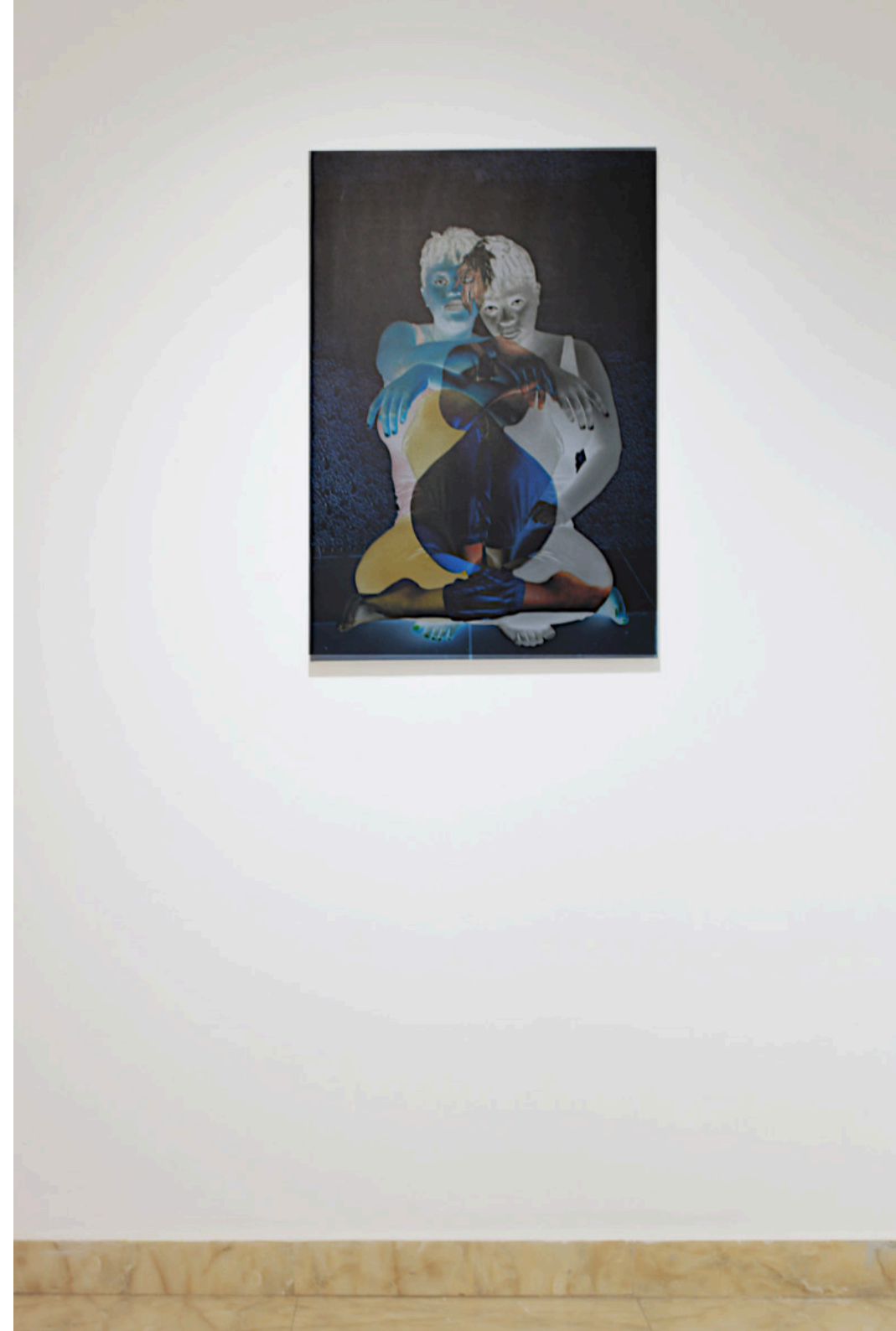


Left: Acacerit,
2023, Digital
archive print on
canvas, 24 × 36 in |
61 × 91.5 cm



Center: Kokiding,
2023, Digital
archive print on
canvas, 24 × 36 in |
61 × 91.5 cm

Right: Installation
view, ECHOES.
Amasaka Gallery,
Kampala, 2023





Left: Sira Keda
Amolo, 2023,
Digital archive print
on canvas, 24 × 36
in | 61 × 91.5 cm



Right: Tiketwana,
2023, Digital
archive print on
canvas, 24 × 36 in |
61 × 91.5 cm

Education

Marget Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts, Makerere University

Group Exhibitions and Art Fairs

2023

ECHOES with Ethel Aanyu, Allan Kyakonye and Olivia Mary Nantongo, Amasaka Gallery, Kampala, Uganda

The Many Faces of the Self, Ars Belga, Brussels, Belgium

2022

Investec Art Fair, Cape Town, South Africa

2021

FNB Joburg, South Africa (online)

2020

Get up Stand up!, Kampala Art Biennale, Kampala, Uganda

Residencies

2023

Artist Residency, 32° EAST, Kampala, Uganda

Press

9 Questions with Ethel Aanyu, In: Suboart Magazine, Jan 13, 2023



Amuno, 2023,
Digital archive print
on canvas, 24 × 36
in | 61 × 91.5 cm

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