



AMASAKA GALLERY

ECHOES –

Ethel Aanyu, Olivia Mary Nantongo, Allan Kyakonye

Opening July 22 at 10 am

Exhibition dates: July 23 – August 15, 2023

Amasaka Gallery
Kisaasi Road, Bukoto, Kampala, Uganda

Three young emerging artists join a stage to push the boundaries of their media and to use their own bodies and biographies as a material of expression and a site of experimentation.

Olivia Mary Nantongo engages patterns and texture to blur the boundaries between figure and ground, photography and painting. Her gaze, through blacked out eyes, commands attention, confuses the viewer as it becomes unclear if she is looking at us or into space – ready to lash out any moment, like a Sphinx, guarding the way past the very trope that she created. Emanating defiance and asserting control over her self-image, she reshuffles the narratives surrounding power, identity, and representation.

Ethel Aanyu's photographic compositions unfold as a tapestry of digital layering, merging positive and negative black and white images. Guided by introspection and self-exploration, Aanyu becomes both creator and subject. Weaving captivating self-portraits in action, Aanyu manifests as a figure of contemplation. Her totem-like appearance unveils the interplay of vulnerability and resilience, care and healing, unraveling the complex depths of human experience and the ceaseless dynamics that shape our being.

Faces with blurred features emerge from Allan Kyakonye's mixed media works, rendered in a peculiar material that, upon closer examination, reveals itself as burnt and discolored fragments of aluminum foil. These enigmatic countenances are set against whimsical backdrops, creating a vibrant interplay of elements. A constellation of medallion-shaped miniature portraits envelops one of the figures, giving rise to a sense of a floating family tree, as if delving into the exploration of ancestry and lineage. And in fact, beneath the surface, Kyakonye's choice of materials holds concealed allusions to his personal biography: From a young age, he collected tin foil, initially with the intention of selling it to scrap dealers, only to

later repurpose and incorporate it into his artistic creations as a trace of his personal journey.

In this way, all three artists are creating echoes of themselves, mirror images not so much of what is, but of what is continuously becoming. Resonating bodies channeling our entanglements within and without: in stories, in states of mind, in kinship, in our surroundings, in our slippery notion of identity.

Olivia Mary Nantongo (b. 1994) experiments with a variety of media and formats, including painting, photography, mixed media, poetry and performance. Her work was exhibited internationally in group exhibitions in Munich, Brazzaville (both 2022) and Jerusalem (2020) as well as at the Kampala Biennale 2020. She is a member of Muumba Art Collective and the recipient of the Affirmative Art Award 2022.

Ethel Aanyu (b. 1994) is an artist mainly working in photography. Having embarked on that journey as an apprentice of Andrew Tshabangu, she first exhibited at the Kampala Biennale 2020. Most recently her work could be seen at a group exhibition curated by Ars Belga in Brussels (2023). She is currently completing an artist residency at 32° EAST Ugandan Arts Trust Kampala.

Allan Kyakonye (b. 1991) is a painter and multi-media artist with a strong rooting in portraiture and collage using repurposed materials. His work was part of many exhibitions around Kampala, most recently at Xenson Art Space (2022) and Afropocene StudioLab (2021). He is a fellow of the 32° EAST residency program and has completed the Groud Zero workshop with Godfried Donkor that was foundational for his art practice. He was part of the Kampala Art Biennale 2018.

For all further inquiries, please contact: info@amasakagallery.com