

## PRESS RELEASE

Sakhile&Me shows new works by Mario Joyce  
in the artist's first solo show in Europe

Frankfurt/Main, Germany. April 2023. – Sakhile&Me is excited to present “Gravity”, the gallery's first solo exhibition with L.A. based artist Mario Joyce. The show opens on April 27th with the artist present, followed by an artist talk between Mario Joyce and curator and co-founder of ARTNOIR Larry Ossei-Mensah on Instagram Live on Saturday, April 29th (9.30am PDT / 12.30pm EST). “Gravity” will run until June 10th.

Mario Joyce's work focuses on ancestry, heritage, and social and cultural awareness, specifically in BIPOC communities. The artist draws on historical, political, and personal narratives and his paintings are figurative compositions with a free-flowing abstracted aesthetic that combines collage from vintage photographs with expressive and gestural painting using oils and acrylics. The thickly layered compositions encompass scenes of both indoor spaces and outdoor foliage.

For this new solo show in Frankfurt, Mario Joyce created a body of work that focuses on genealogy and takes soil from the farm he grew up on in rural Ohio, mixing it with a dark base oil paint to create dense compositions in which abstracted figures made out of old archival photos from the region can be seen in motion: leaping, reaching, overlapping and visually embedded within the environment. Joyce developed this material alchemy with soil in his recently completed Pratt>FORWARD residency at New Lab in Brooklyn Navy Yard which was followed by an exhibition with UTA Artist Space in Atlanta, pushing his experimentation with soil as both living and historical matter and building it into his textured collage paintings.

The title “Gravity” harkens to the vortex-like brush strokes in the compositions, with a shared density in their color palette and their motion densely nestled in swirling fields and portal-like floors. In metaphorical uses of the term “gravity,” we can imagine different associations to gravitational pulls and its “thingness” which keeps us grounded or anchored to a place, even as we transform over time and move across space. Tied to genealogy and the mapping of genealogical traces, the physical effects of this “binding” or “pulling” intersect the metaphysical with the passing of time where the historical encounters meet the more visceral, immediate and emotive aspects of this enduring attraction to the soil and the ground beneath us.

In the artist's own words, "Gravity encompasses both the involuntary and natural imprint that my rural upbringing had on my psyche. In a similar way, the soil from the farm I grew up on (though visible) holds an unseen pull, and evidence of historical pulls, some measurable and others eluding capture. Within this environment and on this soil I became my whole self. But what parts of myself would have remained entirely mine without being raised on this land? What did the soil, personified, see before my existence that influenced my personality and very being? My metamorphosis was one of survival, grasping for my individuality, while simultaneously being transformed into a fully realized version of who I currently am. In this work I am studying the properties within these soil time capsules in the form of stories, while also investigating the 'DNA' of the soil I grew up on and how it fused with my young, fragile 'genome'."

### **About the gallery**

Sakhile&Me was founded in 2018 in Frankfurt/Main (Germany) by Sakhile Matlhare and Daniel Hagemeyer. The gallery works with an international roster of contemporary artists, prioritizing Africa and her diasporas as well as African-American positions. Sakhile&Me places an emphasis on solo exhibitions introducing artists to German audiences (Nnenna Okore in 2018; Kevin Demery, Osi Audu, Ghizlane Sahli, Tajh Rust in 2019; Owanto in 2020; Tagne William Njepe, Raelis Vasquez, Adelaide Damoah in 2021; Mbali Dhlamini, Sekai Machache in 2022; Mario Joyce, Katlego Tlabela in 2023) and facilitating collaborative presentations (Zanele Muholi/Lindeka Qampi in 2019; Wangari Mathenge/Mario Moore/Anike Joyce Sadiq/Lerato Shadi in 2021; The Botswana Pavilion, Kitso Lelliott/Tuli Mekondjo, and Osi Audu /Mario Moore at Art Cologne in 2022; Raelis Vasquez/Anike Joyce Sadiq at Art Cologne in 2023). Sakhile holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Northwestern University, writing her dissertation on "'Africanness' as a Professional Trading Chip: Contemporary African Artists as Producers and Secondary Arbiters in the Gatekeeping Process," and is a member of the Art Cologne Selection Committee. Daniel holds a Master's degree in Digital Communications from the University of Sydney.

### **Press contacts**

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