

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Sakhile&Me shows abstract acrylic paintings and graphite drawings by Osi Audu

Wetin Be Dis? raises questions about the dual nature of self, self-identity and consciousness.

September 17, 2019

Frankfurt/Main, Germany – Sakhile&Me is honored to present *Wetin Be Dis?*, a solo exhibition of abstract acrylic paintings and pastel and graphite drawings by Nigerian-American artist Osi Audu in which he explores the tangible and intangible nature of “the self” and self-consciousness. The exhibition runs from 19 September to 26 October 2019 with a selection of works traveling to London to be presented at *1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair* from 2 - 6 October 2019.

“Wetin Be Dis?” is Nigerian Pidgin English for “What is this?” and in the exhibition Audu develops a series of abstract geometric paintings and drawings to raise questions about the dual and oftentimes multifaceted nature of “the self.” Referencing both philosophy and neurology, he tugs at our understandings and perceptions of “self-identity.” The paintings show brightly coloured shapes, many with an opening breaking the center of their solid forms, with the black, white and grey drawings depicting similar solid geometric shapes as well as more experimental forms with small repeating patterns that create impressions of a starry night sky.

Audu’s practice over the last three decades has steadily and consistently focused on abstract art that retains some figurative elements in his geometric acrylic paintings in two colours and monochromatic grey and black drawings. Following the Yoruba concept of *Ori Inu* („the inner head“), Audu’s works - most of them displaying portraits of the self (hence their title “self-portraits”) - draw attention to the artist’s focus on the head as a signifier of consciousness and as an object of self-knowing. He continues to interrogate the duality of form/void and the tangible/intangible as they relate to the self and self-consciousness.

Audu received his BFA from the University of Ife (Nigeria) in 1980 and his MFA in Painting and Drawing from the University of Georgia in Athens (USA) in 1984 as well as a postgraduate-certificate in education from the University of Kent in Canterbury (UK) in 1994. Audu’s work has shown in several prestigious institutions such as Iwalewa-Haus, Bayreuth (1995), the British Museum, London (2003), the Smithsonian Institute’s National Museum of African Art, Washington D.C. (2006), and the Museo Di Palazzo Grimani during the Venice Biennale (2015). He lives and works in New York.

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About the gallery

Sakhile&Me is a contemporary art gallery based in downtown Frankfurt working with emerging and established international artists, creative entrepreneurs and curators, with a particular focus on Africa and its many diasporas. The gallery's two founders, Sakhile Matlhare and Daniel Hagemeyer, received bachelor's degrees from Hamilton College and master's degrees from the University of Sydney. Matlhare then pursued a doctoral degree at Northwestern University focusing on how contemporary artists work alongside curators, art historians, and other art experts in the gatekeeping process, within and beyond the rubric of contemporary African art. Hagemeyer has worked with his father, Achim Hagemeyer (Kunsthandel Hagemeyer), for the past four years, specializing in German Expressionist and classical modern art.

363 words. 2.303 characters.

Opening hours

Tuesday - Friday: 12 pm - 6 pm; Saturday: 10 am - 4 pm; by appointment.

Image Material

Osi Audu. 2018. Portrait. **File name:** osi-audu-large.jpg. **Caption:** Osi Audu.

Osi Audu. Self-Portrait after Osanyin. 2019. Acrylic on canvas. 38x56cm. **File name:** osi-audu-self-portrait-after-osanyin-large.jpg. **Caption:** Osi Audu: Self-Portrait after Osanyin (2019).

Osi Audu. Self-Portrait after Egungun Headdress. 2019. Graphite and pastel on paper (mounted on canvas). 38x56cm. **File name:** osi-audu-self-portrait-after-egungun-headdress-large.jpg. **Caption:** Osi Audu: Self-Portrait after Egungun Headdress (2019).

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