

CHRISTIE'S

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SAY IT LOUD *AN EXHIBITION CELEBRATING THE WORK OF INTERNATIONAL BLACK ARTISTS*



NELSON MAKAMO (B. 1982, MODIMOLLE, LIMPOPO, SOUTH AFRICA)
Untitled, from Blue Series
Mixed media on canvas, Executed in 2020.

NEW YORK – In partnership with visionary curator Destinee Ross-Sutton, Christie's is proud to present "SAY IT LOUD (*I'm Black and I'm Proud*)," a virtual selling exhibition dedicated to the promotion and empowerment of Black art. The exhibition, which will be open from July 31 – August 18, spotlights 22 emerging Black artists who each explore the notion of identity and perception, providing them with a global platform for the celebration and amplification of their work. Named for the 1968 James Brown anthem "Say it Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud," this exhibition marks the first of a series of exhibitions and educational initiatives organized by Christie's CSR Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives that will provide a necessary platform for the Black Art community's voices to be amplified and empowered.

All works are available for sale via the artists and their representatives. All parties interested in individual works may email sayitloud@christies.com to be put into direct touch with the appropriate artist contact. 100% of the sale price of each work will go to the respective artist.

Christie's is honored to be partnering with acclaimed curator Destinee Ross-Sutton on this exhibition. Ms. Ross-Sutton has co-curated and curated successful international group exhibitions at renowned institutions such as the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA) and CFHILL, Stockholm, Sweden. Independently, she advises several private institutions and international collectors on acquisitions of contemporary art with a focus on African and African American art. In her eyes, "showing

a wide range of opinions, voices, and countless expressions of beauty is essential in a world where compassion and connection is needed now more than ever” (D. Ross, quoted in exh. cat., Black Voices/Black Microcosm, 8 April-9 May 2020, <https://www.cfhill.com/black-voices-black-microcosm-by-destinee-ross>).

Incorporating deeply personal aspects, each of these artists uses their mediums as guiding forces to construct images of identity – whether it be their own, a society or an overlooked community – in order to empower voices that have traditionally been silenced.

The vulnerability of identity is showcased in these works, either conspicuously, as with the work of both **Josh Paige**, who depicts Black men with targets on their bodies, and **Nelson Makamo** who confronts Black stereotypes head-on, or more subtly, as with as the work of **Yoyo Lander** and **Barry Yusufu** who evoke universal emotionality and the vulnerability of time and progress respectively.

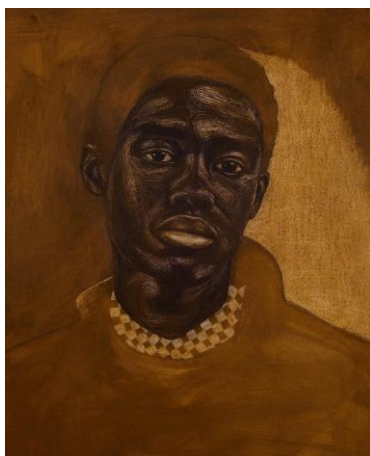
Among the exhibition highlights is **Nelson Makamo’s** *Untitled, from Blue Series, 2020* – pictured on page 1. Johannesburg based Artist Nelson Makamo is best known for his charcoal and oil paintings of young women, men and children who are redressing decades of images that have perpetuated the stereotype that African people are destitute; his work provides a source of hope and optimism. For approximately sixteen years since he received his formal training at Artist Proof studios in Johannesburg, Makamo has been committed to distracting from that demeaning image by portraying African people in a manner that reverses this type of thinking.

Makamo’s work has always depicted a sense of desire for freedom of existence, a freedom which seems foreign to the majority of black and brown communities across the world - due to both the systematic and direct violence that the black community is experiencing across the world historically as well as today. *Home sick at home* and *Blue* represent some of the themes that Makamo is deeply exploring in his studio at the moment, by creating figures that inspire and disseminate optimism during these trying times for black communities globally.

Artist **Yoyo Lander** is represented by two works in the exhibition including *The Deeper Longing is Greater Than Discomfort, 2020*, which is pictured right. Lander’s works prove to inhabit a distinct contrast in shade and color. She achieves this by painting in watercolors and collaging her own works together – repurposing them into fragile portraits of identity. The vulnerability is palpable, but strength overrides any trepidation one might find within her works.

In 2018 Lander began to think about ideas surrounding vulnerability and what it means for people of color, particularly, black women. She decided to name the

series *Time Off*. Her work *Have Tears Sometimes* tackles the same idea, but for black men. These series marked a shift in Yoyo Lander’s artistic approach, in which the context now plays a significant role in the depiction of the individual(s).



The exhibition will also feature **Collins Obijaku’s** *Untitled, 2020* – pictured left – which is a prime example of the artist’s celebration of blackness through elegantly constructed portraits. Through their gaze, the viewer is to be transported into a world where black people exist as themselves, innately elegant and unfazed by the world and its never-ending constructs. Obijaku has a notable relationship with lines; his brushstrokes are seemingly topographic, taking the viewer into a landscape of the wonder and magic of the visage.



As these artists play upon perception, they call attention to the historical perception of “Blackness” and put it on its head, ambitiously challenging the viewer to redefine their pre-conceived and systematically taught notions of Black perception and identity. Exhibited works live in their own self-constructed worlds, urging us to confront perceptions of Black identity, the value we place on the healing conversations and commitments necessary to move our society forward.

Christie’s is committed to addressing systemic racism and discrimination in our society and creating a more diverse, socially engaged organization. It is our responsibility now and going forward to listen, understand, acknowledge, take action and celebrate the rich histories and the future promise that these artists represent. As we reflect upon the many manifestations of racism prevalent in our society, consult with external experts, and engage with the larger arts community, we begin a crucial journey towards creating permanent change—both here at Christie’s and more broadly throughout the art world.

Panel Discussion

Underscoring the exhibition will be a two-part Artist Talk & Consortium curated by The Harlem Arts Alliance as an advocate for artists locally and globally. These conversations are intended to amplify artists’ voices, and serve as a platform for art world leaders to highlight and discuss the systemic and institutional inequalities experienced by Black Artists and art industry workers alike, and the marked lack of Black and Brown accessibility to the art market and institutions on a global scale.

The event will take place at 1pm EDT on August 5th and will accompany Christie’s “Say It Loud” 2020 Virtual Art Exhibition. The event will feature a live vocal performance and DJ set, and will center on the voices of artists and thought leaders.

- Part I: Artist Talk - From Our Eyes Only, Moderated By Stephanie George
- DJ Set
- Part II: Black Legacies Matter: Curating A New Standard For Equitable Artist Engagement, Moderated By Halima Taha

The suggested donation price of each ticket is \$25 dollars, 100% of ticket sales will go towards the Harlem Arts Alliance. Register [here](#).

PRESS CONTACT: Rebecca Riegelhaupt | RRiegelhaupt@christies.com

About Destinee Ross-Sutton

Destinee Ross-Sutton is an international art curator, advisor and artist manager based in NY. The main body of her curatorial work over the last three years has been carried out in her capacity as chief curator for a major Black Arts Foundation opening in 2021.

About Harlem Arts Alliance

The Harlem Arts Alliance (HAA) is a non-profit arts service organization committed to nurturing the artistic growth and organizational development of artists and cultural institutions. HAA offers free and low cost community workshops, marketing, network opportunities and resource allocation to emerging and established artists. HAA plays an essential role in the lives of emerging and established artists by helping build the resources, networks, and capacity of its richly diverse membership. By increasing the exposure of its membership through our collaborative programming, HAA bridges gaps between artists and major arts institutions, amplifying the unique voices of our member artists and expanding the conversations surrounding their work. HAA is a primary source for information dissemination, provides workshops, and produces a number of showcase and presentation programs featuring the work of its members.

About Christie’s

Christie’s, the world’s leading art business, had auction sales in 2019 that totalled £4.5 billion / \$5.8 billion. Christie’s is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. Christie’s offers around 350 auctions annually in over 80 categories including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie’s also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery.

Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

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