



Ephrem Solomon

Ephrem Solomon was born in Addis Ababa and graduated from the Entoto Art School in 2009. He observes and presents socio-political works using woodcut and mixed media. Views of the city and the people that inhabit the spaces around him inform his work, as does a fictional world that exists beyond the present. Using black and white to symbolize this ambiguous juncture in reality, he produces bold figures and portraits that capture both personal and public power relations in society.

The *Forbidden Fruit* series presented here, explores and celebrates the importance of living in the moment. The figures that look to the left, are focused on the past, those facing the right are looking to the present whilst those facing the front are confronting the present. The repetitive motifs resemble natural patterns found in nature; where the beginning and end are difficult to establish. From birth to death, life's journey creates shapes as we make decisions and coincidences and accidents take place. The works remain untitled to allow for limitless readings.

Ephrem has exhibited internationally including in Ethiopia, Kenya, Dubai and Croatia. In 2014 he had his first solo exhibition in the UK at Tiwani Contemporary, London. His work is in private collections in Dubai, Kenya, South Africa and the UK, including the Saatchi Collection.



Ato Malinda

Ato Malinda was born in Kenya and grew up in the Netherlands, Kenya and the USA. She studied Art History and Molecular Biology at the University of Texas at Austin, and has a Masters of Fine Art (MFA) from Transart Institute, New York. She began her professional practice as a painter and now works in the mediums of performance, drawing, painting, installation, video, and as a free-lance curator.

She has exhibited at Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (NGBK) in Berlin, Townhouse Gallery in Cairo, Salon Urbain de Doula in Cameroon and the Karen Blixen Museum in Copenhagen. Her previous work focused on afro-centricity based in a postcolonial context, for example *A Black Man's View*, *A White Man's Taboo*, an exhibition about racial hierarchies in Nairobi.

She now focuses on the ontology of the female experience and African feminism, African queer identity and queer identification, as well as the performativity of architectural space. She examines social segregates and performance theories. Questions of authenticity in afro-centricism remain intriguing and an ever-present site of contestation in her work. Malinda frequently includes an auto-ethnographic element in her performances; including her personal story in the work.

Some of the work you see here are interpretative drawings of Malinda's friend Neo who sometimes identifies as transgender. Assigned female at birth, Neo prefers the pronoun "they". They are an academic at a research institution in Nairobi, researching African literature. Neo is pictured in these images with their breasts bound and with the head of a cockerel. This animal is the name given to their family in their vernacular language of Kikamba; Nguku.

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