

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KATES-FERRI PROJECTS

THE
ARMORY
SHOW
SEPTEMBER 6-8
JAVITS CENTER

SAMUEL NNOROM



KATES-FERRI PROJECTS

JAVITS CENTER
429 11TH AVE, NYC 10001
PRESENTS SECTION BOOTH #P25

KATES-FERRI PROJECTS is honored to present two concurrent exhibitions with the contemporary international visual artist Samuel Nnorom.

- ❖ In our very first participation at *The 2024 Armory Show*, we will exhibit Samuel's works in the Presents section, Booth #P25, on view September 6th to 8th at New York's famed Javits Center.
- ❖ At the same time, from September 3rd to October 5th, 2024, we will present the artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery located at 561 Grand Street, NYC 10002.

The concurrent exhibitions are titled *IN A MATERIAL WORLD, IN THE BEGINNING*, and will display the artist's two newest series, Genetics Inspired and Water Wave Inspired. Using the visual language of creation from science and religion, the artist creates soft sculptures with traditional African wax fabrics to explore the concept of creation.

According to scientists, humanity stems from the Horn of Africa some 200,000 to 300,000 years ago. Based in Nsukka Nigeria, Nnorom appreciates the historic ways in which the globe is interlinked through his home continent, not only as the cradle of life but also as the emergent economic stronghold of the Global South. He illustrates this connection through his fabric choices, which have traversed the global path. These colorful African patterns are designed in China or Europe by contemporary designers originating from Indonesia, mass-produced in China, then sold to, consumed by, and accepted in Nigeria and other African countries as traditional African fabrics. Covering many small foam balls, he cuts, sews, and ties the textiles to make his literal “social fabric”. To the artist, the material is quintessential for humans, as a second skin, as a shelter, and as a larger metaphor for humanity. To further demonstrate humanity’s interconnectedness through the fabric, Nnorom stitched the bubble-like forms to represent eggs, ovaries, or atoms that hold a unit of life. These forms can carry secrets, emotions, mysteries, experiences, and connections. Sharing this network in his Genetics Inspired series, Nnorom utilizes scientific formations like the double helix of DNA, chromosomal forms, three-dimensional rendering of chaos, illustration of the earth’s electro-magnetic field and quantum mechanics to visualize creation. By bringing the socio-economic and the scientific into the series, Nnorom creates a visual metaphor for the way cultures and histories are interwoven, highlighting the complex, dynamic relationships that shape and create our world.

In his Water Wave Inspired series, Nnorom draws on Bible verses on creation: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.”—Genesis 1:1-3. Focusing on the formless void, the darkness, and the waters, the artist births his creation from nothing as well. The wall sculptures burst forth, rising and falling with great depth, while tethering one foam ball to the next. The rich blacks and vibrant blues of the textiles emerge as the spiral comes to life, just as the word of God intended. Using the same visual language, Nnorom activates every space his work inhabits, as if to initiate life itself.

For IN A MATERIAL WORLD, Nnorom’s work bridges the mysticism of religious storytelling of creation with the hard-nosed understanding of creation from the science realm through his manipulation of textiles. He wills his work to life as humanity wills its own existential survival. As such, Nnorom has exhibited on every continent on the planet. The shows kick off the fall 2024 season for the gallery and it promises to dazzle and prompt deep questions of our shared humanity. The exhibition underscores the profound connections that bind us all, celebrating the diversity and unity of human experience through the lens of Nnorom’s innovative artistry. This presentation is not only a testament to Nnorom’s unique vision but also a powerful reminder of the universal threads that weave through our collective existence.

Artist Bio: Samuel Nnorom (b. 1990, Nigeria). He discovered his artistic talent at the age of 9 while assisting his father at his shoe workshop. He started drawing customers who visited the shop while also being influenced by his mother's tailoring workshop. His body of work is typically constructed from pieces of Ankara/African print fabric scraps collected from tailors or cast-off clothing from homes, along with discarded foam and fibres from furniture workshops that are wrapped and stitched into bubbles of various colours and sizes. Through actions like sewing, rolling, tying, stringing, and suspending, he poetically navigates the boundaries between textile, painting, and sculpture. He holds an MFA in sculpture from the prestigious University of Nigeria and belongs to the New Nsukka School of Art.

Nnorom has won several national and international art prizes, which include, ex aequo the Ettore e Ines Fico Prize at the Artissima Fair Italy 2023, Global Prize winner, Art for Change, Saatchi Gallery London UK 2022, Strauss & Co and Cassirer Welz Award, South Africa 2021. He has exhibited in several solo and important group shows with galleries and art fairs in Africa, Europe, America, and Asia. He has an institutional and a museum solo exhibition with Saatchi Gallery London and Textile Museum of Canada respectively in 2024. He had prestigious residencies with important institutions such as Black Rock Senegal 2023/2024, BISO Ouagadougou Burkina-Faso 2023, Guest Artist Space (GAS) Yinka Shonibare Foundation Residency Nigeria 2023, Royal Overseas League and Art House Residency London 2023, Bag Factory residency South Africa 2022. He has gained recognition in several collections, like; the Taguchi Collection, Anthony David Collections, Fondazione Marino Golinelli Collection, Ettore Fico Museum, Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, and Blachere Fondation. Thus, in Nnorom's recent public installation, he explores using fishing and mosquito nets on a monumental scale that engages his audience seeking to interrogate social, emotional, political, and economic challenges faced by migrants and displaced persons around the world.

Artist Statement: My body of work is made from pieces of Ankara fabric/African wax print fabrics collected from either tailors' debris or cast-off clothes from homes and waste foams from furniture workshops, wrapped and stitched into bubbles of various colors and sizes through sewing, rolling, tying, stringing, twisting, suspending, and cutting, which navigates boundaries between textiles, painting, and sculpture in a poetic rendition. In this exhibition, I want to explore the idea of materiality as the foundation of the beginning of the universe. I am interested in the reinterpretation of the creation story through the lens of Biblical and scientific illustrations through the use of African print fabric, which is mostly consumed in my local community and West Africa. Fabric suggests to me a social structure or social organization that weaves humanity into society, in the case of the 'fabric of society' or 'social fabric'. However, it is peculiar to different societies, while 'bubble' suggests a structure that holds or stores something for a period, such as atoms, eggs, ovaries, and bonding. Contemplating each bubble as an atom, egg, or ovary makes me understand the fragility of life itself

as a fabric that our identity and culture are imbedded in but yet never fades from the creation to generation and generation. In this exhibition, I want my audience to dialogue with material and bubble form as units of life in its fragile state, thinking about the creation, the connection, the struggles, and the love that binds the universe through self-interrogation, critical thinking, and questioning of structures.

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