

## ***Constellations***

### ***Part 1: Figures On Earth & Beyond***

Co-curated by Katherine Finerty, Nuna Adisenu-Doe and Tracy Naa Koshie Thompson

Gallery 1957, London, United Kingdom

14 March – 25 May 2024



Phoebe Boswell, *the smallest play of leaves in my branches, the smallest scar on my bark*, 2024, pastel on paper, 153cm x 123cm, courtesy the Artist and Gallery 1957.

**London, 24 January 2024** – Gallery 1957 is proud to present its sister-city exhibition project *Constellations*, opening in London with *Part 1: Figures on Earth & Beyond* on 14 March. Coinciding with the gallery's 8-year anniversary, this multimedia exhibition project brings together emerging and established artists from within the gallery's programme and beyond, celebrating the creative communities burgeoning in Ghana and the UK.

Artists participating in this group show include those collaborating with the gallery for the first time; Adelaide Damoah, Alberta Whittle, Andrew Pierre Hart, Ayesha Feisal, Ayomide Tejuoso (Plantation), Denyse Gawu-Mensah, Henry Hussey, Lisa C Soto, Phoebe Boswell, Rashaad Newsome, and Sarah Meyohas, as well as long-term collaborators and artists in residence; Johannes Phokela, Larry Amponsah, Yaa

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Asantewaa Art Prize winner Lois Selasie Arde-Acquah, Modupeola Fadugba, and Zak Ové.

Co-curated by independent curator Katherine Finerty, curator and artist Tracy Naa Koshie Thompson, and Compound House Gallery founder Nuna Adisenu-Doe, *Constellations* celebrates the cultural exchange between London and Accra's creative ecosystems with artists, curators, writers, and filmmakers. It considers how their interconnectivity breaks the boundaries of time and geography, inviting artists to respond to the unique natural and artificial habitats of both sites whilst considering elements that transcend them.

In line with ecofeminist scholar Donna Haraway<sup>1</sup>, *Constellations –Part 1: Figures on Earth & Beyond* rejects the concept of the Anthropocene Epoch, based on the idea that human activity is the dominant influence on the Earth's climate and environment in the current geological age. The exhibition concept challenges our human inclination to centre ourselves and instead repositions humans as part of a larger ecosystem, critically examining human-made structures of power, memory, and agency within their wider environments through concepts of art history, spirituality, technology, and science fiction.

The show includes specially commissioned works from artists Phoebe Boswell, Adelaide Damoah, Andrew Pierre Hart, and Denyse Gawu-Mensah, whilst artists Lois Selasie Arde-Acquah, Larry Amponsah, Modupeola Fadugba, Henry Hussey, and Ayomide Tejuoso (Plantation) have adapted new and previous works in line with the exhibition concept.

For example, Adelaide Damoah's works visually reference landmarks near Gallery 1957's London space – the equestrian statue of *Baron Robert Napier* at Queen's Gate and the *Albert Memorial* with images of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert – combining them with images of her Ghanaian family and Victorian lace to bring to memory the relationship between colonialism and ancestry. Rashaad Newsome will present a special edition of *Self Inventions*, part of the [LACMA × Snapchat: Monumental Perspectives \(Collection III\)](#) initiative. Engaging augmented reality (AR) to explore representation and history across monuments, this initiative uses the lens of collective ancestral memory to examine the individual and communal legacies. Visitors can access [Self Inventions](#) on Snapchat by scanning a QR code at Gallery 1957's London and Accra spaces, showcasing Newsome's shape-shifting robotic figure reflecting the resilience of Black people in the face of ongoing struggle.

**Curators Katherine Finerty, Tracy Naa Thompson, and Nuna Adisenu-Doe comment:** *“The Constellations project brings to life models of knowledge-sharing for contemporary exhibition making and public gathering. Working together with the artists whose stories inform our research has enabled us to imagine new futures*

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<sup>1</sup> Donna J. Haraway: *Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene*, from the book *Staying with the Trouble, Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016)

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*together. The artworks on display propose a transient space, encouraging audiences to perceive their individual agency in collective ecosystems and restorative ecologies. Part 1 starts this conversation from roots in the earth and travels to stars from the cosmos – from origin stories to science fiction. In a time where radically reimagining human and non-human inhabitation is vital, we welcome all artists and audiences who participate in Constellations to pose future solutions for a regenerative world.”*

## **Gallery 1957’s 8-year anniversary**

Marking Gallery 1957’s opening on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2016 on Ghanaian Independence Day, *Constellations* also celebrates progress of the international recognition for the Ghanaian and West-African arts scene and its diasporic communities. Eight years onwards, Ghana’s artistic influence has expanded across its borders, and early collaborators of Gallery 1957 including Amoako Bofo, Arthur Timothy, Gideon Appah, Godfried Donkor, Kaloki Nyamai, Modupola Fadugba, and Serge Attukwei Clottey are presented in galleries and museums around the world.

**Marwan Zakhem, Founder of Gallery 1957, comments:** *“When I founded Gallery 1957 in 2016, it was time for international audiences to discover more of the talent of Ghanaian and West-African artists. Much has changed since then. I want to thank the artists and supporters who have been instrumental to Gallery 1957’s success, including my dear friend and mentor professor Ablade Glover, artist Ibrahim Mahama, former ICA Director Ekow Eshun, African Artists’ Foundation Founder Azu Nwogbogu and Katherine Finerty, Tracy Naa Koshie Thompson and Nuna Adisenu-Doe. Gallery 1957 continues to grow, debuting at 1-54 Marrakech and Art Basel Hong Kong in 2024, whilst continuing our successful residency programme and the Yaa Asantewaa Art Prize for female Ghanaian artists.”*

## **Exhibition programme**

As part of *Constellations, Part 1: Figures On Earth & Beyond*, curator Katherine Finerty and artist Larry Amponsah will organise a series of interactive collage workshops. These workshops focus on collective-making and world-building. The sessions will take place throughout the duration of the exhibition, and exact timing and locations will be confirmed as soon as possible. Some workshops will be open to the public, while closed sessions will take place in partnership with educational institutions and charitable organisations, including Gallery 1957’s neighbour The Royal College of Art.

For the public opening night of the exhibition on 14 March, Andrew Pierre Hart will perform a special sound set in keeping with his atmospheric soundscape for the exhibition, which responds to current and past issues related to Ghana and wider issues and discussions across the African continent. The soundscape fuses experimental sounds and productions with more recognisable sound, music, and voices to explore these ideas.

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To mark the closing of the exhibition, Gallery 1957 will host a performance on 23 May 2024 by Adelaide Damoah. The artist addresses Donna Haraway's theories in her work with the aim to foster greater awareness and understanding of how we can create a more sustainable future. Through this audiovisual journey, Damoah will explore how we can establish a new ecology by reconnecting with each other and with nature.

*Constellations – Part 2*, taking place later this year in Accra, Ghana, will focus more on the spatial opportunities of Gallery 1957's exhibition space in Accra, in dialogue with its surroundings. In line with scholar Timothy Morton, the exhibition re-examines the way we understand the place of humans in the world, to challenge us into re-thinking ecology without essentialist narratives of 'nature'. It will create an interconnected portal, activating the intricate relationships between myth, science, and the ecological dynamics embedded in cultural narratives.

– ENDS –

## Notes for editors, not for publication

**Exhibition title:** Constellations – Part 1: Figures On Earth & Beyond  
**Dates:** Exhibition dates: 14 March – 25 May 2024  
Opening Reception with Soundset Performance by Andrew Pierre Hart: 14 March 2024 (6pm – 9pm)  
Press view: TBC  
Performance Adelaide Damoah: 23 May 2024  
**Address:** Gallery 1957, London  
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## @Gallery1957

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## About Gallery 1957

Gallery 1957 is a contemporary art gallery with spaces across Accra, Ghana and London, UK. The gallery is dedicated to spearheading international exchanges between art practices from these communities and the rest of the world, presenting artists who interrogate concepts of belonging and identity, cultural exchange, and social history beyond Western narratives. Initially founded by Marwan Zakhem in 2016 to promote Ghana and West Africa's presence in the arts scene, the gallery's programming of exhibitions, installations and performances now encompasses emerging and established artists from the Global South and its diaspora. The gallery further supports artists with initiatives like its residency programme in Accra, which aims to create a free space that helps artists develop their practice and body of work, and the The Yaa Asantewaa Art Prize for female artists. The gallery now hosts three spaces in Accra – one in the Kempinski Hotel and two in Galleria Mall – and a London outpost in Hyde Park Gate.



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## **About The Yaa Asantewaa Art Prize**

Named after a revolutionary Ghanaian Queen Mother, the Yaa Asantewaa Art Prize is part of Gallery 1957's ongoing commitment to nourish and develop the cultural development of Ghana's art scene. The prize is open exclusively to emerging and established Ghanaian women artists living in Ghana or across its diaspora and will offer GHC40,000, GHC20,000 and GHC15,000 to the top three prize winners. The first prize winner will also have the opportunity for an artist residency and exhibition at Gallery 1957. Previous winners include Araba Opoku in 2021 and Priscilla Kennedy in 2022.

## **About Katherine Finerty**

Katherine Finerty (b. New York City, lives and works in London) is an independent curator, writer, and educator focusing on interdisciplinary practices, collective identity politics, and global contemporary art. Her collaborative curatorial practice generates immersive installations and participatory programmes that connect art and imagination to everyday life. Finerty is currently Project Curator in International Partnerships at Tate, and recent positions include Strategic Partnerships Consultant for Pace Gallery (2022-2023) and Curator & Communications Manager at The Showroom, London (2019-2022). Previous experiences include working as Curatorial Assistant to Elvira Dyangani Ose for GIBCA 2015 (Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art), and interning at The Studio Museum in Harlem, Met, and Guggenheim, New York; and White Cube, London. Finerty has a Curating Masters from the Royal College of Art, London, and received a BA in History of Art studying at Cornell University, New York, and the University of Cambridge.

## **About Tracy Naa Koshie Thompson**

Tracy Naa Koshie Thompson (b. 25 October 1993) is a Ghanaian artist-curator living and working in Accra and Kumasi. She is a Fine Art (Ph.D) student at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, Ghana. Thompson has an independent practice in reverse-engineering foods and research into plasticity and morphogenesis. Thompson has curated alongside Kwasi Ohene-Ayeh and Adwoa Amoah for a retrospective on Ghanaian artist Agyeman Ossei (2021); Chris-sis series exhibition by Samuel Baah Kortey (2022); Some Things Stay Broken exhibition by Jonathan Okoronkwo (2022); Kum Ase exhibition by Al Hassan Issah (2023) and Silent Invasions group exhibition in Uganda (2023).

## **About Nuna Adisenu-Doe**

Nuna Adisenu- Doe is an artist, curator and the Founding Director of Compound House Gallery. Drawing inspiration from the emancipatory and radical practices of blaxTARLINES, Kumasi, Nuna embraces the ethos of Compound House Gallery as a space that foregrounds experimentation and stimulates the political sensitivity of artists. Working as an independent curator, his practice focuses on the debris of mass culture as a birthplace of philosophical truths. Walter Benjamin's "Dialectics of Seeing" echoes in his approach towards exhibition making and how they could become immersive experiences that critically reflect the realities of society. His recently curated exhibitions are "Adansini" Clifford Bright-Abu, Buro and "Look at What You've Seen" Emmanuel Kwaku Yaro, Gallery 1957. Nuna Adisenu-Doe holds a BFA in Painting from KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana and an MA in Art Market Appraisal (Professional Practice) from Kingston University, London, UK.