

LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YRNEH GABON

Spirit Leads Me

February 24 – April 13, 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday, February 24, 4–7 p.m.

FRIEZE Weekend Brunch: March 2, 2024, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.



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Luis De Jesus Los Angeles is very pleased to announce **YRNEH GABON: *Spirit Leads Me***, a multimedia exhibition of painting, sculpture, and performance art, on view in Gallery 2 and Gallery 3 from February 24 through April 13, 2024. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, February 24th, from 4 to 7 p.m., and a FRIEZE Weekend Brunch will be held the following Saturday, March 2nd, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

In 2023, Yrneh Gabon became the first artist-in-residence at The Museum of Black Civilizations, a national museum in Dakar, Senegal, where he initiated a body of work based on the *boubou*, an elaborate flowing caftan-like garment that is a manifestation of the spirit of traditional Senegalese fashion. The boubou's African origins can be traced to the 8th century, and the word "boubou" is a French distortion of the Wolof word *mbubb*. In essence, the boubou is both a metaphor for colonization; and, simultaneously, a sign of sartorial resistance against the imperative to adopt Western dress. Gabon designed three grand boubous with fabric selected from across the continent, and decorated them with dragonflies, a motif that first appeared in his work during the severe California drought of 2016. For Gabon, the dragonfly is a symbol of the precarity of life in a time of grave ecological crisis.

The exhibition ***Spirit Leads Me*** presents the boubous that Gabon designed at The Museum of Black Civilisations along with a series of visually rhythmic paintings in which they are depicted worn by himself and subjects the artist befriended during his trips to the African continent (such as the Senegalese twins Sena and Sana, and the Jamaican supermodel and fashion designer Lois Samuels). In addition, the exhibition includes four paintings that highlight the role of African children in a fast-changing Africa and the criticality of empowering them by encouraging curiosity and the search for purpose and prospect. These works are joined by several mixed-media floor and wall sculptures employing a range of materials, including bronze, steel, crystals, salt, clay, wood, glass, water, and paint.

Throughout these works, Gabon excavates and reveals layers of dislocation and destruction to address political, economic, racial and religious subjugation, and the violence in the history of Africa and the slave trade. Like the dragonfly which symbolizes mutability and tenacity, Gabon's work brings Africans from the continent and the diaspora together, connected across time and place by the umbilical cord of history, to communicate messages imbued with spirituality, empowerment and survival.

Yrneh Gabon (b. 1967, Jamaica) received his MFA from Otis College of Arts and Design in 2017 and BFA from the University of Southern California in 2012. Gabon was awarded a 2023-24 Fulbright Fellowship and is currently in residence in Botswana, in Southern Africa, conducting research into the impact of ecological climate change on local society, the Okavango Delta, and La Makgadikgadi Salt Pans. In 2022, he became the first artist in residence at the Museum of Black Civilisations in Dakar, Senegal. Yrneh Gabon is based in Los Angeles, CA.

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Selected solo and group exhibitions include *Collective Conversations Matter* (2023) at Matter Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (2022), Maison AfriKin, Miami, FL; *At the Table* (2022), Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, CA; *Vernacular A la Monde* (2022), Little Haiti Cultural Center, Miami, FL; *Adornment and Artifacts* (2022), Getty Villa, Los Angeles, CA; *A Salted Intermission: 14th Edition of the Dakar Biennale 2022*, Palais De Justice; *I'NDaff # Forger/Out of the Fire*, De La Biennale De L'Art African Contemporain; *Le Marche' International Des Arts de Dakar*, 14th Biennale De Dakar 2022; *The Phoenix Project: Continuing the Dialogue from 1992* (2022), Korean Cultural Center Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA; *Radical Propagations / Propagaciones Radicales* (2022), 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica, CA.

Recovery Justice: Being Well (2021), 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica, CA; *Suturo Artists and Poems: Los Angeles* (2020, online exhibition); *Black Lives Matter* (2020, online exhibition), El Camino College Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; *Drive-By-Art / Public Art in This Moment of Social Distancing* (2020), WEST of Western, Los Angeles, CA; *Mojo Rising* (2020), Ronald H. Silverman Fine Arts Gallery, Cal State LA, Los Angeles, CA; *Facing Darkness* (2020), 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica, CA; National Gallery of Art Summer Exhibition (2019), National Gallery of Jamaica, Kingston, Jamaica; *African Civilisations: Continuous Creation of Humanity* (2018), Musée des Civilisations Noires, Dakar, Senegal; *Memba Mi Tell Yu* (2017), Bolsky Otis College of Arts and Design, Los Angeles, CA; *Visibly Invisible* (2014-15), California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA; *Raíces y Símbolos Escondidos* (2014), Fundación Sebastián, Mexico City, Mexico; among others.

For further information, including images and previews, please call 213-395-0762, or email gallery@luisdejesus.com.

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