

MARUANI MERCIER

CORNELIUS ANNOR

Memories We Share

2 April - 4 May 2022

Kustlaan 90 in Knokke





Cornelius Annor | Sir Johns, 2021 | acrylic and fabric transfer on canvas | 150 x 119 cm | 59 1/8 x 46 7/8 in

CORNELIUS ANNOR

Memories We Share

“Humans, not places, make memories.”- Ama Ata Aidoo

Strictly speaking memory is individual as it involves individual consciousness, but sociologists insist that all memory is social. In her essay *The Site of Memory*, the African American writer Toni Morrison defines memories as the recollection of an image and of the feelings accompanying that picture to reconstruct the world in which her ancestor lived. This reconstruction is based on collective memory when she tries to imagine their world and the private or interior life of the people in it.

This approach on memory is in some way reflected in the work of the Ghanaian artist Cornelius Annor. The exhibition entitled *MEMORIES WE SHARE* revolves around this reconstruction of memories. Departing from photographs taken by his ancestors, Annor recreates life's most memorable moments, whether it be everyday sceneries, weddings, baptisms, anniversaries, or family gatherings.

Navigating through Annor's body of work can be compared to the action of turning the leaves of a family album. Incorporating objects and clothes in his compositions from different periods in time, Annor plays with memory, history, and temporality. His paintings can be seen as hypothetical history writing, merging elements from his family and friends' archive, from the past and the present.

While some of the photographs he gets his inspiration from were shot during family reunions, some are also a reflection of the African tradition of going to the photo studio, shooting a sitting pose in a fictional space. These studio-like sceneries, rooted in the lineage of West African studio portraiture which were created to give a certain middle-class status to the model, are reminiscent of the ambiance in the photographs of the renown Nigerian photographer Samuel Fosso and the Malian photographer Malick Sidibé. While we recognize similar elements of decor, the settings found in the works of Cornelius Annor create a very personal universe to the artist including hi-fi, televisions, photo frames, posters together with opulent wallpapers, vintage sofas, and wooden cabinets.

The seemingly ordinary moments of intimacy, gathering and entertainment also set the focus on the details of his fabric transfer technique as well as his textile and photography collages merging tradition and contemporaneity in his work. Inspired by the British, Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare's body of sculpture using wax fabric, the textiles and motifs found in Annor's work not only refer to the West African culture but are derived for the most part from his personal archive and as such add a more intimate overtone to his paintings. Annor's body of work also focuses on the passage of time and how it affects us, our relations, and our history. This idea of passing of time is reflected in the artist's fabric transfer method. This faded effect



Cornelius Annor | Y3 hwehw3 Dwanek)bea, 2021 | acrylic and fabric transfer on canvas | 213 x 152 cm | 83 7/8 x 59 7/8 in

that is created through this technique which consists in applying the fabric on the canvas for a few hours before removing it, can in some ways be compared to the untold stories behind the photographs in family albums. These left marks on the canvas become like an absent story of a certain event which remains unknown to the viewer.

Another important element is the disruption of the depth and perspective within the paintings through this use of fabric transfer and textile and photograph collages. These collage-based vibrant compositions in a way remind of Derek Fordjour's colorful texturized creations. The photographs inserted to the background of the paintings are snapshots of his family members, adding a print of his father, who was a sculptor, in every painting, as a tribute to the man who inspired him to become the artist he is today.

His interest in painting from his family archive came from his desire to reconnect with family members on his father's side with whom he had long lost touch after the death of his father. This urge to reconnect emerged during his wedding preparation and it is through his paintings that he sought to reestablish a bond with this part of the family. Through his approach, he realized the importance of archiving and began collecting family albums from his ancestors and from friends. Annor invites the viewer to connect with the figures in ambiguous yet completely present and familiar ways, to retrieve their own family histories and memories.

"For me archiving as a form has the potential to open up discussions on lost and forgotten histories and its politics. And I intend to bring into presence these past histories through my works as a way of creating a room of memory which can migrate my audience to a particular moment in time and reflect on themselves. "

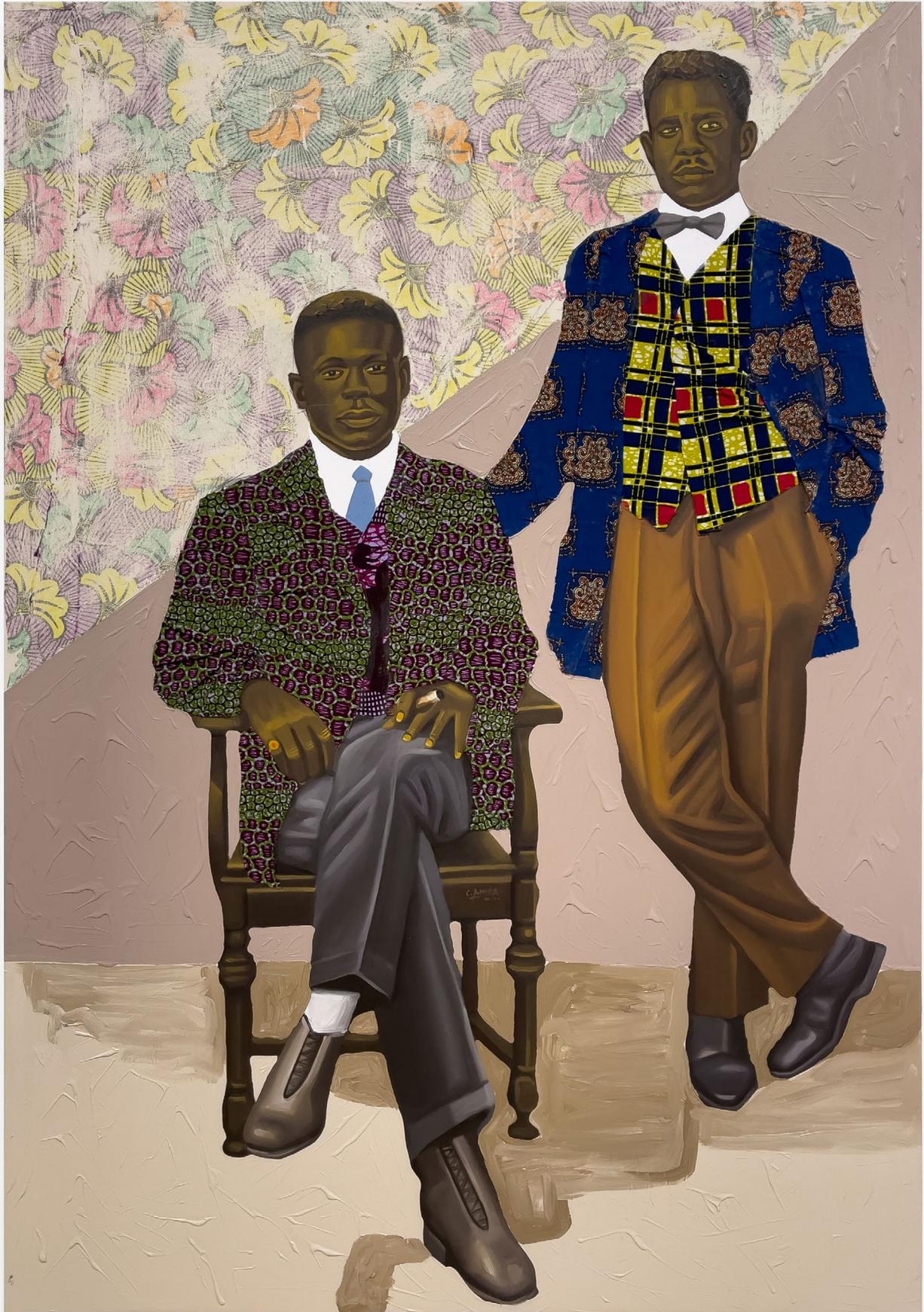
Memories we share is an exhibition devoted to memory, whether it is the artist's own or shared between family members, friends, and the spectators.

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Cornelius Annor | Adanfo pa, 2022 | acrylic, fabric and fabric transfer on canvas | 182.6 x 121.4 cm | 71 7/8 x 47 3/4 in



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CORNELIUS ANNOR

Born in Accra, Ghana from an artist's family, the Ghanaian artist Cornelius Annor started painting at a very young age influenced by his father who was a sculptor. From an early age, Annor developed a passion for painting, sketching his family, friends and even strangers. He completed his fine art studies at Ghanatta College of Art and Design, alongside fellow alumni Amoako Bofo and Otis Quiacoe and together they are at the vanguard of a new generation of West African painters. Annor lives and works in Ghana where he established C.Annor studio, a space dedicated to encouraging and supporting young talents and upcoming artists.

Annor's work has been exhibited throughout Africa and the U.S., including at the Ghana National Museum and the Accra Art Center

EDUCATION

Ghanatta College of Art and Design, Fine Arts Studies

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022** Memories We Share, Maruani Mercier Gallery, Knokke, Belgium
2021 Cornelius Annor: Lost But Found, Venus Over Manhattan, New York
A Family Affair, Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2022** Contemporary African Portraiture, curated by Florian Steininger, Kunsthalle Krems, Krems, Austria
2021 The Interior, Venus Over Manhattan, New York, NY
2019 SANKOFA, Gallery 2622, Wauwatosa, WI
Current Exhibition, Hos Oona, Vejle, Denmark
2017 Atelier 2017, Absa Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2021** News, Cornelius ANNOR: A Family Affair, Omenka Online, 8 Feb. 2021
Staff Writer, Gallery 1957 to showcase works of Ghanaian painter Cornelius Annor, Africa Feeds, 19 Jan 2021
Ghana Web, Ghanaian Artist Cornelius Annor to Exhibit at Gallery 1957 from January 26, Ghana Web, 20 January 2021

COLLECTIONS

Buxton Contemporary
Cuperior Collection
The Bunker Artspace, West Palm Beach
Espacio Tacuari, Buenos Aires

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