

'Stolen Stories' by Kojo Marfo

UNTITLED, ART, Art Basel, Miami Beach



Kojo Marfo, *Heritage*, 2021, acrylic on canvas, 66 1/8 x 74 3/8 inches
168 x 189 cms

On the occasion of the 10th edition of UNTITLED ART Miami, JD Malat Gallery is delighted to present 'Stolen Stories' by Ghanaian artist Kojo Marfo, running from 29 November until 4 December 2021. After captivating a global audience with his first solo exhibition, 'Dreaming of Identity', in London, Marfo has become internationally recognised for his unique style that fuses stylistic elements of Akan art with Western references.

'Stolen Stories' marks Marfo's first solo presentation in the United States, providing the international audience of the art fair with exclusive insight into a series of five new paintings as well as his first foray into sculpture.

Jean-David Malat, founder of JD Malat Gallery, was thrilled when he discovered Kojo Marfo - one of twenty-five artists in the gallery's mid-pandemic 2020 open-call exhibition *Isolation Mastered* : "When I saw Marfo's works, I saw raw beauty, especially in those colourful surreal

portraits; it was as if a whole new vision of society was born. I felt like I was facing the future of contemporary African art.”

Akan art plays a significant role in Marfo’s quest to create a collective experience. The artist developed his interest in art and visual culture through the traditional Akan artifacts, sculptures and carvings that he was exposed to as a child in Ghana. Referring to himself as an Afro-Expressionist, the artist fuses elements from his Ghanaian background with Western Art references to critically engage with themes of identity and multiculturalism.

With block colours, strong shapes, twisted fingers, and the archaic gazes of his figures, Marfo gives the viewers his vibrant interpretation of the diverse narratives of different people he has encountered throughout his life. As Marfo states: “I want my artwork to create a connection with people, to be a symbol for everyone to relate to. No matter what you are going through, or where you live, I want my art to help people think and reflect on their inner lives and how it relates to the wider world.”

Marfo breaks the boundaries between class and cultural divisions with his unique fusion of artistic inspirations. The lineage referenced in *Heritage*, or the familial tension expressed in *Offspring*, become universal stories experienced across time and space. Thus, ‘Stolen Stories’ allows for freedom of interpretation and encourages viewers to reflect on personal stories and the lives of others. His now infamous *Stranger* series captures his ability to represent the universal human condition with sensibility and emotion.

Marfo’s work has been acquired by major international private and public collections spanning Great Britain, Europe, Asia and the United States of America. JD Malat Gallery hopes to continue the artist’s magnificent ascent by showing his works at Untitled Art Fair.

JD Malat Gallery

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