

RWENDO – WHICH MEANS JOURNEY

Tega Tafadzwa

12 October – 7 November 2022



Tega Tafadzwa, *The Streets*, 2022, mixed media on canvas, 140 x 200 cm

JD Malat Gallery is thrilled to announce the debut solo exhibition by Tega Tafadzwa *RWENDO - WHICH MEANS JOURNEY*, curated in collaboration with Africa First and on view at JD Malat Gallery from 12 October until 7 November 2022. Coinciding with Frieze London, Tafadzwa's highly anticipated exhibition offers a celebratory take on the African diasporic population in South Africa and London during the UK's busiest art week.

RWENDO - WHICH MEANS JOURNEY consists of fifteen new paintings which reflect on the journeys of people who have experienced difficulties of relocation. Originally from Zimbabwe, Tafadzwa pursued his artistic career in 2008 when he moved to Cape Town, South Africa. As a foreigner who fell subject to marginalisation during his search for a more prosperous career outside of his home country, Tafadzwa dedicates his art to the stories of fellow migrants who similarly faced the unsettling challenges of 'othering'. Capturing the stylish and confident personalities of his subjects through his vibrant collaged canvases, Tafadzwa seeks to honour and highlight the lives throughout the African diaspora.

Discovering, collecting and actively supporting the careers of emerging artists from Africa and its diaspora are at the heart of Africa First. With a focus on producing growth opportunities via global gallery collaborations, residencies, prizes, institutional loans, publications, sponsorships and various forms of social engagement, since 2017 Africa First by Serge Tiroche plays a significant role in the renaissance and rapidly growing global

visibility of African Contemporary Art. Collaboration with JD Malat Gallery aims to introduce emerging artists from the continent, such as Tega Tafadzwa, into the global art ecosystem.

As a driving force behind this cross-cultural synergy, gallery Founder Jean-David Malat remarks:

Collaborating with Africa First will help build a bridge between the local creative communities of the continent and the international audience of London. I am honoured to support Tafadzwa – an artist with strong local roots – in his steps towards an international career.

Confident poses, a striking colour palette and Western references combined with symbols of heritage bring Tafadzwa's vibrant Cape Town community to life. As a riot in the face of oppression, each one of his painterly subjects proudly carries their individuality. The emphasis on the 'self' and one's journey is the key story behind each artwork, as Tafadzwa embodies his own heritage and culture by depicting a wallpaper of Zumbani - the tea leaf from the fever tree. This common motif reflects the artist's connection to the traditional plant, often used in his home country as a medicinal aid. This visual reference carries a powerful personal message for the artist: Zumbani acts as a symbol of his birth home, a token of remembrance, and a protective talisman for the unknown journey ahead.

Using the unsettling challenges and experiences from his personal journey, Tafadzwa enriches the viewer's understanding of the global issues of enforced migration. The artist explains that despite being encouraged to move for work, many individuals fell victim to labels that often 'poke fun' at their position in society. Tafadzwa's work, however, is a celebration of the cultural and artistic accomplishments of his subjects of African descent.

Art is a way to unite and support each other, especially in South Africa and England –
Tega Tafadzwa.

For more information, images and comment, please contact: press@jdmalat.com

JD Malat Gallery
30 Davies St, Mayfair
London, W1K 4NB

Opening hours:
Monday – Friday: 10am – 6pm
Saturday: 12pm – 6pm