

Foster Sakyiamah
Patterns Of The Everyday

September 16—October 22, 2022

Kutlesa is pleased to present *Patterns Of The Everyday*, an exhibition of new paintings by the Accra-based painter Foster Sakyiamah, on view at the gallery's location. This will be the artist's first solo show with the gallery as well as in Europe. In this latest body of work, Sakyiamah considers his personal journey to manhood and his identity within a matrilineal society. His mother, sisters, and wife, who have often been depicted on his canvases, remain key figures here, serving as a grounding presence for reflection and celebration.

Characters from his local community form the essence of Sakyiamah's paintings: vibrant, stylish, often in pairs or trios, yet highly individual, even when sartorially coordinated. A sense of connection, tradition, and camaraderie permeate through his compositions, his subjects epitomizing what Sakyiamah terms "casual opulence."

Deeply influenced by renowned Malian photographer Malick Sidibe and Ghanaian-British photographer James Barnor, Sakyiamah emphasizes style as a critical aspect of identity and expression rather than mere aesthetic flourish. The swirling, intricate patterns on the canvas form not only the textile-like background, but blend into the bodies of the subjects themselves, revealing an image fully in motion, vibrating with life. The portraits transform their subjects from individuals merely observed and depicted into distinct characters with a commanding presence, inviting and enveloping the viewer into the spirited setting of daily Ghanaian life, straight from Sakyiamah's memories.

A fully illustrated exhibition catalogue will be published in 2022 by Kutlesa Books.

Foster Sakyiamah (b. 1983, Ghana) is an emerging contemporary artist based in Accra, Ghana. Instantly recognizable for their vibrant color palettes and preponderance of curved linear patterns, Sakyiamah's paintings are celebrated as exuberant portrayals of the people and culture of Ghana. Sakyiamah's affinity for patterns comes from his interest in the work of Malian photographer Malick Sidibé, and Ghanaian-British Photographer James Barnor who often dressed his subjects in patterned clothes and posed them amid wildly patterned floors and backdrops.

Such a diversity of patterns and forms creates a dynamism in Sakyiamah's paintings that thrills the eye, and brings his figures to life. Movement is another important aspect of Sakyiamah's practice. He studied gymnasts in order to understand the mechanics of the human body, and to learn how to capture a sense of motion in his paintings. The content in Sakyiamah's paintings concerns his inner feelings and attitudes towards his community, his culture, and towards the everyday domestic aspects of his life in Ghana. His portraits convey a psychological attitude or state of mind through the facial expressions of the figures, their fashion styles, and through their body language.

The intense graphic quality of his compositions is an expression of Sakyiamah's appreciation for popular culture, as well as a reflection of his own interests in the history and principles of design. The energy and dynamism that defines Sakyiamah's canvases is heightened by his deft juxtaposition of complementary forces. His precise and hard-edged portrayal of human figures is contrasted with his elegant and lyrical use of gestural lines. His rich

and luxurious palette of black and brown flesh tones mingles with a luminous and bright rainbow of background hues.

Finally, the objective sense of reality conveyed by the perfectly rendered human figures is juxtaposed against the symbolic and purely abstract patterns, lines and forms enveloping their world. Most captivating of all perhaps is the exactitude of Sakyiamah's craft. The graphic flatness that defines his pictures from afar is juxtaposed sublimely with the lush and painterly impasto texture of his painted surfaces when viewed up close.

For all press inquiries, contact:
press@kutlesagallery.com or +41 41 244 66 99