

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SERGE ATTUKWEI CLOTTEY: CROSSROADS**



02 MARCH – 15 APRIL 2023

PRIVATE VIEW: THURSDAY 02 MARCH, 6 – 8 PM

SIMON LEE GALLERY, LONDON

Simon Lee Gallery is proud to announce *Crossroads*, a solo exhibition of new and recent work by Ghanaian artist, Serge Attukwei Clottey. For his inaugural exhibition with the gallery, the artist explores the relationship between his Ghanaian identity and Western culture, traversing the expanse of his multidisciplinary practice.

Primarily working with found materials from the streets of Accra, Ghana, Clottey's practice has long fostered a dialogue between his native city's material culture and Ghanaian identity. Created between Accra and Los Angeles, the works in this exhibition consider Ghana's complex history with international exchange and migration, contemplating notions of subjectivity, identity, and home.

The celebration of yellow plastic Kufuor gallons, a medium applied frequently throughout Clottey's practice which he calls 'Afrogallonism' is at the centre of the exhibition. Through form and process, these plastic works pay homage to the region's rich history of sculpture – a medium closely tied to Ghana's history of migration and movement, from the settlement of the first European traders, to the looting of artefacts and the transatlantic slave trade. Composed of discarded Kufuor gallons, the materiality of these works also brings them into conversation with the Ghana of today. Ubiquitous throughout Ghana, Kufuor gallons take their name from John Agyekum Kufuor, president of Ghana from 2001 to 2009, a period in which the country was suffering from extreme water shortages, forcing many to use the gallons to collect and store water. As such, these works become a personification of the many personal stories from the homes they have outlived their use in, the different worn colours and textures giving each work an alternate reality and meaning.

*Crossroads* will also debut a suite of oil paintings rendered on duct tape and corkboard. Emerging from and at times disappearing into monochromatic, patterned backgrounds, Clottey's subjects are portrayed as commanding and stylish. The paintings extend upon the legacy of West African portrait photographers like Seydou Keita, Hamidou Maiga and Malick Sidibé whose seminal work across the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s captured their respective societies in the midst of transition from colonial rule to independence. Reenvisaging their work, Clottey transforms the canvas into a space in which questions of subjectivity and cultural identity can be explored. The artist revisits select motifs

present throughout many of these photographers' oeuvres such as the intricately patterned backdrops and the subjects' affected postures, but presented for the first time in 2023, these works invite the viewer to consider what has changed since the studio portraits of Keita, Maiga and Sidibé, what has stayed the same, and how Ghana's relationship with the West has evolved.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About Serge Attukwei Clottey**

Serge Attukwei Clottey was born in 1985, in Accra, Ghana where he currently lives and works. Clottey has received an Honorary Doctorate of Art from the University of Brighton in 2019. The artist will present *Crossroads* his inaugural exhibition with Simon Lee Gallery, London in 2023. His recent solo exhibitions include *Erased Past*, Brigade, Copenhagen (2022); *Stimulation of Consciousness*, Duarte Sequeria, Braga, Portugal (2022); *Distinctive Gestures*, Gallery 1957, London, UK (2021); *Beyond Skin*, Simchowitz, Los Angeles, CA (2021); *Sensitive Balance*, Gnyp, Berlin, Germany (2020); *Routes*, The Mistake Room at The Platform, Culver City, Los Angeles, CA (2020); *Sometime In Your Life*, Lorenzelli Arte, Milan, Italy (2019); *Kubatana*, Vestfossen Kunslaboratorium Foundation, Oslo, Norway (2019); *Differences Between*, Jane Lombard Gallery, New York, NY (2018); *Serge Attukwei & Clottey Frédéric Bruly Bouabré*, Burning in Water, New York, NY (2017); *My Mother's Wardrobe*, Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana (2016). His works have been included in recent group exhibitions at *Desert X*, AIUla, Saudi Arabia (2022); *La Condition Publique*, Roubaix, France (2021); *Materiality*, Iziko South Africa National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa (2020); *Fabrica*, Brighton Festival, UK (2019); *Dans Un Ciel Ensoleille*, UTA Artist Space, Los Angeles, CA (2017). The artist presented installations at Kew Gardens and the Line in London, UK in 2022.

### **About Simon Lee Gallery**

Founded in London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices explore a wide range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography, and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, which introduced its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery [www.simonleegallery.com](http://www.simonleegallery.com)

Image: Serge Attukwei Clottey, *Valentine Flowers*, 2022. Plastic and copper wire, 127 x 96.52 cm (50 x 38 in.)  
Courtesy of the artist and Simon Lee Gallery.

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