

# NANA

# YAW ODURO

PORTFOLIO



# NANA YAW ODURO

NANA YAW ODURO IS A GHANAIAN PHOTOGRAPHER BORN IN 1994 AND BASED IN ACCRA.

He graduated from the business class of the University of Ghana in May 2017 and started photographing in 2015. If Cindy Sherman or Amalia Ulman use self-portrait by playing a role that is not theirs to criticize or denounce; Nana Yaw Oduro instead runs his pictures to make them reflect a depiction of himself and his sensibility, through the staged models. The stories emerging through his lens are inspired by his history. The photographer explores topics echoing his personal life through masculinity, boyhood, feelings, and self-acceptance. His photos provide fictional self-portraits in which his models are like actors, playing a biographical role. Nana Yaw Oduro is, thus, the stage director of his own emotions during the performance of a photo shoot. He specifies: "I put into perspective how my subject could be me on set. I always say: I'd rather shoot myself but since that's impossible I need people who know, understand, and relate to me."

The pictorial composition helps to read these personal stories: the characters are individualized and stand out from their surroundings. The space of each picture is defined without being too precise: a piece of beach, a cracked piece of land, a blue wall... It could be anywhere and at the same time nowhere. Arousing the curiosity of the viewer, these captures seem out of time. They embody a desire for freedom with the only existing boundary being the photographer's imagination.

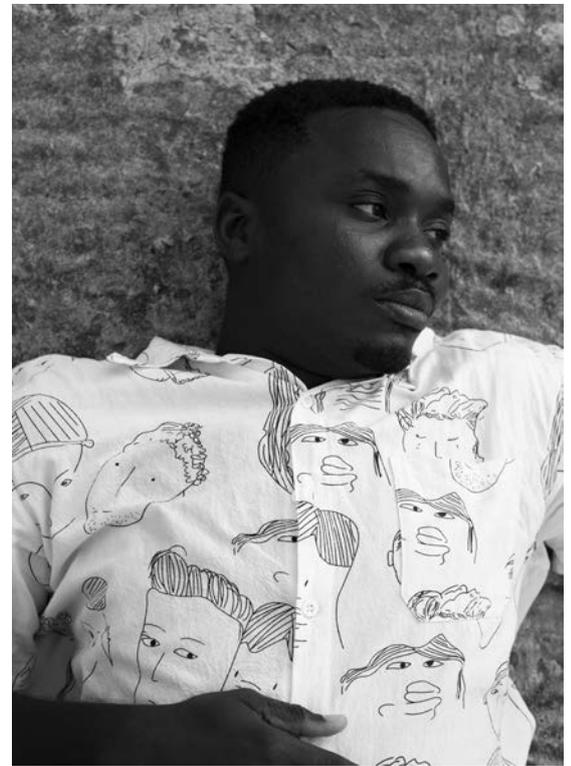
The stories his pictures present are composed using a mixture of his personal emotions, evident in the colors of his environment. Like other photographers of his generation such as Marc Posso or Yannis Davy, colors are at the heart of Nana Yaw Oduro's work. However, whilst these photographers have historically worked with saturated colors, Nana Yaw Oduro uses alternatively tender, pure, or raw colors in his photographs, alongside those captured in black and white. He explains: "I believe you'd agree with me black and white have always had some power and soulful connection to it and sometimes the photo is just perfect in that." Whether the colors are bold or in shades of grey, the chromatic treatment structures his images and produces a certain softness and harmony between shapes and colors, between man and nature; underpinning the narrative. Thus, there is no predetermined and systematically repeated concept in Nana Yaw Oduro's work. The photographer creates each of his images based on his sensation. He is free from any constraint and lets his imagination wander, composing with what is in existence around him. His photos are inspired by daily life, a song running through his ears, a horse that crosses his path, or a basket of fruits under his eyes. Creativity has no limit for him. Inspiration is everywhere. Poetry is everywhere.

# NANA YAW ODURO

b.1994

Accra, Ghana

Lives and works in Accra, Ghana



## AWARDS

2022 - People's Choice Award, Photo London x Nikon Emerging artist of the year Prize

2019 - 1st prize for Indépendent Photographs

## SELECTED SOLO SHOWS

2022

*How I Feel*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

2020

*Some things mysterious boys do*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

## SELECTED GROUP SHOWS

2023

*Insistent Presence: Contemporary African Art from the Chazen Collection*, Chazen Museum, Madison, USA

2022

AKAA, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

Photo London, London, United Kingdom

2021

1-54 London, London, United Kingdom

2020

Intersect Chicago Art Fair, Chicago, United States

*Un été sans fin*, Galerie AFIKARIS, Paris, France

Intersect Aspen Art Fair, Aspen, United States

2019

SXSW, Austin, États-Unis

## PUBLICATIONS

GQ, 2022

I-D, 2022

NYT MAGAZINE, 2021

AESTHETICA, October 2021

SOMETHING CURATED, August 2021

DAZED, May 2020

AESTHETICA, May 2020

I-D MAGAZINE, May 2020, 20 photographers capturing the beauty of modern Africa to follow in 2020

NATAAL, February 2020

IGNANT, November 2019



*CAN'T LOOSE THE MIND OVER ANYTHING GENERIC, 2017*  
Photography



*TROJAN HORSE*, 2018  
Photography



*FRUITS ARE FOR BOYS*, 2018  
Photography

The series *Fruits are for Boys* embodies the freedom of the photographer. He is free from any constraint and lets his imagination wander, composing with what is in existence around him. His photos are inspired by daily life, a song running through his ears or a basket of fruits under his eyes. Playing with the shapes and the contrasted colours he composes unique clichés imbued with harmony and poetry.



*UNTILTED (Fruits are for boys)*, 2019  
Photography



*JULIAN*, 2019  
Photography

If Cindy Sherman or Amalia Ulman, use the self-portrait by performing in a role in order to criticize or denounce, Nana Yaw Oduro directs his images so that they transcribe his own feelings and reflect his personality through the model that he stages. The stories that come to life through his lens are inspired by his own history. The photographer explores topics that echo his personal life such as masculinity, childhood, or self-perception. His photographs are therefore, in a way, fictional self-portraits in which his models, like actors, play his role. Nana Yaw Oduro is the director of his own emotions the time of a photo session. He explains: «I put into context through my photos the way my subject could be me. I always say that I should take a picture of myself. However, since that is impossible, I need people who know and understand me.»



*BEHIND MY BACK*, 2019  
Photography



*TWO BODIES AND TWO SOULS THAT CAN FEEL LOVE, 2022*  
Photography



*I HAVE CARRIED LIGHTER WEIGHTS BUT NONE I MISS  
RIGHTNOW, 2022*  
Photography



*CAMEL HEART*, 2019  
Photography

The reading of these personal stories is carried by the pictorial composition: the characters are individualized and stand out from the landscape. The space of each photo is defined without being too precise: a piece of beach, a cracked earth, a blue wall... It could be anywhere and at the same time nowhere. Attracting the curiosity of the viewer, the pictures seem out of time. They embody a desire for freedom, having for only border that of the imagination of the photographer.



*COME WITH ME*, 2019  
Photography



*PAW PAW BOY*, 2019

Photography



*IF WE PLAY LIKE THIS, WE STAND A CHANCE, 2021*

Photography



*IF WE PLAY LIKE THIS, WE STAND A CHANCE*, 2021  
Photography

If we play like this, we stand a chance arose after the confinement the world experienced in March 2020. It conveys a message of hope and invites us to enjoy the present moment in order to avoid any regrets.

“WE WON’T LET THE LOCKDOWN BURY US. IF YOU PLAY GOOD, IF YOU ENJOY YOUR LIFE, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.”

The series mirrors and extends the latin phrase Carpe Diem, quam minimum credula postero est (Pluck the day, trusting as little as possible in the next one.)



*PHILIP*, 2019  
Photography



*ALMOST CONCEALED*, 2019  
Photography



*GOUJON'S PLEASURE*, 2021  
Photography



EXHIBITION VIEW  
*HOW I FEEL*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France  
November 2022

«At a point in my already short career, I had to take an indefinite break from my craft resulting in a hiatus for 3 years. During this time I went through many phases and discovered a lot about myself. There was depression, there was loneliness, sometimes I laughed. I felt lost and I knew I didn't belong with the things I went to try. This was a difficult time but a good time to reflect on my life and know what works for me and what and most importantly who I really am and want to do with my time on earth. Identifying what works for me and myself took 3 years of self battle. I'm glad a decision was made after the period. I present "HOW I FEEL" a collection of images that reflects my reality from the period 2019 to 2022.»



*COAL ON CLAY*, 2019  
Photography  
Edition 1/5  
54x75 cm

The artist creates each of his images from his feelings. He does not limit himself and gives free rein to his imagination, composing with what surrounds him. His photographs are inspired by his daily life, a song he listens to, a horse that crosses his path or a basket of fruit that is in front of him. Creativity has no limit for him. Everything is inspiration. Everything is poetry.



*POUNDING HEART*, 2019  
Photography



*POLY*, 2022  
Photography



*REVEALED SLOWLY*, 2022  
Photography



*WHERE TO ?*, 2022  
Photography



*ONE OF THE VERY DAYS I FORGET ABOUT FLORA, 2022*  
Photography



EXHIBITION VIEW  
*HOW I FEEL*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France  
November 2022



*HE WAS SUCH A NOBLE MAN*, 2021  
Photography



*ALL THIS THINGS MY FATHER DOES*, 2019  
Photography



*TURA*, 2022  
Photography



*HAPPY EID, 2019*  
Photography