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AT AFIKARIS GALLERY, IN THE FRAMEWORK OF HIS FIRST SOLO SHOW, THE YOUNG NIGERIAN ARTIST EMMA ODUMADE QUESTIONS CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

AFIKARIS Gallery features for the first time Emma Odumade's work and offers him his very first solo show. Thus, from 7 October to 5 November in the new Parisian space of the gallery - at 7 rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth, 75003 - As I Reflected mirrors Emma Odumade's reality through its personal nature, it also touches on universal issues and questions our relationship to the past and the changes in the world through time.

7 October – 5 November, 2022



Left. Emma Odumade, *Festival of Men*, 2022. 150x150 cm. Charcoal, graphite, black tea, acrylic, ink and old photos (photos vintage) on canvas.

Right. Emma Odumade, *Unto Me*, 2022. 140x130 cm. Charcoal, graphite, black tea, acrylic, ink and old photos on canvas.

Courtesy of AFIKARIS Gallery.

29 September, 2022 (Paris, France) – Committed to the discovery of young talents, AFIKARIS gallery announces its new collaboration with the artist Emma Odumade (b. 2000, Nigeria) and thereby signs the artist's very first solo exhibition. From 7 October to 5 November, 11 mixed media works on canvas and paper will unfold through the 180m² of the gallery's new Parisian space at 7 rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth - which will become the gallery's permanent location from December 2022. *As I Reflected*, embodies an introspective reflection. It draws a multifaceted reality that questions change, while addressing the consequences of these transformations; and reconnecting us to the past.

When created during one phase of personal self-awareness, the featured canvases retain, from this period, the artist's torments and explore the paths offered to him to overcome suffering. Emma Odumade presents then a sensitive and confidential art – developed around hyper-realistic charcoal portraits. His work is closely related to his private life and concerns. The artist integrates his memories and emotions into his pieces. If the moments he evokes on his canvases might re-play a key event of his life, he always

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depicts a scene in which a change is taking place. *As I Reflected* materialises the concept of transition. In this sense, the shape of some of the works - circular or inclined - as well as the posture of the moving characters, provides a sensation of impulse and suggests movement.



Left. Emma Odumade, *Three Sides of a Coin*, 2022. 75x75 cm. Charcoal, acrylic, ink, black tea and ols photos on canvas.
Centre. *Three Sides of a Coin III*, 2022. 75x75 cm. Charcoal, acrylic, ink, black tea and ols photos on canvas.
Right. Emma Odumade, *Three Sides of a Coin II*, 2022. 75x75 cm. Charcoal, acrylic, ink, black tea and ols photos on canvas.
Courtesy of AFIKARIS Gallery.

The ensemble of three canvases *Three Sides of a Coin* describes, documents and questions change, by showing three times the same child figure under three distinct angles, crossed by three different emotions. A recurring topic in the art of Odumade are childhood acts, which symbolise a beginning. The child becomes the privileged witness to transition, an actor standing on the dawn of change.

“We were children before anything else. Children project us to the past when we were free.”
Emma Odumade

The collage elements found throughout Odumade’s works - photos of Benin Bronzes, old concert tickets, old images, and sketches - combine past, present, and future. Odumade interrogates transformations in shared spaces. How do these mutations impact social life, as well as relationships with others and the environment? That is the question *Festival of Men* – a circular canvas poses, featuring two central characters holding a cockerel, which initiates thought on the very notion of gender and its associated stereotypes.

Emma Odumade plays with different realities: oscillating between memories and fictional scenes imbued with references to his own life. He expresses his struggle to escape from his malaise and gathers, in his art, the moments of joy that hold him away from the darkness. He plunges the viewers into his intimacy. He introduces them to the people he cares about - his girlfriend in *Unto Me*, or his best friends in *Euphoria (Never Low Again)* - until he reveals his deeper self, through a self-portrait. *Seth; Why Run Away from Light Equals Infin9s* is part of the rare representations of the artist. On the paper’s surface, Seth, his alter-ego, is running away before being stopped. He appears to be caught by the reality facing him. This self-portrait marks the artist’s awareness.

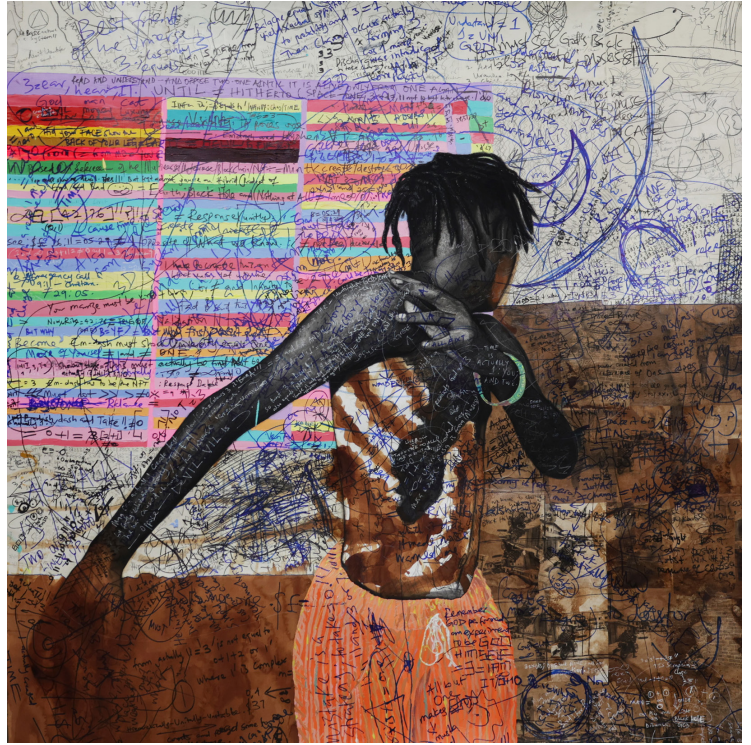
“I’m trying to face the fact that I’m now growing. I can’t escape reality. I need to face it.”
Emma Odumade

Whilst he was down, he illustrated his fight to move on. “Why Run Away from Light”? He asks. The answer arises as an equation: *Infin9s*. Some other equations that can be found in the background onto frenetic and spontaneous notes, nearly compulsive, evoke the future as a prediction of what could happen; as well as the past of the artist who studied physics. The black tea symbolises at the same time the present

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- regarding Odumade's interest in botanical sciences - but also the beginning and the soul: for what is inside but can't be physically shown. Thus, Odumade, who describes himself as an introvert and shy person, discloses his inner self through this self-portrait, exposing his sorrow and doubts. If he tries to draw the viewers' attention by mixing colours and artistic techniques, this piece asserts itself like the scream of the artist, seeking change.

The fictional situations - starring anonymous people he meets on the street - he sometimes depicts, are impregnated with his experiences, and carry his thoughts on the world. Odumade proposes alternative realities that he integrates into his own realm by slipping in personal artefacts, always to underline the transformations the world is undergoing and the connections between people.



Above. Emma Odumade, *Seth; Why Run Away from Light equals Infin9s*, 2021/2022. 140x150 cm. Charcoal, graphite, ink, acrylic, sketches, black tea and old photos on paper mounted on canvas. Courtesy of AFIKARIS Gallery.

PRESS CONTACT:

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NOTES TO EDITORS :

About Emma Odumade:

Emma Odumade (b. 2000, Lagos, Nigeria) is an artist who lives and works in Lagos. His work centers around hyper-realistic drawings that interact with notions of identity and explore the social constructs of beauty and power. Born and raised in Lagos, Odumade's art journey started at a very young age with drawing comics and cartoons and pasting collages on paper. Odumade lauds the pencil as a weapon for activism and a means for reconnecting with personal stories and experiences.

Emma Odumade's work has been exhibited at UNIT London Gallery (London, UK), and is currently on display as part of the group show *Shout Plenty* (13 August – 1st October, 2022) organised by the *African Artists' Foundation* in Lagos (Nigeria). It will be presented by AFIKARIS Gallery at the Art X Lagos art fair in Nigeria (4 – 6 November, 2022).

As I Reflectd is the first solo show devoted to Emma Odumade.

About AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris :

Founded in 2018 by Florian Azzopardi, to promote emerging and established artists from Africa and its diaspora, AFIKARIS Gallery opened a dedicated Paris-based gallery space in 2021. Engaged in promoting cross-cultural and disciplinary exchange, AFIKARIS acts as a platform for artists to engage with the wider public. A mirror onto and space for reflection on the contemporary African art scene, it provides artists with a space to address the topical local and international issues at the heart of their art.

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AFIKARIS's curated program includes group and solo exhibitions; art fairs; publications; as well as institutional partnerships.

Emma Odumade, *As I Reflected* | 7 October — 5 November, 2022

PRESS OPENING: Thursday, October 6th, 3PM — 6PM

PUBLIC OPENING: Thursday, October 6th, 6PM — 9PM

AFIKARIS Gallery

7 rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth

75003 Paris, France

From Tuesday to Saturday: 11AM — 7PM

Ongoing exhibitions:

Le monde cherche un futur | Ousmane Niang's solo show

AFIKARIS Gallery | 38 rue Quincampoix, 75004 Paris

Until October 15th, 2022

Upcoming shows:

Une odyssée de l'espace | Hyacinthe Ouattara's solo show

AFIKARIS Gallery | 38 rue Quincampoix, 75004 Paris

From October 22nd to November 26th, 2022

ART FAIRS

1-54 London, London, UK

Salifou Lindou - Omar Mahfoudi - Ozioma Onuzulike

Akaa, Paris, France

Moustapha Baidi Oumarou - Matthew Eguavoen - Jean David Nkot - Hyacinthe Ouattara

Art X Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria

Matthew Eguavoen, Ousmane Niang, Jean David Nkot, Emma Odumade

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