

“Mutual Identity” Dawit Abebe

Addis Fine Art Gallery, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
18 September – 10 November 2018



Dawit Abebe, *Mutual Identity 13*, 2018 Collage & Pastel on Paper 100 x 70 cms

Addis Fine Art is pleased to announce Mutual Identity, Dawit Abebe’s first solo exhibition at Addis Fine Art’s main gallery in Addis Ababa, from 18 September – 10 November 2018.

Mutual Identity is a body of work following Dawit Abebe’s *X-Privacy* series from 2012 in which he critically examines the themes of power and individual and collective freedom. Experiments in composition and form, explore the collective human experience. A growing sense of responsibility in the face of social and cultural shifts, questions of national and global urgency and their implication on the social fabric, are explored in this exhibition.

Collages carefully constructed in Dawit’s signature style, confront the viewer with questions of personal ego and its impact on society. The ego removes contact with nature as humans more divided and isolated. Magazine cut-outs of famous figures are juxtaposed against each other, taken out of their usual context. Vladimir Putin occupies the same space as Tony Blair, Kim Jong Un, Mulatu Teshome, Adolph Hitler, Martin Luther King Jr., a fashion model and a lone, armed soldier. The giant figures seem to represent these individuals’ combined egos. These giant nude male figures explore the ego under difficult social conditions. Stripped of clothes, knowledge and identity, these figures flagrantly present themselves for view. The

small collage city below is oblivious to the behemoth above. At times this dominant figure seems to be carrying the weight of the world like Atlas or Sisyphus and at times cowered, shamed by his nakedness, like Adam banished from Eden. Nonetheless, the giant's masculinity is unquestionable. The cityscape filled with tiny celebrity figures questions civilization and modernity. The god-like role of camera surveillance asks the viewer to question socially constructed ideals of proper behaviour. The imagery of the cage explores systems that encourage power imbalance. These collages ask what our contribution is to the world. They question national identity in the face of privilege and global systems of power. Are we ignoring our surroundings, entranced by our own selfhood and distracted by the personal shadow we cast?

Dawit Abebe is an Addis Ababa based artist whose practice is representative of the complexities of the social fabric of Ethiopia, weaving together layers of history with reflective commentary on social and technological change. Born in 1978, he graduated from the Addis School of Fine Arts and Design at Addis Ababa University with a diploma in painting, sculpture, graphics, photography and industrial design. Having founded the Habesha Art Studio in 2001 with four other contemporary Ethiopian artists, he continues to practice from Habesha studio as a full-time artist in residence. Dawit Abebe has participated in several group shows and has had numerous solo shows in Ethiopia as well as other parts of the world including the Emirates, France, Germany, Kenya, the Netherlands, South Africa, Tanzania, UK, and the USA. In Europe, it is represented by Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London. His works are in the collections of Barjeel Art Foundation, Rema Hort Mann Foundation, Saatchi Gallery, Frank Cohen, Carole Server and Oliver Frankel.

Addis Fine Art

Founded by Rakeb Sile and Mesai Haileleul, Addis Fine Art is the very first local space and international platform based in Ethiopia. The gallery focuses on highlighting fine art from the Horn of Africa region and its diaspora. In January 2016, Addis Fine Art opened its main gallery space in the heart of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia launching an innovative programme of exhibitions, talks and events, showing a diverse set of modern and contemporary artists from Ethiopia and the diaspora. In October 2016, the AFA Project Space was opened in London, to provide an additional international platform to the gallery's programme. Addis Fine Art is quickly becoming the leading gallery in the region, and continues to strengthen its cross-continental presence at prominent art-fairs, supporting its artists in exhibitions around the globe.

For more press information contact Raku Sile or Judith van Helden on hello@addisfineart.

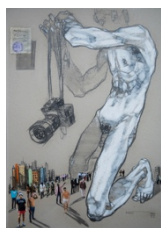
“Mutual Identity”

Dawit Abebe

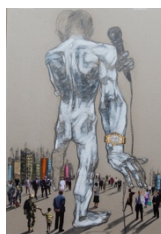
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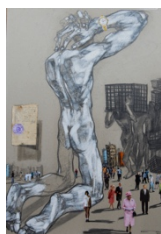
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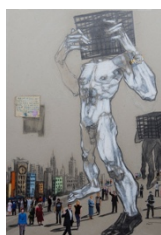
Dawit Abebe
Mutual Identity 11
2018 Collage and Pastel on Paper 100 x 70 cm
Courtesy of the Artist & Addis Fine Art



Dawit Abebe
Mutual Identity 12
2018 Collage and Pastel on Paper 100 x 70 cm
Courtesy of the Artist & Addis Fine Art



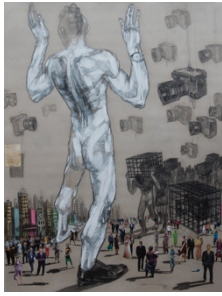
Dawit Abebe
Mutual Identity 13
2018 Collage and Pastel on Paper 100 x 70 cm
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Dawit Abebe
Mutual Identity 14
2018 Collage and Pastel on Paper 100 x 70 cm
Courtesy of the Artist & Addis Fine Art



Dawit Abebe
Mutual Identity 15
2018 Collage and Pastel on Paper 100 x 70 cm
Courtesy of the Artist & Addis Fine Art



Dawit Abebe
Mutual Identity 17
2018 Collage and Pastel on Paper 100 x 70 cm
Courtesy of the Artist & Addis Fine Art



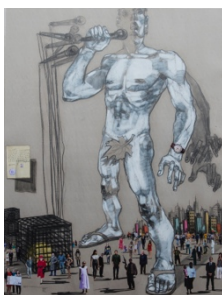
Dawit Abebe
Mutual Identity 18
2018 Collage and Pastel on Paper 100 x 70 cm
Courtesy of the Artist & Addis Fine Art



Dawit Abebe
Mutual Identity 19
2018 Collage and Pastel on Paper 100 x 70 cm
Courtesy of the Artist & Addis Fine Art



Dawit Abebe
Mutual Identity 20
2018 Collage and Pastel on Paper 100 x 70 cm
Courtesy of the Artist & Addis Fine Art



Dawit Abebe
Mutual Identity 21
2018 Collage and Pastel on Paper 100 x 70 cm
Courtesy of the Artist & Addis Fine Art