



Forseeing, 2017, Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 cm

MEKLIT

LULSEGED RETTA

21 September – 9 November 2019

Addis Fine Art Gallery, 3rd floor Woldfiker Building, Bole Medhane Alem

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Opening reception

Saturday 21 September 2019, 6 – 9 pm

Addis Fine Art is pleased to present, Lulseged Retta's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The show will take place at the Addis Fine Art Gallery in Addis Ababa, opening on Saturday 21 September from 6 – 9 PM, and on view from Monday 23 September – 9 November from 10 am – 1 pm & 2 – 6 pm.

Lulseged Retta (b. 1952) is one of Ethiopia's preeminent modernist painters. His work amalgamates and reimagines traditional Ethiopian artistic themes and modernist styles, harmoniously coalesced for a contemporary audience. Retta's paintings are informed by a multitude of influences, including Ethiopian Orthodox Church art, his love of music (which he infuses rhythmically into his compositions), and his interpretation of Ethiopia's rich cultural history.

Retta's first source of inspiration came from Orthodox church paintings and the works of Gebrekristos Desta and Afework Tekle. Now, Retta's distinctively Ethiopian paintings have come to define modern Ethiopian art. His works offer layers of meaning, offering simple aesthetic pleasures to the uninitiated eye and a deeply complex philosophical perspective to those familiar with his style. These works require analysis, revealing the landscape, culture and history that have come to influence him over the years.

Retta has worked hard for several decades offering his own interpretation of beauty through his own unique artistic viewpoint. He has delved into his own identity and the history of Ethiopia in order to create these pieces which convey a critical perspective on what it means to be Ethiopian. Ethiopian themes and African patterns are apparent in his portraits, musical pieces, paintings depicting daily activities and works of a philosophical nature. His works have an air of affluence to them stemming from the colors that enhance the viewer's experience; creating a connection to a deeply wealthy and culturally saturated past.

Retta's love of music informs his style which he rhythmically infuses into his artistic compositions. This is all the more evident in his rich color palette and the rhythms found in his painterly formations. The long necked female figures with the simultaneously telling and mysterious eyes set against vibrant, almost magical backgrounds fixate the viewers gaze. They glance down demurely, secretively, occasionally looking up to declare immutable truths to the audience.

Retta's unique style has inspired generations of Ethiopian artists and he remains an important figure in African contemporary art. He has exhibited his works in Ethiopia and various other African countries as well as in Europe, Asia and across the United States. Retta has also worked to promote Ethiopian art and artists nationally and abroad, helping organize the annual Art of Ethiopia art fair at the Sheraton Addis Hotel. He frequently collaborates with other artists and is highly engaged in the social sphere, following the belief that art is a reflection of our culture and values.

Retta attended Addis Ababa School of Fine Arts before graduating with a diploma and moving to the then USSR in the 1980s in order to complete an MFA at the Academy of Art Repina (now modern-day St Petersburg). He has since become one of Ethiopia's most prolific painters, exhibiting in cities across the world including: New York, Geneva, Cairo, Osaka, and Djibouti.

About Addis Fine Art

Founded by Rakeb Sile and Mesai Haileleul, Addis Fine Art is a pioneering gallery based in Addis Ababa and London. The very first local space and international platform based in Ethiopia and listed as one of the most important galleries in the world (Artsy, 2019), the gallery focuses on highlighting modern and contemporary fine art from the Horn of Africa and its diasporas. January 2016 saw the opening of the gallery's main space in the heart of Addis Ababa, launching its innovative program of exhibitions, talks and events, showing a diverse set of modern and contemporary artists. In October 2016, the AFA Project Space was opened in London, to provide an additional international platform

to the gallery's program. Soon, the London program will move to Cromwell Place, a first-of-its-kind exhibition space in Kensington, London.

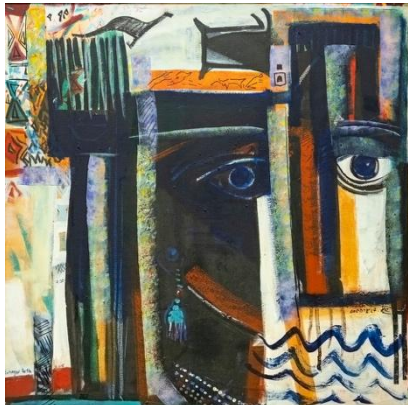
Addis Fine Art has quickly become one of the leading international galleries from Africa, facilitating critical engagement with the local and mainstream art markets, championing an underrepresented yet rich space in modern and contemporary fine art.

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

IMAGE DOWNLOAD LINK: <https://we.tl/t-FhYktoZbka>



Lulseged Retta
Birile, 2019
Acrylic on canvas
80 x 190 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and Addis Fine Art



Lulseged Retta
Foreseeing, 2017
Acrylic on canvas
100 x 100 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Addis Fine Art



Lulseged Retta
Celebration, 2017
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 180 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Addis Fine Art



Lulseged Retta

Asgary, 2019

Acrylic on canvas

230 x 140 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Addis Fine Art