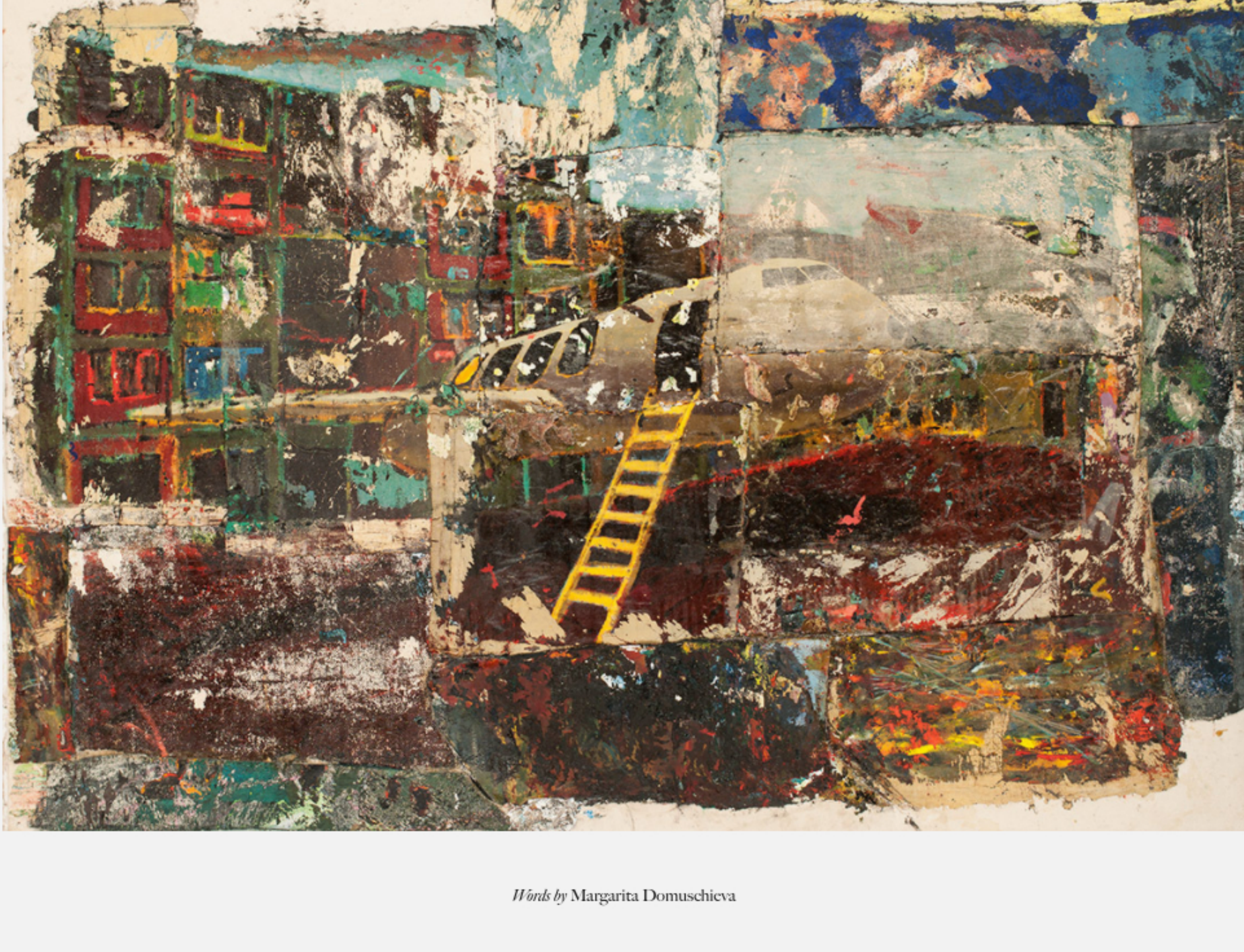


Noted — Art

1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair — Five Artists To Watch



Words by Margarita Domuschieva

Ermias Kifleyesus

Image at top: Ermias Kifleyesus, Addis London, Oil on Canvas, 2020. Image courtesy of Addis Fine Art.

Gallery: Addis Fine Art, Booth W13

Ethiopian multidisciplinary artist Ermias Kifleyesus (b. 1974) interrogates the prevalent Western viewpoint of African history and its omission of the truths of colonisation. Using discarded paintings he finds in Amsterdam's second-hand markets, Kifleyesus deconstructs them, burying and unravelling their surfaces to evoke the act of uncovering obscured layers of history that facilitated Western dominance, such as the theft of natural resources and human oppression.

His intricate and labour-intensive process encourages viewers to look beyond the exterior and explore new perspectives, questioning historical notions that have been accepted as the objective reality.



Tsedaye Makonnen

Image above: Tsedaye Makonnen, Senait & Nahom. The Peacemaker & The Comforter, 2019, Installation made of 50 lightboxes. Copyright of the artist.

Gallery: Addis Fine Art, Booth W13

Tsedaye Makonnen (b. 1984) is an Ethiopian-American multidisciplinary artist, curator and researcher. Her practice explores the history of forced migration of Black communities across the globe and Feminist theory, rooted in her personal experience of being a daughter of Ethiopian immigrants, a Black American woman, a doula and a mother.



Armand Boua

Image above: Armand Boua, La gomie, 2019, Acrylic & collage on linen. Image courtesy of Jack Bell Gallery.

Gallery: Jack Bell Gallery, Booth W11

Armond Boua's (b. 1978) practice is influenced by the violence and instability which followed the 2010 disputed presidential election in Abidjan, the largest city in the Ivory Coast and his birthplace. Boua witnessed firsthand the escalation of the political turmoil, which led to the painful separation of many families. Finding themselves in a catch-22, vulnerable children had to choose between living in the deprived conditions of the over-populated slums or the miserable plight of life on the streets.

Boua's textured paintings and collages, comprising of found materials from the city's streets, depict the fragmented silhouettes of these forgotten children. The artist builds up his compositions by applying and stripping away layers of paint and debris, echoing the frailty that characterises his subjects' lives. Poignant and sensitive, Boua's work is a timely manifestation of remembrance and defiance in the face of the fate of obscurity.



Image above: Tuli Mekondjo, Oilha oihapu, neengobe dihapu, noludalo lihapu (May we have much grain, many cattle and many births), 2020, Mixed Media on Canvas. Image courtesy of Guns & Rain Gallery.

Gallery: Guns & Rain, Booth W10

Angolan artist Tuli Mekondjo (b. 1982) creates earthly mixed media compositions using embroidery, collage, paint and mahangu grain – a Namibian food staple. Drawing on photographic archives as source material, Mekondjo expresses the history of loss and obliteration of native cultural practices resulting from the Namibian independence war and life in exile, which she experienced firsthand during her childhood.

Her rich and textural canvases portray veiled figures amidst an abundant arrangement of botanical vines and flowers, touching upon themes of fertility, proximity to nature, ancestry, ritual, displacement and gendered struggle.



Dominic Chambers

Image above: Dominic Chambers, Something Came To Me, 2019, Oil and spray paint on canvas. Courtesy of Luce Gallery.

Gallery: Luce Gallery, Booth E7

Dominic Chambers's (b. 1993) luscious paintings depict black figures lounging in vivid landscapes, exploring the relationship between reality and fantasy. Drawing on references from literature and African American history, the artist sensitively presents his characters in intimate settings of contemplation and stillness. His dreamlike compositions combine portraiture with gestural brushstrokes, yielding bizarre and surreal scenes, that are at the same time quiet yet filled with vibrancy and life.

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