

KEN NWADIOGBU

Ubuntu

Opening Reception:

Saturday, March 6 from noon to 6pm

** masks and social distancing required at all times / schedule your visit via the link below*

On view March 6 - March 27, 2021

Thinkspace Projects is pleased to present Nigerian-born multidisciplinary artist Ken Nwadiogbu's first solo exhibition in the United States. 'UBUNTU' is an ideology of humanity, often translated as "I am because we are." In twenty new hyperrealist works, Nwadiogbu investigates representation through a focal-point of eyes as a means of discovering and revelation.

By recreating his own realities as a young Nigerian, his work projects the experiences encountered by black lives around the globe. Nwadiogbu invokes a humanist connection to the ongoing issues of police brutality, racism, xenophobia, culture conflict and shock. Working with charcoal and acrylic he creates a hyperrealist narrative that demands socio-political thought and discourse, bringing the ideology full circle by emphasizing an understanding that we are more alike than different.

Societal tendencies drive Nwadiogbu's work and his commitment to technique amplifies the intention behind every mark. Nwadiogbu explains, "I implore us to consider our society as spaces we occupy and challenge us to think, in a larger context, about our role in these spaces, what we can do to influence these spaces and how we react to these spaces, because I believe, it is only then that we can discover the true meaning of Ubuntu."

Artist Statement:

There will always be a need to understand and represent people in a different way. This becomes our way of discovering and revealing who we truly are.

My love for drawing faces of everyday people through ripped paper was born from a need to identify Africans in major global contexts. The eye became a major feature for me as it expresses and exposes more about us than any other part of the human body. My process of caring less for other features of my subjects and focusing on the eyes intensifies my every approach to represent us differently to the world.

The focal point of my art is on black lives; recreating my experiences and those encountered by the people around me such as police brutality, lingering racism, xenophobia, culture conflict and shock. Working with charcoal and acrylic, I am able to invoke empathy in the viewer forcing socio-political thoughts and discourse, and making them aware enough to respond to what is going on in the society.

'UBUNTU' can be expressed in the phrase "I am because we are". My works bring this ideology FULL CIRCLE around the world to remind people that we are all more alike than different. We do not only bleed red but we were created to coexist, thus, for humanity to reach its zenith as one, we all need to uplift each other across the boundaries of miles, oceans and continents as a way to let Dictators and Perpetrators know that they have not won and that we are all willing to stand as one.

All I'm doing is presenting you the truth with being black in a society crying out for UBUNTU. I believe we need this and many more conversations about our society to grow and pull the world out of the third world mentality that was inflicted on us by generations of imperialistic rulers.

FUMI NAKAMURA

Look Toward The Future, But Not So Far As To Miss Today

Opening Reception:

Saturday, March 6 from noon to 6pm

* *masks and social distancing required at all times / schedule your visit via the link below*

On view March 6 - March 27, 2021

Thinkspace Projects is pleased to present this new solo exhibition from artist Fumi Nakamura. 'Look Towards the Future, But Not So Far As To Miss Today' is a new body of work depicting flora and fauna. Each element is carefully selected to represent elements of life, memory, body and soul. Nakamura pulls from the subconscious, using metaphor and imagery to create striking pieces.

Fumi Nakamura draws inspiration from the Japanese phrase meaning "language of flower." In line with this concept, each flower has different meanings right down to the positioning. Colors play a huge role as well, and each work becomes full of phrases and meanings. One tulip can mean a variety of things from "compassion" to "confession of love" to the "lost love" of a white tulip.

Different from her previous work in which she frequently incorporated negative space, this new series is filled up to the edges. Using custom "coffin" or "container" imagery, Nakamura takes inspiration from the funeral ceremony where we last see and connect with another being physically and reflect on the past together. This collection of works is layered and complex both in visuals and meaning.

Artist Statement:

Using fauna and flora as symbolism: each thing is carefully selected to depict my subconscious and unconscious mind about life, memories, body and soul.

In Japanese, we have *Hana Kotoba* which it means "language of flower" For example, each flower has different meanings, and arranged/composed onto paper carefully (ie: Tulip generally means "compassion." And different color changes meaning of tulip; red tulip translates "confession of love," white tulip becomes "lost love," and yellow tulip is "genuine love." Tulip also has a meaning of a "perfect lover").

I also try to incorporate traditional Japanese floral arrangement, *ikebana*, where it was historically made as an offering by Buddhist altar during the Heian Period. Buddhist and buddhism desire to preserve lives and believe in rebirth and death is part of life. Unlike animals, flowers and plants can continue to grow/regrow even if they are detached from roots and soil. It is also considered to be an attempt to comprehensively manage the mysterious power beyond the reach of humans on the vase.

Unlike my older work where negative spaces were common, a new series fills the image up to edges. In a format of depicting a custom "coffin" or "container." In funerals is a ceremony where we last see and connect with another being physically, and revise to look back at the past together.