



# A NIGHT OUT WITH LARIBA AND FRIENDS

KWAKU YARO

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A Night Out With Lariba And Friends, Kwaku Yaro's first solo in Cotonou, is an exploration of the importance of community which, Yaro believes, contributes to what we are, what we feel and what we seek to be. Inspired by the people of Labadi, the peri-urban town located along the coast of the Atlantic in Accra, Ghana, in which he was born and raised, Yaro explores the blend of experiences and emotions that the people in the town, both young and old, carry in their daily lives, taking on the role of observer, storyteller, witness to the times changing right before his very eyes. Yaro invites us to a night out with Lariba, an old friend with whom he'd lost touch. The rift that distance and time created has split them into different worlds. The moment they are in presents an opportunity for both friends to engage in a test of memory and friendship to which we, the viewer, are witness and participant.

Using as his canvas the woven plastic mats, used across the continent to eat, talk, relax and commune, Yaro brings to life different characters he encounters in this evening with Lariba, each with their distinct style and swag, each with their unique stories and histories, who together form a community. Using acrylic for their features and various found fabric materials for their dress, Yaro's characters come to life.

The folds in their stylized clothes create movement and drape their poses. Yaro invites us, the viewer, to sit on these same plastic mats, installed in front of his various characters, imploring us to look at his works from a different vantage point. The exhibition becomes an immersive installation in which we are called on to appropriate the space as our own, with all our senses, all while getting to know Lariba's friends, their idiosyncrasies, what makes them both unique and part of a larger whole. It is through this immersion that Kwaku succeeds in introducing us to this community formed around Lariba.

*"This is the story of a memorable, yet simple night; the story of strangers, of the power of connecting people through conversations.*

*I am surrounded by Lariba and her friends, some I've met before, others only tonight. There is something almost magical about this Friday night, as though it exists outside of the realities we each live separately. Here, at this very moment, in the safety of a chosen community, we release, we disclose, we are free.*

*On this night, I am the listener, the silent observer, allowing Lariba and her friends to come to life..."*

## BIOGRAPHY

KWAKU YARO (Ghanaian, b. 1995) is a contemporary artist who resides in Labadi, Accra. He has been a practicing artist for over six years and has a number of group exhibitions to his name, working with notable institutions including Alliance Française d'Accra. Yaro has also had a solo exhibition in the African Regent Hotel in Accra which also resulted in growth in the interest in his works, both locally and internationally. He has also been involved in a number of group exhibitions with Efe Gallery in Dubai and Phillips Auction House in London. He is a member of the Artemartis collective in Accra.

## INFORMATION

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