

As media partner for 1-54 NYC, Nataal speaks to artists from its central exhibition about the worlds they weave together

Knotted Ties - opening this week at Christie's Rockefeller Plaza, as part of 1-54 NYC - offers an in-depth look at female textile-based artists. The group show draws together powerful pieces by 10 artists that seek to celebrate their medium while also facing the tangled and troubled histories that surround women who work with and within the textile industry. Thread and fabric have long been used to convey meanings and address socio-political landscapes of our time. The pluralism depicted in this exhibition cements its importance, covering matters including displacement, motherhood, resilience and ancient textile practices, thereby proving its use as a platform to nurture further debate and contemplation.

São Paulo's HOA Gallery, an exciting newcomer to 1-54, is presenting two pieces in Knotted Ties. The gallery was founded in 2020 by creative polymath, artist and humanitarian Igi Lola Ayedun. "Setting up the first Black-owned gallery in Brazil is a great challenge in several aspects," she explains. "Firstly, it is necessary to understand what were the historical problems that made us, as a community, take so long to reach this. And then, because it is not only about selling art, it also becomes about designing a market structure capable of housing and developing the permanence of Afro-descendent artists in the market and institutions... Being in 1-54 promotes new flows of exchange to the Black world. I want Afro-Brazilian art to be possible and historically tangible for everyone."

When considering textiles, Ayedun argues in favour of claiming agency with it. She explains that it becomes a way of recognising not only yourself within the medium but your heritage as well. "I think that the textile power goes beyond any binary logic of gender. The manipulation of textile fibres is something that carries a lot of history and a lot of energy for the African continent and all its descendants," she says.

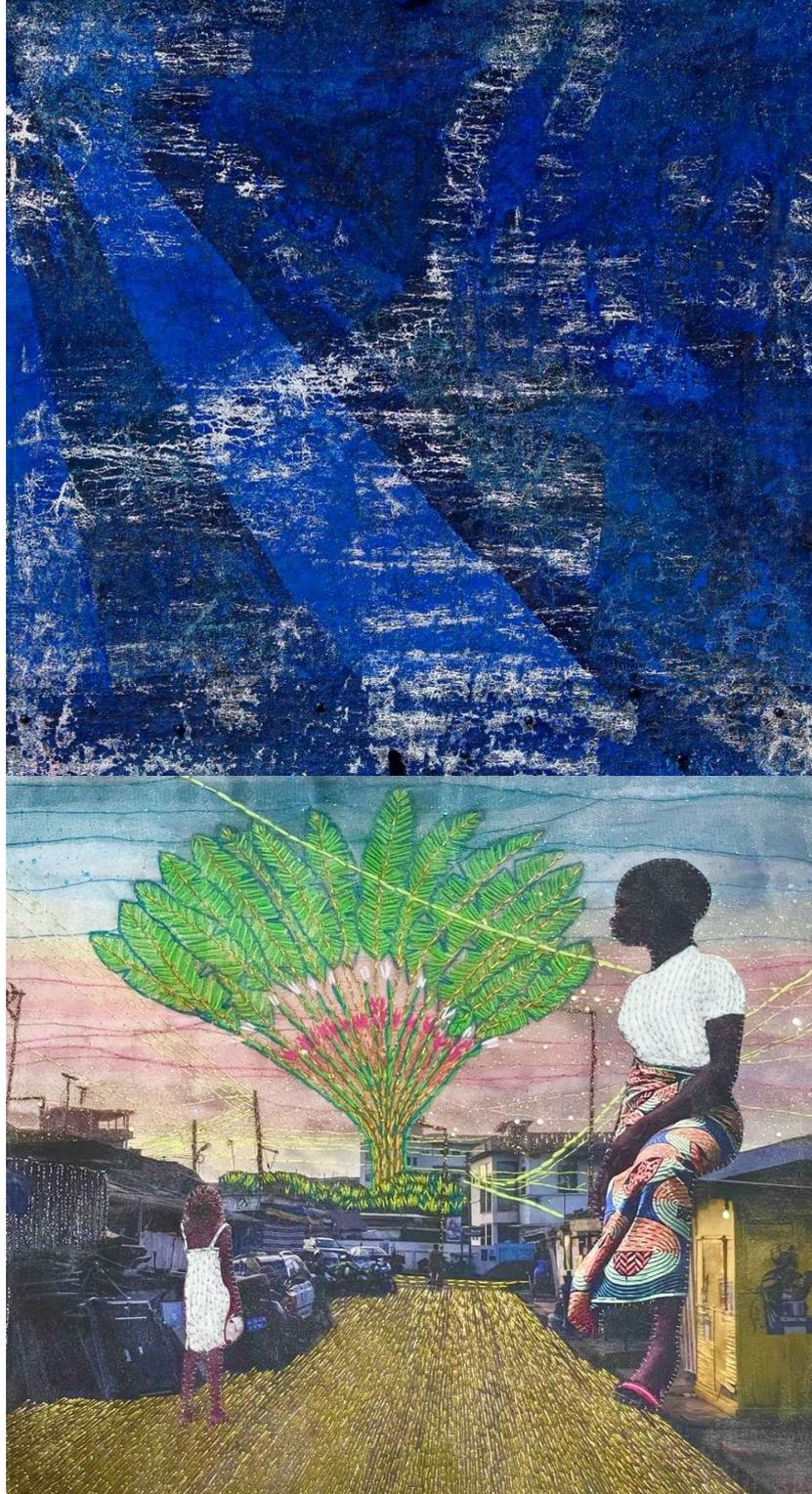
Knotted Ties shows Ayedun's piece titled 'Espelho'. This work, made from textile, stones and pigments, is a bold testimony to colour and its ability to become a social transaction in itself. "Blue is my guide at this stage of life," Ayedun says about the piece. "It rose from the moment I started investigating indigo and lapis lazuli pigments, and understanding the power of cultural transmission of colours as a claim to decolonise painting. This piece was developed in 2019 in Morocco, where I recovered original gestures from African practices such as bogolan, adire and the leather treatment in Berber tanks."

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Tennessee-based artist, Josie Love Roebuck, uses thread in a multidisciplinary manner to empower the female gaze and take back the narratives surrounding the depiction of women. The repetitive and laboured motions of sewing, and the piercing action of the needle, are useful tools for Rosebuck as a meditation on traumatic memory and sexual assault. "I learned the lesson of how art could be your salvation," she explains about her path to becoming an artist. "This discovery allowed me to piece myself together and by doing this I learned the power that art holds; the power of sharing your pains and triumphs, exclusion and acceptance."



Knotted Ties presents 'No, I Don't Speak Swahili' by Rosebuck, a layered and sensitive piece representing her struggles with simultaneously accepting and denying the African-American experience. In an unsettling personal encounter with a student of hers she received the comments "You're Black cause you're from Africa," and "Cause you're Black you speak Swahili."



Also notably in the show is renowned South African artist Turiya Magadela, who is a single mother of five and uses commonly found yet contextually weighted fabrics to represent her experience of womanhood. "Women are humans first before the stereotypes of gender cripple them," she states. Her piece 'It all started with the roses and kisses when he met her?' is a tribute to a poem with the same name, about a brother who doesn't understand why his sister remains in a relationship within which she suffers domestic violence. Through cutting, stitching and stretching, Magadela patches together women's pantyhose to create an abstract fabric of her own design, one laden with the tales of personal struggle as well as carrying the wider stories for Black women born in Apartheid South Africa. "My work is about womanhood, childhood, motherhood and all the domestic spaces I moved into on a daily basis," she explains.

Knotted Ties is free to visit from 15 - 26 May 2021 at Christie's Rockefeller Plaza. All viewing is by appointment only. [Book here.](#)

1-54 New York is taking place online from 17 - 23 May 2021. Find out more [here.](#)