

Ghislain Brown-Kossi

AKWAABA

April 27 to May 14, 2023

In Brown-Kossi's latest exhibition titled *AKWAABA*, the artist pushes the boundary of his earlier exploration of a juxtaposing concept: the Archaeological Pop Artist.

In Ghana and Ivory Coast, Akwaaba is "Welcome" in the African language *Twi* spoken by the Akan people. The artist welcomes us to his universe rich in visual symbols. During a recent trip to numerous countries of his roots, including France and the Ivory Coast, Brown-Kossi explored museums and archeological sites of Afro-descendant frescoes, carvings, and other historical and contemporary art pieces. Using this inspiration, Brown-Kossi is hoping to connect society to our ancestral beginnings. One important reference is the contribution of ancient Egypt to the evolution of the written word as we know it, seen in the symbols present on each of his art pieces. They invite the viewer to imagine a new language and question its origin.

Four series are present in this holistic exhibition, including the recent *Artifact*, the new *Umoja* series, as well as new creations from his popular, colorful pop-style: *Believe* and *Symbols*.

The uniquely textured surface in *Artifact* is made of built-up plaster and sand, which point towards the past. The contrasting vivid pop colors act as signal to the present and future. The inviting surface begs for the viewer's hand to experience "finding" the symbols on an ancient wall. In this way, the artist is simultaneously portraying multiple timelines and exploring their connectedness. The recollection of what has been lost and what is yet to be discovered in the future is another underlying theme in this new work.

In *Umoja*, Brown-Kossi is creating what appear to be maps, but on closer inspection, viewers will note the shapes are not specific geographical locations. Instead, the abstract map images are symbolic to his own experience of melding cultures in his life. As the artist works towards his Canadian citizenship, he is increasingly fascinated with the many questions of identity, immigration and ancestry. *"The human being tends to want to dissociate, to separate colours, origins, religions, etc. In my new series, I want to show that one can be different while being part of an interconnected whole."* The term *Umoja* is from the Kiswahili language spoken in 14 different African countries. In this context, the term directly refers to the imagines maps and translates to "unity".

BIOGRAPHY

Born and raised in Lyon, France, Brown-Kossi experienced great diversity throughout his childhood and schooling. His family's heritage from the Ivory Coast further provides the artist a background full of dialects and mixed language history. Presenting his first photographic exhibition in an apartment in Paris, he has since exhibited in France, England, Ivory Coast and Canada. Currently living and working in Vancouver, BC, Brown-Kossi's art is featured in *Art Hole Magazine* 2021, London, UK, in group exhibitions *Art Rich* 2021 at the Richmond, BC Arts Coalition, the Evergreen Gallery, Coquitlam, BC and is part of a 4 person exhibit at The Gibson Art Gallery in 2022, curated by France Trepainier. He is also a member of several Professional art associations.



All images, dimensions and values for the artist are listed under Ghislain Brown-Kossi at:
www.kostuikgallery.com

Tuesday to Friday 10-6, Saturday 10-5, Sunday 12-4.
Private Appointments are always welcome.

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