

MEDIA RELEASE

Memory in Motion: Identities, Materials and Resonances Curated by Gilles Yoro (Felin Light) **Exhibition Dates:** 2 May – 12 July 2026 **Venue:** Art of Contemporary Africa (AOCA), San Francisco

Art of Contemporary Africa (AOCA), the first Pan-African contemporary gallery in San Francisco, is pleased to present *Memory in Motion: Identities, Materials and Resonances*, a major group exhibition curated by Gilles Yoro (Felin Light), opening on 2 May 2026.

Memory in Motion brings together a dynamic group of contemporary African artists whose practices traverse time, geography, and materiality to explore the fluid construction of identity. Rather than treating memory as static or archival, the exhibition positions it as an active, evolving force—one that is continually shaped by personal histories, collective experiences, and cultural inheritances.

Across painting, sculpture, assemblage, and mixed media, the artists engage materials not merely as formal tools, but as carriers of meaning. Found objects, reclaimed surfaces, traditional techniques, and experimental processes become vessels through which histories are preserved, disrupted, and reimaged. These material choices echo the layered realities of the African continent and its diasporas—where past and present coexist in tension and harmony.

“Through their works, the artists of *Memory in Motion* invite us to delve into the depths of collective and individual memory, where stories intersect and identities are shaped. Each piece is a testament to art’s ability to transcend the boundaries of time and space, revealing the invisible threads that connect us to our ancestors, our cultures, and our personal experiences.

The materials used by the artists—reclaimed wood, found objects, layered pigments—are all metaphors for memory itself, fragile yet resilient, which is built and rebuilt across generations. The symbolic forms and motifs that emerge from their works are keys to unlocking the doors of understanding, allowing us to grasp the complexity and richness of African identities.

This exhibition is a celebration of the creativity and resilience of African artists, who show us that memory is not a burden, but a treasure to be shared, transformed, and passed on. *Memory in Motion* is a journey through memories, stories, and identities, inviting us to reflect on our own place in the world and our connection to others.”— Gilles Yoro (Felin Light), Curator



Gerald Chukwuma. Freedom in the Rain. Carved wood and paint. 75x84” 2026.

Artists such as Gerald Chukwuma and Mederic Turay transform discarded or everyday materials into intricate visual languages, embedding memory into surface and form. Mwass Githinji and Ayanda Mabulu interrogate sociopolitical histories, addressing power, representation, and the ongoing negotiation of identity in postcolonial contexts. Meanwhile, practitioners like Opa Bathily, Kebe Ibrahim Bemba, Ndabuko Ntuli and Kenof Franck Kemkeng Noah draw from spiritual, symbolic, and vernacular traditions, activating ancestral knowledge within contemporary frameworks.

The exhibition also highlights the poetic and introspective dimensions of memory. Through the works of Ange Arthur Koua, Ndabuko Ntuli, Alexis Daniel Onguene Tassi, and Dieudonne Djiela Kamgang, memory emerges as both intimate and collective—resonating through gesture, abstraction, and figuration. These artists articulate identities that are not fixed, but continuously in flux, shaped by migration, urbanization, and global exchange.



Kebe Ibrahim Bemba. *The Aftermath*. 56x63". Acrylic on Canvas. 2026

Memory in Motion ultimately invites viewers to consider how identities are constructed through accumulation, transformation, and resonance. It asks: what do we carry forward, what do we leave behind, and how do materials themselves remember? In this space, memory is not a destination, but a movement—one that reverberates across bodies, objects, and time.

This exhibition forms part of AOCA's ongoing commitment to presenting ambitious, museum-quality exhibitions that foreground leading voices from across the African continent and its diasporas, while fostering cross-cultural dialogue within the global contemporary art landscape.



Ayanda Mabulu. The Kiss (Love Supreme). Oil on Canvas. 98x71".2026.

Opening Reception: Open to the public on 2 May from 11am to 6pm.

Location: Minnesota Street Project, 1275 Minnesota Street, San Francisco, 94107

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About Art of Contemporary Africa (AOCA) Art of Contemporary Africa (AOCA) is the first Pan-African contemporary art gallery in San Francisco, dedicated to presenting and promoting leading artists from across Africa and its global diaspora. Through a dynamic program of exhibitions, fairs, and collaborations, AOCA provides a critical platform for African voices within the international art market. AOCA is located at Minnesota

Street Project in Dog Patch, San Francisco. Sister gallery to The Melrose Gallery located in Johannesburg, South Africa.