

Unearthing Truths Through Art: Kojo Marfo's Exhibition at JD Malat Gallery Challenges Perspectives on Universal Experience



Kojo Marfo, *Pride & Joy*, 2023, Acrylic on canvas, 189 x 174 cm

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London - On rare occasions, a contemporary artist emerges, fascinating audiences, and reshaping the very essence of our perception of the world. Kojo Marfo is precisely such a visionary. JD Malat Gallery proudly announces his latest exhibition 'Crucible of Hope', a remarkable milestone for Marfo, following his successful solo debut at the gallery two years ago. In parallel with Frieze Week, from 11th to 15th October, this enchanting exhibition invites viewers on an exploration into the intertwined realms of success, happiness, and the burdens that shape our very existence. Marfo is an acclaimed contemporary artist celebrated for his unique style, which draws inspiration from traditional Akan artefacts, sculptures, and carvings that he encountered growing up. Moreover, his experiences in New York have seamlessly blended Afro-expressionism with the dynamic backdrop of the city, and where he returned in 2022 for his first international solo exhibition.

Through his thought-provoking artworks, Marfo skilfully explores the intricate nature of shared and personal human stories, with each piece carrying the weight of experiences we have lived and continue to live today. At the heart of 'Crucible of Hope' lies a powerful narrative that sheds light on the societal pressures placed upon us to succeed at any expense, often overshadowing the pursuit of true happiness. Marfo's art becomes a mirror to society, inviting introspection and igniting a dialogue on the complex interplay between success and fulfilment, and how we can reach for a sense of equilibrium.

Gavin Rossdale, of Bush, comments, *"Kojo has an uncanny ability to incorporate the future with the past. Frailty, strength and interdependence all woven into bright hopeful colour. He is an artist who shows us with his own history whilst finding pathways of connection for all of us. As if we are all in this together."*

Drawing inspiration from his own experiences and intuition, Marfo showcases an eclectic range of styles and mediums in his works, adding further depth to his artistic repertoire. From vibrant brushstrokes that

exude energy to new endeavours in print techniques, his artistic prowess continually redefines the horizons of creative expression. Displayed across two floors at the gallery, the exhibition offers an immersive journey through Marfo's visual symphony, allowing visitors to delve deeper into the layers of meaning and emotions he skillfully weaves into each piece.

Kojo Marfo shares his thoughts on the exhibition, stating, *"The idea is to expose and highlight the burden that our families and society place on us to be successful, rather than prioritising our happiness. It has become almost like a birthright to be successful at any expense. The intention is to shed light on these sentiments and hopefully inspire some individuals to bring about change and find happiness in our world."*

Esteemed art historian and Barbican Centre curator, Wells Fray-Smith, will lend her expertise by offering profound insights in the catalogue entry that will enrich the viewers' understanding of Marfo's artistic visions.

Following his successful debut solo exhibition in 2021, which took place at the gallery after his discovery by Jean-David Malat during the open call exhibition *"Isolation Mastered,"* Marfo's extraordinary talent continues to garner widespread acclaim and recognition in the art community. JD Malat Gallery is honoured to showcase Marfo's exceptional artworks, remaining committed to providing a platform for emerging and established artists, fostering creativity, and elevating the art world with enchanting exhibitions.

Jean-David Malat and Kojo Marfo are available for interviews, please contact jdmalat@plus1comms.com.

Editors notes

JD Malat Gallery

Since its establishment in 2017, JD Malat Gallery's mission has been to support established and emerging artists. Specialising in contemporary art, the gallery represents over 20 international artists from a diverse range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography. JD Malat Gallery aims to provide a significant international audience for its artists through its wide-ranging programme and participation in art fairs across the globe and also endeavours to broaden its dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme.

Jean-David Malat, Gallery Founder

Born in Paris, Jean-David Malat is a London-based art dealer and curator dedicated to discovering and developing the careers of contemporary artists. Having trained at Sotheby's and with over 15 years of experience in the art industry, Jean-David has collaborated with numerous international museums and foundations and has secured sales of several masterpieces spanning the secondary and primary market. Following his passion to nurture and champion emerging artistic talent, Jean-David set up JD Malat gallery at 30 Davies Street, Mayfair which opened to much acclaim in June 2018. Jean-David has discovered, promoted and established over a dozen formerly-unknown artists, and continues to use his years of expertise to bring even more artists to the world's attention.

Kojo Marfo

Kojo Marfo, a Ghanaian-born multidisciplinary artist, currently based in London, draws inspiration from his experiences living in New York City and travelling internationally. Influenced by his passion for cultures, Marfo has developed a unique style that explores themes of universal heritage. As a self-proclaimed afro expressionist, he finds inspiration in traditional Akan artefacts, particularly armless wooden fertility dolls with rounded heads. Marfo's artworks reference both Akan iconography and European court paintings, fusing them with contemporary techniques. Through his art, Marfo offers a self-referential perspective on the black image and delves into themes of identity, multiculturalism, and shared experiences.