





# Ken Nwadiogbu's "Yellow is the New Black" Illuminates Black Joy at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

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Ken Nwadiogbu, "She Knows", 2025 | Oil and Acrylic on Akwete Handwoven fabric | 150 x 120 cm / 59 x 47 1/4 in (Image courtesy of the artist and Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery)

Nigerian-born, London-based multidisciplinary artist [Ken Nwadiogbu](#) is set to present his solo exhibition “Yellow is the New Black” at [Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery's](#) Tower Bridge location, running from August 13 to September 6, 2025.

The exhibition, which will open with a private view today, Tuesday, August 12, offers a warm celebration of Black experiences through transcendent moments of everyday life.

The title of the exhibition, one that looks provocative, serves as both a playful nod to the artist's colour palette and a deeper statement about the luminosity of Black experience. Yellow, as Nwadiogbu notes, is the brightest visible colour the human eye can perceive, a fitting metaphor for the vibrancy and strength of the Black community he portrays. The works capture pieces of life within the Black immigrant community, transforming ordinary moments into extraordinary visual narratives.

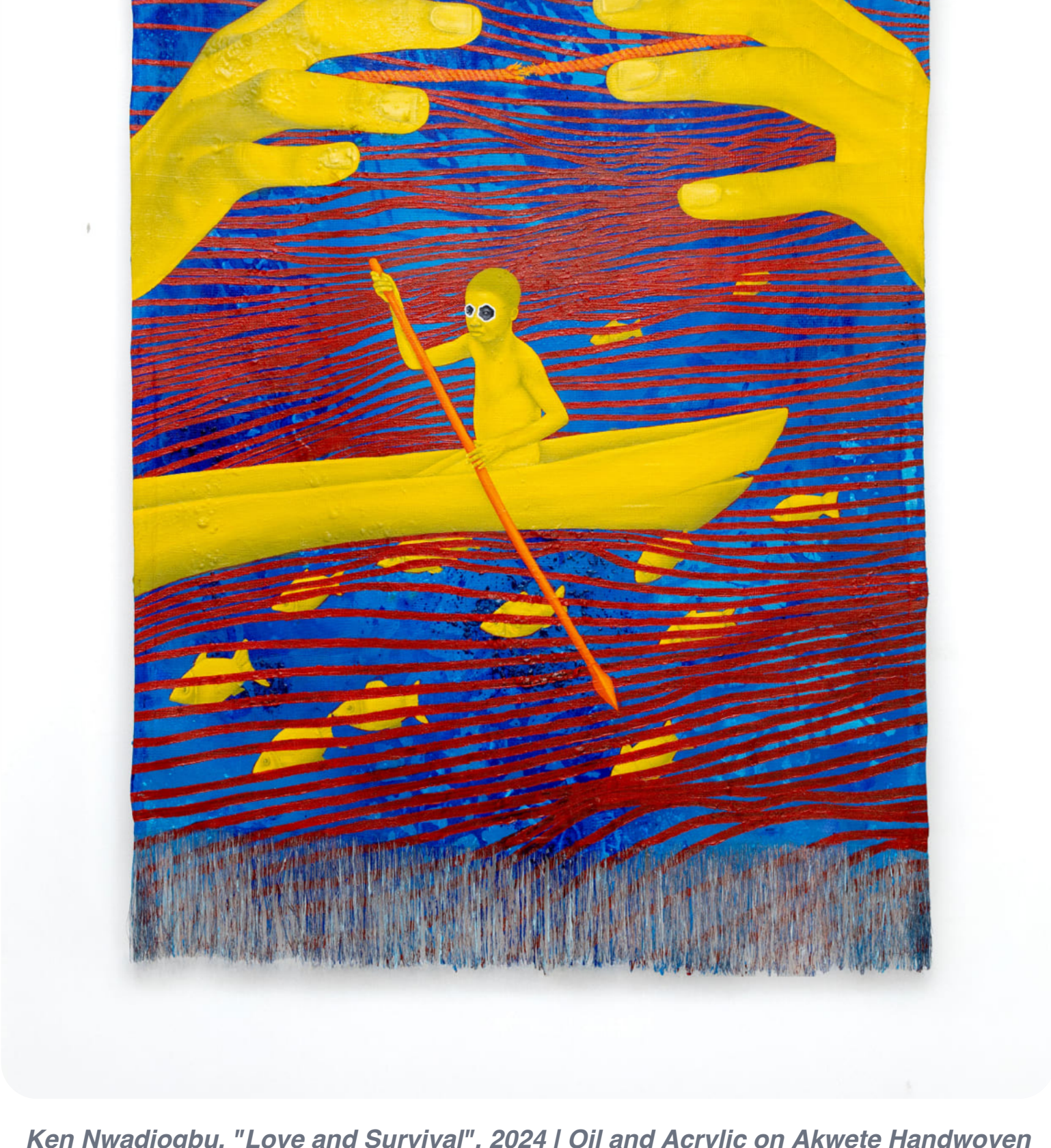
Nwadiogbu's artistic process is deeply personal and intuitive. Working from photographs of friends, family, and community members, he doesn't simply recreate images but instead brings to the center, the emotionally charged details and moments. His technique begins with pouring paint onto canvas, allowing the medium to respond to his psychological state and the rhythm of music playing in his studio.



Ken Nwadiogbu - Photo © Brynley Odu Davies, 2023)

Central to the exhibition's impact is Nwadiogbu's choice of canvas: Akwete cloth, a handwoven textile from Igbo land. These fabrics, traditionally used to mark occasions and events, remain untouched on the front while the artist paints on the reverse side. This creates a visual dialogue between his contemporary mark-making and ancestral traditions, connecting present experiences with ritual and celebration.

Among the exhibition's standout pieces is "Love and Survival," a work that reflects the artist's own struggles with maintaining relationships across continents as he pursued his career from Nigeria to London. The painting features a surreal scene of a boy with a spear in a fishing boat, with two hands joined by a disintegrating string hovering above, a touching metaphor for connection and separation.



Ken Nwadiogbu, "Love and Survival", 2024 | Oil and Acrylic on Akwete Handwoven fabric | 150 x 117 cm / 59 x 46 in (Image courtesy of the artist and Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery)

"Take Off," a circular canvas, shows a young man with feathered wings climbing onto a building's roof, bringing to our attention the expansiveness the artist felt upon returning to London. The work captures both the possibilities and unknowns that define the immigrant experience.

Other works in the exhibition pay homage to the broader journey of displacement and aspiration that defines many immigrant stories. Hands gripping tickets emerge from turbulent backdrops, symbolizing distance traveled and obstacles overcome, while ambiguous forms suggest the weight of memory and psychological transformation.

*For Nwadiogbu, this body of work represents more than artistic expression, it's a celebration and affirmation. "This work is a reminder, not just to Black people, but to everyone, that we are strong, beautiful, powerful; that our experiences matter and that we can all understand the world better through them," he explains.*



Ken Nwadiogbu, "It Feels Like Freedom", 2025 | Oil and Acrylic on Akwete Handwoven fabric | 61 x 91 cm / 24 x 35 7/8 in (Image courtesy of the artist and Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery)

The exhibition comes at a crucial moment when conversations about representation and identity continue to evolve in contemporary art spaces. Through his masterful technique and cultural authenticity, Nwadiogbu offers viewers an opportunity to witness Black joy, resilience, and transcendence through an unapologetically celebratory lens.

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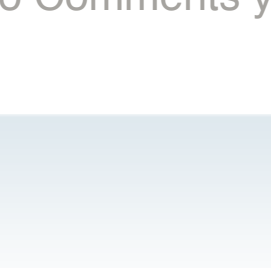
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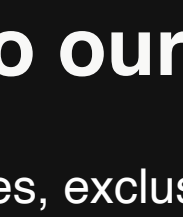
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