

Wendimagegn Belete's 'Moment 2.0'

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Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery is opening their fourth gallery space at The Shrimp Factory in Nevlunghavn, Norway, with a solo exhibition by Ethiopian artist Wendimagegn Belete. Entitled 'Moment 2.0', the show is a continuation of Belete's recent London exhibition and presents a new collection of textural collage paintings that weave together archival materials and memories to create rich and complex visual landscapes, illustrating the continued murmurations of the past within the present.



Wendimagegn Belete, *Moment (22)*, 2020. Mixed media, 180 x 160cm. All images courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery.

Despite the challenges currently facing the art world, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery continues to support its artists with a dynamic programme of exhibitions across its three existing spaces with the new Norway gallery set to host an annual exhibition each summer. Situated in a former shrimp factory in the atmospheric fishing village of Nevlunghavn, the gallery invites new audiences to appreciate art in an unusual and historic setting. ‘The space itself is not a conventional artist space. It was never intended to be an art gallery, but through art, it is transformed,’ comments Belete whose practice similarly repurposes found materials, such as newspaper articles, archival letters, recorded conversations and traditional Ethiopian ceremonial garments as artistic mediums. Fragments of these sources are reassembled to create the artist’s vibrant collages, which reference his own Ethiopian heritage and personal memories as well as collective experiences and historical events, specifically, Italy’s attempts to colonise Ethiopia. Much like the gallery’s re-contextualizing of a traditional industrial space, Belete’s art revives historic narratives in the present as a means to both reclaim the past and understand the shaping of identities.



Moment (20), 2020. Mixed media, 180 x 180cm.

Viewed together, there's a sense of fluidity between the artist's works as the colours, imagery and brushstrokes transcend the boundaries of a single canvas; often, the artist cuts sections from one painting and adds it to another, creating a further layer of intertextuality and visual coalescence. This method of working is an essential part of Belete's process as he engages in a deeply psychological exploration of time and memory. The half-formed shapes, abstract patterns and lines convey a sense of creative spontaneity and urgency, whilst the distinctive colour palette reflects the intensity and energy of Ethiopian culture. The effect on the viewer is immediately striking on an aesthetic level, but closer observation reveals the subtle layers that contribute to the

work as a whole. In this way, Belete encourages us to consider both our cultural and personal identities as an accumulation of past experiences, events, and decisions that continue to pervade and define the present.

Belete's artistic explorations are more prevalent than ever as we consider the possible visions of our future and how we might take action. Whilst Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery's opening in Norway at this time marks not only an expansion of the gallery's international presence, but also the continuation of the art world and its power to bring about change.

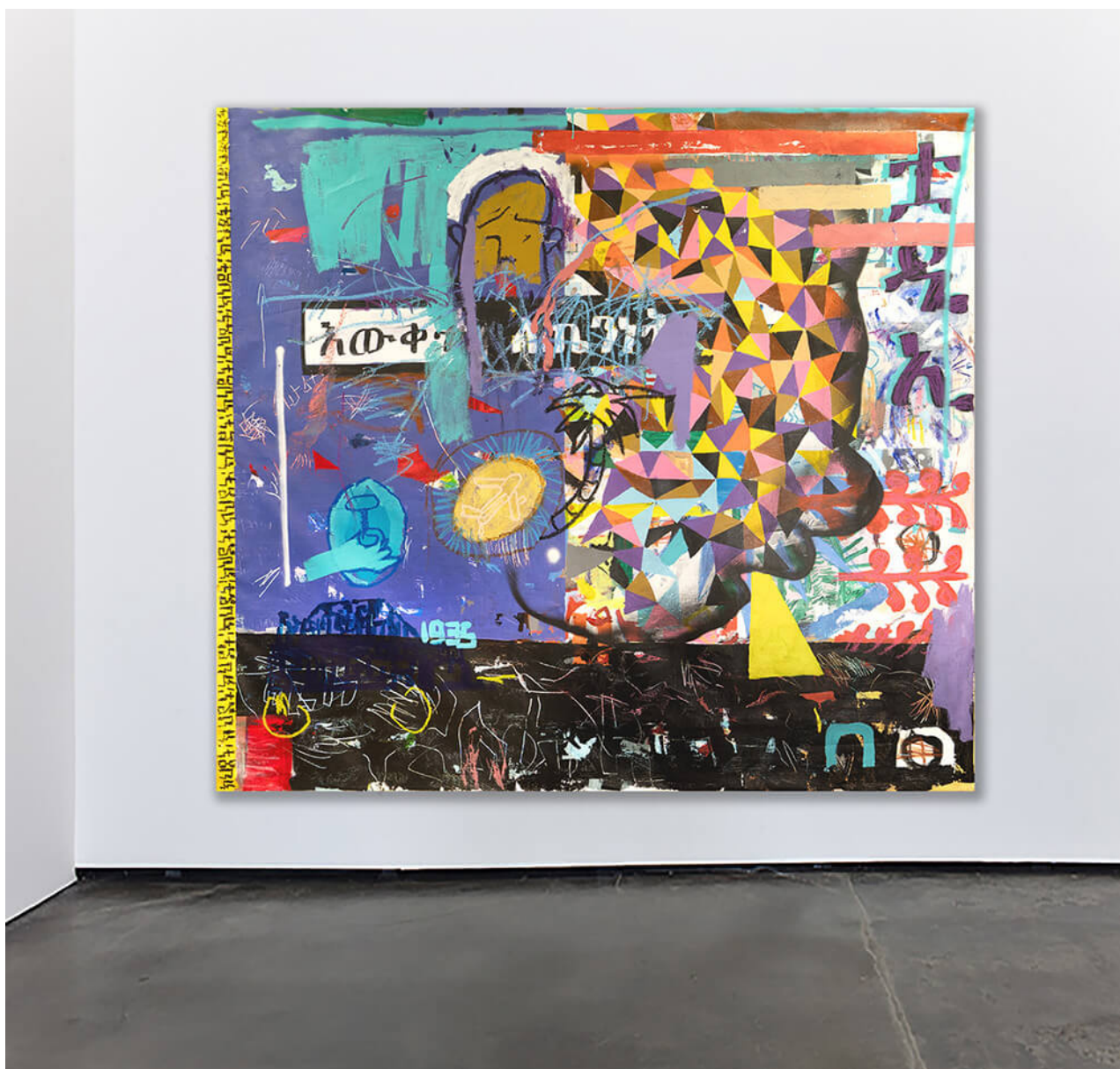


Moment (18), 2020. Mixed media, 180 x 180cm.

“It’s fantastic to have the opportunity to present art in my home country,” says Kristin Hjellegjerde, “And especially during a time when it’s difficult to travel and get new experiences, I hope that a visit to the Norwegian coast to see art will bring satisfaction and inspiration.”

Wendimagegn Belete

Born 1986, Ethiopia, Wendimagegn Belete lives and works in Ethiopia and Norway. Belete completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts, AAU Alle School of Fine Arts and Design, ET (2009- 2012). He then furthered his studies with an MA in Contemporary Art, Tromsø Academy of Contemporary Art and Creative Writing, Norway (2016 – 2017). Belete's works are greatly informed by Ethiopian narratives, identity, and history. The visuals in his paintings contain an encyclopaedic range of information taken from archival photos, texts, stories, video frames, and his own experiences/visual documentation. He's also fascinated by the idea of epigenetic inheritance and how memories transfer over generations. Belete's work will be included in the opening of the National Museum of Norway, Oslo (2021), as well as an upcoming exhibition at the National Museum of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa (2021) among others.



Moment (21), 2020. Mixed media, 200 x 180cm.

Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

Established in 2012, Kristin Hjellegjerde quickly gained recognition as an international gallery dedicated to exhibiting a roster of innovative, international artists, both emerging and established, with strong theoretical and aesthetic bases. Known for its multicultural curatorial approach, the gallery has, over the past years, fostered close and cooperative relationships with museums and curators worldwide, maintaining a deep devotion to the artists it represents. Drawing on her own international background, Kristin Hjellegjerde seeks to discover new talents by creating a platform through which they can be exposed to local and international clients. In 2019 she curated 'Kubatana', a museum exhibition focused on African artists at Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Norway. Her curatorial approach is collaborative, working closely with other curators and collectors, as well as with developers and architects. Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery stretches across four spaces throughout Europe; London, Wandsworth (2012), Berlin, Mitte (2018), London, London Bridge (2019), and now Nevlunghavn, Norway (2020).