

# Serge Attukwei Clottey

Simchowitz



THE RITZ-CARLTON



**Serge Attukwei Clottey** (b. 1985, Accra, Ghana) is an artist living and working in Accra, Ghana. Working primarily in sculpture, photography, installation, and performance, Clottey has received international acclaim and recognition for his radically unique revisioning of scrap materials. Often working with readily-available discarded plastics found near his home of Accra, Ghana, Clottey shapes, cuts, weaves, and binds refuse into vibrant and vital reimagined art objects. Tactile and formally beautiful, Clottey's sculptures, installations, garments and masks point to the unabiding human need to create.

1985 Born in Accra, Ghana  
Lives & works in Accra, Ghana

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2021 *Distinctive Gestures*, Gallery 1957, London, UK  
*Beyond Skin*, Simchowitz, Los Angeles, CA
- 2020 *Sensitive Balance*, Gnyp, Berlin, Germany  
*Routes*, The Mistake Room at The Platform, Culver City, Los Angeles, CA  
*Adesa We*, Ever Gold [Projects], San Francisco, CA
- 2019 *Sometime In Your Life*, Lorenzelli Arte, Milan, Italy  
*Solo Chorus*, The Mistake Room, Los Angeles, CA  
*Kubatana*, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium Foundation, Oslo, Norway
- 2018 Solo presentation with Gallery 1957 at UNTITLED, Miami, FL  
*Differences Between*, Jane Lombard Gallery, New York, NY  
*Defying the Narrative*, Ever Gold [Projects], San Francisco, CA  
*The Displaced*, Gallery 1957 at Lawrie Shabibi Gallery, Dubai, UAE
- 2017 Gallery 1957 at Cape Town Art Fair, Cape Town, South Africa  
Gallery 1957 at 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, New York, NY  
*Burning in Water* w/ Frédéric Bruly Bouabré, New York, NY
- 2016 *My Mother's Wardrobe*, Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana  
*Hand to Mouth*, Ever Gold [Projects], San Francisco, CA  
*Earthly Conversations*, GNYP Gallery, Berlin, Germany  
Solo presentation w/ Gallery 1957 at 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, London, UK
- 2015 *The Displaced*, Mesler/Feuer, New York, NY
- 2008 *Global Warming* (Featured Project), British Council, Accra, Ghana  
*Portrait of Accra*, Junior Art Club Sponsorship, Bristol, UK

## Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2021 *La Condition Publique*, Roubaix, France  
*Desert X*, Curated by Cesar Garcia and Neville Wakefield, Palm Desert, CA  
*Kugarisana*, Simchowitz at Christie's Beverly Hills, CA
- 2020 *Radical Revisionists*, The Moody Center, Rice University, Houston, TX  
*Materiality*, Iziko South Africa National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2019 *Fabrica*, Brighton Festival, UK  
*Tradition Interrupted*, Bedford Gallery, Walnut Creek, CA
- 2018 Art Los Angeles Contemporary w/ Ever Gold [Projects], Los Angeles, CA
- 2017 *Dans Un Ciel Ensoleille*, UTA Artist Space, Los Angeles, CA  
*Atsala Tsala (A Selection of Contemporary African Art)*, Patricia Low Contemporary, Gstaad, Switzerland  
*Untitled Group Show*, Ibid Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*Group Show*, Blank Projects, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2016 *Practical Common Sense*, Chale Wote Street Art Festival, Accra, Ghana
- 2015 *Spielzeiteröffnung 2015: We Don't Contemporary Festival*, Hamburg, Germany  
*What is Matter*, Intelligentsia Gallery, Beijing, China  
*The Silence of Ordinary Things*, The Mistake Room, Los Angeles, CA
- 2014 *Colour Unfinished*, 27th Festival Les Instants Vidéo, Marseille, France  
*Migration Messages, Collective Realities of African Migration*, Werkstätten-nd Kulturhaus, Vienna, Austria  
*Global Art Local View*, European Monument Day, Mohr-Villa, München, Germany  
*MULTIPOINT*, The International Art Symposium, Nitra, Slovakia  
*African Contemporary Photography*, The Auction Room &

- Ozwald Boateng, London, UK  
*Masked/Unmasked*, DAK'ART - 11th Biennale de l'Art  
 Africain Contemporain, Dakar, Senegal  
*'Colour Unfinished, Du Bois In Our Time II,'* University of  
 Amherst  
 Nubuke Foundation and the Du Bois Centre, Accra,  
 Ghana
- 2013 *Muses*, Goethe Institut, Accra, Ghana  
*Art Speaks*, Werkstätten-und Kulturhaus, Vienna, Austria  
*Inside The Mosquito Net*, Alliance Française, Accra,  
 Ghana  
*We Are Africa*, Nubuke Foundation, Accra, Ghana
- 2012 *Time, Trade & Travel*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam,  
 Denmark  
*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Goethe Institut,  
 Accra, Ghana  
*Alternative Independence Day Celebration, Freedom Tour*,  
 Nubuke Foundation, Accra, Ghana  
*Inside The Mosquito Net*, Brazil House, Jamestown,  
 Ghana
- 2011 *Cultures in Confluence*, Alliance Française & Goethe  
 Institut, Accra, Ghana  
*Trash To Treasure*, Alliance Française & Goethe Institut,  
 Accra, Ghana  
*Climate Change*, Caspar House, Accra, Ghana
- 2009 *Africa Show*, African Contemporary Art, Naples, Italy
- 2008 *Untying the Human Spirit*, CAN 2008, Goethe Institut,  
 Accra, Ghana

## Selected Bibliography

- 2019 Caldwell, Erica. "To Go Local." *BOMB magazine*, August  
 26, 2019. [https://bombmagazine.org/articles/to-go-  
 local/](https://bombmagazine.org/articles/to-go-local/)

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 plastic-gallons](https://wsimag.com/art/53038-the-migration-of-yellow-plastic-gallons)
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 Performance to Address Political, Social, and Local  
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 address-political-social-and-local-issues](https://www.whitewall.art/art/serge-attukwei-clottey-uses-performance-to-address-political-social-and-local-issues)
- Harpers Bazaar Arabia Art* (cover), July, 2019.
- 2018 Donoghoe, Katy. 'SERGE ATTUKWEI CLOTTEY'S "TIME  
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 Whitewall Magazine. [www.whitewall.art/art/serge-  
 attukwei-clotteys-time-time](http://www.whitewall.art/art/serge-attukwei-clotteys-time-time)
- Chase, Dylan. 'If this jerrycan could talk', Flaunt  
 Magazine. [www.flaunt.com/content/serge-clottey](http://www.flaunt.com/content/serge-clottey)
- Gotthardt, Alexxa. 'Serge Attukwei Clottey Is Creating  
 a Real-Life Yellow Brick Road in Accra', Artsy. [www.  
 artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-serge-attukwei-clottey-  
 creating-real-life-yellow-brick-road-accra](http://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-serge-attukwei-clottey-creating-real-life-yellow-brick-road-accra)
- 'In pictures: Follow Ghana's 'yellow-brick road'', BBC  
 News. [www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45836387](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45836387)
- 'Ghanaian artist making art for Facebook HQ from plastic  
 waste', BBC World. [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/  
 p068w4j1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p068w4j1)
- 2017 Nnadi, Chioma. 'This Artist Is Wearing His Mother's  
 Clothing to Promote Social  
 Change in Ghana', Vogue Magazine. [www.vogue.com/  
 article/serge-attukwei-clottey-my-mothers-wardrobe-  
 project](http://www.vogue.com/article/serge-attukwei-clottey-my-mothers-wardrobe-project)
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 African men to dress as Women', The Guardian. [www.  
 theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/oct/06/serge-  
 attukwei-clottey-ghana-artist-dead-mothers-clothes](http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/oct/06/serge-attukwei-clottey-ghana-artist-dead-mothers-clothes)
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[www.nytimes.com/2016/03/25/arts/international/  
technology-expands-the-world-for-african-artists.  
html?mwrsm=Email&\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/25/arts/international/technology-expands-the-world-for-african-artists.html?mwrsm=Email&_r=2)

*'Can Art Change the World?'*, BBC World Service. [www.  
bbc.co.uk/programmes/p048sqjq/p048sqk4](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p048sqjq/p048sqk4)

## **Public Collections**

Kunstmuseum Arnhem, The Netherlands  
Modern Forms, UK  
Nubuke Foundation, Accra, Ghana  
Seth Dei Foundation, Accra, Ghana  
The World Bank Collection, Washington D.C., US  
Facebook, Menlo Park, CA

## **Awards and Honors**

Doctor of Arts, University of Brighton, UK

# The Bodies Left Behind



For Ritz Carlton South Beach & Miami Art Week 2021, Serge Attukwei Clottey presents a newly commissioned work, *The Bodies Left Behind* (2021), an immersive sound sculpture and installation. With this work, Clottey aims to address the omnipresent themes prevalent in his practice—our collective ideas around the politics of globalization and the impact consumerism has on our environment.

Boldly installed, Clottey envisions a traditional Ghanaian fishing boat, adorned with iconic Kafour gallons outfitted with speakers. With sounds of the ocean crashing around visitors, the installation is intended to function as a lightning rod for the salient political critique spilling over the edges of the boat in the form of plastic ziplock bags filled with items collected from the evening tides along the shores of Ghana. Each bag filled with pressed clothing, shoes and other objects, the accumulation of items returning to the coastline—traces of imported goods that are discarded. A central motif in the work, as featured contents of bags installed within and surrounding the boat, are “dead man’s (white) clothes,” which are used clothes imported from the West. Packed into a number of the bags, family photos of loved ones passed serve as an evocation, further enunciating the gross comparison of the ephemerality of human life alongside the seeming permanence of the consumer goods that we amass.

Clottey poses questions about the afterlife of these items, the commercial brands assigned value by Western (social) media—particularly when they have little value in places like Ghana (i.e. winter boots and coats), or are not quality made items that can continue to be worn, passed down between generations. Clottey proffers that what is most interesting about this cycle is the afterlife of consumption—that Ghana frequently becomes the dumping site (hence the title *The Bodies Left Behind*) for discarded items, contributing to an evolving environmental crisis. While so much of consumer culture is dictated by the West, the artist wonders how these brands are considering the environmental and global cost of their products. Each item both contains and represents a plethora of data and information—where it comes from, what it is made of, its intended use, its actual use and information about the people who use or consume it. All of that data, a codex of global consumption, import and history can all be found folded into the items neatly packaged within the sculpture. The migration of these items back to the west recontextualizes and augments to tell a more fully articulated story of the life cycle of consumerism and displacement, as well as the long and short term impact on communities around the world.





Serge Attukwei Clottey, Presented by LA BIBI Gallery

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The Displaced by Serge Attukwei Clottey, Directed by Charles Whitcher

[\(Click to Watch\)](#)

# Curated by



**Neville Wakefield** is a modern curator and writer interested in exploring the ways in which art behaves outside of institutional contexts. It is his belief that where art is most successful – it's most epiphanic and challenging – is not within the white spaces and clean-cut definitions that have traditionally encased it. Rather it is to be found in new territories; hybrid spaces that break free of containment to suggest new paradigms. While a senior curatorial advisor for PS1 MoMA and curator of Frieze Projects he gained a reputation for challenging the conditions that shape art in both commercial and non-commercial contexts. He has worked extensively with institutions in the U.S. and abroad including the Schaulager Switzerland where he curated the ground-breaking Matthew Barney retrospective 'Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail.' His interest in how art behaves outside of institutions has led him to co-found Elevation1049, a sitespecific biennial in Gstaad, Switzerland currently in its fourth edition while his role as artistic director of Desert X has been instrumental in shaping the biennial that in its most recent 2021 edition attracted over 650,000 visitors to the Coachella Valley region of Southern California. Wakefield also spearheaded Desert X's third iteration in the desert of AlUla, an ancient oasis in Saudi Arabia. Desert X AlUla set art originating in the conditions found in Southern California in conversation with newly commissioned works by artists from Saudi Arabia and the surrounding regions, creating an open and international cultural exchange, while focusing attention on the environmental, natural, social and historical ecologies of the desert.

Wakefield has also brought art outside of the rarefied insider world of private safe-houses and public institutions through collaborations with the likes of Cartier, Nike, Rimowa, Supreme and others for which context becomes a creative act. As curator, Neville's boundary breaking role is not just to create and encourage new conditions under which art can flourish but to make it accessible to wider audiences in new and exciting ways.

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