

Exhibition Guide

Abdulrazaq Awofeso

OUT OF FRAME

10 June – 29 August 2022

Second Floor Galleries

OUT OF FRAME is a solo exhibition by Nigerian artist Abdulrazaq Awofeso, recently arrived in Birmingham from Lagos.

Awofeso's work for Ikon is all new, made entirely from discarded wooden pallets. Used for the transportation of goods around the world, for the artist they are loaded with connotations of human migration, as well as referring to his own frequent journeys through Africa and Europe.

Awofeso dismantles the pallets and uses the timber to represent human figures in wall reliefs, freestanding sculptures and installations. Each is individually carved and painted by hand. Their physical traits and vibrant colours are inspired by the people he meets in different cities and subcultures such as *La Sape* ("society of ambience-makers and elegant people"). Prevalent in Kinshasa and Brazzaville, the colourful, sartorial style of *La Sape* originated as a response to colonial rule and western "dandy" fashion. However, any suggestion of uniformity – or a kind of universal portrait – is contradicted by the distinctiveness of each figure, thus conveying the artist's resistance to simplistic cultural or racial categorisation.

Gallery 4



2. *Do You Know Who I Am* (2022) **Pallet wood, acrylic paint**

Do You Know Who I Am (2022) depicts people Awofeso met during a return flight to Birmingham from Lagos in 2021. It involved him and fellow travellers being held in Amsterdam as the UK government imposed a swift ban on arrivals from Nigeria due to the country's then rising cases of Covid-19.

We see one wearing a face mask, reminding us how much these hygienic accessories became pervasive, insinuated into our physical and social identities. One figure is wearing sunglasses and forms a tribute to the jazz musicians and communities encountered by Awofeso in both Birmingham and Nigeria.

Gallery 5



3. *Skhothane* (2021–22) **Part of the series *Boujee* (2009–present)** **Pallet wood, acrylic paint**

For more than a decade, Awofeso has produced stand-alone figures, entitled *Boujee* (2009–present), formed of geometric blocks. For the first time, he connects his artistic language to the gallery's architecture. A shaped doorway mirrors the rectangular forms of *Skhothane* (2021–22), a series of figures displayed on custom-made plinths at different heights. *Skhothane* is a culture associated with the post-apartheid 'born-free' generation living in South Africa. When visiting friends in the townships of Soweto, Vosloorus, Thembisa, Mabopane and Thokoza, Awofeso would enjoy seeing *Skhothane* dance battles, involving the destruction of personal possessions, such as money, mobile phones, designer and luxury clothes, as a demonstration of wealth.

Gallery 6



4. *Avalanche of Calm* (2021–22) **3,000 figures, 10 clouds** **Pallet wood, acrylic paint**

An installation of 3,000 individually carved figures, *Avalanche of Calm* (2021–22), fills much of the floorspace of the gallery it occupies. It signifies the modern city, where people from all walks of life come together. Suspended above are wooden clouds, their subdued hues recalling the overcast British weather. In life, passing clouds often remind us of the ephemerality of human existence. Awofeso's installation evokes this and the relative smallness of people in relation to the cosmos – at the same time humanity's strength.

This exhibition is part of Ikon's *Arrivals* programme for Summer 2022, concerned with the international movement of people and ideas and organised to coincide with the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

This exhibition is supported by the Ikon Investment Fund.
All works courtesy the artist.

Second Floor

Exit



4. *Avalanche of Calm* (2021-22)

Gallery 6

Gallery 5



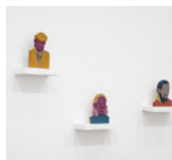
**3. *Skhothane 1-12* (2021-22)
Part of the series *Boujee* (2009-present)**

Resource room

Lift

Entrance

2c



2. *Do You Know Who I Am* (2022)

Gallery 4



1. *Komole (bridal train)* (2022)

2b

2a

2. Do You Know Who I Am (2022)

From left to right

2a: Funke, Ify, Iyaloja, Headmistress, Okukwu, Oge, Fortune, Kutaba, Hassanatu, Kessy, Richy, Lucy, Modele, Nne

2b: Dilim, Makurube, Issah, Vicky, Robert the Optimist, Osh, Bimbo, Bola, Bako, Drip

2c: Zinhle, Oby, Blinder, Kubura, Uthy, Bongani, Selfie

Haffendi Anuar
Rumah Berkaki (Legged House)

10 June – 29 August 2022
Second Floor, Tower Room

Haffendi Anuar is an artist from Malaysia, whose work spans sculpture, painting, installation and drawing. Based in both Kuala Lumpur and London, Anuar's experience of life between continents has led to an interest in using his creative practice to explore postcolonialism, architecture, ways of living and identity construction.



1. *Unit* (2021)

Kain pelikat, natural and artificial felt, hemming tape, eyelets, metal brackets, wood, varnish, hooks

Rumah Berkaki (Legged House) presents two aspects of Anuar's artistic output. In *Unit* (2021), he uses sculpture to explore the iconography of the *kain pelikat*, a colourful sarong worn by men across South and South-East Asia for centuries. Inspired by memories of playing with his father's *kain pelikat*, *Unit* suggests the garment as an architectural form and as a signifier of bodily presence. Depicting a same-sex male couple and their child, it sets the *kain pelikat* against Malaysian ideas on love and masculinity and gives form to Anuar's exploration of his identity as a queer South-East Asian artist.



2. *Cobweb 4* (2021)

Oil on Giclée Hahnemühle Pearl

The *kain pelikat* also forms part of Anuar's *Cobweb* series. These paintings revise existing photographs, one from the artist's family albums, the other from the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. Both are structured around a web, referencing an overarching post-colonial legacy. Together, they document Anuar's shifting sense of self and interrogation of the Western gaze and institutional histories.



3. *Cobweb (Welcome Party)* (2021)

Oil on Giclée Hahnemühle Pearl

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All works courtesy the artist and A.I Gallery

Please note the Tower Room is only accessible via a number of steps.



Exhibition catalogue

Abdulrazaq Awofeso

This publication accompanies the exhibition *OUT OF FRAME*,
10 June – 29 August 2022.

Pre order from [Ikon Shop](#) online and in store.
Special exhibition price: £7



Off-site

Hew Locke: [Foreign Exchange](#)

14 June – 15 August 2022

Foreign Exchange by artist Hew Locke is a new temporary piece of public art which reimagines Birmingham's city-centre sculpture of Queen Victoria. Presented by Birmingham 2022 Festival and commissioned by Ikon.

Event




The Migrant Festival

14 – 17 July 2022

Ikon presents the fourth annual Migrant Festival – a four day programme mixing visual art, music, film and performance.

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Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS
0121 248 0708 / ikon-gallery.org

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Free entry, donations welcome

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