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***Amoako Boafo: Soul of Black Folks* to open at Denver Art Museum this fall, the first solo museum tour for celebrated Ghanaian artist**

Traveling exhibition features more than 30 works depicting Black portrait subjects, centering Black life and joy

DENVER – May 3, 2023 – The Denver Art Museum (DAM) presents *Amoako Boafo: Soul of Black Folks*, the debut museum solo exhibition tour for Ghanaian artist Amoako Boafo (b. 1984). This traveling exhibition, organized by Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, opens Oct. 8, 2023, and is on view in Denver through Feb. 11, 2024, in the Gallagher Family Gallery on level 1 of the museum's Hamilton Building.



One of the most acclaimed artists of his generation, Boafo's works focus the viewers' gaze on his subjects' presence through his portraits representing Black life. More than 30 works created between 2016 and 2022 are featured in *Amoako Boafo*, displaying Boafo's vibrant use of color and thick gestures shaped by improvisational techniques such as finger-painting. His works actively center Black subjectivity, Black joy and the Black gaze as the foundation of his inspiration and artistic practice. This presentation is a continuation of the Denver Art Museum's ongoing commitment to highlighting the work of Black contemporary artists, including solo exhibitions featuring artists El Anatsui, Mark Bradford, Jordan Casteel, Nick Cave, Senga Nengudi and Simphiwe Ndzube, among others.

"The museum looks forward to presenting *Amoako Boafo*, continuing its initiative to showcase the work of contemporary Black artists and center Black perspectives," said Christoph Heinrich, the Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the DAM. "Boafo's work is powerful and vulnerable and encourages viewers to reflect on how our viewpoints influence the way we see the people around us."

Born in 1984 in Ghana, the artist studied at the Ghanatta College of Art and Design in Accra, as well as the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Austria. Boafo was awarded the 2017 Walter Koschatzky Art Prize as well as the 2019 STRABAG Art Award. His work resides in private and public collections, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Hessel Museum of Art and the Pizzuti Collection of the Columbus Museum of Art, among others.



The exhibition's title was inspired by civil rights activist, sociologist and Pan-Africanist W.E.B. Du Bois and his study, *The Souls of Black Folk*, published in 1903. Boafo grew up near the burial site of Du Bois in Accra, Ghana, and was affected by his research, especially his coining of the phrase "double consciousness," meaning the experience of Black people simultaneously having to look at themselves through their own and through white people's points of view. Boafo's artworks serve as an invitation to think about and challenge the "othered" perspective concerning Black people and the Black figure.

"Amoako Boafo's is one of the foremost contemporary voices contributing to and influencing art that celebrates artists from the African diaspora," said

Rory Padeken, Vicki and Kent Logan Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art for the DAM. "Our show highlights the artist's unique approach to portraiture and encourages the viewer to connect intimately with his subjects. I look forward to sharing his work with our communities."

Amoako Boafo: Soul of Black Folks is presented in partnership between Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco. The exhibition is curated by Larry Ossei-Mensah, who will oversee the exhibition's installation at the DAM with the artist and curator Rory Padeken.

In addition to the artist's works of portraiture on view in *Amoako Boafo*, visitors will be invited to explore/engage with the expansive array of creativity that inspires the artist, including a video featuring Boafo's artistic creative process, audio clips of the artist's voice and a music playlist developed by the artist to accompany the exhibition. Additionally, Ekphrastic poetry (poems written about works of art) and a resource library featuring Black authors will round out the visitor experience.

The presentation of this exhibition at the Denver Art Museum is organized by Rory Padeken, Vicki and Kent Logan Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. This exhibition will be accompanied by a catalog.

Presentation of the exhibition at the Denver Art Museum is funded by the donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign and the residents who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine* and CBS Colorado.



Planning Your Visit

The most up-to-date information on planning a visit to the Denver Art Museum can be found online under the [Plan Your Visit](#) tab. Use this page to find details on ticket pricing, public transit options and access information. General admission for museum members is free every day. Youth aged 18 and under, regardless of residency, receive free general admission everyday thanks to the museum's Free for Kids program. Free for Kids also underwrites free admission for school and youth group visits.

About the Denver Art Museum

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its mission is to enrich lives by sparking creative thinking and expression. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro residents support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations.

For museum information, visit www.denverartmuseum.org or call 720-865-5000.

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Image Credits:

Image 1: Amoako Boafo, *Ghana Must Go*, 2017. Paper transfer and oil on canvas, 165 x 144 cm., Kehinde Wiley Collection, NYC.

Image 2: Amoako Boafo, *Green Clutch*, 2021. Paper transfer and oil on canvas, 82 5/8 x 70 7/8 in. Courtesy of Private Collection and Mariane Ibrahim Gallery, Chicago and Paris.

Image 3: Amoako Boafo, *Pink Astilbe*, 2021. Oil on canvas, 63 x 51 1/2 in. Courtesy of the Artist.