

Artist: Luther Konadu

Exhibition: No Further

Venue: MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Canada

Date: September 23, 2023 - January 14, 2024

Documentation Photography: Carey Shaw

Work list: *No Further*, 2023 variable dimensions and media, Courtesy of the artist.

Exhibition Info:

Luther Konadu's latest exhibition, *No Further*, continues the artist's ongoing exploration of portraiture photography, which began in 2015. Departing from conventional depictions of human subjects, Konadu directs his attention to the medium of photography itself and the compositional elements inherent to the genre. By interrogating photography as a vehicle of access, the artist encourages viewers to consider both its limitation and its potential and how it chooses what to capture with its viewfinder. Konadu writes:

This exhibition is another opportunity to think about this same still-evolving project from a different perspective. The title refers to a denial of the photograph as a point of access to who is depicted within its frame. If photography is thought of as a window into the world of who is portrayed, that is, an entry for "knowing" and "discovery of that which is depicted," this expectation therein is disappointed by the flat surface and materiality of my photographic works. This presumed window or portal becomes rather pronounced for the illusory space that it is—a false depth, an impasse. I'm interested in emphasizing the non-transparency of the photograph even though my depictions are ostensibly a direct address of who is depicted. I'm motivated by the contradiction arising from the people in my photos looking directly at the camera (and by extension, the viewer) with a seemingly open, frontal gaze and how this seeming openness leads no further into any clarifying knowledge of their lives, but rather it's a blank stare, a misdirection into a dead-end.

Built on a strong understanding of modern and contemporary photography, Konadu's work recalls French semiotician Roland Barthes' discussion of the photographic image as a complex interplay of signifiers—unveiling layers of meaning embedded within the visual representation—or American philosopher Susan Sontag's critical analysis of photography's relationship to memory and truth, which questioned the role of the photograph as both a document of reality and a subjective interpretation, raising awareness of the medium's potential to shape our perceptions and memories. Through his innovative and thought-provoking approach to making contemporary portraiture, Konadu challenges viewers to question the boundaries and possibilities of photography as an artistic medium.

Konadu's new body of work transcends traditional notions of portraiture. The artist presents new insights that shed light on the evolving nature of the medium and its role in shaping our understanding of identity, representation, and the act of looking itself. In *No Further*, Konadu's artistic vision merges with the intellectual richness of contemporary photography discourse, fostering an environment of critical engagement and opening avenues for profound contemplation on the nature and significance of portraiture in contemporary society.

Curated by Tak Pham

Luther Konadu is an artist and writer based in Winnipeg (Treaty One). His studio activities are realized through photographic processes that give way to sculptural components. He acknowledges the legacies of the photographic medium as an interpretive site for generating new conventions and expanding fixed narratives.

Konadu's work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Aperture*, and *FOAM International Photography Magazine*. In 2019 he won three national competitions: BMO 1st Art!, the New Generation Photography Award, and the Salt Spring National Art Prize. He has exhibited nationally and internationally, including at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto; Remail Modern, Saskatoon; The Polygon Gallery, Vancouver; SBC galerie d'art contemporain, Montreal; Filter Space, Chicago; the Center for Photography at Woodstock, New York; and the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.

Luther Konadu expresses his deepest gratitude to his family of friends who continues support this ongoing photography project.

Website:

<https://mackenzie.art/exhibition/no-further/>