

sharp

Abdul Sharif Oluwafemi Baruwa
Space that opens up
November 8 - December 8 ,2024
Opening: November 8, 4 -7 pm

Sharif Baruwa's dense yet precise, playful yet deep and nonchalant yet always carefully arranged environments seem to achieve both. They maintain a certain eeriness and opaqueness while revealing cracks and layers that allow for readings of the artist's experience and cosmovision as well as the sociopolitical underlying structures that shape them. These readings are not fixed though, and as one moves through space, the singular elements appear to have an iridescence of a conceptual nature, meaning that as the visual connections between them change also their readings may vary.

The found materials usually employed by the artist could be said to be humble in their nature. Most of them have been previously used, discarded and then thoughtfully reworked and rearranged, achieving a meticulous balance between happenstance and intent. Here, coincidence and encounter are deployed rigorously as an artistic strategy. The fact that they have had some use before, gives them weight, alludes to stories and suggests identities. These materials and objects think and speak to each other, they demand attention, but they also invite experimentation of thoughts and sensations.

Effortlessly assembling drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, video and poetry into a fragmentary unity, Sharif's environments provoke feelings of familiarity as they integrate not only materials but also objects present in everyday life. The techniques, as well as their level of precision differ according to necessity, varying from hyper realistic and detailed moments to less defined representations which at times only demand a few strokes to achieve a certain image or effect. At the same time, painterly and sculptural deliberations such as composition, proportions, combinations of materials or specific colour palettes are never neglected and put into the service of concept and content.

The stories, histories and characters inhabiting Sharif's worlds range from the very personal, for instance family members to intriguing chance encounters with strangers. The power of these personal encounters is that they share a certain sensitivity and complicity both, with the viewer and the artist. Simultaneously, they serve to uncover underlying structural concerns and oppressive mechanisms that are at play in society. Sharif's practice speaks from a position of loving resistance to the logics and forces of oppression that have led us to a moment in time where gruesome crimes against humanity are committed overtly and with impunity on the stage of world politics and it has become impossible to ignore the endless trail of broken promises.

- Text excerpt by Laura Amann for Baruwa's recent solo show Haus-Geist (House Spirit) at Neue Galerie in Graz, Austria.

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Abdul Sharif Oluwafemi Baruwa was born in London, United Kingdom; he lives and works in Vienna, Austria. Baruwa's show, *Space that opens up* at Sharp Projects, is his first solo exhibition in Copenhagen, Denmark. His selected exhibitions include: Kyiv Biennial, Vienna (AT), 2023; Kunsthalle Wien, *Darker, Lighter, Puffy, Flat*, Vienna (AT), 2023; Neue Galerie Graz, *Haus-Geist*, Graz (AT), 2024; Ar/ge Kunst, *I'm Gone, Do You Remember Me*, Bolzano (IT), 2024; Secession, Tuesdays, Performative Screening, Vienna (AT), 2022; Franz Josefs Kai 3, *Black Pages 1-100*, Vienna (AT), 2022; Neuer Kunstverein Wien, *Hello Austria/Hello Vienna*, 2021; CCA Andratx, Mallorca, *Wintershow* (ES), 2019. Grants and awards include: Fogo Island Arts, 2019; Austrian Federal Grant, 2022; Vienna Contemporary Bildrecht Award, 2023; Outstanding Artist Award, Federal Ministry of Austria, 2024.