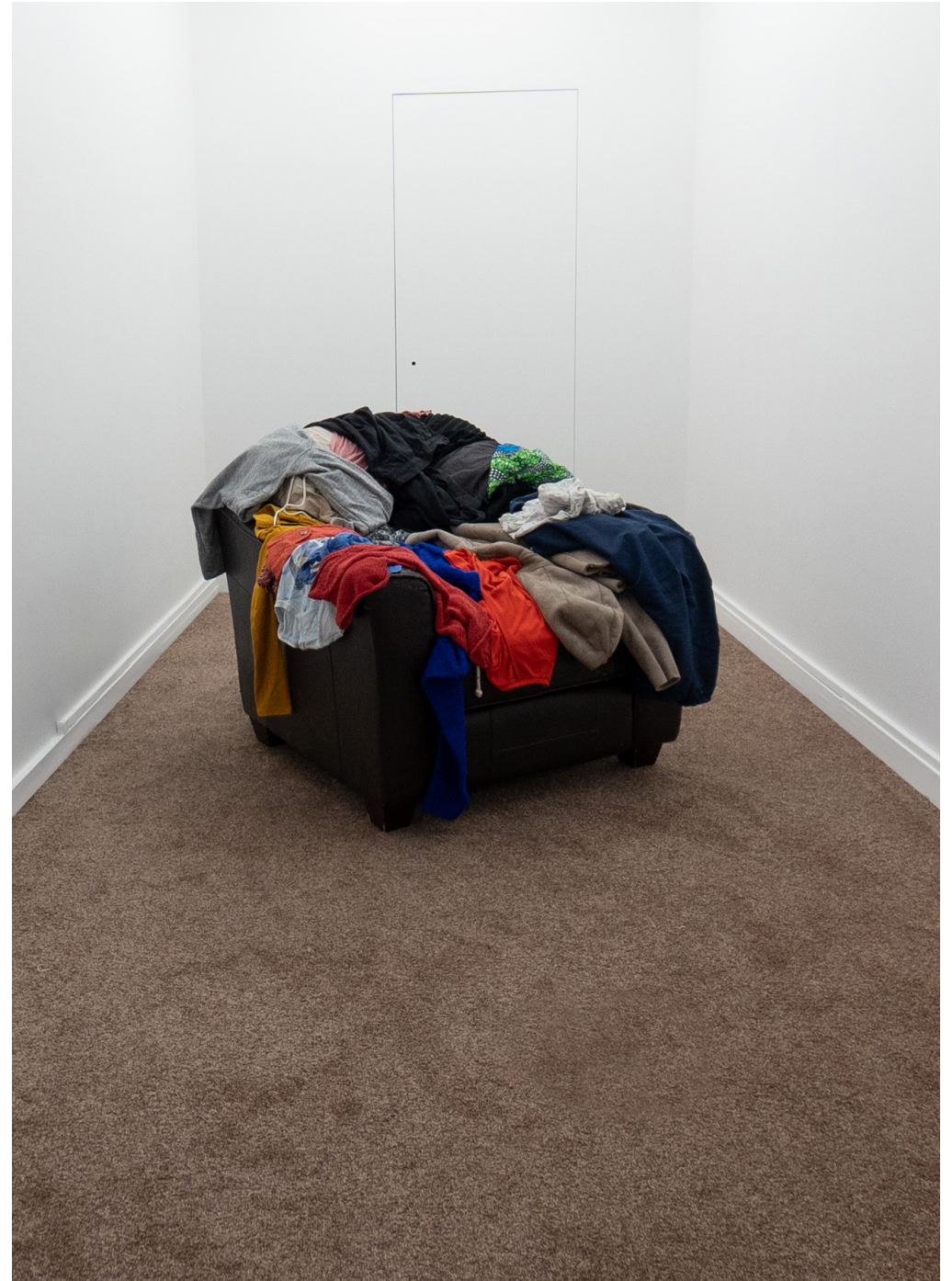


Charlie, let's go!

Hilda Kortei

15 July 2023 - 20 Aug 2023

**HARLESDEN
HIGH STREET**





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“Charlie, Let's Go!”, is a solo exhibition by Hilda Kortei; an experimental showcase featuring an armchair, clothing, shoes, carpets, and paintings on fabric and reclaimed wood.

Through the use of archival materials, Hilda delves into the concept of labour and survival. Upon entering, visitors are kindly requested to remove their shoes.

The title, “Charlie, Let's Go!” (or “Friend, let's go!”), is the English translation of “Chale Wote” – a term commonly associated with a ubiquitous shoe found in Ghanaian households, transcending social classes, genders, and ages. These shoes are used for daily activities and local errands, known to the British as flip-flops.

The artist explores themes of kinship, contemplating the significance of building relationships with objects. Ritualistic in nature, the act of repeatedly wearing something establishes trust, companionship, and a sense of daily communion. Eventually, the object succumbs to wear and tear, becoming torn and soiled from excessive use. Take the example of a shoe: as it is worn day after day, it gradually moulds itself to the contours of the wearer's foot. The once rigid and unfamiliar object becomes a second skin,

embracing the unique shape and movements of its owner. It is a testament to the harmonious dance between human and artefact, where the boundaries between the two blur.

“Charlie, Let's Go!” also delves into the profound metaphorical significance of the shoe, representing the state of being overworked and overwhelmed. Kortei invites us to reflect on the power of words and the intriguing notion of incorporating the daily act of dressing in our lives. It raises the question of whether we unconsciously infuse our existence with the energy of perpetual motion each time we put on apparel.

The chair offers a resting place, covered with worn clothing. The clothes symbolises not only the shoe but also the human body. This scene evokes a shared familiarity, as clothes accumulate on the chair over weeks or even months, patiently awaiting attention.

The exploration delves into the thresholds of labour, survival, disposability, and replacement. It prompts us to question when an item should be washed, discarded, or replaced. In this contemplation of beginnings and endings, we ponder what is lost when we start over.

Exhibiting Artists:

Hilda Kortei

List of Works:

“She repeated the names, as if to imprint them in her mind”,
2023

Leather armchair, worn clothes, carpet
Dimensions variable

“Return to”, 2023

Acrylic, spray paint, plastic carrier bag, photograph, canvas,
linen form stuffed with plastic carrier bags, nails, shoe rack,
shoes
Dimensions variable

Hilda Kortei (b.1994, London) is a visual artist based in London. She graduated from the Royal College of Art with an MA in Painting in 2023. She was awarded the Leverhulme Arts Trust Scholarship and the Sir Frank Bowling Award. Kortei's works have been shown internationally and across the UK including her most recent group exhibition Stellatundra at Sim Smith (2023) and her solo presentation Charlie, Let's Go! at Harlesden High Street (2023). In the summer of 2023, she participated in the Villa Lena residency in Tuscany, Italy.

Her practice, research-based and intuitive, explores strategies of refusal and modes of care used as a disruption and in response to inflicted organised and systematic

violence. She takes sculpture, painting and assemblage as methods of making, letting gestures of tenderness sit amongst clumps of flesh.

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