

GALERIE KREMERS

presents

TO SPEAK OUT LOUD

A solo show by

ADÉBAYO BOLAJI

15.9. - 14.10.2023

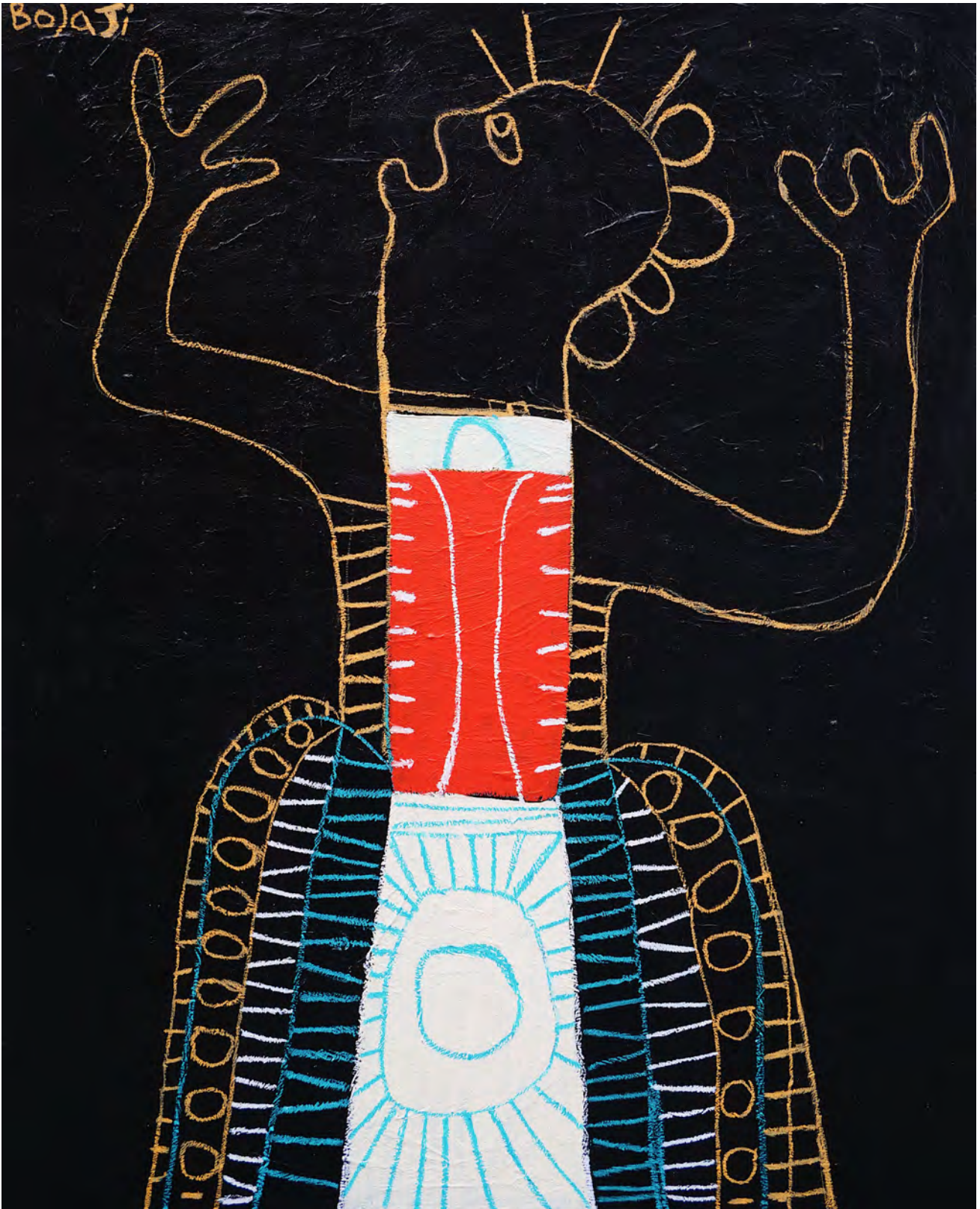
GALERIE KREMERS

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GOTHIC HALL

I AM HERE. 2023.

Acrylic and Oil Pastel on cotton canvas, 130 x 160 cm



THE CURIOUS BRIDE. 2023.

Acrylic and Oil Pastel on cotton canvas, 154 x 121 cm



ANOTHER VOICE. 2023.

Acrylic and Oil Pastel on cotton canvas, 130 x 160 cm



THE TEACHER. 2023.

Acrylic and Oil Pastel on cotton canvas. 130 x 160 cm



A MOTHER HOLDS HER SON. 2023.

Acrylic and Oil Pastel on cotton canvas, 200 x 200 cm



GALLERY

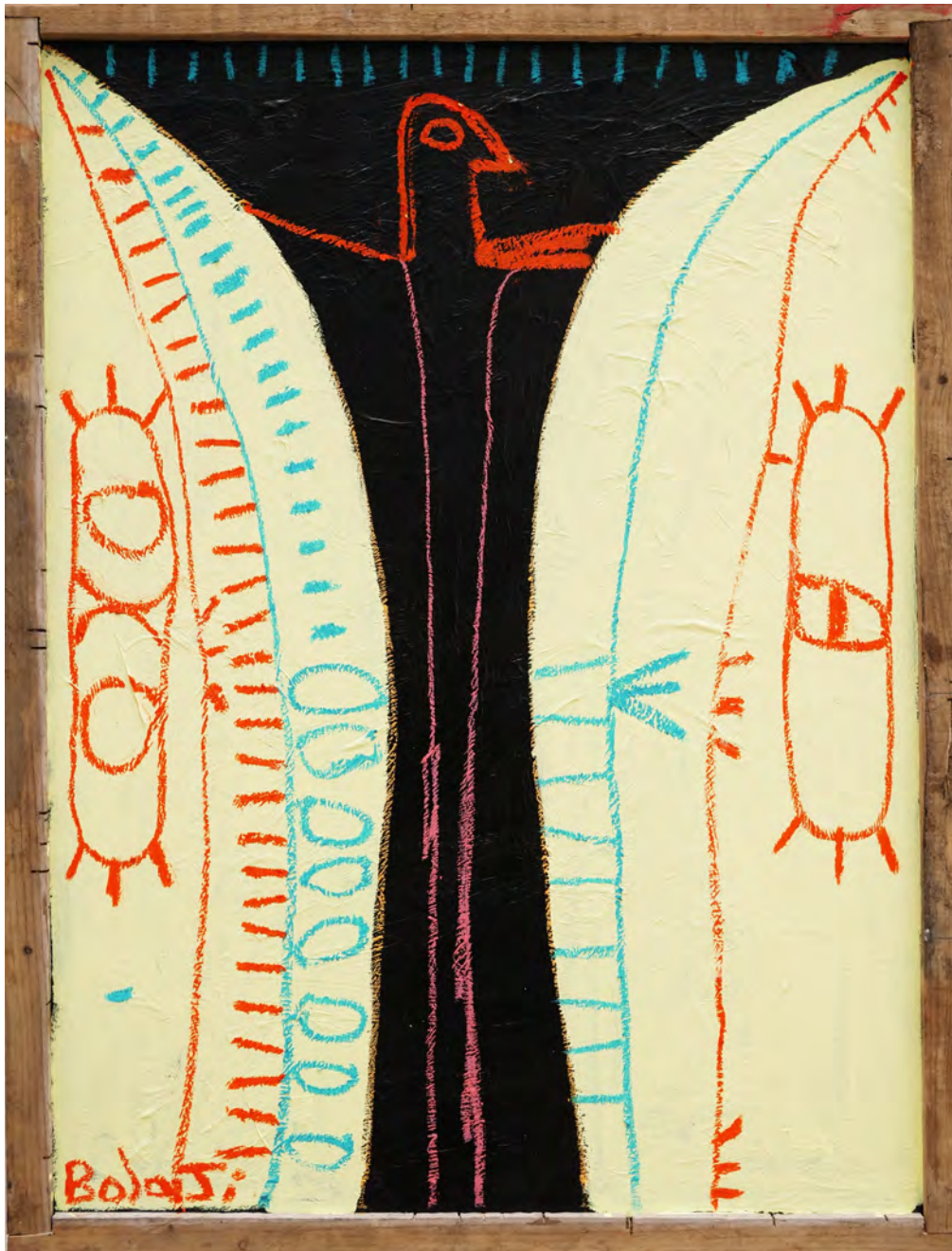
THE SKIRT. 2023.

Acrylic and Oil Pastel on cotton canvas, 130 x 160 cm



LA MANIFESTATION 001. 2023.

Acrylic and Oil Pastel on cotton canvas & Wood, 105 x 75 cm



LA MANIFESTATION 002. 2023.

Acrylic and Oil Pastel on cotton canvas & Wood, 105 x 75 cm



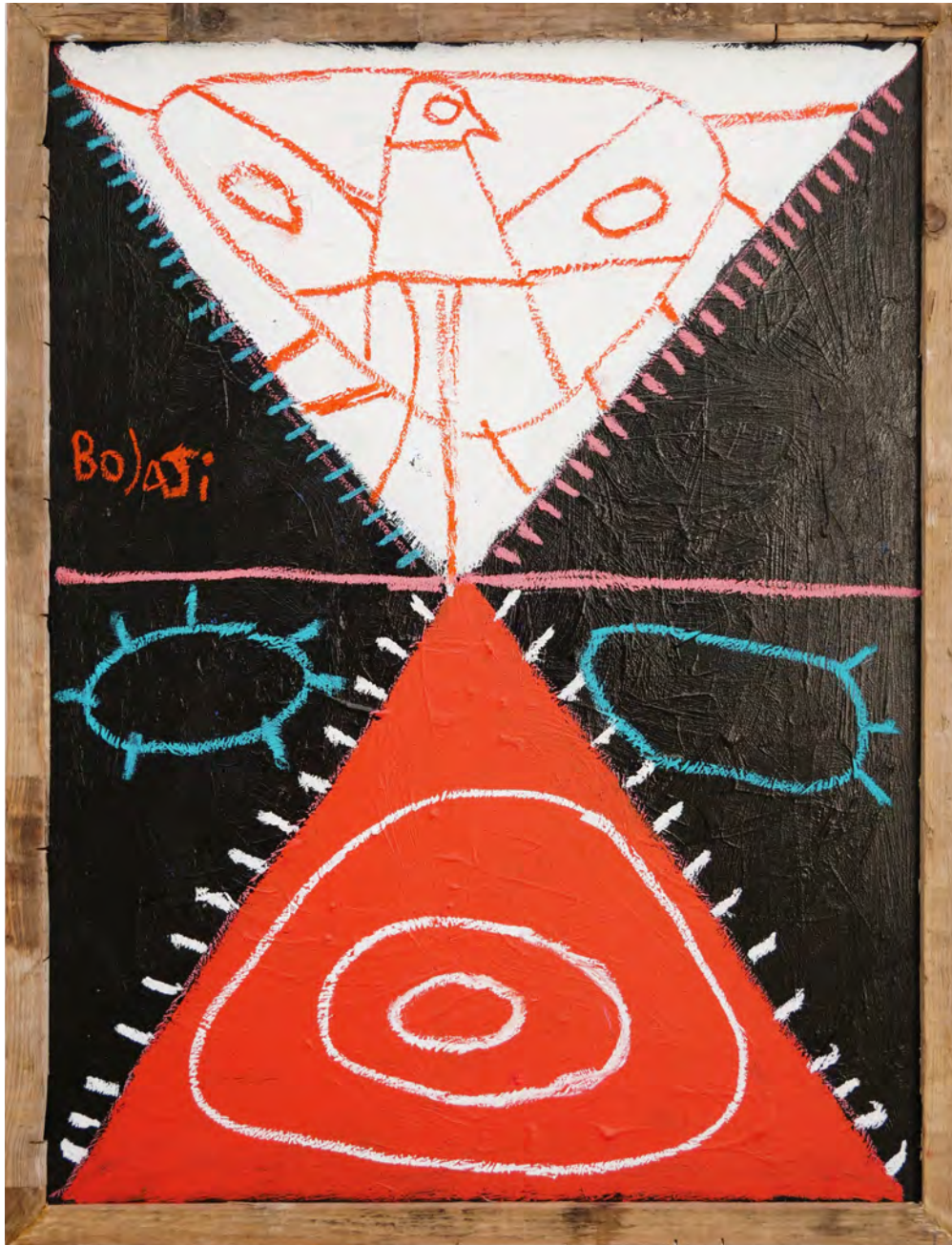
LA MANIFESTATION 003. 2023.

Acrylic and Oil Pastel on cotton canvas & Wood, 105 x 75 cm



LA MANIFESTATION 004. 2023.

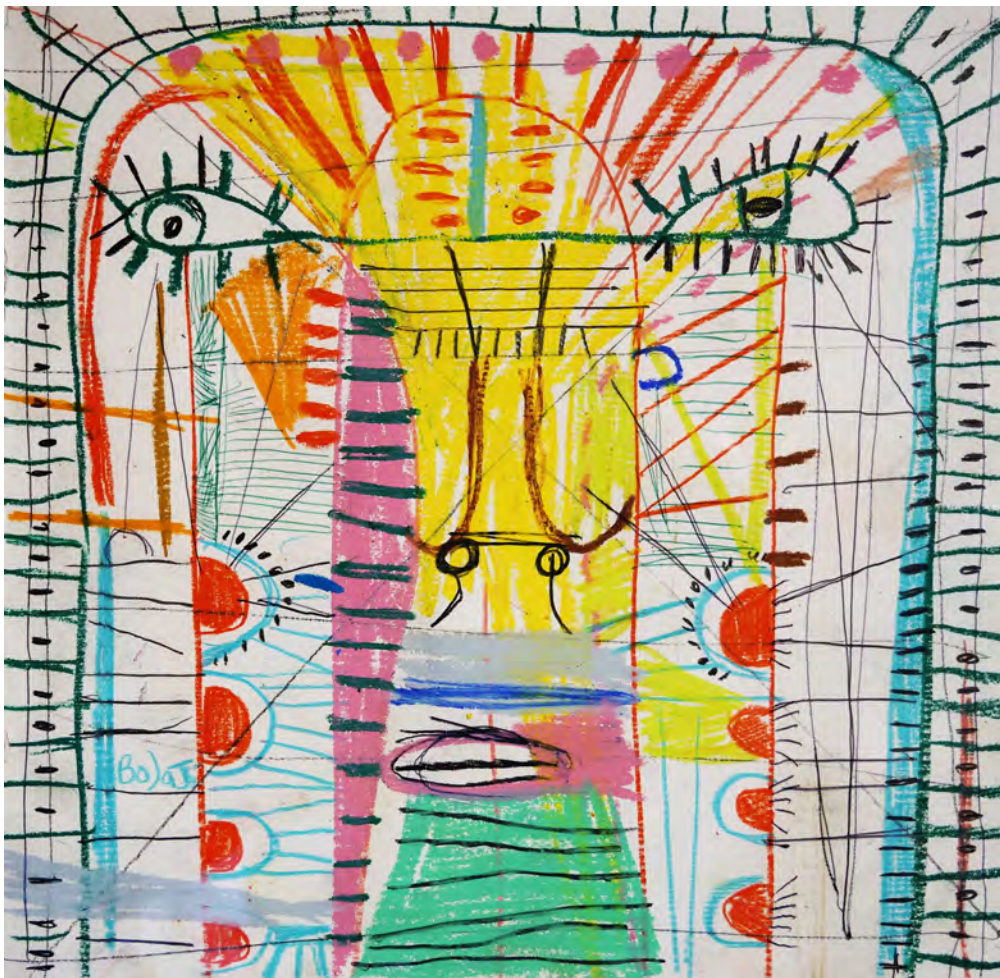
Acrylic and Oil Pastel on cotton canvas & Wood, 105 x 75 cm



AN APPARITION 01. 2023.

Pencil, Wax Crayon and Biro on paper,

29 x 29 cm



AN APPARITION 02. 2023.

Pencil, Wax Crayon and Biro on paper,

29 x 29 cm



AN APPARITION 03. 2023.

Pencil, Wax Crayon and Biro on paper,

29 x 29 cm



AN APPARITION 04. 2023.

Pencil, Wax Crayon and Biro on paper,

29 x 29 cm



AN APPARITION 05. 2023.

Pencil, Wax Crayon and Biro on paper,

29 x 29 cm



Adébayo Bolaji – An artist on his own path

Currently identity is in everyone's mouth. In wokeness debates it seems, identity is considered either the cause or the consequence of social division: One group claims the recognition of certain attributes as essential to their identity, whereas the other regards this claim as the root of the conflict. Thus, the topic of "identity" occupies the minds and worries of people.

Above all, the fine arts are the discipline in which the question of identity has always played a major role. Art is an expression of the search for identity and the medium in which this search takes place as an existential self-questioning just as much as a reflection on the biological, cultural, and social roots of identity.

Adébayo Bolaji is a multidisciplinary artist in search of himself. His artistic production does not follow any scheme, fashion, or order, but solely his own inner text or film.

How can social and political events, such as the suppression of the protest movement in Lagos, Nigeria, the country of his ancestors, influence him?

Are certain biographical prerequisites, family- and cultural roots, are the strengths and weaknesses brought with you, are certain life events the sources that have the power to lead the individual to activity or passivity?

Which of these mentioned dispositions and events have the potential to become part of identity and self-understanding, and which do not?

If at all, each one can answer these questions only for themselves.

For Adébayo Bolaji, these questions are the principles that guide his artistic work, and he has the courage to face them.

Like many other artists, collectors, gallery owners and fans, I follow Adébayo Bolaji on Instagram. I was and still am not only attracted by the beauty, power, and class of his work, but also by the way he uses the medium to communicate through different techniques. In the medium of text, for example, there is the form of dialogue: objections and counter-speech, distributed between persons A and B. Sometimes this also takes the form of a logical conclusion: presentation, attack, and defense of a thesis according to the laws of logic. (The artist has studied law.)

There are also philosophical, psychological maxims and confessions in the first-person, derived from honest, perhaps ruthless, introspection.

In connection with the letters, which are written in capital letters in simple, scrawled handwriting with strikethroughs like in a notebook, we also see the artist photographed in a cool outfit that is composed down to the smallest detail. We see him in special poses that go with the sentences and dialogues, but also with outbursts in comic language, onomatopoeic sound effects like BAAM, FLASH or the like. Like flashes of inspiration, these seem to express the harshness but also the suddenness of a realization that follows an observation.

In this way, Adébayo Bolaji has created his own social media language universe, which has a very direct and immediate effect on viewers and involves them. Apparently, a lot of people can relate to that.

In the preparation to his solo show "To Speak out Loud" Adébayo Bolaji created a poster of himself posing in front of a graffiti and a handwritten confession:

"I prefer to die in freedom than to live pretending to agree with anything you say."

This confession could be a quote from one of the protesters of the End-SARS – movement which was brutally beaten down by the police in Lagos, Nigeria in 2020. In the poster this confession is linked to a photo of the artist standing before a graffiti GLITCH. The suggested lack of clarity is increased by a misspelling – GITTCH? - and by the fact that the photo shows the artist Adébayo Bolaji (in disguise),

who was not a part of the protest. Thus, the artist is playing a role – which is not difficult for the trained actor he is. But the point is not successful mimicry or creating the epitome of a protester, but an exploration:

Can he identify? Could this role be part of his true life?

In a conversation leading up to this exhibition, Adé spoke of how important trust is.

Indeed, trust is needed when embarking on such a journey.

Adébayo Bolaji will open the exhibition "To Speak Out Loud" at GALERIE KREMERS on September 15th, 2023. The fact that this exhibition is being shown in Berlin, the city where the restitution of the Benin bronzes to their Nigerian homeland was the subject of heated debates and where a third of the bronzes are exhibited at the Humboldt Forum, gives the exhibition additional meaning.

Christine Kremers, August 2023

