

Camden Art Centre
 Arkwright Road
 London NW3
 Press Release



Karimah Ashadu
Tendered
 10 October/22 March

Karimah Ashadu, *MUSCLE* (still), 2025.
 Courtesy of the artist, Camden Art Centre,
 Fondazione In Between Art Film, Sadie Coles
 HQ and The Renaissance Society at the
 University of Chicago



Camden Art Centre and Fondazione In Between Art Film are delighted to announce *Tendered*, the first institutional solo exhibition in the UK by artist and filmmaker Karimah Ashadu (UK/Nigeria, b. 1985), winner of the Silver Lion for Promising Young Artist at the Venice Biennale 2024.

Curated by Alessandro Rabottini and Leonardo Bigazzi of Fondazione In Between Art Film, the exhibition includes the premier of *MUSCLE* – a newly commissioned moving-image installation – as well as a series of new sculptures conceived especially for the show that reference objects and environments within the film. *MUSCLE* (2025) is an intimate portrait of body builders in the heart of Lagos' slums striving to attain a hyper-masculine ideal, continuing the artist's research into issues of socio-economic independence and patriarchy within the context of West African culture and society. *MUSCLE* is commissioned and produced by Camden Art Centre, Fondazione In Between Art Film, and The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, where it will be presented in autumn 2026.

In addition, the exhibition features a selection of earlier moving image works also set in Lagos – *King of Boys* (2015), a window into the inner workings of the Makoko abattoir, and *Cowboy* (2022), a two-channel film that follows a man who has dedicated his life to the care of horses – configured within discrete environments that extend aspects of the films into the viewing space. The show takes visitors on a journey through the range of Ashadu's practice, from the intimate to the expansive, featuring works that form a cinematic narrative of bodies and land – an undulating scenario of urban subcultures, quotidian labour, and our relationship to nature.

Ashadu's practice looks at the contemporary manifestations of Nigerian history as they are borne by its people and landscape. Having grown up between the United Kingdom and Nigeria, the artist situates her point of view within a constant negotiation of distance, one that pertains to diasporic existences. It is through a sympathetic proximity – as opposed to a documentary approach – that Ashadu observes the struggles, and gathers the stories, of working men – from the motorcycle taxi riders in *Machine Boys* (2024) to the tin miners in *Plateau* (2022) or the palm oil farmers in *Red Gold* (2016). Her background in painting carries through to the visual language of her films, combining a strong sense of colour, composition and form, with the fugitive kinetics of her camera lens. This unique approach to the handling of the camera, and the framing of its gaze, defies the

tendency towards spectacle in colonial ethnographic documentation. Ashadu's nuanced and intimate portraits, whether of individuals or communities, probe multifaceted reflections onto the notions of masculinity and patriarchal systems within the cultural context of West Africa, as they are inextricably related to the conditions of economic independence and exploitation in the aftermath of British colonial rule.

Tendered is accompanied by the first reference monograph dedicated to the artist, edited by Bianca Stoppani, editor at Fondazione In Between Art Film, with Rabottini and Bigazzi. Published by Mousse, the monograph features contributions from Karimah Ashadu; Myriam Ben Salah, director and chief curator at The Renaissance Society, Chicago; Leonardo Bigazzi, curator at Fondazione In Between Art Film; Gina Buenfeld-Murley, curator at Camden Art Centre, London; Martin Clark, director at Camden Art Centre, London; Dr Clive Chijioke Nwonka, associate professor in film, culture and society, UCL, London; Alessandro Rabottini, artistic director at Fondazione In Between Art Film; Bettina Steinbrügge, director at Mudam Luxembourg; and Arese Uwuoruya, assistant curator at Camden Art Centre.

Tendered is the second project launched under *Unison*, a biennial initiative promoted by Fondazione In Between Art Film to commission and produce moving image-based exhibitions in partnership with international public institutions. The show follows Ali Cherri's solo exhibition *Dreamless Night* which was held at GAMEC, Bergamo, and Frac Bretagne in 2022-23.

Karimah Ashadu is among the shortlisted artists for the Film London Jarman Award 2025.

Notes to editors

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Biography

Karimah Ashadu (b. London 1985) is a British-born Nigerian Artist and Film Director living and working between Hamburg and Lagos. Ashadu's practice is concerned with labour, patriarchy and notions of independence pertaining to the socio-economic and socio-cultural context of Nigeria and its diaspora.

Her work has been exhibited and screened at institutions internationally, including the 60th Venice Biennale, where she was awarded the Silver Lion for a Promising Young Participant in the International Exhibition. Upcoming exhibitions include Camden Art Centre, London. Her work has been shown at Canal Projects and MoMA PS1, New York, Kunsthalle Bremen, Tate Modern, London, Secession, Vienna, Kunstverein, Hamburg, South London Gallery, London, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, and Trautwein Herleth, Berlin.

Ashadu is the recipient of other awards such as the Prize of the Böttcherstraße in Bremen (2022) and the ars viva prize (2020). Public collections include MoMA, the Art Institute of Chicago, the City of Geneva Contemporary Art Collection, the Kunsthalle Bremen and the Federal Collection of Contemporary Art, Germany. Fellowships include the Abigail R. Cohen fellowship at the Columbia Institute for Ideas and Imagination, Paris. In 2020, Ashadu established her film production company Golddust by Ashadu, specialising in Artists' films on black culture and African discourses.

Camden Art Centre

Since 1965 Camden Art Centre has been a place for art and the people that make it. Rooted in our local community and internationally acclaimed, we foster a sense of belonging and a deeper relationship to art. We aim to push boundaries and connect people to their own creativity through our exhibitions, residencies, events and learning programmes. Originally built as a public library, the building now combines historic architecture with open, modern spaces and a secluded garden with free entry for all. Camden Art Centre has always led the way supporting artists and audiences to create and engage with the most vital and inspiring contemporary art and culture today.

Fondazione In Between Art Film

Fondazione In Between Art Film was founded in Rome in October 2019 with the mission of promoting the culture of moving images and of supporting international artists, institutions and research centers that explore the dialogue between disciplines and the boundaries between film, video, performance and installation. Under the guidance of its founder and president Beatrice Bulgari, Fondazione In Between Art Film aims to contribute to the international artistic debate by furthering the role and potential of moving images in our time.