

Rising Master-Painter M^óy^òs^ór^é Martins Takes Europe By Storm With Concurrent Exhibitions In Geneva And Paris

Natasha Gural Contributor 

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Oct 3, 2024, 09:00am EDT

Updated Oct 7, 2024, 06:06pm EDT



M^óy^òs^ór^é "M^óy^ò" Martins "AH! I (Triptych)" 92023-20240 Oil, oil stick, pigments, graphite on canvas ... [+] TRAFFICARTS

At least 18 male figures in blue-and-white striped shirts and pants occupy a massive triptych, some in powerful stances, others distressed, and at least two human heads have been lopped off with swords. A severed

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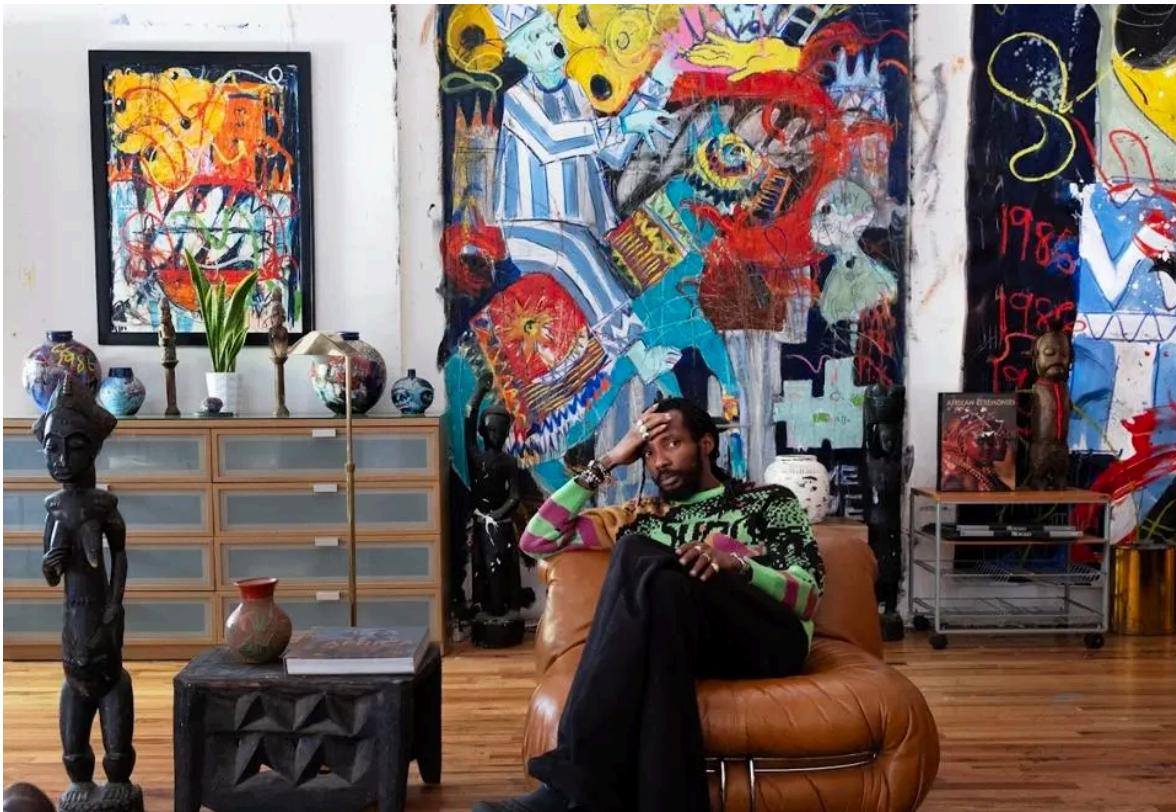
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identified for their uncanny skill.

Our gaze is unsettled and perpetually enchanted as we navigate the frenzy of activity born from the imagination of the New York-based mixed-media

artist raised in Lagos, Nigeria, by a Brazilian father and a Nigerian mother from Ekiti state. The very father he honors in Dogan-like figures forbade him to pursue a passion for art, and Móyò studied computer science in Ghana and the Ivory Coast before immigrating to New York City in 2015.

“My artwork is intentionally raw ... I layer the background and then deconstruct it, which gives the feeling of wear and tear on the canvas. No painting is alike as each has symbolic patterns and encrypted messages hidden within it. I want to merge the vision with the given and the new world that I live in now. The word ‘Why?’ is seen in a lot of the work because it leaves you asking the same question,” explains Móyò, as he’s called by those who appreciate the verisimilitude of his inimitable artwork and creative practice.



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AH! I (Triptych) (2023-2024), an oil, oil stick, pigments, graphite on canvas that measures nearly eight-foot-tall and 19½-foot-wide when stretched underscores that magnitude of Móyò’s creative force. The

monumental work that I imagine as a centerpiece in a major museum exhibition is a highlight of Moyo's first Parisian show, **MÓYÒSÓRÈ MARTINS**, opening Oct. 16, on the eve of the Paris+ for Basel VIP Opening, at 8 Rue Chapon, in the heart of the Marais. Presented by **TRAFFICARTS** with the generous support of husband-wife-business-partners Asher and Michelle Edelman, Jerome Neutres, and Aurore Blanc, is on view through Nov. 15, showcasing self-discovery and connection with those around him, following a return to his university roots in Ghana, Africa, through the **Arms Around The Child** artist residency. The charity provides "safe loving homes for children living in adversity." Works created during that residency are on public view for the first time at the Paris show.

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Such collaboration and collective effort to amplify a rapidly emerging artist is a rare positive trend toward returning to an era when galleries helped to build and advance artists' careers. As galleries continue to shutter quickly after launching without the best interests of the artists they represent or show, this is a seismic shift in the market which hasn't been witnessed for decades. Such efforts comprise a truly global art

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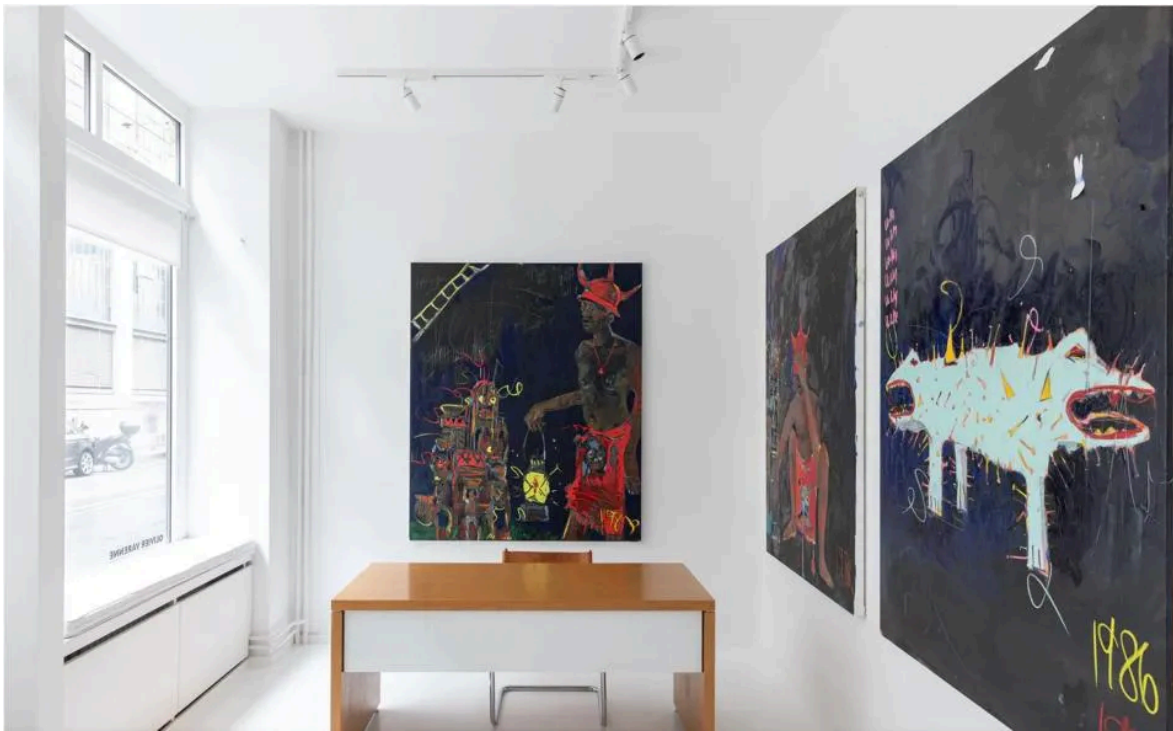
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The show runs concurrently with Moyo's first-ever solo exhibition in Geneva, Switzerland. **MÓYÒSÓRÈ MARTINS: THROUGH THE LIGHT**, opened Sept. 11 and is also on view through Nov. 2 at the **Olivier**

Varenne Art Moderne & Contemporain. The indulgent darkness of some works in this exhibition illustrate the importance of light, both in the painterly sense and the human sense.

“It’s been an honor to put on Moyo’s first show in Europe - there’s an exciting growing buzz about him. We sold half the show at the opening - and there’s been lots of interest since. He’s on the up!” Varenne exclaimed.



Installation view of MÓYÒSÓRÈ MARTINS: THROUGH THE LIGHT at Olivier Varenne Art Moderne & ...
[+] OLIVIER VARENNE ART MODERNE & CONTEMPORAIN

“Geneva is all about going through the light and experiencing those challenges and breakthroughs,” said Moyo. “The Paris show follows that period with a new perspective and knowing my impact on others’ lives, this is what truly matters at this stage in my life. Like my experience of

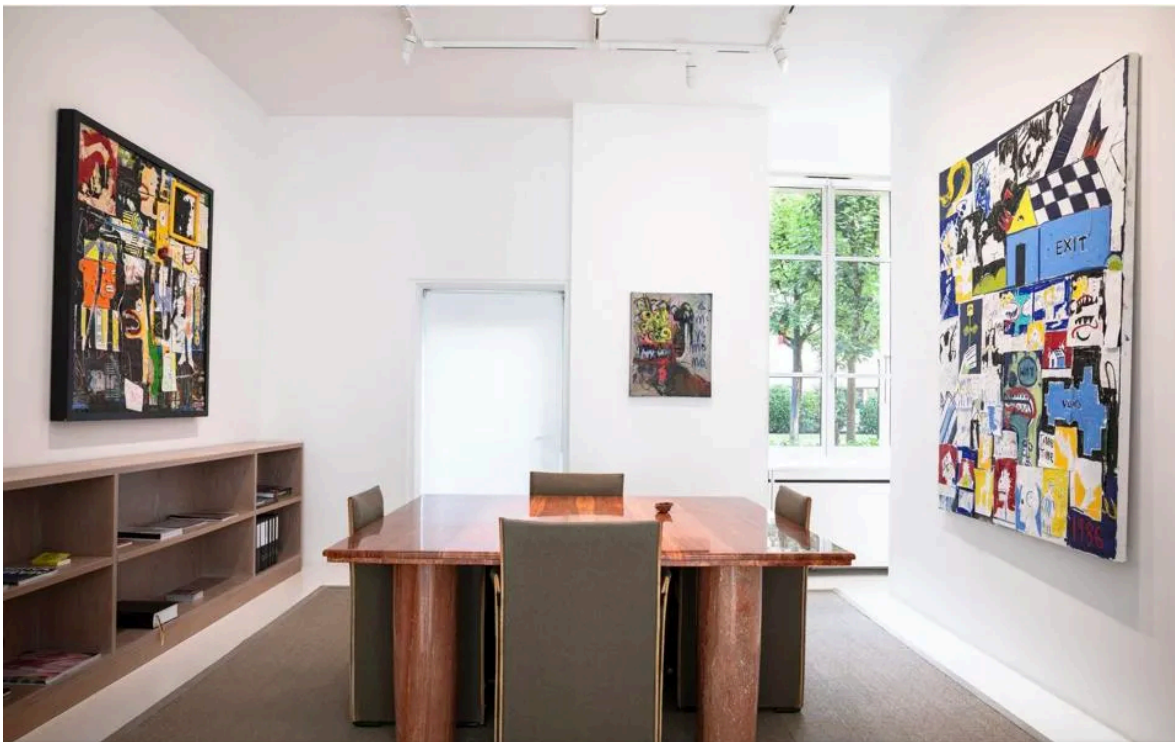
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Further explaining the title of his European debut, Moyo said: “There will always be more work to do, as we are living organisms and we continue to grow. I am going through this transformation to the next phase. I’m going through the light.”

The more we delve into M'oy'ò's visual language, the more we realize there cannot and should not be a definitive interpretation of any single work. Repeated, self-referential motifs, symbols, and iconography, along with his incomparable color palette, offer hints, but often it's what's left out that draws us deeper into his story. Incessant "no no no no no ..." scrawled across the left and center panels suggest resistance, but the same yellow lines used in his "no" font evolve into scribbles, extending the dialogue to the viewer. As with other colossal works, M'oy'ò leaves some raw canvas, inviting the viewer inside (his canvas, his mind, his imagination, his passage through light) to cull the wealth of references and further advance the conversation with their viewer.



Installation view of M'oy'ò's artwork *MARTINS: THROUGH THE LIGHT* at Olivier Varenne Art Moderne & ...
[+] OLIVIER VARENNE ART MODERNE & CONTEMPORAIN

My eternal-1080s-non-girl squeals with delight as I gawk at the neon

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Though there is a repetition of iconography and M'oy'ò's anthology of characters and personal symbolism throughout the array of his expressionistic canvases, each is brazenly unique, evoking its own

polyphony of emotions. This digs deep into the essential truth of art: evoking emotion is the most effective means of drawing humanity closer to its goal of empathy.

Móyò's work may be "raw" in the sense that meaning is sliced open to expose, dissect, and explore myriad visceral narratives born from his internal conversation. While Móyò eschews any outside influence, his personal narrative is woven into every richly layered canvas. More than a building of texture with paint and imagery, Móyò's story evolves with every canvas, carrying him from childhood in Africa to his Mott Haven, the Bronx, studio, through every meticulous stroke and singular color choice. Make no mistake, his work is complex and witnessing him paint will make anyone a believer in his claim that imagination fuels his creative process. I've witnessed Móyò's spirit afire in his studio, as he appears to effortlessly dangle a paintbrush far from its ferrule while he executes meticulous brushstrokes, as the hairs on the brush belly impart their visual wisdom onto large-scale canvases. The dynamic paintings transform again and again, as Móyò floats from one wet canvas to another, further proving there is a singular thread that's evolving and amplifying through his practice.

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Móyòsóré "Móyò" Martins "Enitan" (2023) Oil, oil stick, pigment, and graphite on canvas 74 x 61 in. ...
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In a move typical of well-established artists with a wide fan base, and
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On small tablets Moyo uses as studies for future paintings. The oil, oil
stick, and graphite on canvas mounted on board tablets were created
while Moyo was developing his first *Hungry Mouth* paintings.

Perhaps nothing is too soon for Moyo, who seems to be on the precipice of global fine art stardom, as evidenced by a successful **Sotheby's New York auction**, his current European embrace, and a rapidly-growing and devoted client base across continents.

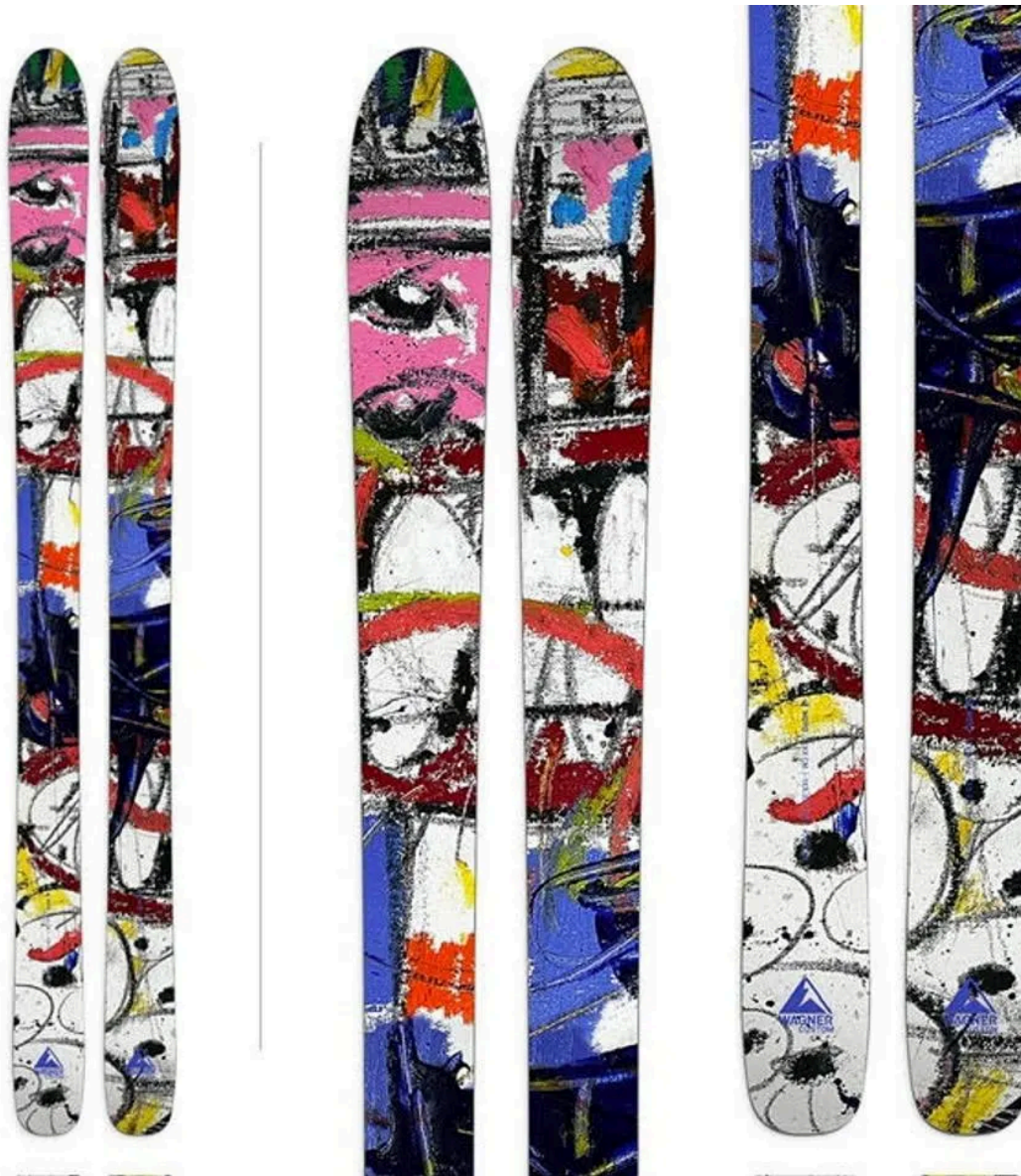
"When Moyo'sóré Martins first joined my agency **TRAFFIC** as a graphic designer, I immediately sensed there was something unique about him. One day, he mentioned he was an artist, and I asked him to send me some of his work. Then, COVID hit. When he finally shared his work, I was struck by its originality and authenticity. His work had guts. My husband and business partner, Asher Edelman, and I then visited Moyo in his studio in Harlem, where he unveiled six years of work that had never been shown to anyone. We were stunned. Our professional relationship grew organically and successfully." said Michelle Edelman.

I had the same *gut* reaction in March 2023, when I first saw **Attestation (Vouch)** at the preview for Sotheby's Contemporary Discoveries, focused on artwork created since the 1960s, offering works by a broad variety of artists such as Andy Warhol, Salmon Toor, Alex Katz, Helen Frankenthaler, George Condo, Kenny Scharf, and Willem de Kooning.

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Móyò's first brand collaboration with Telluride, Colo., based "king of custom skis," Wagner. The Raw ... [+] WAGNER SKIS AND MÓYÓSÓRÉ MARTINS

Follow Móyò on Instagram, [@moyosoremartins1910](https://www.instagram.com/moyosoremartins1910).

Read more about Móyò:

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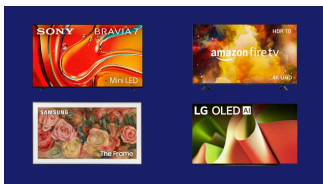
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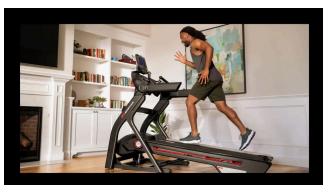
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