

TANYA WEDDEMIRE GALLERY presents JAH·RAS·TAFARI
INDUSTRY CITY : BUILDING 2 | 254 36th STREET | SUITE C257 | BROOKLYN, NY
OCTOBER 17th – DECEMBER 21st of 2024



from left to right

1. **ADDIS GEZEHAGN** | PRESENCE, 2024 | 36" X 36" | Acrylic and Paper on Canvas
2. **WORKNEH BEZU** | I WAS HELD, 2023 | 47" X 47" | Acrylic on Canvas
3. **WENDI DEMEKE** | MOOD 3, 2024 | 14" X 16" | Oil on Canvas
4. **SEYOUM AYALEW** | WHERE THE PORT IS?, 2024 | 51" X 51" | Oil on Canvas
5. **ABRAHAM WOLDEGEBREAL** | WAITING 4, 2024 | 40" X 44" | Acrylic on Canvas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[BROOKLYN NEW YORK, October 7, 2024] The Tanya Weddemire Gallery is thrilled to present **JAH·RAS·TAFARI**, an Ethiopian Art Activation from October 17th to December 21st of 2024. The showcase will feature works of five talented artists: **ADDIS GEZEHAGN**, **WORKNEH BEZU**, **WENDI DEMEKE**, **SEYOUM AYALEW**, and **ABRAHAM WOLDEGEBREAL**.

JAH RASTAFARI : **JAH** is the name of God and his presence in every individual. Haile Selassie, the Great Emperor of Ethiopia, the Power of the Trinity, was crowned Le'ul-Ras and became known as **RAS**, which means the head of the dynasty. His given name **TAFARI** means "one who is respected or feared." Rastafari is Afrocentric and focuses attention on the African Diaspora. It originated among impoverished and socially disenfranchised Afro-Jamaican communities in 1930s Jamaica.

The activation highlights the rich textures, colors and composition of both figurative and abstracts works. These elements are rooted deep in the Ethiopian culture, history, offering diverse approaches and formats. In addition, this is a celebration of Founder Tanya Weddemire's first journey to the African continent, where she spent time with each artist in Addis Ababa. It was an important journey not only for her personal connection to the **RASTAFARIAN** culture and being of Jamaican descent but also for getting to know each artist's character behind the canvas as well as their cultural caretaking demonstration within their work.

FEAUTURING ARTISTS



about ADDIS GEZEHAGN | [@addisgezehagn](#)

Addis Gezehagn (b.1978) Gezehagn completed his BFA from Addis Ababa University Alle School of Fine Art in 2011 with a distinction. A long-time artistic presence in Addis Ababa, he is known for portraying the multifaceted characteristics of the city's residents by detailing the external facades of their homes. In his painting series, he captures the chaos, charisma, artistry, and harmony of his birth country, Ethiopia. The paintings depict dream-like deconstructed and layered renderings of the urban landscape rising above the ground. These compositions, made by layering magazine cutouts with acrylic paint, blend the boundaries of fantasy and reality of urban life, blurring the lines between the past, present, and future. Flattened and reductive, Gezehagn's works imagine cityscapes as towers or patchworks of colorful doors and gates, the architectural structures seeming to signify a natural, organic network of living spaces.



about WORKNEH BEZU KASSA | [@worknehbezu](#)

Workneh Bezu Kassa (b.1978) grew up in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Workneh began drawing at a very young age, taking drawing lessons in elementary school and showing great artistic ability. Although his family encouraged him to become an auto mechanic, Workneh was destined to follow his passion for art and enrolled at the prestigious Addis Ababa University School of Fine Art and Design to study under some of the masters of Ethiopian Painting and Sculptor. For Workneh, art is his life, passion, and dreams. Receiving formal training gave Workneh the techniques and academic skills he needed to bring his dreams to reality. Workneh experiments with different artistic forms and became one of Ethiopia's pioneers of children's puppet films and short animation films. His creations include rug puppets, oil and watercolor paintings, sculptures, and graphics art.



about WENDI DEMEKE | [@wendimagegnart](#)

Wendimagegn Gasham Demeke (b.1985) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Art is second nature to Demeke. He feels it, plays with it, and lives with it. Demeke explores his childhood experiences and reflects on them in his art. He aims to connect deeply with his surroundings through observation and participation. He enjoys experimenting with various mediums and techniques, combining drawing, painting, and sculpture to create impactful pieces. His art often addresses social, political, and personal issues, using Ethiopian cultural elements to emphasize these themes.



about SEYOUM AYALEW | [@seyoum_ayalew](#)

Seyoum Ayalew (b.1968) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He started his journey in the art world at Beyene Mereed elementary school and continued at Tikur Anbessa high school. In 1981, he joined the Arts and Design faculty at Addis Ababa University, where he studied for four years and graduated in Mural Arts. After graduation, he stayed in Dessie, Ethiopia, and mentored many young artists, some of whom are now teaching at Addis Ababa University Arts and Sculpture faculty. Seyoum has exhibited his work in various venues in Ethiopia, as well as internationally in Ireland, Bulgaria, Nigeria, Djibouti, and the USA. Seyoum's art reflects his exploration of conflict and resolution. He uses light and shadow, along with warm and cool colors, to express these themes. His work is influenced by his experiences in theatrical courses and aims to resolve the tension between these elements through color and emotions. Seyoum also played a significant role in establishing the first Ethiopian Visual Artists Association and currently serves as its president.



about ABRAHAM WOLDEGEBREAL | [@abraham_wolde](#)

After graduating from Addis Ababa University in 2011, Abraham Woldegebreal began working as a full-time studio artist, focusing mainly on painting and drawing. His work often explores themes of identity, culture, and social issues. Over the years, he has participated in several group exhibitions. 2013 Abraham had his first solo exhibition, "Nafkot" Nostalgia, at the National Museum of Ethiopia. This exhibition showcased a series of paintings that depicted the struggles and triumphs of everyday life in his childhood area in Ethiopia. His artistic journey is a constant exploration and evolution. In addition to his creative practice, Abraham has also been involved in art education. He has conducted workshops and taught drawing and painting classes to aspiring children and youth. He believes in the power of art to inspire and bring about positive change in society. Currently, Abraham is working on a new series of paintings that delve into the concept of social interrelation and its impact on modern cultures. He is thrilled about the prospect of pushing the boundaries of his artistic practice and contributing to the vibrant art scene in Ethiopia.

About TANYA WEDDEMIRE GALLERY | [@tanyaweddemiregallery](#)

The Tanya Weddemire Gallery is a Brooklyn-based art gallery that thrives from being a vital source and representation of the arts. It's a premier art destination dedicated to showcasing the work of emerging established artists. Its mission is to deepen the value and importance of art by enriching each person's perspective on life explorations through exhibits. The gallery applies thoughtful and intentional curation while integrating cultural and historical connections to all their shows that can include, but are not limited to, paintings, sculptures, drawings, photography, fashion, and furniture. Located at 254 36th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11232.

JOIN US for VIP NIGHT on THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17TH | 6PM – 9:30PM

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254 36TH STREET | BROOKLYN, NY 11232.

For more information about the exhibition and Tanya Weddemire Gallery, please visit:

www.tanyaweddemiregallery.org

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