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**Buffalo Arts Studio presents:
Identity, Power, and Reconciliation
paintings by George Afedzi Hughes
January 27 – March 1, 2023**

Opening Reception: Friday January 27, 5:00 – 8:00 pm



Photo credit: Christina Buscarino

George Afedzi Hughes's paintings explore shared narratives that cut across racial differences and highlight the connection of contemporary global conflicts to colonial history. Using humor and metaphor, *Identity, Power, and Reconciliation* juxtaposes personal narratives, historical tropes, and pop culture references in ways that address the complex and nuanced issue of racial reconciliation.

Hughes has been awarded a New York State Council for the Arts (NYSCA) 2023 Support for Artists grant for this work. The project is also part of Buffalo Arts Studio's 2023/23 National Endowment for the Arts project *Displacement: Reclaiming Place, Space, and Memory*, includes new work that fosters critical dialogue on

transnationalism, intersectionality, and representational justice through panel discussions, exhibitions, and student instruction. This exhibition series reflects the belief that artists and curators can effect change through purposeful collaborations that balance community needs with artistic excellence. The program expands arts access to underrepresented artists and audiences through community partnerships, public forums, and hands-on workshops.

Hughes grounds his work in the history of colonialism, highlighting parallels between imperialism's brutal past and contemporary global conflicts. His paintings interpret the spectacle of news, history, and social engagement by borrowing imagery from global popular culture including sport and ritual. During the exhibition, Hughes will also conduct community art workshops for Buffalo Arts Studio's Jump Start students. Jump Start empowers youth who possess an exceptional interest in a career in the arts by providing access to advanced art instruction, mentorship, and professional development to pursue this interest and prepare for entry into college. The primary goals are to offer opportunities, tools, and mentorship for ALL interested youth, regardless of their ability to pay, in order to create the next generation of art leaders who will reflect the diversity of the region's population.

Hughes will also serve as a panelist for *Making Accessible*, Friday, February 24, 2023 along with exhibiting artist Jodi-Lynn Maracle and Savion Mingo, co-founder of D.O.P.E. Collective. Additionally, representatives of Frontline Arts Buffalo and Starlight Studio will serve as panelists and all will discuss some of the social, economic, and physical barriers they have experienced as artists. A serious accident in 2017 left Hughes largely paralyzed from the neck down. After years of intense physical therapy, he has regained limited use of his arms and legs; however, Hughes requires skilled assistants in order to paint and teach.

George Afedzi Hughes was born and raised in Ghana and studied painting at The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, College of Art (1985–1991) where he earned a BA in Painting and Drawing and an MA in Art Education. He relocated to the United States in 1994 and earned his MFA in Painting from Bowling Green State University (2001). Hughes is currently an Associate Professor of Painting at SUNY Buffalo. His paintings, performances, and installations have been shown in Canada, China, Denmark, Dubai, England, France, Germany, Ghana, Holland, Northern Ireland, Nigeria, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden, Uruguay, Wales and the USA. Hughes is represented in Germany by Artco Gallery, in Portugal by Influx Contemporary Gallery, in Ghana by Artists Alliance Gallery, and in the USA by Skoto Gallery.

For more information about Buffalo Arts Studio, please visit www.buffaloartsstudio.org

Buffalo Arts Studio is a not-for-profit arts organization whose mission is to create cultural connections in our community through exhibitions, public art, and educational programs. We also provide support resources and affordable studio space for local visual artists. Buffalo Arts Studio is a catalyst for self-empowerment and for the cultivation of new ideas and actions to enhance our region. Buffalo Arts Studio is located at 2495 Main Street, Suite 500, Buffalo, NY 14214. The gallery is open Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m. and Saturdays, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Buffalo Arts Studio receives exhibition support from the Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation, Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo, Erie County Cultural Funding, Garman Family Foundation, John R. Oishei Foundation, M&T Bank, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

Below are images of some of the work that will be included in *Identity, Power, and Reconciliation*.

High resolution images are available upon request.



Trap 2, 2022, 30 x 48 in., acrylic, oil on canvas



Bulgey with Boombox, 2022, 64 x 47 in.,
acrylic, oil on canvas

Potru Handed a Shaken Drink, 2022, 40 x 58 in.,
acrylic, oil on canvas



Blue Head Speaks, 2022, 47 x 62 in., acrylic, oil on canvas