



97 & 99 HOXTON STREET LONDON N1 6QL

T 020 7739 8080 INFO@PEERUK.ORG WWW.PEERUK.ORG

PRESS RELEASE

# SAMSON KAMBALU

## POSTCARDS FROM THE LAST CENTURY

24 January to 28 March 2020

Wednesday to Saturday 12:00 – 18:00 (or by appointment)

PRIVATE VIEW Thursday 23 January 18:00 to 20:00

London, UK: PEER announces a multimedia exhibition of by UK-based Malawian artist Samson Kambalu (b.1975) including up to 10 new film projections alongside other work. Samson Kambalu: *Postcards from the Last Century* opens on 24 January and runs until 28 March 2020. Admission is free.

Samson Kambalu's approach to making art is akin to his approach to life – 'I think about life as a creative project' he says. This ethos is derived from his knowledge of 19th and 20th century Western philosophical thought, richly blended with and viewed through a lens of multiple and merging belief systems as experienced during his youth.

The films presented at PEER were shot during Kambalu's recent research trip to the Black Forest in Bavaria, visiting Heidegger's Hut and Bayreuth, the home of Wagnerian opera. His films have the look of found footage from early cinema and are often just a few seconds long, featuring the artist enacting a gesture or action – they have been described as 'cinematic fragments that blend slapstick and spiritual ritual'. They have the look of found footage from early cinema, but the artist grounds his practice in Nyau culture – a secret society of the Chewa tribe, which is especially known for its ritual mask performances. Kambalu's 'Nyau Cinema' is characterised by spontaneity, playfulness and a non-linear approach to time.

Alongside his films, Kambalu will show work arising from his childhood memory of collecting bubble gum cards of the flags of the world. These national and sovereign identities are manipulated and dissected using smart phone technology to create images that adopt the 'look' of geometric Western abstract painting, and also resonate with the vibrant colours and bold patterning of African Kente cloth.

Kambalu's often irreverent fusion of social, national and artistic tropes and identities is intentionally mischievous and provocative. His aim is to skew our reading of cultural behaviour and customs and to seek out the areas where humanity meets. Having become a fellow at Magdalen College, University of Oxford in 2017, Kambalu relishes the ceremonial and ritualistic customs of the academic life of "lingering medieval scholasticism and time wasting rituals", and the parallels that he draws from the 'radical democracy' of the Nyau culture he embraced during his Malawian upbringing.

---

### About Samson Kambalu

Samson Kambalu (b. 1975) is an artist, author and academic. He was born in Malawi, where he attended Kamuzu Academy and then graduated from the University of Malawi's Chancellor College, Zomba with a BA in Fine Art and Ethnomusicology. He has an MA in Fine Art from Nottingham Trent University (2003), and obtained a PhD at Chelsea College of Art and Design (2015). One of his most well-known artworks is *Holy Ball*, a football plastered in pages of the Bible. He has shown his work internationally and was included in Okwui Enwezor's *All the World's Futures* at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. His first book, an autobiographical narrative entitled *The Jive Talker or How to Get a British Passport*, was published in 2008. In 2018 Kambalu was appointed Associate Professor of Fine Art at Ruskin College and Fellow at Magdalen College Oxford. Kambalu is represented by Galerie Nordenhake in Stockholm, Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg and London and Kate MacGarry in London.

 PEERUK

 PEER\_UK

PEER's programme is generously supported by

PEER Patrons and Paul and Louise Cooke Endowment



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

DIRECTOR: INGRID SWENSON MBE / TRUSTEES: ISABELLE NOWAK (CHAIR), CRAIG BURNETT, MARTIN COOMER, JEFF MCMILLAN, JANICE MCLAREN, JON MEDLAM, HABDA RASHID, CLAIRE REAY / PEER UK LTD IS A REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1115091 AND COMPANY NUMBER 5757614