

Noah Beyene - "Mourning Light"

Curated by Vincent Vanden Bogaard

25th September - 31st October 2025

Solito - Galleria S1 - Piazza Enrico De Nicola 46, Naples

Former Lanificio complex - Staircase B - 1st floor

Thursday 25th September 2025 - 7.00 p.m.

Galleria Solito continues its 2025 program with "**Mourning Light**", a solo exhibition by Swedish artist **Noah Beyene** (b. 1993). For his first exhibition in Italy, Beyene presents a selection of new, previously unseen works created specifically for **S1**, the main gallery space within the **Solito** group, located in the former Lanificio complex of Porta Capuana.

The exhibition is introduced and curated by **Vincent Vanden Bogaard**.

Noah Beyene's work offers a deeply personal exploration of the human form, psychological states, and our relationship with the world around us. A graduate of mixed Ethiopian and Swedish heritage, his canvases bridge the gap between the visible and the felt, transforming moments of quiet introspection and vulnerability into poignant visual narratives. Through his art, Beyene captures the fragility of intimacy, depicting friends and family in compositions that challenge the conventions of contemporary figurative painting.

The work of Noah is challenging as it offers the audience a duality, creating a welcoming and beautiful feeling while depicting something more unsettling, thus creating a powerful friction between the image and the emotions it evokes.

Beyene's background in photography and his acclaimed work as a lighting director are evident in his artistic process. He carefully arranges and photographs his subjects in real-life settings before translating them into oil paintings, imbuing each work with a unique cinematic quality. His masterful use of light and bold color palettes creates scenes that are both meticulous in detail and evocative in atmosphere, oscillating between photorealism and emotional abstraction.

The color yellow is a powerful and prominent motif in Beyene's practice, it is the center of its palette. In Judeo-Christian traditions, the color is often controversial, symbolizing both divine light and betrayal, as seen in depictions of Judas. In Beyene's paintings, it takes on additional layers of meaning, representing abundance and belonging, while also naturally representing light shades, closing the loop with the artist's photography background.

A centerpiece of the exhibition, the painting "*Miracle of the Black Leg*", re-examines a gruesome Western art historical myth through a personal and familial lens. The original legend, believed to be the first time an Ethiopian was painted in Western art, depicts the sacrifice of a black man to save a white man. Beyene reclaims this narrative by reimagining it as a tranquil domestic scene.

As the artist states it: «My version reimagines this myth through a familial lens. My mother and father sit on a sofa, calmly looking at me – I'm dressed in a robe, legs resting on a table. On the table stand a pot of coffee, an Ethiopian cross, and a small concrete lion – shared cultural signifiers that float between Swedish and Ethiopian heritage».

These symbols – coffee, the cross, and the lion – take on new meaning within the context of the painting, serving as anchors of identity and resilience. Beneath the table, a seemingly mundane detail – a vacuum cleaner with a black sock caught in its nozzle – serves as a nod to «the messiness beneath symbols, to what we try to erase or contain».

Noah Beyene's paintings invite a dialogue not just with the subjects on the canvas, but with our own inner lives, revealing the extraordinary depth of feeling that exists within the quietest corners of our daily existence. *Mourning Light* is a powerful reminder that our most intimate stories are often the most profound. (VVB)

Noah Beyene will be present at the opening.

Noah Beyene (Stockholm, b.1993) obtained his BFA at the Slade School of fine art, London (United Kingdom) in 2023.

An internationally renowned lighting director in the field of photography as well as a painter, Noah is consciously in dialogue with the history of image making and painting. For Noah, painterly mark-making grants the ability to be any and every type of image, whether wholly abstract or rendered with photorealist fidelity to the subject. However, it is in the gaps in between these two positions that the artist finds his language be it through the use of bold colour or a simple line, or a strenuously painted chair, or the feeling of soft light in a dull room that allows something to recede and almost disappear out of sight unless you squint. There is a desire to understand how to manipulate the eye and exploit the evolution of sight. This approach leads to work that keeps you engaged. Just as you thought you knew the work a new piece reveals itself as a multifaceted painting language paired with an extraordinary gift to tell a story.

Among the artist's most notable solo exhibitions: *Headfirst*, Addis Fine Art, London, UK (2023); *Beyond the seas*, A House, Stockholm, Sweden (2020). Selected group exhibitions: *Changing the Subject*, Annely Juda Fine Art, London, UK (2024); *Connected Threads*, Addis Fine Art, New York, USA (2024).

Noah Beyene lives and works between London and Stockholm.

Vincent Vanden Bogaard (b.1986) is an esteemed Belgian curator with a full-bodied and important resume and an independent consultant who has developed over time a strong knowledge and strategic vision for companies in the contemporary art market. In the last two years, he has dedicated himself to the development of the **Solito** project.

The formula of the **Solito Galleries** is a small holding company that manages, in addition to its own physical spaces, also a digital platform (awardee project of a ministerial call for Cultura Crea) and the *iemme* publishing project born in 2011. All initiatives are promoted on the **website** galleriasolito.com. We thank **Hapto Studio** in Milan, which curated the visuals of the project, **Officina Keller** of arch. **Antonio Martiniello** for the urban regeneration work that for years has involved the area of Porta Capuana and the former Lanificio complex, thanks to the social integration activities of local artisan realities, **Lanificio Digitale**, the open innovation HUB, which has created the digital platform to support **Solito's** activities, **Valeria Apicella's Punto Zero Atelier** and **ANGAMC** - National Association of Modern and Contemporary Art Galleries.

Noah Beyene's "Mourning Light" is featured in the official program of the **European Heritage Days 2025 (Saturday, September 27 and Sunday, September 28)**, coordinated by the **Ministry of Culture**. The exhibition also participates in the **21st Edition of Giornata Del Contemporaneo (Saturday, October 4)**, an initiative promoted by **AMACI - Association of Italian Contemporary Art Museums**.

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Free entry

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Monday - Friday > 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. / Saturday and Sunday > by appointment

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