

Content Review

Amoako Boafo: Soul of Black Folks

On view | May 27–October 2, 2022



Amoako Boafo, *Reflection I*, 2018, oil on paper, Courtesy of Private Collection and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles

This content review is designed to communicate accessibility and powerful subject matters within this exhibition. Powerful subject matters include nudity, sexuality, violence, and explicit language.

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Amoako Boafo: Soul of Black Folks is a solo exhibition of Ghanaian artist Amoako Boafo and presents over 30 paintings from 2016 to 2022. The exhibition is curated by Larry Ossei-Mensah. Boafo exclusively paints Black people to create a focus on representation. His subjects range from family members, friends, people he admires, and himself. This exhibition includes a site-specific wall painting created by Boafo.

Boafo paints the skin of his subjects directly onto the canvas with his fingers. Two paintings, *Ghana Must Go* (2017) and *Black Skin, White Mask* (2016), are self-portraits of the artist in the nude. His gestural marks emphasize the contours and luminous skin tone of the body, but do not explicitly depict genitalia.

Boafo titles his works in relation to his subject matter. In a painting of a woman in a brown sweater and pulled back hair, Boafo uses explicit language to title this work: *Fuck You Mean Tho* (2019). This impactful phrase honors Black pride and vernacular.

The exhibition takes its title from the seminal text by sociologist and Pan-Africanist W.E.B Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*. Du Bois' text serves as an invitation to think deeply about Boafo's artistic practice and how it challenges an "othered" gaze concerning the Black figure.

Large print version of this exhibition's wall text is available at the front desk in English and Spanish. The exhibition will have benches available throughout the gallery space.



Amoako Boafo, *Libby and D-Lee*, 2019, oil on canvas, Courtesy of Holly Jane Butler and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles