

# RUSSO ▲ LEE GALLERY

## Artist Statement

### *A Place I Call Home*

I was born in 1988 and raised in Accra, Ghana. Relocating to a new country and starting over can be daunting due to the uncertainty involved. However, this move has profoundly enriched my artistic practice and has allowed me to experience a new culture and its people. Since moving to Portland, Oregon, I've been inspired by its people and its landscapes, all of which have significantly shaped this new body of work.

This exhibition, "*A Place I Call Home*", marks my first Solo Show in Portland. It is a celebration of the connections I've made and the beauty I've discovered in my new environment. Through portraiture, I explore themes of empowerment, intimacy, and belonging. My figures are rendered in bright, luminous tones, inviting viewers into emotionally resonant, often personal moments. These works highlight the deep bonds of friendship I share with my subjects—many of whom are members of my new community.

My paintings offer glimpses into the private spaces of these individuals, capturing quiet, tender moments within the colorful and diverse environments of Portland. Each portrait reflects not only the character of the subject and their relationship to place, but also how I, as the artist, perceive and connect with them. The color palette throughout this series draws heavily from Oregon's unique and varied natural beauty.

For this exhibition, I've expanded my artistic practice by incorporating plant installations that reflect my passion for botany and emphasize the beauty of Oregon. Additionally, a replica of my working studio is included in the exhibition, offering visitors an intimate look into my daily work routine and creative process.

This body of work is both a tribute to the new life I'm building and a continuation of my ongoing journey as an artist deeply engaged with people, place, and the power of portraiture.

Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe - 2025