

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ABOUDIA: TALKING HEADS

February 25<sup>th</sup> - April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Ethan Cohen is pleased to host Aboudia's third solo exhibition in New York *ABOUDIA: TALKING HEADS* featuring African artist Aboudia with his new body of work that he created in his New York residency. An opening reception will take place on Thursday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8pm.



*"Aboudia is the most globally recognized of the young African new wave artists. I have shown Aboudia's paintings all over the world- New York, Basel, Miami, Hong Kong, Singapore, San Francisco, Lima. Everywhere I go, people find the vivid color, dynamism and raw honesty of his work highly compelling."* - Ethan Cohen

In kinetically painted canvases redolent of both Jean Dubuffet-art brut and Jean-Michel Basquiat and graffiti art, Aboudia Abdoulaye Diarrassouba (b. 1983) depicts feverish colorscapes populated by child-like figures. The fusion of Western and African art traditions began with Picasso and his contemporaries. Aboudia brings the

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continuum of fusion into our time and takes the next step towards an individualized expression inspired by both Africa and the West.

His trademark "nouchi" style is drawn from the street culture of children in his home city of Abidjan, Ivory Coast. The word "nouchi" refers to their street patois which, combined with the ubiquitous graffiti around Abidjan, inspires Aboudia's work, a form of dreamscape in response to privation. Rendered in oil sticks, acrylics and collage, his works are noted for brutal lines of color that evanesce electrically.

Until now, his mural-like canvases, often monumental but delicate, feature a palpable background presence of small hectic detail suggesting his home-town street setting where urbanization becomes another form of public communication through the messages left directly on walls. The current works mark a departure, being born of his current art residency in New York and his reaction to a transplanted consciousness. The style is unchanged and continues to illustrate currents in contemporary African art and its peaking international relevance.

*Aboudia is a stranger in a strange land, so the visual context and background of his previous work have dropped away, leaving faces to the fore, "I find myself in the New World, immersed in alien streetscapes but painting in solitude, accompanied by my past and its characters. They watch you, they expect things - my family, my friends, my ancestors, ghosts. They never let me alone. I feel them as I paint, asking for things, asking questions, wanting to be here. They observe the money you make, the food you eat, the streets you walk. They watch you and watch with you. After all, I have emerged from a texture of poverty. They count on me. So I watch myself along with them looking at this new world. I am often the presence in orange, seeing faces, being the face that sees - for them. The landscape fades and all there is, is me looking, trying to find features I recognize in the new faces on the new streets and often I only can see what I bring with me."*

For all inquiries, please contact the gallery at 212-625-1250 or via email at [ecfa@ecfa.com](mailto:ecfa@ecfa.com)

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