

Kaloki Nyamai

## Unlimited Dining in Chaos

04.11.–22.12.2023

Opening: 03.11.2023, 6–9 p.m.

Galerie Barbara Thumm proudly presents *Unlimited Dining in Chaos*, featuring exceptional works of Kenyan artist Kaloki Nyamai. For the first time in Berlin, two paintings of Nyamai's monumental series will be on view, following his recent presentation at Art Basel Unlimited in Basel 2023. The installation of two epic large paintings is combined with new small pieces, challenging traditional artistic norms and persuade the view to explore the intricate layers of human experience.

Nyamai's understanding of painting as a sculptural medium blurs the lines of traditional painting, mixing acrylic paint, layered collages, and stitchings in sisal rope on the canvas. These large creations hang suspended from the gallery's ceiling, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in their narratives.

The paintings depict people resting and taking care of each other, in front of tumultuous scenes, ranging from playful and euphoric to aggravated protest. Nyamai paints a heartfelt social portrait of what it feels to live through times of global crisis. Barely healed and stitched up wounds inflicted by colonialism, as well as pre-colonial history and identity of the Kamba people, which Nyamai heavily draws from for his work, are overlaid with contemporary struggles and conflicts but always crack through the surface.

Nyamai's art is a testament to his remarkable ability to unravel the intricate interplay between history, identity, and contemporary society. Drawing inspiration from his rich heritage, tales of the Kamba people told by his grandmother, he weaves together stories that bridge the gaps between cultures and generations. Furthermore, the expansive canvases Nyamai employs provide the perfect backdrop to delve deeply into the narratives of African history—stories of resilience, struggle, and triumph. Each piece becomes a visual epic, inviting viewers to embark on a profound journey through layers of history, identity, and societal critique.

Through his monumental art, Kaloki Nyamai proudly upholds the legacy of African artistic heritage. With unmatched talent and creativity, he illuminates the

complexities and beauty of the continent's cultural legacy, inviting us to contemplate our world's discomfiting realities—from racial inequalities to the pervasive grip of capitalism.

Kaloki Nyamai (born 1985 in Kitui, Kenya) creates intricate compositions on canvas. He has shown works internationally at the Stellenbosch Triennale (2020), Dakar Biennale, and Venice Biennale (2022); as well as the solo shows 'Moments That I Miss' (2022) and 'Dining in Chaos' (2023) at Galerie Barbara Thumm. Nyamai lives and works in Nairobi.