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## Oroma Elewa *CORPORATE ASHAWO*



Oroma Elewa, IT WOULDN'T BE YOU TOM, 2022

OPENING 12.03.23

12.03.2023 - 29.04.2023

Text written in collaboration with Mobolaji Otuyelu and Gabriella Beckhurst

*CORPORATE ASHAWO*, born from the performance project *Area Babes & Ashawo Superstars* was first presented by the artist in late 2019 as an Instagram-based performance piece that used the 'meme' as a framework for commentary with a focus on contemporary womanhood.

In *Area babes and Ashawo Superstars*, Elewa enacts an evolving set of performances for camera that articulate the lives and experiences of a fictional group of intergenerational African cosmopolitan women foregrounding their takes on sex, gender, class, and power.

The performance evoked the embodied expressions and aesthetics of Nigeria's golden age of cinema, Nollywood, rearticulated by the artist through contemporary reference points.

In this work, Elewa seamlessly blends self-portraiture and cinematic personae to refract and critique representations of contemporary African women. Candidly addressing socio-economic ideologies, cultural indoctrinations, and the tensions of transnationalism. Elewa's cast of characters, Cash, Currency, Lady Ivorio Ost, Jussi Pussi, and Auntie Linda brought into this work a dimension to cultural and feminist discourse often considered taboo such as the economic agency and liberatory potentialities of transactional sex.

For her first solo show at In situ, Fabienne Leclerc in Paris, Elewa presents *CORPORATE ASHAWO*, a series of photographic prints, photographic sculpture, sound and video further developments of the project that bring her characters to life as strategic players who skillfully leverage their social capital--sexual and otherwise--to make a life for themselves, from the streets of Naples to five-star hotels in New York City.

In *CORPORATE ASHAWO*, Elewa's characters look to engage viewers in a feminism that exists outside its normative contours; a feminism which derives its essence and meaning right within the socio-economic realities of African cosmopolitan and Diasporic women. Here, Elewa places economic agency and the liberatory potential and politics of transactional relationships, responsibilities and self navigation at the centre of feminist discourse.

