

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

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Studio Visit: Gideon Appah by Osman Can Yerebakan

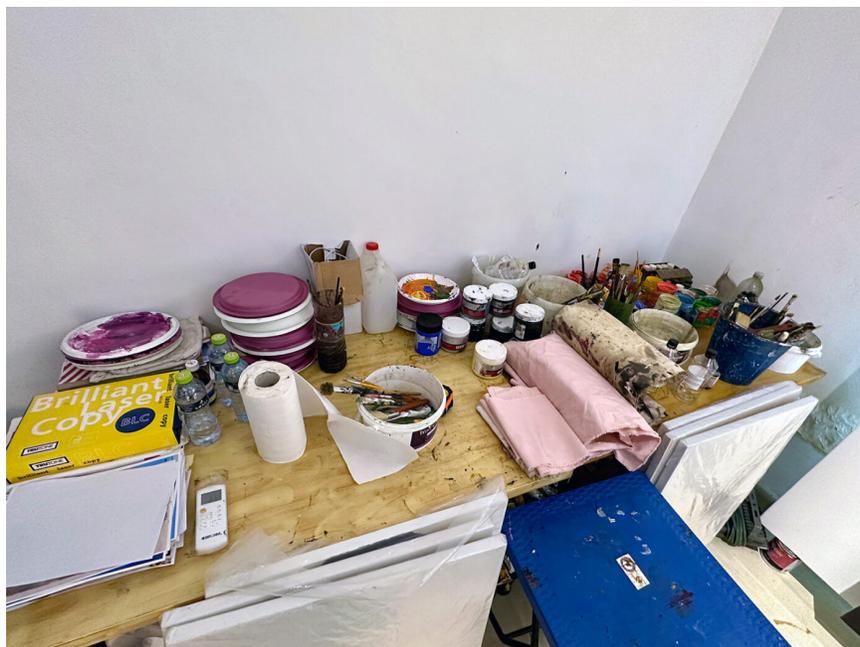
Contemplative and visually precise paintings from Ghana.

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All photos by Osman Can Yerebakan.

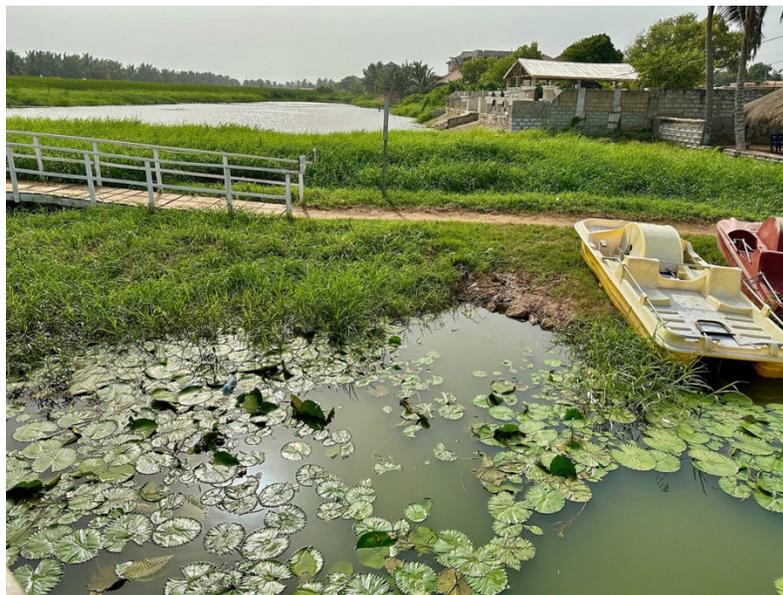
Painter Gideon Appah's studio in Ghana is just outside of Accra, positioned quietly by a small farm of pepper plants above which the sun was sharply gleaming when I visited. The two-story studio is a medley of rooms, each full of paintings that the artist had recently completed or left in process. Walking through the studio's maze-like construction, I felt as if Appah's liquid universes were blending; the blue sky in one larger-than-life painting bled into the sea in the next work, which he rendered without the usual mass of azure and instead in an icy white dotted with various darker hues. This flow throughout his studio's sun-lit chambers allowed for a momentary escape from physical reality.



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Appah is among the leading figures of a new generation of Ghanaian, mostly Accra-based painters who in recent years have stood out in global art networks for their effortlessly contemplative and visually precise depictions of everyday life. While portraits are a thread running through the work of most of these artists, Appah commands the landscape genre as its own form of portraiture by depicting the emotionality of a place like the piercing immediacy of a face. Mostly nude or semi-nude figures occupy these lushly mysterious places, where they engage with the unhurried daily rituals of Appah's inner universe. They are moody and even aloof, with their expressions turned away from the viewer's gaze as they thrive in joys that they seem uninterested in emphasizing with their gestures.



Despite this imaginative quality, Appah also pulls references from post-liberation Ghanaian films, music, and media, all mixed with musings during his morning painting sessions facing the farm and sightings around the streets and on the nearby beach in Oshiyie, where we later drove to walk on the sand populated by swimmers and a few horses.

Gideon Appah is the co-curator with Yinka Barotto of [Worldmaking](#), a group exhibition featuring ten emerging artists living and working in Ghana, on view at Mitchell-Innes & Nash in New York City until August 25.