
BRUCE KARIM

Artist statement

I am a Ugandan-Swedish multidisciplinary artist based in Stockholm, working across painting, mixed media, creative reuse, dance and performance. My work explores identity, freedom and belonging.

Painting and dance are connected for me. Colour, texture and movement help me express things I find difficult to put into words. Sometimes a gesture becomes a mark on a surface. Sometimes I bring my whole body into the painting, allowing people to witness the work taking shape.

Faces and animals return throughout my work. I am drawn to a gaze that holds your attention, a body that carries strength, and the vulnerability within that strength. I want people to spend time with the image and discover what it brings up for them.

I also see possibilities in things people have thrown away. Cardboard, packaging and textiles bring their own history into a work. Their shapes and worn surfaces influence what I create. I keep those traces visible because the material's story matters alongside the image.

In Sound of Freedom, movement leaves its traces across a five-by-five-metre painting. In RISE UP, painting, the body, sound and silence meet as I explore Black representation, the experience of being silenced and the act of claiming space.

Still Arriving grows from something I live with. I am Ugandan-Swedish. When I return to Uganda, I am seen as a foreigner. In Sweden, I experience that same distance. I belong to both places, yet I feel like an outsider in both. Through this developing body of work, I explore who gets to recognise our belonging - and what a document can never fully explain about a person.

Creating with others is part of this journey. Through collaboration, teaching and Rise & Change, I share art and movement while making room for other people's ideas. I know what encouragement can mean: at nineteen, recognition for three paintings I made during a summer job helped me continue as an artist. I carry that experience into the spaces I create for others.

I make work from what I have lived, what I notice and what I am still trying to understand. I want it to hold a presence of its own, while leaving room for you to bring something of yourself.