

next
up

Next Up: Yatreda Preserves Ethiopian History Through On-Chain Storytelling

BY ARTHUR PARKHOUSE · NOVEMBER 02, 2023

Taping into the style of "tizita" (ቲዝታ), an Amharic word that represents nostalgia and a longing for the past, our latest Next Up artist isn't "an" artist but rather a family of artists.

The group, based out of Ethiopia, is known for its powerful and thought-provoking storytelling, many centered around classic tales of Ethiopia.

Every week, nft now's Next Up unveils a new artist from our curated list of ascendant talents who have been making significant waves throughout Web3. This week, we're excited to feature the art collective and family that is **Yatreda**.

Yatreda Art Collective

Arriving on the Web3 scene in 2021 with their project “Kingdoms of Ethiopia,” Yatreda, representing the Amharic words “fence and debt,” has since risen to significant heights and recognition in the space.

Leading the group is Kiya Tadele, who, after working in the modeling industry for several years, decided she would try and see what it was like to be on the other side of the camera.

Under her direction, the Yatreda Art Collective was formed, consisting of her husband, Joey Lawrence, sisters Roman and Suzy Tadele, and her friends, Tigist and Abiy.

Since forming Yatreda, the group has set out on a mission to resurrect and honor Ethiopian legends and tales, focusing on preserving the stories on the blockchain through an engaging artistic lens.

Following the exceptionally well-received launch of Yatreda’s **“The End of Innocence”** collection via **Fellowship**, we caught up with Tadele to learn more about her entry into Web3 and the process, inspiration, and energy that goes into the Collective’s works.

“The End of Innocence” auction is currently live and, at the time of writing, has a current bid of 22 ETH.

nft now: How did you first become interested/involved in NFTs?

Tadele: The conversation I used to have with my artist friends was: why do we take all our time and effort just to give something away for free to Instagram? Where is our future in this? What is the continuity of my creativity?

It was early 2021 when we began to hear about NFTs from strong artist friends like Sam Spratt and photographer Lyle Owerko. We flew to Italy for an exhibition, and it was the producer who invited us to Foundation for the first time (back then, you needed an invitation to mint).

It was always a big dream of my family to make a film about the battle of Adwa, which is Ethiopia’s victory over the Italian invasion in 1896. So, for our first drop, my family and I realized “Kingdoms of Ethiopia,” which was like the film idea simplified into 12 1/1 motion portraits.

nft now: How would you describe your art?

Tadele: Our art is black and white motion portraits focussed on Ethiopian history and celebrating the diversity of African culture, especially with a focus on motherhood.

But how I really like to describe our art is leaving something meaningful for the new generation. To use new technology to preserve those old classic things which are slowly being erased with time.

nft now: What's your process like? Where do you usually find inspiration?

Tadele: Every spark of an idea seems to start from a story I grew up learning during childhood, or something I would like to pass on to the new generation. From there, I do my research, spend many days in the museums looking for inspiration, and begin to make mood boards.

I will ask myself: how can my family tell this story in a way that has never been seen before? How can we let our experience as Ethiopians and localized knowledge shape something unapologetically fresh? Then comes costumes, hairstyles, jewelry, and the fun little details that are so important to us. My sister might make a painting that we can use as a guide when shooting.

nft now: Can you tell us about your recent sales? How they've made you feel, and how they've affected your relationship with your work?

Tadele: Most collectors hold on to Yatreda artwork for the long term. We recently had two secondary sales. One was **Gudit for 11.95 ETH**, and another was a Strong Hair for 7.5 ETH.

I see it very positively. The art has transferred from artist to art collector, to art gallery, to a new believer.

(Other recent sales include The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil for 10 ETH, The Garden of Eden for 10 ETH, and a bid for "The End of Innocence" at 22 ETH at the time of writing).

