

APOLLO

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40 UNDER 40 AFRICA

Cécile Fakhoury

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Founder and director, Galerie Cécile Fakhoury, Abidjan, Dakar and Paris

From an early age, Cécile Fakhoury – whose parents ran a modern art gallery – was immersed in the art world. Having spent a decade or so working in a gallery and auction house in Paris, she moved to Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d’Ivoire, where she opened her own space – a striking concrete-and-glass cube that covers 600 square metres – in 2012. Through periods of instability in the country, Galerie Cécile Fakhoury has nonetheless established itself in a city that Fakhoury describes as a ‘nerve centre of West Africa’. In 2018 Fakhoury expanded the business, opening an exhibition space in Dakar and a showroom in Paris – all augmented earlier this year with Project Space, a second location in Abidjan where the focus is on the work of emerging artists.

Fakhoury has spoken of her desire to counter the idea that ‘art shouldn’t be a priority’ in countries like Côte d’Ivoire, and to develop local audiences and markets for West African artists. The gallery’s roster includes Ivorian artists such as Aboudia, Sadikou Oukpedjo (who works in Paris), and New York-based Ouattara Watts. Fakhoury has shown their work internationally at fairs including FIAC, 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, and the Investec Cape Town Art Fair.

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