

Josie KO

Curated by Muine Bheag Arts

Muine Bheag Arts is pleased to present *A kì í mọ̀ nà ogbà ju olôgbà lọ; ení múnì wá là ntè lé*, an exhibition of new and existing works by Josie KO.

The exhibition takes its title from a Yoruba proverb, roughly translated as: *“Do not presume to know the garden better than the gardener; always follow the person who brought you”*.

For St Carthage Hall, Josie KO has created a hand-sewn textile banner, inspired by this proverb, reflecting on the relationship between landowner and labourer and how connections to land are shaped by memory, ancestry and identity. The garden is a recurring motif throughout the exhibition, emerging from the artist’s time exploring the gardens at Lismore Castle. KO considers the garden as both a site of cultivation and beauty, and a symbol of ownership and status.

The exhibition develops from KO’s ongoing research into *fir gorma* (literally, ‘blue men’), an Old Irish term believed by historians and folklorists to refer to enslaved North African people brought to Ireland by Vikings in the ninth century. Drawing on this overlooked history, KO creates a vibrant installation that invites imaginative speculation. The space is inhabited by statuesque figures that reimagine the Black female body, recalling mythological figures and goddesses often found in formal gardens. Adorned with sequins and hand-painted features, the figures possess a rich material presence that reinforces the artist’s aim to restore power and visibility to historically marginalised people.

The figures are accompanied by a series of cyanotype prints of Josie KO’s mother and grandmother in garden settings, tracing the artist’s connection to the garden across generations. The cyanotype process, often associated with botanical photography, renders the figures in blue, evoking the *fir gorma*. Drawing on memories of collecting flowers as a child in Nigeria, her ancestral home, KO reflects on traditions passed down through generations and her experience growing up in England as a second-generation immigrant. These layered experiences of home prompt broader questions about land, identity and belonging – how they are cultivated, remembered and carried across borders.

A kì í mọ̀ nà ogbà ju olôgbà lọ; ení múnì wá là ntè lé by Josie KO is developed alongside Muine Bheag Arts. The exhibition emerges from a residency in Lismore in April 2026. This marks the first presentation of works by Josie KO in Ireland.

Josie KO is a Glasgow based artist who graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 2021. Since then she has been a committee member at Transmission Gallery, worked full time at Glasgow School of Art’s Student’s Association, and has exhibited in Dundee, London and Switzerland. Purposely working with untraditional methods and mediums (such as paper mâché, glitter and found objects), Josie KO uses these materials relegated status in the art world and mixed media techniques to present a newly reimagined depiction of the Black female body. Constructing the women with irregular limbs and glittery bodies, the work glorifies the handmade and drifts from the norms of Western art ideals. The scale of her works makes them unavoidably noticeable, counteracting the erasure of Black women in art history and Black female artists.

Muine Bheag Arts is an artist-run organisation based in a small town in County Carlow that engages with the local context to present projects in the public realm. Guided by values of collaboration and experimentation, Muine Bheag Arts invites dialogue between artists, audiences, community and place.

The programme includes exhibitions, workshops, events, residencies, publishing and radio broadcasts. These platforms provide opportunities for artists to research, test and make through close collaboration with the organisation and members of the local community.

27 JUNE -
26 JULY 2026
OPENING RECEPTION
SATURDAY 27 JUNE, 3-5PM

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JOSIE KO





Image captions:
Front Cover: Josie KD, Bossy Lady, Installation view, Glasgow International, 2024, Photo: Eoin Carey

Rainbows are portals into Utopian Belongings, Govan Project Space, Glasgow, 2024. Photo credit Matthew Barnes

Mekle Lippis, Quench Gallery, Margate, 2025

Fir Gorma, Glasgow International, Glasgow, 2024