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Makers

5 Artists to Watch According to Larry Ossei-Mensah of ArtNoir, and the Thin Line Between Visibility and Commitment



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Photo of Larry Ossei-Mensah. Photo credit: Diego Martinez Chacon & New Wave Magazine.

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[Black History Month](#) is often a moment to reflect on the legacy of the artists, thinkers, and cultural workers who shape how Black history is remembered and reimagined. But it is also a time to consider the curators and cultural stewards building the future of global art and culture.

In a contemporary art world often driven by speed, remaining present and building work that lasts has become more important than ever. It is within this space of commitment and long-term cultural conversation that Ghanaian-American curator [Larry Ossei-Mensah](#) is working.

Known for his expansive curatorial vision and his leadership as co-founder and president of [ARTNOIR](#), Larry operates at the intersection of contemporary art, community building, and global Black culture. For him, curating goes beyond exhibitions. It is also built on long-term relationships with artists whose work invites deeper reflection.

Visibility Does Not Equal Quality or Commitment

Lately, I've been thinking about presence, not as visibility, but as commitment," he says. "In moments when speed, spectacle, and branding often eclipse the process, I'm drawn to artists whose practices are shaped by time, labor, and an insistence on staying with difficult questions.

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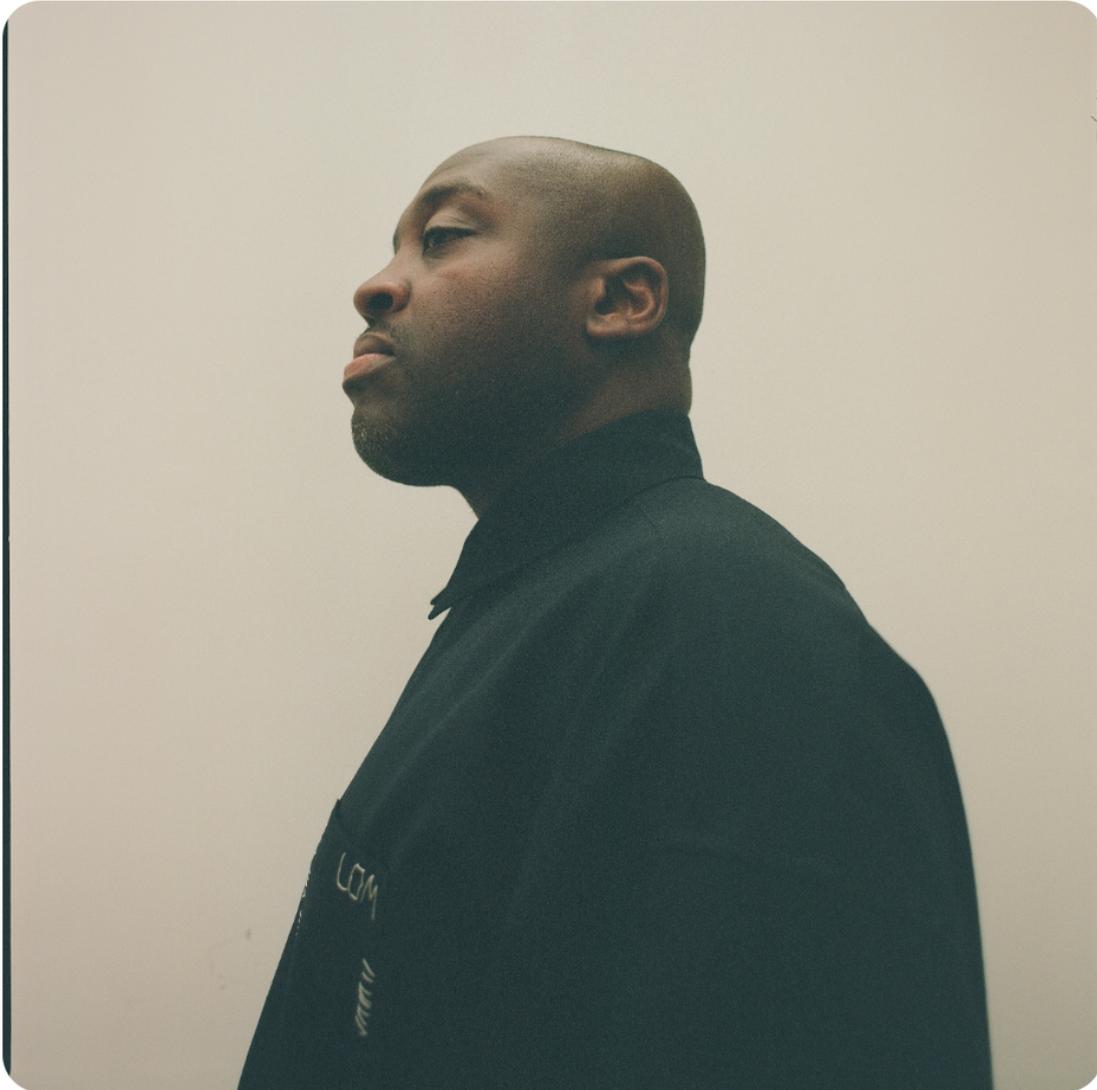


Photo of Larry Ossei-Mensah. Photo credit: Diego Martinez Chacon & New Wave Magazine.

For Larry, presence is about endurance. It is also about artists who take their time and let their work develop slowly, with focus and commitment. Across the African diaspora and beyond, he is particularly compelled by work that resists easy translation.

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I'm interested in art that doesn't ask to be consumed quickly, but instead asks us to slow down and reckon with history, memory, and inheritance," he explains. "This is not nostalgia. It's a forward-looking engagement with what it means to carry ancestral knowledge, social responsibility, and ambition simultaneously.

In this context, curating becomes more than organizing exhibitions. For him, it is about creating spaces where people can pause, reflect, and engage deeply with art and with each other. As he puts it:

The work I'm most compelled by right now doesn't chase relevance, it earns it through rigor, generosity, and an unwavering belief that presence itself can be a radical act.

Five Artists Defining This Moment in Contemporary Art

The following artists embody the depth, complexity, and global perspective that Larry sees shaping the future of contemporary art:

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Antonio Társis - Multidisciplinary Artist



Portrait of Antonio Társis in his studio, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. Photo: Lucas Cordeiro.

Antonio Társis fuses formal precision with urgency, transforming the lived complexities of Afro-Brazilian life into artworks that feel both intimate and socially expansive. His practice holds space for personal narrative while reflecting broader histories of migration, labor, and cultural inheritance.

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Antonio Társis catastrophe orchestra #1 (Act 1), installation overview - Sao Paulo Biennial - Brasil, 2025. Photo: Eduardo Ortega.