

NÉGRITUDE REEMBODIED

Adelaide Damoah - Ayesha Feisal - Enam Gbewonyo

Exhibition: 7 - 17 October 2020

Preview: 7 October 2020 - extended viewing between 3-9 pm

Location: HOXTON 253 art project space

In observance of Black History Month in the UK, [HOXTON 253](#) is proud to present *Négritude Reembodied* produced by and co-curated alongside [Halime Özdemir](#) in collaboration with the [Black British Female Artist Collective](#) (BBFA).

Featuring artists: [Adelaide Damoah](#), [Ayesha Feisal](#) and [Enam Gbewonyo](#); the exhibition not only reflects on the evolving nature of British art through the gaze of the BBFA; but through a variety of points of view and artistic practices, which aims to provide a window into the work of contemporary Black British art today.

The title is inspired by a concept-turned literary movement born out of Paris, in the 1930's, *Négritude*, as a term first came into being as the expression of a revolt against the historical situation of French colonialism and racism spearheaded by three black students: [Aimé Césaire](#) (Martinique), [Léon Gontran Damas](#) (Guiana now Guyana) and [Léopold Sédar Senghor](#) (Senegal). *Négritude* at its conception was a movement aimed at cultivating "Black consciousness" across Africa and its diaspora which began by examining Western values critically and to further reassess African culture within this context. The word *Négritude*, however, was coined by Aimé Césaire himself, in his 1939 poem: *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* which translates to *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*.

The exhibition addresses issues of historic legacy, activism and philosophies in a postmodern world which unite the artists, despite their differing artistic strategies, points of reference and media of predilection. The BBFA aims to not only cast a light on the diversity of contemporary approaches to their practices, but will see the works explore the artists' impact on the landscape of art and British culture, across their generation and disciplines.

On a broader cultural level, the exhibition examines the multicultural nature of Britain and its generations of post colonial inhabitants at a time of division and isolation, which is reflected not only within the country, but by examining global movements in the context of the events that have jolted societies into this cataclysmic minefield of the year, 2020.

All of the artists in the show live and work in the UK, and are collectively first and second generation west african and afro caribbean in descent. By reinterpreting Black British contemporary art through the prism of their own varied cultural backgrounds and artistic heritage; the artists urgently reaffirm the necessity for the diversity and openness in Black British culture, at a pivotal point in not only the nation's history, but that of the global stage.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Visitor Information

Title: *Négritude Reembodied*
Address: Hoxton 253 art project space, Hoxton Street, London, N15LG
Website: www.hoxton253.com
Dates: 7 – 17 October 2020
Opening: 12-8pm Wednesday to Sunday
Instagram: @hoxton253_artprojectspace

In light of the new government announcements and to guarantee everyone's safety, please RSVP via the website. Each booking allows you up to 30 min in the space with only 15 people maximum in attendance.

General enquiries: Zsuzsa Benke
Email: info@hoxton253.com

For press information, images and sales please contact:
Producer: Halime Özdemir
Email: halime.ozdemir@icloud.com

About HOXTON 253

HOXTON 253 is an artist-run gallery and project space, providing a cultural event space in the heart of Hoxton. “Our aim is to use art to act as a cultural bridge between national and international artists as well as within the local community, bringing established and newcomer local residents in the area together. We run a diverse program of exhibitions, experimental projects, workshops, events and screenings. Through our community outreach projects we also aim to provide culturally valuable creative activities to both the younger and older generations. We nurture local, national and international creative talents, provide accessible exhibition space, and build a community of artists and visitors with the objective to provoke critical dialogue within contemporary culture and society. Our doors are open to all, and for the purpose of accessibility our programs are primarily free of charge.”

About Halime Özdemir

Halime Özdemir, (b. Famagusta, Cyprus, raised in London, UK) is an International Arts Producer, and works with commercial, institutional and not for profit arts organisations and contemporary artists to develop and produce a wide range of multidisciplinary visual arts content, also covering film and music productions worldwide. With particular focus on audience engagement and technical know-how; Halime is widely known for managing and delivering projects for the likes of Elephant Magazine, Frieze, and supporting exhibitions at the British Museum, Royal Academy of Arts, White Cube, Istanbul Biennial to name a few and most recently, producing for La Ira de Dios, in Buenos Aires; cheLA: Centro Hipermediático Experimental Latinoamericano and the Bagri Foundation in London.

Halime has recently produced [Revaluing the Self](#) a Brand New Performance by [Adelaide Damoah](#), which premiered 13 August 2020 at [Boogie-Wall Gallery](#), Mayfair, London and is currently producing and curating the UK premiere of [Absolutely Augmented Reality](#), a collaborative art project by the New York based artists [Kuzma Vostrikov and Ajuan Song](#).

About BBFA

Founded in 2015, and consisting of four artists [Adelaide Damoah](#), [Ayesha Feisal](#), [Enam Gbewonyo](#) and Carleen De Sözer; whose work diversely reflects Diaspora stories, the Black British Female Artist (BBFA) collective serves to address the invisibility of UK's Black female artists and disparity in prominence to their male counterparts.

Since its inception, the BBFA Collective have delivered and participated in a number of successful projects including their first cross cultural artist exchange, *Dispersed*, funded by Arts Council England and delivered in partnership with Nubuke Foundation and Chale Wote Street Art Festival in Ghana. Active within their field, the BBFA frequently participate in talks and panel discussions with institutions such as the Royal Academy of Arts, British High Commission in Nigeria, Wish Africa, Goldsmiths University, Oxford University, South London Gallery, Beaconsfield Gallery, and Kuenyehia Art Prize Ghana. They have exhibited at the African and African Caribbean Design Diaspora (AACDD) Festival, TEDxEuston, as part of the late Bisi Silva's 'Gallery of Small Things' which showed at ACDF Lagos, Nigeria and Dak'art Biennale and in No Room for Fear the Black History Month exhibition co-curated with Nigerian artspace SMO Contemporary in partnership with Hogan Lovells LLP and the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art.

In 2018 the BBFA became represented by the London-Fitzrovia based Tafeta Gallery, who have since delivered the group show BBFA Presents, presented the collective at ART X Lagos, Nigeria and presented the solo show *Transitions* for collective member, Ayesha Feisal.

Key partnerships include the 2018 'Calling All Creators' collaboration with adidas USA and Germany which saw BBFA artists deliver talks, performances and workshops as part of the brand's staff development programme. In 2018, they also partnered with the Paris based arts and culture platforms Little Africa and Des Gosses to present the artist residency *Marrakech Off The Tracks* for 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair. BBFA also have an ongoing partnership with Tate (Britain & Modern) working alongside their Schools and Teachers team to develop teaching resources for a number of their exhibitions.

About Adelaide Damoah

'All of my performances have at their core the principle of Sankofa- ancient Akan (Ghanaian) idea which tells us to learn from our past in order to live a better present and future.'

British-Ghanaian artist Adelaide Damoah is a London based multidisciplinary artist, using investigative practices which currently span painting, performance, collage, image transfer and photographic processes. Key areas of interest for interrogation are colonialism, spirituality and intersectional feminism. After studying applied biology (BA Hons, Kingston University, Surrey, her subsequent career in the pharmaceutical industry was cut short following a diagnosis of the debilitating chronic illness endometriosis. While convalescing, she dedicated herself to art.

Since her debut exhibition 'Black Brits' in 2006 (Charlie Allen's Boutique, London, UK), Damoah has exhibited in myriad group shows including Opera Gallery, Budapest, Hungary (2009); Bargehouse Gallery, London (2015) as part of the AACDD Festival; 'A Seat at the Table', 198 Gallery, London, 'Dispersed', Nubuke Foundation (+Chale Wote), Ghana; UNFOLD Festival, London; Article 10, Amnesty International, London, ACDF Festival, Lagos, Nigeria, and in 2018 at 'We Face Forward' Bonhams, London, Little Africa Des Gosses, Marrakesh, (Off the Tracks) as part of an artist residency. In 2019, Damoah was selected for 'No Room for Fear' with SMO Contemporary, BBFA Collective and Smithsonian in London, 'Under the Skin' (Royal College of Physicians Museum, London), and ArtX Lagos with Tafeta Gallery.

She has performed internationally including her ongoing 'Confronting Colonisation' project (Into The Mind Of The Coloniser performance), Reanimating Shadow Projections of the Real (Black Shade Projects Morocco), '#MYFACE' Visual Diet, Cannes Lions Festival, Cannes, 'This is Me: The Inconsistency of the Self II' Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris, Adidas 'Calling all Creators' performance Portland Oregon, USA. Past solo exhibitions include 'Supermodels', Nolia's Gallery, London (2008); 'Domestic Violence', Mayfair, London (2009); 'This is Us', Camden Image Gallery, London (2015) and 'Genesis', 1 Bedford Avenue, London

(2018), her first solo exhibition as an academician at the RWA in Bristol (2020) and her most recent solo exhibition, Reembodying The Real at Boogie Wall Gallery in Mayfair.

Damoah has works placed in private collections nationally and internationally. She is a founding member of the Black British Female artist (BBFA) Collective which is represented by Tafeta Gallery, London and a co-founder of the Intersectional Feminist (INFEMS) Art Collective. In 2019, Damoah became the first black artist to be appointed an academician of the Royal West of England Academy (RWA) and was an invited artist and selector at their open exhibition in Bristol.

About Ayesha Feisal

"Art is where we discover and express our humanity; a place where we find a language to share our ideas and our emotions. It has the responsibility of helping society deal with its conflicts and contradictions. As an artist, I see it as my role to facilitate this"

Ayesha Feisal is a British/ Sierra Leonean artist born in London, where she currently lives and works. Within her art, Feisal creates complex, amorous forms, drawing inspiration from the study of behaviour and the mind, whilst exploring the effects of experience. Influenced by the painting styles of the expressionist and futurist movement; her intrigue comes from how artists of such eras depicted meaning and experience; as well as movement and time. As a result, she displays intense – and sometimes unnatural – colours as a way to heighten the emotion in her work.

Feisal's art is reflective of her interest in psychological states and she uses the human form as a means to explore the psyche. Her works have been an ongoing response to events and situations; influenced by her interest in consciousness,

universal law, balance and truth. She is drawn to portray characters with elevated mindsets, who move beyond the impact of circumstance, environment and social condition.

Concerned with issues that affect black women globally, Feisal sees creativity as a form of resistance and is an ardent advocate for self empowerment. In 2015 she became a founding member of the Black British Female Artist (BBFA). The BBFA collective addresses the invisibility of UK's Black female artists and disparity in prominence to their male counterparts. Focussed on building opportunities for black female artists, the work diversely reflects Diaspora stories.

Feisal has exhibited in numerous group shows including Bargehouse Gallery, London (2015) as part of the AACDD Festival; 'A Seat at the Table', 198 Gallery, London; ACDF Festival, Lagos, Nigeria; 1:54 Contemporary Art Fair 'Off The Tracks' with Little Africa/ Des Gosses Marrakech, Morocco as part of an artist residency and Dakar Biennale (OFF Dak'Art Gallery of Small Things) Senegal. In 2019, Feisal was selected for 'No Room for Fear' with SMO Contemporary, BBFA Collective and Smithsonian in London, and ArtX Lagos with Tafeta Gallery.

She has been featured in: [Evening Standard](#), [Harpers Bazaar Arabia](#), [ALT Africa](#) and [Petrie Inventory](#).

About Enam Gbewonyo

Enam Gbewonyo born in London, is a British Ghanaian textile and performance artist. Her practice investigates identity, womanhood, and humanity while also advocating the healing benefits of craft. With her performance work, Gbewonyo seeks to deliver the collective consciousness to a positive place of awareness by creating live spaces of healing. By using craft as her portal she pushes us to face the truth of a dark past and the emotions it brings forth. Thus bringing us to a point of spiritual awareness both of self and humanity.

Gbewonyo has exhibited with galleries and institutions such as: Tafeta Gallery, Bonhams, New Ashgate Gallery, Sulger-Buel Lovell Gallery and Artist Project Contemporary Art Fair, Toronto. She has delivered performances for Christie's, Hogan Lovells LLP, Henry Moore Institute, as part of the collateral programme for the opening week of the 58th edition of Venice Biennale and as part of the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair Marrakech public programme. Her collaborative commissioned artwork exploring empire, slavery, colonisation and the tea trade is currently on view at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Passionate about elevating black women artists, Gbewonyo is also a curator and writer as well as the founder of the Black British Female Artist (BBFA) Collective.

She has been featured in: [Garage magazine](#), [The New York Times](#), [Financial Times](#), [The Independent](#), [Guardian](#), [Vogue](#) (International, Australia, Spain and British) and [Nataal magazine](#).