

THIS IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS

ANTHONY OLUBUNMI AKINBOLA

MIKE LEE

NATE LEWIS

NEO MATLOGA

ENIWAYE OLUWASEYI

Exhibition from 15 January until 26 February, 2022.

Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery is pleased to present a new group exhibition with Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola, Mike Lee, Nate Lewis, Neo Matloga and Eniwaye Oluwaseyi. At this occasion an exhibition catalog will be published with an essay written by Niama Safia Sandy, Visiting Assistant Professor at Pratt Institute.

ANTHONY OLUBUNMI AKINBOLA

Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola's work is fundamentally built upon the philosophy of the readymade and investigation into his relationships with these same objects. Foregoing conventional approaches to painting and sculpture, he reimagines the construction of identity through startling original treatments of color and texture.

He pushes his materials away from their typical cultural and historical evocations, emphasizing plays of color and texture while highlighting unexpected thematic associations. Upon parsing the readymade object, Akinbola examines the intimate narrative of our individual and collective cultural associations to these objects, amplifying their seminal and perpetual role in the fragile construction of who we are.

Throughout the artist's process he has used Du-rag; fiber scarves used in the maintenance of African hair, as a primary material to continue the investigations of the Color Field and Action Painting movements. His series of textile paintings celebrate and reconcile diverse cultural narratives, creating multilayered works of art that engage consumption, respectability, and the commodification of African-American identity, and its vulnerability to structures of capitalism. Upon emphasizing its transition from mass produced good to art material, Akinbola simultaneously transforms not only the object but the entire environment with his large-scale paintings. The fabrics exist in a spectrum of hues; flayed and draped, stretched and strung tight, intuitively weaved across a wooden panel. Their bold compositions permeate the space, immersing the viewer in their multi-layered fabrication, an allusion to the complex fashioning of identity. The *Camouflage* series taps into a ready-made tradition and delves into themes of hybridity, consumerism and race, Akinbola sees each new exhibition as an opportunity to reexamine and contextualize the work through a new lens.

Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola was born in 1991 in Columbia, Missouri. He has been included in solo and group exhibitions at venues including the Queens Museum, New York; Pace Gallery, NY; Carbon 12, UAE; the Museum of Arts and Design, New York; the Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI; FALSE FLAG, New York; and Zuckerman Museum of Art, Kennesaw,

Georgia. He has been a resident artist at the Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Snowmass, Colorado; DordtYart, Dordrecht, Netherlands; and Verbeke Foundation, Kemzeke, Belgium. He lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola's next group show is in January 2022, at Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery in Luxembourg.

MIKE LEE

Mike Lee is a New York based artist who conveys contemporary social attitudes and anxieties through simplified silhouettes of the human form. By avoiding detail and blurring identity, his iconic figures amplify the emotive undertones of his own biographical narratives. These stylized forms are universally relatable and deeply cathartic reflections of the artist's own life. His inspiration comes from the people and the spaces that surround him in his daily life.

Mike Lee was born in Placentia, CA, USA. He received his BFA in 2006 from Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, CA, USA. His work has been exhibited in galleries across Los Angeles, New York, Tokyo including exhibitions at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, California, USA, the Honolulu Museum of Art in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, and the Vincent Price Art Museum in Los Angeles, California, USA. Mike Lee is also an active member of RVMP, a collaborative art group featuring Robert MacKenzie, and Vincent and Peter Nguyen. In 2012, he self-published his first book, entitled 'Bodega'. Mike Lee has worked for various film and commercial studios which includes: Blue Sky Studios, Psyop, LucasArts, Buck and Hornet. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, USA. Mike Lee's next group exhibition is in January 2022 at Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery, Luxembourg.

NATE LEWIS

Nate Lewis explores history through patterns, textures, and rhythm, creating meditations of celebration and lamentations.

« I am interested in the unseen. My work is driven by empathy, and the desire to understand nuanced points of view. By altering photographs, I aim to challenge people's perspectives on race and history through distortion and illusion. Treating the paper like an organism itself, I sculpt patterns akin to cellular tissue and anatomical elements, allowing hidden histories and patterns to be uncovered from the photographs. I approach subjects and imagery from a diagnostic place with the idea of utilizing diagnostic lenses and contrast dyes. By virtue of my medical training, I am interested in the tensions that exist within and without us. Ultimately, the work embraces humanistic ideas of human connection and understanding. »

Nate Lewis was born in Beaver Falls, PA (1985). He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from VCU, and practiced critical-care nursing in DC-area hospitals for nine years. Lewis' first artistic pursuit was playing the violin in 2008, followed by drawing in 2010. Lewis' work has been exhibited at the California African American Museum; The Studio Museum in Harlem; The Yale Center for British Art; 21c Museum Hotels; with the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services. Past residencies include Pioneer Works and Dieu Donne. Lewis' work is in the public collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, Grinnell College Museum of Art, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Weatherspoon Art Museum, Kadist, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Austin at

Texas, and 21c Museum Hotels. He has lectured at Yale University as part of Claudia Rankine's Racial Imaginary Institute, the Yale Center for British Art, and Paris Photo. He lives and works in New York City. Nate Lewis' next group show is in January 2022 at Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery in Luxembourg.

NEO MATLOGA

Neo Matloga works with drawing, painting and collage to make large-scale mixed media pieces on paper or canvas, depicting domestic scenes which capture memories of daily life during his childhood in South Africa. These monochromatic works play with surrealism and perspective, pushing light, shadow and line to the edge of abstraction. The artist's practice is a meditation on the healing properties of family and home, showing fragments of happiness and togetherness in the midst of struggle, and the new hope for a democratic future after the end of Apartheid which was emerging at the time. Neo Matloga uses a black, white and grey palette and titles most of his works in his mother tongue, Sepedi, a choice not without its political connotations, or its ambiguities. His characters are hybrids, their faces formed by collaging together photographic images of friends, family, and famous South African figures from politics and the arts. The process of cutting, reconfiguring, and collaging facial anatomy is Neo Matloga's way of trying to identify with the racist gaze, thereby disappropriating its oppressive power.

« I thought about what it means to offer my practice from a social and aesthetic context and point of view. I made the conscious decision to continue making the interiors using a monochromatic palette, partially due to the fact that this use of colour makes the figures difficult to place in time – my characters appear in scenes from an alternative, personal existence. With all figurative painting, the most important question asked is, who are the people in the painting? In my collage paintings, the figures refuse to solidify into simply drawn or painted material; there is a living presence there on the canvas that cannot be looked away from. »

« Although the scenes are socially confirmed, living with the work in studio made me realise that I'm creating situations that I know are not for me to understand, meaning I'm not able to decipher the expressions of these souls even though I highly connect with and to them. The questions that arise about the people in the paintings are part and parcel of the concept. At the centre is an allegory that speaks to the importance of carrying on with life, living and existing in the midst of all the socio-politics. »

Neo Image Matloga was born in 1993 in Mamaila, a small town in Limpopo province, South Africa. He has been exhibited in galleries across Netherlands, United States and South Africa including exhibitions at De Ateliers, Amsterdam; SCOPE Art Fair, New York; FNB Joburg Art Fair, Johannesburg; Kunsthal KAdE, Amersfoort; Gallery van Dorst, Wassenaar; Printmakers Gallery, Washington. Before participating in the De Ateliers residency in Amsterdam from 2016 to 2018, Neo Matloga completed a residency at the Bag Factory in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2015. In 2018 he won the Royal Award for Modern Painting in the Netherlands.

Neo Matloga currently lives and works in Amsterdam, where he recently completed a two-year residency at De Ateliers. His next group exhibition is in January 2022 at Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery in Luxembourg.

ENIWAYE OLUWASEYI

Eniwaye Oluwaseyi's paintings are primarily centred around portraiture while bridging the gap between figuration and expressionism, examine identity and its influence in shared spaces. Oluwaseyi's paintings are birthed from images from memory, pictures from family and friends, while also integrating visual fragments perceive by the artist to create psychological reality. Infusing a strong visual language and a distinct accent that permeates through individual paintings, he uses bold colours and striking brush strokes to give his paintings a strong physical presence. "I try to combine unusual colors and techniques" says the artist.

Navigating through the intricate struggles that form the backbone of individual tales of existence, his art works are impregnated with personalized view on psychological reality and how they integrate into the current socio-political climate. Evoking strong feelings of hope and redemption in the minds of viewers who connect with his pieces.

Eniwaye Oluwaseyi was born in 1994 in Kwara, Nigeria. He graduated with a B.Eng. in Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering from the University of Ilorin, Nigeria in 2018. He held his first solo exhibition at ADA\ contemporary art gallery, Accra, Ghana. His works has been shown in selected group exhibitions across Europe and America in galleries such as Galerie Ron Mandos (Amsterdam, Netherlands), AKA fair (Lyon, France), Christie's (New York, USA) among others. Eniwaye Oluwaseyi lives and works in Kwara. His next group exhibition is in January 2022 at Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery, Luxembourg.