

FAYE FLEMING & PARTNER

THE ARMORY SHOW 2010

March 3 - 7 2010

Booth 1409, Pier 94, New York



Diplomacy III, 2009, Oil on linen, 190 x 250 cm

Solo Exhibition: LYNETTE YIADOM-BOAKYE

The imaginary people that Lynette Yiadom-Boakye conjures up in her paintings all have the quality of real lives lived, a suggestion of their place in an unfolding personal narrative that the viewer can only guess or dream about. This is unsurprising given the artist's literary tendencies. She writes manifestoes for her studio practise as well as short fictional stories that are usually left without conclusion, open-ended for the reader to finish themselves, much like her paintings which are a form of communication through materials rather than text.

Yiadom-Boakye often focuses on a formal concern such as light or scale in each painting. This ensures that it is through the act of painting itself that the subject emerges, avoiding the distraction of deciding who is being created on canvas: decisions on sex, age and emotions are often secondary to the formal considerations. Thus, the handling of paint is as much the idea as the image itself. Narrative and meaning take their cue from there.

Most of her paintings are what are termed "one-shot paintings", started and finished in a single day or bout of painting. She works quickly, many paintings are destroyed and many are kept. This urgency enables a dialogue to take place between works. Yiadom-Boakye takes a very pragmatic approach to her work, yet maintains a strong belief in intuition, sensibility, sensuality and imagination. "I have to trust in the ability of a work of imagination to make its own sense or have its own logic," she says. "To some extent, I have to believe in magic"

The people in these paintings are strong, powerful and often challenging. "Although they are not real", says the artist, "they are imbued with a power of their own; they have a resonance – something emphatic and other-worldly. I am beginning to understand that power and to develop a sensibility towards it that involves beauty. The beauty that I like to think about is not passive or gentle. It can be fallible, flawed and problematic. My work is not celebratory. I believe in emotion but not in whimsy. History is wonderful but nostalgia is dangerous. These people are neither heroes nor victims. But if they are pathetic, they don't survive; if I feel sorry for someone, I get rid of them. Cruelty is as unappealing to me as pomp and circumstance are. I don't like to paint victims." In this sense we are confronted by a political manifesto of a sort: the evidencing of a populace that is strong, competent and Black.

Born in 1977, London. Recent exhibitions include: Essays and Letters, Michael Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town (2010); Living Together: Towards a Contemporary Concept of Community, curated by Xavier Arakastain and Emma Dexter, Centro cultural Montehermoso Kulturenea, Vittoria-Gasteiz, Spain; travelled to MARCO, Museu de Arte Contemporanea, Vigo, Spain (2009); The 7th Gwangju Biennial, curated by Okwui Enwezor, Korea (2008); Flow, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2008); The Unhomely: Phantom Scenes in Global Society, 2nd International Biennial of Contemporary Art in Seville, curated by Okwui Enwezor, Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo Reale Altaronanas, Seville (2006-2007); Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Gasworks, London (2007); Series, ARQUEBUSE (now Faye Fleming & Partner), Geneva (2007); Bloomberg New Contemporaries, Barbican, London (2004-2005); Direkte Malerei, Mannheimer Kunsthalle, Mannheim (2004). Upcoming projects include the group exhibition Newspeak, Saatchi Gallery, London, a solo exhibition at Jack Shainman Gallery, New York and the upcoming book Contemporary African Art Since 1980, ed. Okwi Enwezor (published October 2010).

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