

Gallery 1957

Modupeola Fadugba *Dreams from the Deep End*

Curated by Katherine Finerty

25 August - 31 October 2018



Modupeola Fadugba, *Black See III* (2018). Acrylic, gold leaf, pencil and ink on burnt paper, 51 x 66 inches.
Image courtesy of the artist and Gallery 1957

This August, Gallery 1957 hosts a solo exhibition of new paintings and multi-media work, by Togo-born Nigerian artist Modupeola Fadugba, running from 25 August to 31 October. Fadugba's multi-media practice encompasses painting, drawing and socially engaged installation.

Informed by the artist's summer residency at the International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) in New York, Fadugba explores the social history of communal swimming pools, portraying powerful black figures in water together, within the greater context of visibility, access and representation. Fadugba's exhibition, titled *Dreams from the Deep End*, is influenced greatly by Jeff Wiltse's publication *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools*, which explores the history of public pools and their privatisation in relation to race politics and community life in America.

Fadugba's characteristic use of burnt paper overlaid with colour and gold leaf are now applied to new motifs such as turbulent waters, heroic lifeguards, melting ice cream cones and intergenerational swimming lessons. Pastels and monochromaticity are punctuated by deep sea blues and strong reds, presenting a new spectrum of the colours of water.

Some of the works on show see Fadugba collaborating with the New York based Harlem Honeys and Bears, an all-black synchronised swimming group for senior citizens who also offer free swimming lessons to children. Relating to the artist's ongoing series *Synchronised Swimmers*, Fadugba continues to explore moving bodies, focusing on teamwork and unity, whilst developing a new interest in inter-disciplinary collaborations with other artists and local communities. The recreational and educational perspective of these works are a direct extension of the artist's award-winning project *The People's Algorithm* (2014), an installation where participants play an interactive game, seeking to address the critical situation of education and unemployment in Nigeria.

As an avid and lifelong swimmer herself, Fadugba has a profound personal affinity for the pool and uses it as a visual tool to explore challenges experienced by artists, whilst navigating hierarchies relating to race, gender and representation.

About Gallery 1957

Based in Accra and working internationally, Gallery 1957 has a curatorial focus on West Africa. The gallery presents a programme of exhibitions, installations and performances by the region's most significant artists currently bridging the gap between local and international practices. Founded by Marwan Zakhem in 2016, Gallery 1957 has evolved from over 15 years of private collecting. Opened in 2017, Gallery 1957 II is the gallery's second space, situated in Accra's Galleria Mall. The gallery serves as a vital platform, promoting West Africa's presence within the art scene by hosting ambitious exhibitions, providing resources for residencies and participating in international art fairs.

About Modupeola Fadugba

Born in 1985 in Lomé, Togo, Modupeola Fadugba has a background in economics, engineering and education and holds a BEng Chemical Engineering / MA Economics from the University of Delaware and MEd from Harvard University. *The People's Algorithm* was awarded El Anatsui's Outstanding Production Prize at the African Artists' Foundation's National Art competition in Nigeria in 2014 and a Dakar Biennale Grand Prize in 2016. She lives and works in Abuja, Nigeria.

Recent solo exhibitions include: *Heads Up, Keep Swimming*, Lagos (2017); *Prayers, Players & Swimmers*, Cité des Arts, Paris (2017); *Synchronised Swimming & Drowning*, London (2017); and *Like Play, Like Play*, Dakar (2016). Selected group exhibitions include

The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, London (2017); *Afriques Capitales*, Gare Saint Sauveur, Lille (2017); *Dak'Art*, Dakar (2016); *The Art Energy*, London (2015); and *Design is the Personality of an Idea*, Ford Foundation & African Artists Foundation, Lagos (2015). Fadugba had a solo booth with Gallery 1957 at Art Dubai (2018).

About Katherine Finerty

Finerty was born in New York City and practices as an independent art curator and writer in London. She focuses on socially engaged practices, translocal identity politics, and contemporary African art. Finerty holds an MA in Curating from the Royal College of Art, studied History of Art at the University of Cambridge, and received her BA in Art History and Africana Studies from Cornell University. She was the Curatorial Assistant for the Göteborg International Biennale for Contemporary Art 2015 and Rencontres Picha: Biennale de Lubumbashi 2013, and has interned in the curatorial departments of The Met and Studio Museum in Harlem.

Notes to editors:

Exhibition: *Modupeola Fadugba: Dreams from the Deep End*

Private view: 24 August

Dates: 25 August - 31 October

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