

PRESS RELEASE

Tales from an Absent Truth

Tayo Adegunle

24th – 31st May

10 Greatorex Street, London E1 5NF

Private View: 24th May, 6-10pm

Studio Chapple is delighted to present *Tales from an Absent Truth*, the first physical solo presentation of works by Nigerian-British photographer Tayo Adegunle. Working predominantly with self-portraiture, Adegunle uses her work to explore issues surrounding race, gender and sexuality as well as racial and colonial history.

Adegunle's practice explores both the historical and contemporary commodification, fetishisation and sexualisation of the black female body; what bell hooks (1992) called 'eating the other'. Specifically, she has been working in response to colonial anthropometric photography as well as ethnographic expositions and world's fairs. Such events serve as one of numerous examples of how the black body was commodified and made into a spectacle because of its physical difference; in the past and in the present.

Tales from an Absent Truth explores representations of black women throughout history. Using her own body, Adegunle offers a counter-narrative to established notions surrounding black womanhood, drawing on their Nigerian heritage, familial ties as well as wider black culture and history.

Works such as *Lady (1840)* and *Reclining Venus* respond to the lack of depictions of black women in places of historical high social standing and within whitewashed modern day beauty standards. *Reclamation of the Exposition* makes direct use of archival colonial photographs, whilst investigating the role that Eurocentric body standards played in moulding black bodies into a spectacle because of their physical difference.

In her most recent work, Adegunle takes on the role of Yemoja, the mother of all Yoruba Orishas. *Yemoja* embodies the exhibition in its entirety; a visual tool that educates people on painful histories while also acting as a representation of someone discovering and celebrating their own cultural history. The exhibition and its works reclaim the negative notions surrounding black womanhood and celebrate the richness of black history.

The exhibition will be designed to act as a space within which the viewer is enveloped by both the aesthetics and context of the work, beyond the physical photographs. This will be achieved through several curatorial and design decisions, including the placement of West African Ankara cloth featured in Adegunle's work, exhibiting 'Artefact' photographs

within an antique display cabinet, and the inclusion of plants. This will enhance the dialectic between visual and metaphorical signifiers of both African identity and colonial modes of display and decoration. Furthermore, a recording of Adekunle reciting a section from bell hook's 'Eating the Other' will play throughout the gallery, connecting critical academic writing, lived experience and aesthetic impact at the heart of the exhibition.

Tayo Adekunle's daring and critical work in *Tales from an Absent Truth* will engage the public in critical discourse surrounding colonial history and race theory - something that remains at the heart of this exhibition.

Tayo Adekunle (Wakefield, UK).

Select exhibitions include: *RSA New Contemporaries 2022*; *Mis(sing) Information*, Perth Museum & Art Gallery (2022); *Otherlandz*, 10 Devonshire Square, London (2022); Workplace Foundation (online solo show) [2021]; *SSA Annual Exhibition* (2021); *Touch: The Politics of Physicality*, ACall Festival London (2021); *COUP DE FOUDRE*, Insurgency Gallery and Five Years (2020); *A Quest That's Just Begun*, Wooosh Gallery with Generator Projects (2020). Awards: Edinburgh College of Art Degree Show Purchase Prize (2020); Clason-Harvie Bursary (2020); Astaire Art Prize Shortlist (2020).

Studio Chapple is a roaming gallery and curatorial platform working primarily with emerging and graduate artists based in the UK. Studio Chapple seeks to dismantle an ever-growing exclusivity associated with the art world by fostering close relationships between artists and collectors, and acts as a stepping stone into the commercial sector for recent graduate artists. The platform is unrestricted by a permanent gallery space, and thus inhabits a nomadic lifestyle, hosting exhibitions where the curatorial and the commercial coexist. Studio Chapple is committed to highlighting the practice of underrepresented artists, whilst giving collectors a chance to engage with the next generation of contemporary artists before they are out of reach.

For more information please contact: **louis@studiochapple.com**