

NDIDI EMEFIELE

PETS, PARTIES AND A CUDDLE



Ndidi Emefiele, *Search party*, 2018

'Pets, Parties and a Cuddle'

5 October 2018 – 10 November 2018

Opening reception: Thursday 4 October 2018

6.30–8.30pm

Rosenfeld porcini is honoured to present the second solo exhibition at the gallery by Nigerian artist Ndidi Emefiele (*1987). Gravitating around theatrical mixed media large-scale compositions, *Pets, Parties and a Cuddle* also features a number of mid-size portraits and a selection of works on paper.

Drawing on her rich visual lexicon, Emefiele's new body of works further challenges the historically held vision of women as figures of beauty encapsulating a standardized male desire. Young, fiercely proud, self-assured female characters are the sole protagonists of her compositions. Their unconcerned postures reveal an aversion to conventional conformism and their demeanors and outfits in no way are attempting to lure the male gaze, rather embodying an expression of a purely female necessity.

Through the depiction of exaggerated heads said to predict one's destiny and the recurring use of extravagant glasses, often in the form of CD's, which illustrates the women's quest for protection, Emefiele combines popular superstitions and inner weaknesses. As collaged elements and textiles traditionally regarded as symbols of pride and motherhood weave in and out of painting lending the compositions a tactile quality, Emefiele conjures up an original amalgam of contemporary-culture references and Nigerian traditional aesthetics.

If recurring formal elements such as the bold, vibrant use of colour signal the continuity between *Pets, Parties and a Cuddle* and her previous solo – *Loud -*, the emphasis on the cinematic array of details and on the juxtapositions of design both in clothing and interiors denotes an increasing complexity and ambition.

On a narrative level, works like *Cuddle Cat* and *Untitled (Dancing to wo!!)* further explore the artist's predilection for domestic intimate settings, whereas in *Somebody's Commute* her taste in fashion shines through as the three stylish characters appear wittily as if emerging from a modelling shoot notwithstanding their obvious commuting to work routine.



Cuddle Cat, 2018 (detail)

A tribute to Baroque legacy, with Search Party Emefiele deliberately quotes a series of paintings that Van Dyck realized in Genova portraying an elegant and eminent woman against a classical veranda. Expression of her typical ingenious recourse to body language and acute visual references, the sexy subject wearing a frilly dress and the collaged coke bottle offset the canons suggested by the greek/roman column.

Emefiele's work speaks a universal language. This 'democracy' is one of her most unique strengths, yet beneath the apparent playfulness lurks a great seriousness of intent.

'I use my works to change how the female surveys herself by not conforming to societal standards or expectations, the carefree female who wouldn't give a damn!' (Ndid Emefiele).

Ndidi Emefiele (*1987) lives and works between Abuja, Nigeria and London. She has exhibited widely both internationally and in the UK including solo/group presentations in Miami, New York, London, Chicago, Los Angeles, Lagos, Johannesburg and Abuja. Emefiele forms part of private collections such as The Deighton Collection and The Jimenez - Colon Collection. Public collections include; The Nigerian Stock Exchange, Lagos, Nigeria and The University of South Africa, Cape Town. Importantly, she was awarded with the prestigious 'The Olive Prize 2016' (Excellence in Painting, The Slade School of Fine Art) and was among the nominees of The Future Awards Africa 2016 for Arts & Culture. Recently, she presented her works at the Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke, Virginia in February 2018 as part of the exhibition "Reclamation! Pan-African Works" from the Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection.