

NDIDI EMEFIELE
THE GIFT OF FELLOWSHIP



Ndidi Emeziele, *Isle of the blessed*, 300x250cm

'The Gift of Fellowship'
13 October - 9 December 2023

Opening reception: Thursday 12 October 2023
6.30-8.30pm

gallery rosenfeld is very proud to present the artist Ndidi Emeziele's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery, entitled, 'The Gift of Fellowship'. The show will present an entirely new body of works on paper and presents a further path on her journey as she attempts to come to terms with her sister's tragic passing.

Whereas the artist's previous exhibition was dedicated and inspired by the tragic loss of Emeziele's beloved sister, her new show, dedicated to the importance of fellowship, represents the slow process of healing and how one goes about dealing with memory and pain. The artist uses 'fellowship' in its widest sense; the importance of friends, relationships and spaces and above all, 'fellowship with self'. have helped her navigate the very profound mourning period which she went through and is still going through. The artist sees this gift of fellowship as being a very spiritual embrace and this has certainly helped her. These paintings, as she explains it, 'are seeking to reconcile the familiar and the unknown where I paint it just as I imagine it from the clues I get when dreaming about my sister'.

These works are heavily autobiographical, an element which, apart from 'Here as in Heaven', 2020, her previous exhibition, was something she had felt very reticent about. Moreover, these paintings have served Emeziele as a cathartic voyage for dealing with 'self'. 'Using ambiguous landscapes and a myriad of materials in these heavily collaged works as if to unravel layers of emotions that have been concealed in an outer shell'. (Emezele)

This new exhibition will be dominated by large paper works; a medium Emeziele has used on many occasions but never giving them such prominence. There are narrative echoes of previous works such as her use of swimming pools, exaggeratedly large glasses and extremely rich and colourful costumes and landscapes, although they are now used in a different way. A perfect example is the work entitled 'Untitled (Pool Side)' The dramatic sky, the hills in the background illuminated by various houses and the fact that the pool is not now a dominant presence but one of a series of elements in an extraordinarily rich and complex composition. The large work on paper, 'Isle of the Blessed' could be seen as a companion piece to the work entitled, 'They Came to see God' from her previous exhibition. In that work, two women presumably the artist and her recently departed sister, are in front of the sea shore, surrounded by animals, with the artist looking towards us the viewer, whilst the other woman has her head turned away from us as she looks directly at the horizon... in 'Isle of the Blessed', both women are looking straight at us. Pictured in this extraordinarily rich landscape, here, instead of her sister, Emeziele's companion is intended to be herself.



Ndidi Emefiele, Brethren, 140x140cm

This is even more evident in the work entitled, 'Nwunye Anyi (our wife)' where we view the majority of the scene and the characters through a heavily beaded curtain. It's as if the artist is telling us, the viewer, 'if you want to really look at my works you have to stop and give them time'.

Emefiele has painted dinner scenes before which referenced 'The Last Supper'. This time she turns to Egon Schiele's 'Friends (Round Table)' for inspiration. On this occasion, instead of using unknown figures as in the earlier works, she is now featuring herself and friends of hers to populate the scene. These new works where she confronts herself have opened up a new reality for her. The artist calls this voyage of discovery as 'confronting her fears'.

Her previous use of collaged elements to enrich the canvas has been further developed to include; a variety of textiles, plastics, clock bezels, compact discs, collage, printed papers, sequins, pens, faux pearls and coloured pencils on archival paper. In addition to this, the animals which populate her paintings, as in her earlier works, serve as spiritual symbols to further enrich the many layers of meaning in each work.

All these additional elements enable the artist to display her extraordinarily creative spirit. In the work entitled 'Brethren', just the glasses of the two characters is sufficient testimony to this. Glasses are one of the recurring leitmotifs of Emefiele's works. Used as a protection for women against the aggressiveness of the male gaze, here she gives her creativity free rein.

Although her bold use of colour has always been present, these new paintings feel like looking at a "fauvist on speed". With each successive exhibition, the artist has succeeded in pushing her works into new uncharted waters, although always remaining true to herself. She is on a highly individual artistic voyage and each step reserves for us, the viewer, new and unforeseen surprises.

Ndidi Emefiele (b.1987) lives and works in North Hampton, UK.

Emefiele 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 has exhibited in numerous museums and private collections such as MoCADA, New York; The Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg; The Taubman Museum of Art, Virginia; The Perimeter, London; The Mint Museum, North Carolina; HSBC Global, London; The Nigerian Stock Exchange, Lagos; The University Of South Africa, Cape Town; The Deighton Collection, Beth Rudin DeWoody collection; The Jimenez - Colon Collection and The Charles H. Wright Museum, Detroit. Her works were also showcased at the Art Encounters Contemporary Art Biennial in Timisoara, Romania and Christie's London as part of Bold Black British in 2022.

Importantly, she was awarded with the prestigious 'The Olive Prize' (Excellence In Painting, The Slade School Of Fine Art). Emefiele was among the nominees of The Future Awards Africa for Arts & Culture.