

CHRISTIE'S, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VISIONARY CURATOR AINDREA EMELIFE, WILL SHOWCASE THE LEGACY AND INFLUENCE OF BLACK BRITISH ARTISTS IN NEW EXHIBITION

BOLD, BLACK & BRITISH
Curated by Aindrea Emelife
1-21 OCTOBER 2021

- Aindrea Emelife brings together the work of Black British artists, from the 1980s to the present day, to celebrate their significant contribution to the UK's cultural landscape
- Artists include Sonia Boyce and Marlene Smith, pioneering artists from the British Black Arts Movement in the 1980s; Hew Locke and Samson Kambalu, who recently won the Fourth Plinth commission; as well as Emily Moore, Anya Paintsil and Olivia Sterling, artists who graduated within the last five years; an installation by Lakwena and exciting new media work by Simeon Barclay, John Akomfrah, Julian Knox and Emmanuel Adjei & FKA Twigs



Sonia Boyce, *The Audition in Colour*, 1997/2020, 75 photographic panels, Fuji Crystal archival prints under matt Acrylic, mounted on 3mm Alu-Dibond and glazed with 2mm matt Acrylic glass, all with Aluminium rails on the back, Each panel: 20 x 30 cm (7 7/8 x 11 3/4 in.) Approximate overall dimensions: 376 x 196 cm (148 1/8 x 77 1/8 in.). Edition of 3 © Sonia Boyce.

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Photo: Alexander James Edwards

LONDON – In partnership with the curator Aindrea Emelife, Christie's will present an exhibition titled 'Bold, Black & British'. Taking place from 1 to 21 October, 'Bold, Black & British' is a meeting point of artists working across disciplines and generations, exemplifying the significance of Black Britons in shaping the country's creative landscape. The exhibition pairs pioneers from the iconic British Black Arts Movement in the 1980s with the next generation of outstanding Black British artistic talent. Traversing history, legacy and hope, this exhibition is an

opportunity to be immersed in the contributions of artists often overlooked, while celebrating the richness, exuberance, and verve of Black art.

Participating artists include Kesewa Aboah, Tunji Adeniyi-Jones, John Akomfrah, Simeon Barclay, James Barnor, Shannon Bono, Phoebe Boswell, Sonia Boyce, Paul Dash, Kimathi Donkor, Ndidie Emefiele, Ben Enwonwu, Samson Kambalu, Julian Knox, Lakwena, Hew Locke, Sahara Longe, Jade Montserrat, Emily Moore, Abe Odedina, Sola Olulode, Zak Ové, Anya Paintsil, Amber Pinkerton, Ibrahim El-Salahi, Olivia Sterling, Marlene Smith, and Emmanuel Adjei & FKA Twigs.



Aindrea Emelife, Curator, 'Bold, Black & British': "'Bold, Black & British' is a cross-generational, multi-disciplinary exhibition tracking the legacy of Black British creativity. But it is also a disruption, a trojan horse. The widespread absence of Black artists from British art history is symptomatic of an even wider absence in history. We must recover these forgotten or erased histories, reclaim them, celebrate them and immerse ourselves in a rich cultural legacy that has always been there. From an installation by artist Lakwena celebrating Black Joy and collectivity, to audio-visual works by Julian Knox, Simeon Barclay, Emmanuel Adjei and FKA Twigs... Christie's will be transformed – at every turn – into a full-immersion distillation of a legacy encouraging viewers to jump deep into the rich artistic creation of Black British art. I am aiming for a democratic appreciation of Black British art and seek to establish this through many channels in order to dissolve the boundaries of who art is for, how we engage with Black art and who the gatekeepers are for Black creativity and its reception."

Katharine Arnold, Co-Head, Post-War and Contemporary Art, Christie's Europe: "Aindrea Emelife is one of the most exciting young curators working today. I am delighted to be partnering with Aindrea to realise her vision for an exhibition which is new, exciting and showcases the best of Black British art at Christie's. Spanning the legendary and radical 1980s British Black Arts Movement to today's talent fresh out of art school, the exhibition will be both visually spectacular and an important opportunity to learn about this living, breathing and ever evolving chapter of art history."

Isabel Millar, Associate Specialist, Post-War and Contemporary Art, Christie's: "We are thrilled to be collaborating with Aindrea Emelife on 'Bold, Black & British', an exhibition which highlights the legacy and influence of Black British artists, who have historically been underrepresented in the UK and beyond. 'Bold, Black & British' will present a dialogue between recent art school graduates and their predecessors, from the highly influential British Black Arts Movement of the 1980s onwards."

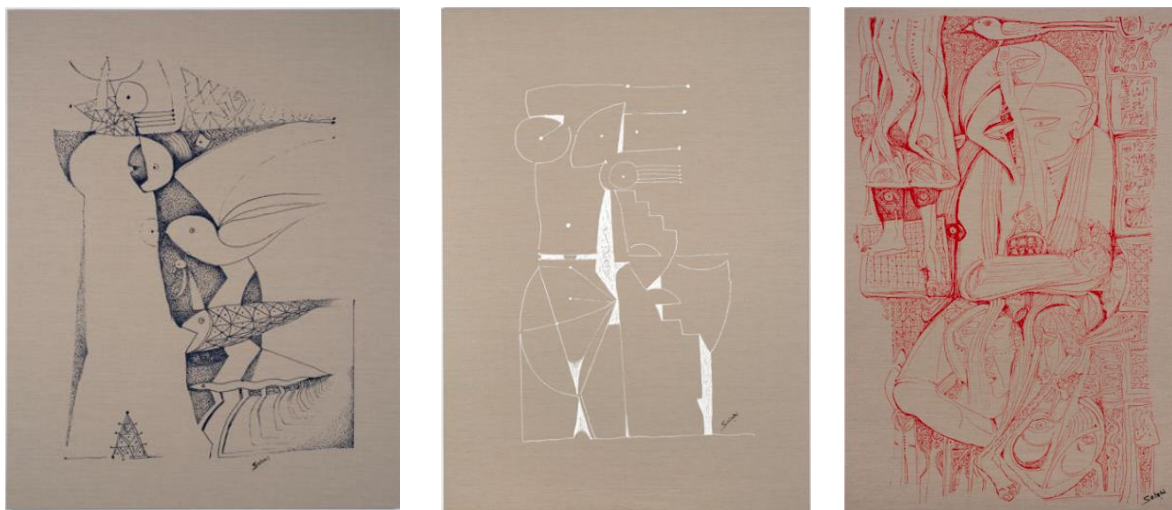


Marlene Smith, *Do, Please. A Happy Ending* (1987)

Tracing the trajectory of Black art in the UK throughout the last 40 years, the exhibition begins its journey with the British Black Arts Movement, a radical art movement founded in 1982 to disrupt what British art was considered to be, and to empower Black artists. The work generated by the movement often challenged racism, imperialism, colonialism and patriarchal ideas, addressing the lack of inclusion within the art world. Represented in this exhibition by Sonia Boyce and Marlene Smith, we come to consider the injustices faced by Black people

in Britain and beyond. In the wake of this, these artists found expression by way of 'creation for liberation'. **Sonia Boyce's *The Audition in Colour*** (1997/2020, on loan from the UK Government Art Collection for the DCMS, *illustrated page one*), a powerful musing on the emotional history of Black hair and an exploration on identity and how it shapes our perception, is included alongside **Marlene Smith's *Do, Please. A Happy Ending*** (1987, *illustrated page two*).

Ibrahim El Salahi's 'The Pain Relief' works (2016-18, *illustrated below*) sees the artist making use of the pictorial possibilities of the braille on medicine packets. This body of work, made despite and because of circumstance, serves as a record of memory and contemporary experience fused with the ambition to communicate. In addition, Ibrahim El Salahi's *Reborn Sounds of Childhood Dreams IV* (2020, *illustrated, page five, bottom left*) draws on the modernist language that the artist became known for in the 1960s, using charcoal on canvas to bring together his practice of drawing and painting.



Ibrahim El Salahi, 'The Pain Relief' (2016-18) © Ibrahim El-Salahi, courtesy Vigo Gallery. All rights reserved, DACS 2021

Zak Ové's *Invisible Man and the Masque of Blackness* (2016, *illustrated, page five right*) builds on the artist's 2016 project for 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair in which 40 figures were sited in the courtyard of London's Somerset House. In this location, the installation directly referenced Ben Jonson's play *The Masque of Blackness*, which was enacted by Anne of Denmark and members of her court at Somerset House in 1605. Featuring white actors in blackface, the play was reflective of the societal shift towards a preference for lighter skin in the early 17th century. Ové also alludes to Ralph Ellison's acclaimed novel *The Invisible Man*, a pioneering consideration of racism and marginalised communities in America told through the eyes of its black protagonist. In *Invisible Man and the Masque of Blackness*, he uses graphite to explore what he describes as "future world black".

Samson Kambalu, Professor of Fine Art at Ruskin School of Art, recently won the Fourth Plinth 2022 commission in Trafalgar Square with his powerful sculpture, *Antelope*, depicting the pan Africanist Malawian preacher, John Chilembwe. Kambalu said, when receiving the commission, that his work is "a litmus test for how much I belong to British society as an African and a cosmopolitan". The works in this exhibition include *Contingent* (2021), reproductions as cardboard cut-outs of archival photographs found in the colonial archives of Oxford's Weston Library of soldiers and members of the King's African Rifles who served Britain in both World Wars. A signature flag work, *The Country Drowning in Unhealthy Nationalism* (2019), and his 'Mboya' series (2016), 12 photo-collages which combine images of the Kenyan politician Tom Mboya (1930-1969) and photographs of Barack Obama, investigating the construction of charismatic public personas, are also presented.



John Akomfrah's new series of photo-texts, 'The Monuments of Being', explores colour, race and the legacy of "The Great Chain of Being" with grids of giclee photographic prints and golden texts – words and archaic definitions used to categorise and differentiate ethnicities – set on solid blocks of colour, juxtaposed with photographs of fragments of British monuments. The series builds on the artist's work around monuments since the 1980s, including *Handsworth Songs* (1986) and *Signs of Empire* (1983), and references poet Caroline Randall Williams' astonishing essay *My Body is a Confederate Monument*, published in *The*

New York Times last year in response to demonstrations against imperialist monuments.

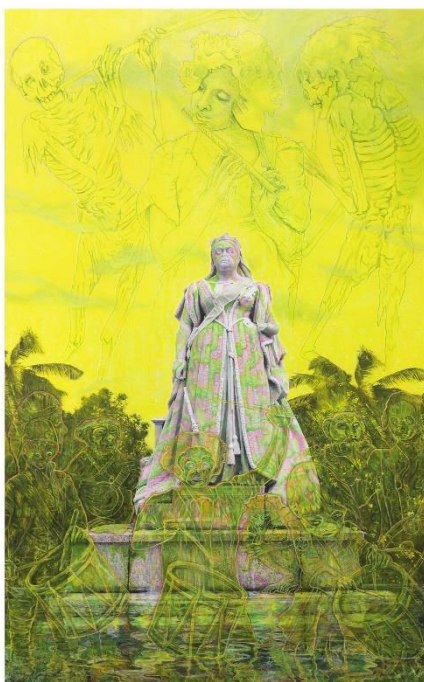
Representing the new guard, **Tunji Adeniyi-Jones'** paintings emerge from a perspective of what he describes as "cultural addition, combination and collaboration". Recently signed to White Cube, and a frequent collaborator of Emelife'sⁱ, his practice is inspired by the ancient history of West Africa and its attendant mythology by his Yoruba heritage.

Hew Locke explores the symbolism of statuary, ships and monarchy as part of a complex practice dedicated to illuminating histories and geographies, highlighting the relevance of the past within the context of contemporary culture and politics. In *Call Sign 1* (2019), Locke is inspired by a nautical poem by Victorian poet Arthur Hugh Clough to evoke paradoxical notions of displacement and home. In *Hinterland* (2013, *illustrated below*), Locke has layered paint over a photograph of the statue of Queen Victoria in his hometown of Georgetown in Guyana. During the socialist uprising of 1970, the statue was dumped in the Georgetown Botanical Gardens before being restored in 1990. The painted images of skeletons and oppressed peoples over the monument symbolise the exploitation of native peoples under empire.

Of the recent graduates, Welsh-Ghanaian artist **Anya Paintsil's** tapestry works, featuring her own hair, comment on race and gender while **Sahara Longe's** gently revisionist canvases reframe Old Masters' go-to tableaux, swapping black bodies into a markedly white visual history. **Emily Moore**, who was recently exhibited at Ordovas Gallery, contributes moving tapestry work and **Olivia Sterling's** sugar-coated nostalgic images mask the darker political undertones of a Black British childhood. New works by **Shannon Bono** centralise the black female body as the subject to tell stories of intersectionality and colonial visual history.

The exhibition features works on loan, in cooperation with the artists and their galleries; some of which will be available for sale privately.

Aindrea Emelife is a 27 year old curator from London and a ground-breaking new voice in the art world. Aindrea, through public talks, writing and curating, seeks to galvanize the way we see art whilst exploring representation, desire and calling for a recalibration of the art world, asking "what more can art do?" at each turn. Since graduating from the Courtauld Institute of Art, she has been passionate about diversifying art history, holding place for contemporary Black and female artistic production and pushing the gauntlet further to make art mean more to more people more often. In 2021, Aindrea was appointed to the Mayor of London's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm and featured in *Forbes* 30 under 30. Her recent exhibition, 'Citizens of Memory' at The Perimeter, London, explored nostalgia and cultural memory in the Black experience and was met with wide acclaim. Her first two books, *A Little History of Protest Art* (Tate) and *Art Can Change the World* (Frances Lincoln) publish in Spring and Autumn 2022. In October, Emelife sees her US curatorial debut in Dallas, Texas with 'Black Bodies/White Spaces: Hypervisibility and Invisibility', a survey of Black figuration at the Green Family Art Foundation. In 2022, Emelife will curate two museum shows in New York and Italy.



Hew Locke, *Hinterland* (2013) © Hew Locke. All rights reserved, DACS 2021 and
Amber Pinkerton, *Miss Black & Beautiful* (2020)



Top Left to Right: Ibrahim El Salahi, *Reborn Sounds of Childhood Dreams IV* (2020) © Ibrahim El-Salahi, courtesy Vigo Gallery.
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Zak Ové, *Invisible Man and the Masque of Blackness* (2016)

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Aindrea Emelife

Aindrea Emelife is a 27-year-old curator, art critic and art historian and presenter from London. Starting at The Courtauld Institute of Art, where she completed a BA in History of Art, she has quickly gone on to become a ground-breaking new voice in an art world otherwise steeped in tradition.

In her curatorial practice, she seeks to galvanize the way we see art whilst exploring representation, desire and calling for a recalibration of the art world and asking "what more can art do?" at each turn. She is passionate about diversifying art history, has held place for contemporary Black and female artistic production and looks to focus on pushing the gauntlet further to make art mean more to more people more often.

She has featured in programming on Sky Arts, Channel 5 and CNN and presented art films for various museums and galleries. She has been published widely and internationally, including articles in The Guardian, Vanity Fair, The Telegraph, BBC, GQ, Frieze, The Independent, BBC and ArtNet. She features regularly on podcasts, most recently Talk Art and The Art Newspaper Podcast and has delivered talks at UNESCO, Paul Mellon Center for British Art, the Courtauld Institute of Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

This year, Aindrea was appointed to the Mayor of London's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm. Her recent exhibition, *Citizens of Memory* at The Perimeter, London, explored nostalgia and cultural memory in the Black experience and was met with wide acclaim. She is also currently working on her first two books, *A Little History of Protest Art* (Tate, 2022) and *How Art Can Change The World: A Manifesto* (Frances Lincoln, 2022) as well as writing and presenting her first art documentary.

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About Christie's

Founded in 1766, Christie's is a world-leading art and luxury business. Renowned and trusted for its expert live and online auctions, as well as its bespoke private sales, Christie's offers a full portfolio of [global services](#) to its clients, including art appraisal, art financing, international real estate and education. Christie's has a physical presence in 46 countries, throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East, and Asia Pacific, with flagship [international sales hubs](#) in New York, London, Hong Kong, Paris and Geneva. It also is the only international auction house authorized to hold sales in mainland China (Shanghai).

Christie's [auctions](#) span more than [80 art and luxury categories](#), at price points ranging from \$200 to over \$100 million. In recent years, Christie's has achieved the world record price for an artwork at auction (Leonardo da Vinci's *Salvador Mundi*, 2017), for a single collection sale (the Collection of Peggy and David Rockefeller, 2018), and for a work by a living artist (Jeff Koons' *Rabbit*, 2019).

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house (Beeple's *Everydays*, March 2021), with the unprecedented acceptance of cryptocurrency as a means of payment. As an industry leader in digital innovation, Christie's also continues to pioneer new technologies that are redefining the business of art, including the creation of viewing and bidding experiences that integrate augmented reality, global livestreaming, buy-now channels, and hybrid sales formats.

Christie's is dedicated to advancing [responsible culture](#) throughout its business and communities worldwide, including achieving sustainability through net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and actively using its platform in the art world to amplify under-represented voices and support positive change.

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ⁱAdeniyi-Jones featured in Emelife's recent exhibition, *Citizens of Memory* at The Perimeter, London and also features in a curated selection of prints by Emelife due to be released by AvantArte