

From: RECOLLECTIONS, JOY LABINJO @ TIWANI CONTEMPORARY  
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## *The White Pube*

Emoji summary:



I haven't written about paintings in such a long time, i think i've forgotten how i am meant to (or how i'd like to) articulate my feelings about them. I've been so caught up in both these grand abstracts of structural crapness, and the granular dust of art that feels like smoky wisps; i have forgotten the beauty of the Image. This week I have felt Hit Hard. idk what triggered feels like to me, but i think like.. i think i was triggered u kno. and for the life of me, i cannot think back on one thing that did it. i feel like i should remember what toppled the bricks, but i can't recall anything cataclysmic; nothing devastating, nothing unfurled, i just feel shit. In all of that, I popped into Tiwani Contemporary to visit Joy Labinjo's show, Recollections.

I don't think I have patterns, but i fully do, and it is Good and Honest to recognise your patterns. I reckon I am most receptive to Images and their simple and viscerally felt Beauty when I feel like I am crumbling. This week, I was glad to be in a room w paintings. Joy's paintings are quiet and still (imo). They are well-spoken and they stand w their backs up straight, hair neatly parted. Clammy hands on paper, i skimmed the press release; the paintings in this show are made up from old family photographs and ~found images~. They've been collaged and put through the ringer (travelled thru artist's eye, mind, out thru the hand onto canvas), bent into style and popped out balanced and satisfying. In that process, it's important to mention it, bc these images have been re-conditioned into artworks by the artist n Joy's own eye/mind/hand/taste. I like that,,, bc it feels like it's skipped that awkward clunkiness of painting straight from images without alteration where ur like 'y did u bother, j go snappy snaps n get them to put it on a canvas for u. get it on a keychain n a mug while ur there'.

I walk up to the first painting to greet you at the door, on the left wall as you walk in. Matte pastel pink and baby blue block colour background, matte paint that j dissolves as ur eye meets it. 4 figures stand in front, floating on that background; flattened shining faces, squared shoulders, an awkward candid with solid smiles. I shuffle close, look up and notice that the cheese plant leaves up the right hand side are painted on w a different texture of paint. They are slick and shiny, glistening green against the hard matte baby blue. They don't look dewy-shiny, they look sticky-shiny. like heavy night-cream, like crude-oil-smooth, like Vaseline. I turn on my heel and walk over to the painting facing the door. This time, an image more recognisable as something that came from a photograph; 5 figures looking out at you, posed and relaxed. Happy skin, glowing against a brighter baby blue wall with 3 windows behind. Out of the window it's dark out. There's a creamy-beige border around the image, and in the bottom left corner, another plant with its spiky yellow edged leaves spilling out of the internal frame and over the creamy-beige border. Another painting across the room; 4/5/6 figures with their backs facing us. they are clustered into the right side of the painting. the left quarter is just the baby blue, matte background. slick green palm leaves over empty space and flat cloudless sky. there is something about that that's happy and full in a uniquely quiet way. it is a bright kind of emptiness, the emptiness of metal biscuit tins (when u look in n see ur own eyes n eyebrows looking back at you from the dull metallic surface),

the emptiness of matteness n how it j absorbsssss ur eye in.

It is a deeply internal satisfaction i feel while looking at these paintings. It is the satisfaction you get when you watch those videos of people cutting blocks of magic sand, carving it into neat slices like deli meat; the satisfaction of running your fingers through those expanding plastic water beads on the stalls in Camden Stables;;; it is a specifically Haptic satisfaction. it is known to the body, and only the body. I feel like i'm unable to translate that sentence into the language of words, bc it is just like... umami. It's like a whole savoury satisfaction that fills ur entire mouth and leaves you feeling like you've felt it in ur soul rather than ur head. it goes right to the stomach n coats ur mouth n ur throat on its way down. I'm being so dramatic, but i mean it i mean it, i felt that in the gallery.

Joy has an incredible knowledge n understanding of what feels aesthetically balanced. As I say that, I'm very aware that this satisfaction I feel, that this aesthetic balance I'm claiming, is predicated by what informs my taste, and that is a Category isn't it. Like it's a thing that's formed bc of so many different arrows into it: instagram, shabby-chic furniture shops, my aunt's home renovation inspo Pinterest board, Weekday's website n the outfits they composite, the backgrounds of my fav youtuber's minimal make-up tutorials, Glossier's branding, the carefully considered graphic design of the books in gallery bookshops, coffee shops that put their biscuits n muffins on slate sheets rather than plates... all of these things have kinda taught me to find the beauty and the satisfaction in sparseness and flatness. I don't care. It's worked. This is satisfying to me now, and it feels Real and Impactful when I see sticky-glossiness on top of that matteness (in a painting or on the box packaging for a lipstick tube), when I see backs facing me on top of empty flat baby-blue. I felt Joy Labinjo's paintings n their aesthetic logic through my body (where i don't have to chew through the logic of my own boundaries of taste). Subject matter aside, I was hit by the more formal elements of texture, surface, placement, balance n space. I liked these paintings deeply, bodily. I thought they were beautiful, Good. I think painters should go to this show. I would like to see what you feel, if you feel at all. Maybe we should all j agree to go when we feel like we're crumbling. This show was transparent broth, oil droplets floating on the surface. warming on the inside, complete in ur mouth.

Recollections by Joy Labinjo is on @ Tiwani Contemporary till 22nd December





