

**JOY LABINJO**  
**RECOLLECTIONS**

7 November – 22 December 2018

Tiwani Contemporary now represents Joy Labinjo and is delighted to present *Recollections*, her debut solo exhibition at the gallery. In 2017, Labinjo received the prestigious Woon Art Prize, jointly awarded and presented by Northumbria University and BALTIC.

Joy Labinjo's large-scale paintings depict intimate, contemporary scenes of family life: a group of people casually lying down on a sofa and chatting after a family gathering, a child and his grandmother posing together in front of the camera, or stolen moments before the official wedding portrait. Her work expands on her British-Nigerian heritage and explores the relationship between belonging, identity, and culture.

For her current body of work, she used family photographs and found images as a starting point for her paintings. When visiting her parent's home a few years ago, Labinjo stumbled across old photo albums she had assembled at the age of 10. They contained portraits of her parents as a young couple, their friends and other family members taken throughout the years at gatherings and parties. As a child, she had been determined to piece together and ultimately preserve a rich, varied yet elusive life, which had taken place prior to and after her birth. The photo albums revealed carefully captioned photographs, which connected relatives and pinpointed locations. In building this early family archive, she had mapped a constellation of places, people and relationships which extended across time and geographies: evoking the fashion, hairstyles and interiors of yesteryear and places such as Essex and Lagos, which played an important role in the artist's upbringing.

Returning to the albums many years later as an artist, Labinjo delved into the photographs again, this time looking at them as repositories of visual information. Piecing the images together according to vibrant colours, patterns and poses, she rearranged the photographs into collages, which in turn inspired the compositions of the paintings in this exhibition. Having taken ownership of her archive through its documentation during preadolescence and subsequent depiction later through her work, Labinjo highlights a highly distinctive process of self-exploration to locate her own narrative.

Exploring multiple modes of representation including abstraction, naturalism, flatness and graphic patterns inspired by Ankara print designs, Labinjo's 'collage aesthetic', eclectic visual vocabulary and mixed technique echo her experience of multiple identities - growing up Black, British, Nigerian in the 90s and early 00s. Her paintings are bold but convey a sense of evasiveness: who the subjects are, where they are, to which era or city they belong is not always clear. As places merge, faces meld, Labinjo invites us to rethink identity as a fluid construction which takes into consideration both past and present, personal and collective subjectivities.

**About Joy Labinjo**

Joy Labinjo (b. 1994, Dagenham) was awarded the Woon Art Prize in 2017. Recent exhibitions include: Gallery North, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK (2018); Cafe Gallery Projects, London, UK (2018); Bonington Gallery, Nottingham, UK (2018); Goldtapped, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK (2018); Morley Gallery, London, UK (2018); Baltic 39, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK (2017); Hoxton Arches, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK (2017); The Holy Biscuit, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK (2017); FishBowl space, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK (2015); XL Gallery, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK (2013).