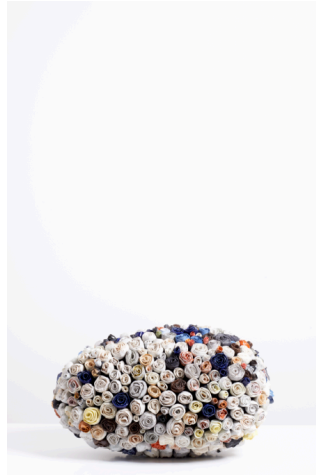




Njideka Akunyili, *Beautiful One*, 2012



Simone Leigh, *Chore Gloaming*, 2013

Njideka Akunyili & Simone Leigh: *I Always Face You, Even When It Seems Otherwise*

Preview: Thursday 10 October 2013, 6.30-8.30pm

On View: Friday 11 October – 14 December 2013

Tiwani Contemporary presents *I Always Face You, Even When It Seems Otherwise**, featuring the work of US-based Nigerian artist Njideka Akunyili and American artist Simone Leigh, from 11 October – 14 December 2013.

The artists will present new works in painting, ceramic and sculptural installation. The pieces further their respective explorations and engagement with disparate, yet overlapping ideas including contact zone, language and lived experiences, as well as in the process and materiality.

Njideka Akunyili's works, a collage of drawing, painting and printmaking are intricate personal narratives of professional encounters, taking references from Western painting, or personal ones from her daily interactions with family and people she meets. Akunyili considers these meeting points as important 'contact zones' in her exploration of new visual languages. Her new large-scale paintings depict children, focusing on the sartorial aspect of portraiture to highlight the way in which a person is presented and viewed through their choice of dressing. In creating her portraits, her references and influences remain multifaceted, inspired by literature, art history, as well as popular culture.

Simone Leigh works in ceramics, sculpture, video and performance art. She will present new ceramic installations that emphasis her interest in collapsing the boundaries between 'high' art and craft. Borrowing from traditional African techniques of pottery she infuses her ceramic objects with a contemporary aesthetic. Leigh's critically acclaimed cowrie shells cast from watermelon peels synchronises symbolic objects of an African past with a diasporic present. The cowrie shells construct new meanings outside their use as a form of monetary exchange, whilst the use of watermelons points implicitly to their historical significance as discriminatory symbols. Leigh's work is grounded in her interest in African art as well as her extensive research in colonial and anthropological histories.

*The title is from a 2012 work by Njideka Akunyili

Njideka Akunyili and Simone Leigh were selected by Tiwani Contemporary's Curatorial Advisor Bisi Silva.

About the artists

Njideka Akunyili was born in Nigeria in 1983. Winner of the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award (2013), Rema Hort Mann Foundation Grant (2013) and Carol Schlosberg Memorial Prize for Excellence in Painting (2011). She studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, USA, and Yale University School of Art, USA. Recent and upcoming exhibitions have included *Bronx Calling: The Second Bronx Biennial*, Bronx Museum, New York (2013), *Cinematic Visions, Paintings at the Edge of Reality*, Victoria Miro Gallery, London (2013); *Primary Sources*, The Studio Museum, Harlem, New York (2012) and *Retrospective of S.*, curated by Sam Messer and Jonathan Safran Foer, Fredericks and Freiser Gallery, New York (2012). Artist Residencies have included International Studio & Curatorial Program, sponsored by the Edward and Sally Lier Fund of the New York Community Trust, Bronx Museum (2013), Artist in the Marketplace Program (2013), Acadia Summer Arts Program (2012) and Artist-In-Residence, Studio Museum in Harlem (2011). Her work is also included in the public collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Yale University Art Gallery, The Rubell Family Collection, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and The Studio Museum in Harlem.

Simone Leigh creates sculpture, videos and installations informed by her interest in African art, ethnographic research, feminism and performance. She is a Creative Capital Grantee (2012) and a recipient of the LMCC Michael Richards Award (2012). Leigh has been awarded residencies other awards including the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2011); The artist-in-residence program at the Studio Museum in Harlem (2010–11); The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Workspace program, Bronx Museum's Artist in the Marketplace program, the Art Matters research grant and the New York Foundation for The Arts Fellowship for Sculpture. Leigh was a facilitator of the 2012 International Art Programme at The Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos, Nigeria. Recent and upcoming exhibitions include solos shows at The Kitchen and Tilton Gallery in New York, NY, and group exhibitions at Contemporary Art Museum in Houston, SculptureCenter, NY, Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna; L'Appartement22 in Rabbat, Morocco; the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh; and the AVA Gallery in Cape Town, South Africa.

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I Always Face You, Even When It Seems Otherwise will run from 11 October- 14 December 2013 at Tiwani Contemporary.

Notes to Editors

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Gallery hours are Tuesday to Friday, 11am - 6pm, Saturday 12pm -5pm

Tiwani Contemporary, founded in 2011 and based in the heart of the Fitzrovia gallery district, focuses on contemporary artists from Africa, including Nigeria, its diaspora, as well as from the Global South. The gallery's aim is to present the works of emerging and established artists through solo, group and thematic exhibitions to a London institutional, corporate and collector base. In addition to its commercial activities, Tiwani Contemporary presents *Art Connect*, a dynamic and innovative public programme of events, panel discussions and curated projects within the gallery space as well as in collaboration with other partners in London and across the UK. The programme is developed in collaboration with The Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos, and generously supported by the A.G. Leventis Foundation.